

Lecture 5: Phases 2 & 3 – Authoritarian Governments & Return to Democracy

SAJC History Unit, 2023

1. Possible question types for this lecture

2. Case Study 1: Burma

3. Case Study 2: Indonesia

4. Case Study 3: Philippines

5. Case Study 4: The Federation of Malaya / Malaysia

6. Case Study 5: Singapore

7. Case Study 6: Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam 1954-1976), Socialist Republic of Vietnam (post-1976)

8. Case Study 7: Thailand

This set of lecture notes focuses on the effectiveness of authoritarian governments (Phase II) and the return to democratic governments in (Phase III). Having established some form of authoritarianism, different SEA countries thus experienced varying degrees of effectiveness in consolidating power.

We will be using the set of 4 criterion (on p. 3) to assess effectiveness of governments more closely for this lecture. Hence for every case study, you need to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Were authoritarian governments able to harness traditional institutions (religion and monarchy)?
2. Were authoritarian governments able to manage political challenges and popular opposition?
3. What about constitutional process and elections? Did these processes bring about greater legitimacy and support for authoritarian governments?
4. Were authoritarian governments able to implement effective socio-economic development?

Lastly, phase III refers to a return to more democratic practices by SEA countries. Questions you should be asking yourself should be:

- Why this trend back to democratic practices?
- Were these truly democratic practices?
- What was the impact on the consolidation of power? Positive or negative?

1. Possible question types for the lecture (recap of Lecture 4)

1.1 Assessing effectiveness of authoritarian govts in consolidating power

- Criterion to assess effectiveness in consolidating power
 - a) Ability to harness traditional institutions
 - b) Ability to maintain order and stability
 - c) Ability to promote constitutional forms and practices
 - d) Ability to promote socio-economic development

1.2 Evaluate significance of each factor in determining whether SEA governments could consolidate power

- Factors influencing the consolidation of power:
 - a) Role of Government Leaders**
 - b) Role of Constitutional Processes and Elections**
 - c) Role of the Military**
 - d) Role of Traditional Institutions**
 - e) Government Performance**
 - f) Role of Political Challenges and Opposition**
 - as litmus tests of whether governments were able to consolidate power and legitimacy
 - **Political challenges:** communist threats, minority uprisings, military coups
 - **Popular opposition:** middle-class and student movements, pro-democracy movements
 - g) Role of Cold War Developments**

2. Case Study 1: Burma

2.1 Overview of Case Study

Burma remains a very important case study for the following question types:

i) Effectiveness of authoritarian governments in consolidating power

Ability to harness traditional institutions	Burma's example is useful to show how the government failed to harness traditional institutions like religion to consolidate power. Rather than strengthening the role of Buddhism, Ne Win sought to suppress Buddhism instead, sparking religious opposition.
Ability to maintain order and stability	We already have evidence of how the Burmese military managed to contain both communist and ethnic minority uprisings in Lecture 4. For this lecture, we learn about the military government's response to popular protests, namely the 8888 Uprising. It is important to know how the military government used repression to clamp down on these protests and yet they also gave some political concessions, albeit only in form but not in practice.
Ability to promote constitutional forms and practices	Burma is useful to show how democratic forms and practices were subverted and used to legitimise authoritarian government. Hence you need to know how the democratic forms and practices were farcical and certainly did not mean an opening up and sharing of political space with other parties. Litmus test to evaluate effectiveness of using democratic forms and practices to gain legitimacy would be in the form of popular protests.
Ability to promote socio-economic development	Another negative case study in the form of Burmese Way to Socialism.

ii) Return to Phase III – democratic practices

This is a negative case study, where the military government resorted to further repression to consolidate its monopoly of power.

iii) Factors contributing to the consolidation of power in authoritarian governments: Again a negative case study. The Cold War context is not relevant for Burma as it pursued isolationist policies since 1962.

2.2 A chronological overview of the political transitions over time:

- **1947:** Democratic constitution announced and democracy
- **January 1948:** Burma attained independence, with U Nu as Prime Minister
- **1951:** First elections held
- **1958:** AFPFL split occurred and military caretaker government invited by U Nu to reestablish order
- **1962-1988:** Ne Win's coup and the military took over; authoritarian government rule imposed
- **1988:** The '8888' Uprising
- **1988-1997:** State Law Order and Restoration Council (SLORC) / State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)

2.3 Ne Win's influence as leader (1962-1988)

- Ne Win's influence in Burmese politics was **central to its consolidation of power from 1962-1988**. As a leader, Ne Win carefully cultivated an **image of a successor to Aung San as source of legitimacy**.
 - Ne Win was a **member of the Thakin movement** dating back to student activism at the University of Rangoon in the 1930s. He was also a member of the "Thirty Comrades", organised during Aung San and trained in Japan during WWII.
 - He had been the **army commander-in-chief** since 1948, had a brief stint as a member of U Nu's cabinet in 1950 and then was PM from 1958 to 1960 (period of caretaker government).
 - His **experience and military background** led to the **loyalty of hundreds of men** in the military until the end of his term in 1988.
- Ne Win might have enforced military rule in Burma but it is possible to see his political style as one that adopted **a gradual and cautious approach to organisation**.
 - Although he imprisoned opposition leaders, as he did in 1962 after his coup and failed negotiations, they were released after two years.
 - In **1980**, the state **offered amnesty** to all political prisoners, including insurgents who surrendered within 90 days. This amnesty enabled large numbers of people who joined U Nu in his 1970 attempt to overthrow Ne Win to return to Burma, including U Nu himself.
 - Ne Win's leadership saw **relatively more elite and military unity** than in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.
- Personal character

- He believed in the establishment of a single party that would lead the state to socialism and was adamantly against parliamentary democracy noting that it had failed to achieve unity.
- His political philosophy was narrow-minded in its goals.
- He introduced disastrous economic policies of isolation from the world and nationalisation of businesses.
- He was a believer in strong, authoritarian rule, willing to use force to achieve his aims/goals e.g. use of force to crackdown on student and monks protest which arose throughout his rule.
- This pattern was repeated throughout his rule. Use of brutal force to put down opposition, Crackdown of the 8888 uprising and human rights violations also led to international condemnation and UN sanctions against Burma.

2.4 Constitutional processes and elections: The 'Burmese Way to Socialism'

- In the immediate aftermath of the coup of **1962**, Ne Win's government created a political mechanism that supported rule by an authoritarian government; this was known as the Revolutionary Council.
 - The council combined all the powers of the state.
 - It ruled by decree until **1974** when a new constitution was promulgated. The chairman was Ne Win.
- The Revolutionary Council soon issued an ideological statement, "The Burmese Way to Socialism", which served as a guide to government policies:
 - The purpose of the statement was to focus loyalty on as well as to mobilise popular support for the political structures of the state. Ne Win specified that the state rested upon the people and not on a narrow capitalist or landlord class.
 - Inherent in the plan of action was the establishment of a single party that would lead the state to socialism. The new regime was adamantly against parliamentary democracy, noting that it had failed to achieve unity under the previous government led by U Nu.
- The Burmese Way to Socialism was also meant to create unity by being non-partisan, because its socialist roots were indigenously Burmese.
- In this Burmese-ness lay the basis for consensus among opposing factions. Ne Win tried to unite the three major political parties in an effort to form a single national party, somewhat in the image of Aung San's AFPFL of 1945.
- The poor response led him to create a new party in **1962** called the **Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)**, also called the Burmese Way to Socialism Party. Its

aim was to steer the country towards the ideological goals of the Burmese Way to Socialism.

- Economic performance: An assortment of **ill-conceived and ill-implemented economic programs**, the Burmese Way to Socialism eventually led to country down the road to bankruptcy by the end of 1960s
 - As the intelligentsia refused to cooperate with the blatantly militaristic regime, the BSPP increasingly **came under the influence of left-wing army commanders and Marxist theoreticians**.
 - They advocated an economy **geared to the welfare of the peasants and workers by eliminating the profit motive and the alien (Chinese and Indian) middlemen** and establishing state-controlled cooperatives in all sectors of the economy.
 - Thus the Ne Win government ordered the **nationalisation of almost every economic activity**, including retail. **Indian and Chinese**, who were active in the Burmese economy as shopkeepers, moneylenders, importers, exporters, **were expelled and their property confiscated**.
 - Approximately 125,000 to 300,000 Indians and Pakistanis left the country from 1963-65.
 - Banks and insurance companies were also nationalised and assets of British-owned trading companies liquidated.
- **Failure of economic policies:**
 - The **policy of isolation** from the rest of the world cost Burma heavily as the **import-export trade and foreign investment virtually ground to a halt**.
 - The economy's integration with the global market was calculated at 40% in the 1950s but **dropped to 26% by the 1960s**.
 - From 1963-1964, industry **grew at an annual rate of only 2.6%** due to government intervention in the economy and managerial incompetence.
- From 1964, Burma also reverted to its **historical isolation** and shutting itself off from the rest of the world.
 - The official justification for this was that Burma wanted no outside interference in its efforts to integrate the diverse ethnic communities and to build up its economy through indigenisation and nationalisation.
 - However, the **rejection of any alien role in the Burmese economy** led to Burma becoming more isolated from the rest of the world. It **even refused to make contact with international economic, educational and cultural bodies, and discouraged tourism**.
 - Such isolation would cost Burma heavily as the import-export trade and foreign investment virtually ground to a halt, while **domestic institutions left to their own devices rapidly lost their effectiveness**.

2.5 The unrivalled status of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) and tightening of control under Ne Win's authoritarian government (1964)

- In **1964**, the BSPP became the only legal party in Burma.
 - The BSPP thus bore strong parallels to Indonesia's Golkar and the Philippines New Society Movement.
- By **1964**, Ne Win's regime had nationalised the bulk of the economy, declared all political opposition illegal and took over the direct management of most educational and cultural organisations.
 - The **armed forces of Burma (tatmadaw)** established complete domination over all **aspects of Burma** e.g., music, song, and dance competitions were prohibited.
- The membership of the BSPP was synonymous with the membership of the Revolutionary Council.
- In **1972**, **58% of all members and 75% of the BSPP's Central Committee were from the Burmese armed forces.**

2.6 The 1974 Constitution and continued unrest in Burma

- In the 1970s, the BSPP showed new vitality in seeking the political, economic and social transformation of Burma.
- 1973: The Ne Win regime, with a view to be labeled as "democratic", drafted a new constitution, modeled on a one-party system in which Ne Win's **Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)** was recognised as the **only political party in the country**. The **constitution also stipulated a unitary state in place of the existing federal polity** and led to change of name to the "Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma". The referendum for the constitution managed to receive an "endorsement" by 90% of those who voted.
- **1974: 1st Burman elections** held at the national, district and village levels were held after a lapse of 14 years.
- **Ne Win** became the president and a People's Assembly (representing only BSPP) was elected.
 - Another election was held in 1978, where BSPP remained the only party & Ne Win was retained to serve another 4-yr term as president.
 - **Analysis:** The elections were **mere trappings of democracy** that were more of **a farce than a genuine exercise in popular representation.**
- Ne Win served as President of Burma from 1974 to 1981 and Chairman of the BSPP until July 1988.
- **In 1974**, Ne Win's refusal to honor former UN secretary-general U Thant with a state funeral **sparked riots**. Workers and monks also used the return of the body of U Thant to demonstrate against their lack of opportunities and low wages.

- **Protests broke out again in 1975** when students camped at the Shwedagon Pagoda.
- **Student sources estimated that more than 100 were killed**⁴ in the demonstrations
- In **early 1975**, martial law was declared.

2.7 The suppression of ethnic minorities

- Ne Win **gave even less of a voice to the minorities than in U Nu's period** of leadership because the Burmese Way to Socialism attempted to enforce a level of homogeneity in Burma that fundamentally neglected the diversity of a country that was populated by heterogeneous minority groups who did not identify with the majority Burmans.¹
- Critically, Ne Win was also intent on destroying the autonomous ethnic political structures that U Nu had allowed to develop.
 - Shortly after the coup in 1962, **Ne Win ordered the arrest or removal of hereditary leaders, especially the Mons and the Shans**. The state councils with their chief ministers were also abolished. In their place, state supreme councils consisting of local civilian leaders and military commanders were established, and these were linked in a hierarchy all the way up to the Revolutionary Council.
- **When the minorities resisted forcefully, Ne Win waged war against the insurgents**. However, these military campaigns were **seldom conclusive** in their results, in part because of **the difficult terrain of Burma**.
- The minorities **continued to constitute one of the main political challenges to Ne Win's government until the 1980s**.
 - **In 1981 alone**, the army **faced four major and eleven minor armed opposition groups, primarily from ethnic and communist groups**.
 - These included the **Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)** and **Burma Communist Party (BCP)**.
 - However, these groups existed on the periphery of the state and posed no significant threat. Ironically, **their actions may have justified the stabilising role that the military saw itself as fulfilling in Burma's political landscape**.²

¹ Consider what issues this might pose in the government's attempts to foster national unity; we will explore this in greater detail in the next topic.

² This is one perspective - might it also be possible that the continued opposition of minority groups and the overall climate of discontent towards the heavy-handedness of Ne Win's government plausibly saw Burma see a brief reprieve from military rule in the late 1980s?

2.8 Suppression of religious opposition

- In pursuing his non-sectarian goals, he was firmly convinced that U Nu's promise to make Buddhism the state religion was divisive. Thus, he was most intent on restricting the political activities of the Buddhist monkhood (Sangha) in Burma.
 - In 1962, for example, he required all monks to register. Subsequently Buddhist clergy were excluded from voting or holding office in many kinds of organisations.
- In 1965, the Buddhist clergy was excluded from voting and holding office.
- In 1980, the state imposed rules to regulate the conduct of the monks. Any monk who did not demonstrate 'proper behaviour' could be removed from the Sangha.
 - The Sangha was organised into committees at all levels, and controlled by senior monks who worked with the State.

2.9 The '8888' Uprising (1988)

- Prevailing conditions by 1980s: Radical policies of economic isolation had completely isolated Burma from the rest of the world in the 1970s.
 - By 1977, Burma's foreign trade was at 13% of GDP (having declined from 40% in the 1950s), one of the lowest among developing countries in the world.
 - Economic frustration spiked from 1987 onwards due to a series of poor economic policies on rice export and prices. In addition, the Burmese government suddenly declared all bank notes over K.15 (USD 2.50) to be illegal, resulting in a pervasive atmosphere of economic fear across the country from 1987-1988.
- In mid-1988, Burma went through its most tumultuous phase since the country's independence. A mostly non-violent people's movement, like in the Philippines, succeeded in overthrowing the autocratic regime of Ne Win. Unlike in the Philippines, however, there was no highly organised church in Burma to support the popular upsurge and Burma did not return to democratic government after the fall of Ne Win.
 - Due to the violently repressive nature of Ne Win's regime, public discontent over government policies had not been as evident.
 - Whenever grps of people protested in different cities, Ne Win's right-hand man, Sein Lwin, who was also BSPP's secretary-general and in command of the security forces, quickly and ruthlessly clamped down on the demonstrators.
- In March 1988, a fight between students from the Rangoon Institute of Technology and patrons and the owner of a local tea shop escalated into widespread riots.
 - The military dealt with these protests through harsh repression with the riot police using unprecedented brutality against the students.

- An **inquiry into the army's misconduct** in the **March 1988** incident **led Ne Win to step down from his position as BSPP Chairman** on **23 July 1988** during the **BSPP Party Congress**.
 - He also proposed a **national referendum on whether the country should have a multi-party system**.
 - His stunned colleagues accepted the resignation but not his proposal for a referendum, which would have eliminated their privileged and lucrative political, military, and economic positions built over a quarter century.
 - **Sein Lwin was appointed as Ne Win's replacement**.
 - Sein Lwin's appointment **enraged the students further** because he had been **responsible for the killings** on **March 1988** and the blowing up of a student union building in **1962**.
- On **8 Aug 1988**, in response to these issues, **students and the public launched a peaceful demonstration against military rule in a bid to topple Sein Lwin and press for democracy**, in what was later called the '**Four Eights Uprising**'.
 - Some **3,000 were estimated to have been killed in the army's suppression** of the demonstrations, while authorities in Burma put the figure at around 350 people killed.
- On August 29, **the leading dissidents** – among them former PM U Nu, former president U Mahn Win Maung, and former chief of staff and defense minister general Thura Tin U – **formed the Democracy and Peace (Interim) League (DPIL)**. U Nu announced on September 9 the formation of a provisional government with himself as PM, claiming continuation of the administration that was overthrown in 1962.
 - 3 days later, agitating students from all universities combined to form the All Burma Students' Organization.
 - On September 28, the DPIL registered itself **as a political party under the name of National League for Democracy (NLD)**.
- Among the leaders of the protesters were **Aung Gyi and Aung San Suu Kyi**.
 - **Aung Gyi** was the number-two man in the 17 member Revolutionary Council of Ne Win in 1962 but was soon imprisoned due to political differences with Ne Win. In the wake of the incidents of 1988, he wrote a series of letters critical of the government's economic policies and human rights record.
 - Aung San Suu Kyi was the daughter of **Aung San** and had returned to Burma after living in England with her husband, British scholar Professor Michael Aris.
- The protests ended on **18 September 1988** after a coup led by General Saw Maung, who took over as the chairman of the **State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)** and Prime Minister of Burma.

- The SLORC cabinet was made up almost entirely of active-duty military officers with the exception of the Minister of Health.
- Yet again, the military had intervened to re-establish political and economic order in Burma.

2.10 Return to repression under the SLORC (1988-1997)

- In response to the continued demonstrations, **General Saw Maung launched a coup on 18 Sept 1988**, which dismantled the BSPP and established the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), with himself as the Chairman of SLORC.
 - He immediately **cracked down on the protestors and dissidents**, and in July 1989 **Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest for the first time**.
 - **Analysis:** This military takeover put an end to the 16-yr old, farcical election-based “democracy” and also implied a renewal of repression and denial of democracy than ever before.
- Despite the SLORC’s heavy-handedness, it tried to appease the people.
 - In **1989, it renamed the country ‘Myanmar’**, ostensibly to **reassure the minorities by using a more ethnically neutral term**.
 - However, the minorities interpreted the move as hypocritical and an attempt to deceive the people, since the Burmese military now running SLORC had traditionally been hostile to the minorities, and there was little reason to believe SLORC was now becoming sensitive to minority preferences. To the present day, the minorities of Myanmar still call their country ‘Burma’, which they say is more honest to the existing reality.

2.11 1990 General Elections held for the first time since 1960 (27 May 1990)

- In **1990**, the SLORC **announced national elections**. Some **73% of eligible voters** took part in the elections, **indicating popular interest in democratic processes**.
- **The NLD, now led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won 58.7% of the votes and 392 seats out of 492 available on the Myanmar Constitutional Committee**.
 - Aung San Suu Kyi was a primary catalyst of change in Burma as opposition forces rallied around her from 1988 onwards.
 - She brought the frontier areas back into the political arena with her campaigns for minority votes during the 1990 elections.
 - Her minority tours had a significant impact on the tatmadaw’s minority policy and her **attempt at inter-ethnic coalition was seen as a threat to the military**.
 - Anticipating that the military would be unable to deal with an alliance between the NLD and armed ethnic insurgents, the **military initiated and**

concluded **negotiations for ceasefires with seventeen of the twenty-one major anti-government forces** in the **first half of the 1990s**. The junta also started infrastructural projects in these areas to pacify the minorities.

- **Analysis:** Thus, Aung San Suu Kyi's political challenge pushed the junta into a somewhat abrupt policy change towards the minorities and this led to greater stability between the centre and the periphery.
- As the military junta **had no intention of relinquishing power they invalidated the 1990 election**, which was regarded as fair & free by the foreign media & diplomats.
 - The SLORC dismissed NLD's demands to form a National Assembly and now maintained that the revolution of 1988 was a "clever plot" by the communists to capture power and that such a threat still persisted.
 - On July 29 1990, the SLORC officially declared that it ruled not by constitution but **by martial law**, that its legitimacy came not from the people but from the UN and the governments around the world that recognised it as the government of Burma. It proclaimed its intention to rule until a government was formed under a new constitution.
 - The **pro-democracy movement was crushed**. The SLORC brutally suppressed all dissent, annulling the representative status of elected NLD candidates and imprisoning a large number of NLD leaders. It smothered dissent through the use of arbitrary arrest, imprisonment and torture of political prisoners.
 - **Political parties were declared de-registered and students were kept under strict vigilance. Aung San Suu Kyi was put under house arrest**. She would spend a total of 15 years in house arrest, out of the 21 years following 1989.
 - Many elected NLD leaders fled to Karen strongholds, joining them and other minorities, students and dissident monks to form the **Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB)**.
 - **Analysis:** The military **might have eliminated popular opposition, but this was through the use of brutal force and coercion and not genuine legitimacy**. This had in fact led to the regime's loss of legitimacy, both internally and internationally. **Power was only achieved due to the overwhelming superiority of authoritarian structures over societal forces**.

2.12 State-rebuilding programme under the SLORC/SPDC

- The *tatmadaw* found itself at the centre of state-building once again after the uprisings of 1988 and elections of 1990.
 - The armed forces expanded from 186,000 soldiers to more than 370,000 between 1988 and 1996.
- In 1997, the SLORC was re-organised as the **State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)**. The objection of the reorganisation was to purge regional commanders who had amassed excessive influence and wealth in the regions.
- Despite confrontations between the NLD and SLORC/SPDC during the 1990s, the military retained its vice-like grip on Burmese politics.

2.13 International attention and pressure on the military junta

- The international community reacted sharply to the human rights abuses by the SLORC.
 - The US declared suspension of all aid and the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHCR), Amnesty International and Asia Watch issued persistently negative reports on the state of human rights and progress in democracy in Burma.
 - Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 in recognition of her nonviolent campaign for democracy and her son received the prize on her behalf and dedicated it "in the name of all the people of Myanmar". The award awakened the international community to the utterly unacceptable human rights conditions in Burma.
- Finally, cumulative international pressure had some effect on the military junta as it feared that the UN General Assembly meeting of 1992 might resolve to unseat the SLORC representative from the world body. On April 23 1992, the SLORC announced major changes calculated to impress the international community:
 - General Saw Maung was removed from his position as head of SLORC and power was passed to General Than Shwe who became PM and Chairman of the SLORC (which was renamed the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in 1997). Than Shwe is also the Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces.
 - A large number of political prisoners, including the 85 yr old U Nu, were released.
 - Suspension of fighting against all minorities.
 - Martial law, in operation since July 1990, was lifted on September 26 1992.
 - Lastly, the government promised to hold a political convention in 8 months to formulate principles for drafting a new constitution. Accordingly, the junta opened dialogue with the NLD but without results. The 8-mth deadline passed without any progress toward holding the promised convention.

Paper 2: Developments in Southeast Asia (Independence – 2000)
Theme I: Forming Nation-States – Establishing Political Structures and Legitimacy

- Suddenly and quite unexpectedly, the SLORC released Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest on July 10 1995 but continued to closely monitor her every movement and to prevent her from meeting up with her party supporters. In September 2000, it put her under house arrest again.
- SLORC also applied to join ASEAN. Despite international outrage at SLORC's policies, ASEAN accepted Myanmar as a member, formalised on 23 July 1997, reasoning that it was better to have Myanmar inside the organisation where it could be monitored and its behaviour moderated, than outside and out of anyone's ability to influence.
- It remains to be seen how long the anti-democratic generals will be able to stem the irresistible forces of democracy in a resurgent Burma.

3. Case Study: Indonesia

3.1. Overview of Case Study

This case study provides two examples of Authoritarian Governments, one positive and one negative eg.

Negative eg: Sukarno's "Guided Democracy"

i) Effectiveness of authoritarian governments in consolidating power

<i>Ability to harness traditional institutions</i>	<i>While Sukarno sought to synthesize the ideology of nationalism, religion and communism under Guided Democracy, there are other case studies to better illustrate the ability/inability to harness traditional institutions.</i>
<i>Ability to maintain order and stability</i>	<i>Sukarno was able to suppress the regional rebellions of 1958 only with the help of the military.</i> <i>However, Sukarno began to play a very dangerous game of balancing the communists with the military in order to consolidate his power. His increasingly left-leaning policies, seen in his foreign policy especially, would usher in his downfall as can be seen in the abortive communist coup of 1965, which resulted in the all-out extermination of the PKI by the military. It also led to the fall of Sukarno.</i>
<i>Ability to promote constitutional forms and practices</i>	<i>Sukarno's "Guided democracy" is useful to show how democratic forms and practices were subverted and used to legitimise authoritarian government. Hence you need to know how the democratic forms and practices were farcical and certainly did not mean an opening up and sharing of political space with other parties.</i> <i>Litmus test to evaluate effectiveness of using democratic forms and practices to gain legitimacy would be in the form of communist uprisings in this instance.</i>
<i>Ability to promote socio-economic development</i>	<i>Another negative case study in the form of "Guided Economy", which will be covered at length in the next theme in JC2.</i>

ii) Factors contributing to the consolidation of power in authoritarian governments: Again a negative case study. Sukarno's eg is more straightforward than that of Suharto's.

Positive eg: Suharto's New Order

i) *Effectiveness of authoritarian governments*

<i>Ability to harness traditional institutions</i>	<i>Rather than tapping on religion as a source of legitimacy, Suharto's case study is a positive example to demonstrate the ability to manage religious diversity, preventing it from amounting to a serious domestic political threat.</i>
<i>Ability to maintain order and stability</i>	<i>Student movements from the 1970s in response to growing corruption and repressiveness of the government. Notice how although the Suharto government was not afraid to crack down on the students, some concessions were made to accommodate some of their demands, albeit limited.</i> <i>Suharto was eventually overthrown in 1998 by popular protests in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis.</i>
<i>Ability to promote constitutional forms and practices</i>	<i>Suharto's government is that of an authoritarian government but it is still a positive case study overall as there were regular elections being held and political opposition were allowed to run for elections and win seats in parliament, albeit with many restrictions.</i> <i>Also note the idea of political passivity that was promoted by his government, which was another important component of authoritarian government.</i>
<i>Ability to promote socio-economic development</i>	<i>This is certainly a positive case study, with one limitation – growing corruption and nepotism.</i>

ii) *Return to Phase III – democratic practices*

This is a positive case study, referring to the period after the downfall of Suharto in 1998.

iii) *Factors contributing to the consolidation of power in authoritarian governments: Again a positive case study for the factors.*

3.2 A chronological overview of the political transitions over time:

- **1949:** Withdrawal of the Dutch and Indonesian independence
- **1949-1959:** Democratic rule with elections
- **1955:** Fragmentation of Indonesian political scene seen in how no party won a clear majority in the elections
- **1958:** *Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* (PRRI) Rebellion, led by a subversive government in Sumatra against the central government in Java
- **1959:** Transition to 'Guided Democracy' finalised; martial law implemented and democratic processes suspended.³
- **1965:** The Gestapu and military coup
- **1966-1998⁴:** Suharto took over with the 'New Order government' which was possibly even more authoritarian than Sukarno's but perhaps legitimised its rule more deftly than Sukarno's regime had, through the use of democratic mechanisms.⁵
- **1998-2001:** Post-authoritarian government rule under B.J. Habibie.

3.3 Sukarno's Guided Democracy (1959-1965): Civilian Dictatorship

- In a self-proclaimed effort to 'save' the country from political ruin, purposelessness and **fundamentally divisive character of party-based cabinet governments**, Sukarno turned the government on **Feb 21 1957** over to a **National Advisory Council**.
 - The Council was made up of various functional and political elements like peasants and workers and nationalists, Communist, and military leaders.
 - Sukarno became the chairman of the council.
- Sukarno quickly introduced his new concept of 'Guided Democracy', **a government by mutual consensus rather than a majority rule, in effect replacing normal democratic practices and processes with a personal dictatorship**.
- He **unilaterally ordered the restoration of the 1945 constitution**, which gave wider executive and legislative powers to the president.
 - The elected parliament was dismissed in 1960 as he said political parties no longer represented the people.

³ This was the first transition to authoritarian government.

⁴ Suharto, by now army chief of staff, took effective control of the Indonesian government on March 12, 1966, though Sukarno remained nominal president for another year. Suharto banned the PKI and began formulating new policies to stabilise the country's economy and political life, which had approached the brink of chaos in the last years of Sukarno's rule. In March 1967 the People's Consultative Assembly (the national legislature) appointed Suharto acting president, and in March 1968 it elected him to a five-year term as president. Information taken from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Suharto#ref976039>.

⁵ This could be seen as the second transition, to an even more extreme form of 'maximum' government.

- A new 'cooperative parliament' (an appointed legislature in which differences of opinion were not to be expressed but no formal voting on issue & decisions were to be unanimous) was appointed by the President, who became dictator.
- Guided Democracy was then officially proclaimed in **1959**.

3.4 "Guided Democracy": Continuation of divisive politics

- Power was too diffused during Guided Democracy to eliminate any possible rival to presidential leadership.
 - Sukarno government **was able to put down the PRRI Rebellion** only because the **army leadership remained loyal**.
 - Moreover, Sukarno **needed the soldiers in his effort to wrest West Irian** (Western New Guinea), the part of the old Netherlands E Indies not turned over to Indonesia in 1949, from Dutch until 1963 & renamed as Irian Jaya (1973).
 - **Rise of PKI:** **The PKI provided the mass audience as well as encouragement of Sukarno's increasingly strident and militant campaigns**, supplying the mass adulation that Sukarno needed. **In return, the party's program was allowed to continue almost uninhibited.**
 - For instance, **the PKI pressed ahead with its unilateral action** (aksi sepihak) **to seize land for the landless**. This **alienated the landowners**, many of whom were supporters of Muslim parties.
 - **Analysis:** By late 1964, the rural scene in Java was **polarised between a radical left who supported Sukarno in continuing revolution, and a military-Muslim alliance that was fearful of communist takeover**. The consensus that Sukarno thought Guided Democracy could bring was only an illusion.
- Indonesia's **2nd national elections, scheduled for 1960, were not held.**
 - Sukarno **feared that the communists might demonstrate a popular** following that would empower the PKI to mount a challenge to his power.
 - **Analysis:** This revealed the political farce that "Guided Democracy" actually was.

3.5 Sukarno's increasingly left-leaning and confrontational politics & impact on political stability

- In the mid-1950s, **external affairs took primacy over domestic matters** to such an extent that by the early 1960s, they **determined the course and developments of domestic politics**, leading to the chain of cataclysmic events that ended with **Sukarno's removal from the presidency** and fall from grace.

- Sukarno followed **Nehru's** lead in adopting a **policy of non-alignment**⁶ in international affairs.
- In 1955, Indonesia took tremendous pride in having been selected to play host to the 29-nation Asian-African conference at **Bandung**, the first such bi-continental meeting of newly freed peoples, later called the **"Newly Emerging Forces"** (NEFOs). This led directly to the **establishment of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961**, with Sukarno as one of the self-styled leaders of the movement.
- Sukarno pursued **friendly relations with China from 1954**, opening up negotiations with China over the **citizenship status of the 1.5 million economically dominant Chinese** in Indonesia. A treaty was eventually ratified in 1960 whereby many Indonesian Chinese accepted Indonesian citizenship.
- **Confrontational politics** being played out in **demanding control of Dutch-occupied West Irian**, an issue that was unresolved at the time of Indonesian independence in 1949. By **launching anti-Dutch attacks as well as mustering support from all Asian and African member-states of the UN**, West Irian was handed to the Indonesian government in 1963.
- The successful resolution of the West Irian dispute encouraged Sukarno to **embark on further international adventurism as he adopted Konfrontasi against the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963**⁷. However, confrontational politics in the instance resulted in **alienation of Indonesia from many fellow Asian and African nations**. Indonesia's neighbors became **apprehensive of Sukarno's ambitions and the implications of his militant chauvinism for their own security**. Thus the **position of Sukarno as a regional leader was undermined**.
- Cold War influences: One of the **principal consequences of confrontational politics** was Indonesia's **growing dependence on communists – both internally and externally**. Sukarno received support from USSR for West Irian and for his concept of confrontation between "Newly Emerging Forces" and "Old Established Forces". Moscow also provided military and economic aid, selling massive quantities of arms and offered economic aid amounting to \$2 billion by 1965. China on the other hand was more influential in PKI politics due to China's common Asian bonds and more because of its radical stance within the communist camp and leadership of liberation movements in the Third World.

⁶ This means that Indonesia would be able to decide on various issues on their merits irrespective of the superpowers.

⁷ Sukarno might have been influenced by the PKI in adopting this vicious campaign to "crush Malaysia".

- His policies by 1960 had **swung more to the left & his main collaborators included the army & communists.**
 - He ran a **centralised authoritarian administration & adhered to unrealistic policies**, which caused **economic disaster to the country.**
- Indonesia was clearly Sukarno's Indonesia 15 years after independence had been declared.
 - Partly the result of Sukarno's own power-grabbing
 - Partly the result of the weaknesses & divisions amongst his political rivals and allies.

3.6 End of Guided Democracy: The abortive communist coup of Sept 30, 1965

- Until 1960-61, Sukarno's power had rested upon his consummate skill in playing the army against the PKI, with the nationalist centrist force represented by Sukarno himself.
- However, his tilt towards the communists, both domestically and internationally, in the 1960s upset the army leadership, although it did not take the initiative to seize power.
- It is alleged that on the night of September 30th 1965, **the communists attempted a coup of their own by rounding up 6 leading generals and brutally killing them.**
- There is no clear evidence that Sukarno himself had any knowledge of the impending PKI coup, although the participants claimed that they were acting on his behalf. Sukarno himself did not blame the murders on the communists.
- **Retaliation by the army:**
 - General Nasution, who escaped by jumping over the back wall of his house, and Major General Suharto, who was left out due to his known neutralist views, quickly mobilised the counter-attack, curbing Sukarno's authority and setting the stage for a nation-wide massacre of communists.
 - Perhaps as many as half a million people, mostly Chinese, were killed, while several hundred thousand suspected communists and their sympathisers were thrown behind bars.
 - The PKI and leaders of PKI – D.N. Aidit, M.H. Lukman and Njoto – were destroyed with relative ease, raising doubts about its real strength, the more so when most Western observers had believed the PKI would emerge victorious in this confrontation.
- Sukarno lost much of his power but he still commanded much respect in the country that the new leadership had to take two years to remove him formally and completely from the presidency in 1967. **Suharto became the next president in March**

1967. Suharto then established a new system of government for Indonesia, which he **dubbed the 'New Order'.**

3.7 Authoritarian Government Version 2: Military rule under Suharto – The New Order

- Upon taking over power from Sukarno, Suharto made it clear that he had no intention to put the country on a democratic path. Instead **Suharto refined the elements of authoritarianism already in place under Sukarno's rule.**
 - Unlike Sukarno who defined authoritarianism in terms of the need to sustain the romanticism of revolution, Suharto's version was given a more concrete of purpose, **defined in terms of the imperative of development.**
 - It created an ideology of development consisting of **three elements: stability, growth and equity.** The trilogy also demonstrated **how national priority was structured: the maintenance of stability in order to achieve growth, with the promise of equity to come later.** In reality, the promise of equity was hardly fulfilled.
- Suharto's regime meant **military control** because most top government level & lucrative ambassadorial positions were filled with military personnel & **1/5 of parliamentary seats were guaranteed to military.**
 - Suharto **revived the Constitution of 1945,** giving various parties, **except the PKI and the Masjumi,** the same representation that they have enjoyed. Civil liberty restrictions were partly eased.
 - Like Sukarno, Suharto kept political parties at arm's length. While Sukarno used the PKI to counter-balance the military and other political parties, Suharto employed the same tactic to play off the conservative Muslims against the nationalist parties.
- As president **Suharto relied heavily on three individuals: Hamengku Buwono, Sultan of Yogyakarta,** who became Deputy PM and in charge of several economic portfolios; **Adam Malik** as foreign minister; and **Dr. Bambang Sumitro,** an eminent economist, who joined his cabinet in June 1969 as Minister of Trade. They were the leaders of the **"Orde Baru"** – the New Order.
- **The New Order would derive its legitimacy by promoting an orderly government, the rule of law, economic rationalisation and internal consensus.**
- Suharto was also **aided by the Cold War** where the human rights violations that occurred during his militant regime was plausibly **aided by US,** and western, support for Suharto due to **Indonesia's value as an anti-communist bulwark in the region.**
 - In contrast, during the **post-Cold War era,** Suharto's regime faced a **Clinton administration that was less forgiving towards Indonesia's human rights record.**

- In 1993, the USA vetoed an arms sale to Indonesia until further assessment of its human rights performance.

3.8 Constitutional Processes and Institutions: Political Parties, Elections & People's Assembly

- To entrench his political power, Suharto sponsored the organisation of a functional group, the **Golkar Party**, which was an agglomeration of civil servants, the armed forces, intellectuals, women, youths, workers, farmers, veterans and so on. It was the instrument to mobilise votes in general elections.
- **1971: First elections held 16 years after the first one held in 1955.**
 - Having organized itself into Golkar, the government put up candidates from economic and professional groups such as civil servants, trade unions, students, businessmen, professionals and farmers.
 - 9 other parties participated in the elections and among the important opposition parties were the Nahdatul Ulama, an orthodox organization of the Muslim ulamas⁸, the PNI and the liberal Permusi Muslim Party. **PKI was banned from the elections.**
 - Government officials were encouraged to campaign for the Golkar candidates and to speak favorably of official performance but the opposition were forbidden to criticize the president or the government's actions and policies.
- Despite the controlled conditions of the elections, **the Golkar won 236 seats (65%) out of the total of 360, with 63% of the total vote, a performance that brought some credibility to the elections.**
 - The Nahdatul Ulama (NU) Traditionalist Islamic party won 60 seats, the Indonesian Muslims' Party, Parmusi⁹ 23 and the PNI 20, with the remaining 21 shared by 6 other parties.
- **Suharto was re-elected president in 1973** by the People's Consultative Assembly¹⁰ (a kind of supreme parliament consisting of members of the House of Representatives and special functional delegates from different regions of the country) to serve another 5-yr term.
- **2nd national election** during Suharto's regime took place in **1977** & the results were similar to the first.
 - Suharto's Golkar Party received 62% of the vote.

⁸ They were the Muslim scholars.

⁹ Successor to the Masyumi Party

¹⁰ This served as the central legislative authority during Suharto's New Order, where the assembly was empowered to fire and elect a president and could deliberate on the broad guidelines of state policy. However, **its effectiveness was limited by the fact that it only met once in 5 years.**

- **The process continued in the 1982 & 1987 elections** when the Golkar party captured 64% & 73% of the votes respectively.
- The **army's authority has been somewhat legitimized** through the national elections.

3.9 Political passivity (compared to Sukarno's "Continuing Revolution")

- When Sukarno was president, attempts were made to mobilise the population for campaigns like the recovery of West Irian, confrontation against Malaysia and agitation for land reform, though such mobilisation was not long-term but restricted to specific transient goals. Political activism has also brought about economic ruin to Indonesia.
- When **Suharto was president**, the **watchword was political passivity**. Suharto's political structures were designed to **reduce mobilisation and political activism**.
 - For example, **political parties were not permitted to organize in the villages and sub-districts**, the home of 80% of Indonesia's population.
- Suharto also attempted to restructure the remaining 9 political parties into two grps in the early 1980s.
 - **All Muslim parties were forced to coalesce under the banner of the Development Unity Party** (or PPP, Partai Persatuan Pembangunan).
 - Similarly, **the PNI was forced to cooperate with the Christian parties under the banner of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI)**.
 - **Analysis:** The result was **more internal bickering and growing ineffectiveness**. In the end the NU withdrew from the PPP and ceased to continue as a political party in 1985.
- In 1987, **all societies**, including political parties, **were required to declare their sole guiding principle the state ideology of the Panca Sila**¹¹.
 - This move was rationalized as the **de-ideologisation of the Indonesian political structure** and political parties were thus forcibly divorced from their original and traditional sources of power. **Even Muslim groups, had to acknowledge Panca Sila as their sole guiding ideology**.
 - **Analysis:** All **political groups had to subscribe to one ideology** – the one approved by Suharto. **Political passivity and emasculation of political parties were taken to new heights**.

¹¹ The ideology was announced in a speech known as "The Birth of the Pancasila", in which Sukarno gave to the Independence Preparatory Committee on 1 June 1945. It is the philosophical basis of an independent Indonesian state. It comprises five principles held to be inseparable and interrelated and they are i) Belief in the one and only God, ii) just and civilized humanity, iii) The unity of Indonesia, iv) Democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives and finally, v) Social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia.

3.10 Creation of new bases of political support under the New Order

- Understanding the context of economic conditions in Indonesia in the 1970s will enable us to better extent the political control that Suharto's government wielded during this period.
 - Increased foreign aid from 1968 and rising oil export revenues, boosted further by the oil boom of 1973-1974 had quadrupled oil revenues.
 - State control over key enterprises such as the oil corporation Pertamina was a major source of funds for the regime.
 - From 1968-1983, driven largely by oil revenues, the percentage of GDP accounted for by the state sector increased from 13 per cent to 41 per cent.
 - Politics was characterised further by an unprecedented strengthening of the financial power of the state and a further weakening of the political influence of societal forces.
- Within the context of the state's substantial financial leverage, the business class became dependent on the state to dispense rewards to its supporters and this in turn strengthened state organs such as the army.
 - Suharto's economic allies included Indonesia-Chinese businessmen known as cukongs, who controlled giant conglomerates.
 - Cukongs supplied capital and connections without threatening Suharto's political control, and in return were rewarded with protection, license and even the coercive powers of the government.¹²
 - One such cukong was Liem Sioe Liong, also known as Sudono Salim, who became one of the richest men in Indonesia.
- The middle class also remained docile during this period as the government was the only source of middle-class employment for indigenous Indonesians, thus winning acceptance for the regime through what is known as performance legitimacy.
 - Economic opportunities for the skilled and educated expanded as 40,000 civil servants in 1957 grew to 1.4 million in 1968.
 - Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the flourishing Indonesian middle class was a natural ally of the regime.

¹² Do you think this would create issues that undermined the Suharto's ability to consolidate power in the regime in the long run?

3.11 Shift in foreign policy direction

- Part of the credit for the economic recovery was owed to foreign policy.
- Suharto quickly ended the wasteful confrontation with Malaysia; instead he sought economic and political cooperation with it. In 1967 he joined in the largely pro-Western ASEAN.
- Suharto reversed Sukarno's foreign policy and befriended the US, Britain, Australia and Japan. Relations with communist China remained hostile.
- Despite its pro-west moves, Indonesia did not abandon its membership in the Non-Aligned Movement.

3.12 Role of Suharto

- Unlike Sukarno, who defined authoritarianism in terms of the need to sustain the romanticism of revolution, Suharto was more down to earth: his version was more concrete and defined in terms of development.
- He also adopted and believed in importance of family. He saw Indonesia as a huge family and in the Javanese concept of family, the father can do no wrong. Critics, therefore, were severely dealt with.
- Suharto's greatest strength: the ability to co-opt potential groups that could threaten his rule.
 - This elaborate system of patronage permeated all levels of society for more than 30 years.
 - Given the highly centralised and paternalistic nature of the New Order, Suharto's role in the consolidation of power was critical.
 - Suharto was considered a consummate politician whose political calculation was an outstanding: he knew how to tap on experts when he needed them and won their loyalty with considerable "rewards."
 - His two strongest sources of support in the government were the military and the economic technocrats.
 - Suharto's economic allies also included the Indonesian-Chinese businessmen (refer to 3.9).
 - Military, through the concept of "dwifungsi" was given a central role in his rule. Suharto was not from the inner circle of the army; his support came from junior officers, to the disapproval of the senior officers. He circumvented ABRI's chain of command through the creation of intelligence agencies such as Kostrad, whose leaders reported directly to him. He appointed his own trusted officers to head key organisations.
- Limits to Suharto's ability to consolidate power:

- **Corruption and cronyism**: family and close friends gained lucrative economic deals, political positions.
- This became a source of instability as it unleashed much **unhappiness with the monopoly of political and economic power** in the hands of a small group of Suharto's cronies.

3.13 Role of the **military: Dwifungsi**

- The Indonesian military **became even more important for the government than it already was**. Indeed, **ABRI now involved itself in government**, as it saw itself as a legitimate political participant, even a desirable one since it had **demonstrated its ability to defend Indonesia from its threats both foreign and domestic**.
 - This was actually a recent departure for ABRI. During the revolution, the army commander, General Sudirman, described the military as belonging to the people of Indonesia. He recommended that it not participate in the power struggle of the political parties of the day. This position was widely accepted and was instrumental in the military's contribution to the consensus achieved during the revolution.
 - With the end of the revolution, Sudirman's dictum was ignored. **ABRI became entangled in party politics**. **When martial law was proclaimed by Suharto, the military became a political structure in its own right**. **The military also assumed an economic role in the country by seizing the management of Dutch investments on the basis of nationalising the assets of the country**.
- The post-1965 situation provided a larger field for the expansion of the military's political role. The term used to describe this new role was **'dwifungsi' or dual function**. Army seminars constantly reiterated that the military now had two roles to fulfil: a strictly defence role and a sociopolitical role.
- Perhaps the best example of an exponent of dwifungsi **was Suharto himself**. By 1967, he occupied the **top position in both military and civil hierarchies**. Until 1973, he was also the **Minister of Defence and Security** in control of combat troops; he was commander of the armed forces too.
- **Military officers got appointments in the judiciary, top ranks of the diplomatic and consular corps, and business enterprises** like Pertamina, the oil conglomerate.
- Suharto's overall strategy was to reorganise the military so as to centralise the power of the military within a small group of officers who were loyal to him.
 - By the late 1970s, **half of the Indonesian cabinet and over two-thirds of the regional governorships were military appointees**.
 - In the bureaucracy, **78% of the director-generals were ABRI appointees**.

3.14 Violent crackdowns by the New Order

- Following the Gestapu massacres of 1965-1966, **PKI supporters were systematically wiped out across the country.**
 - In 1968, **government efforts to eliminate a remnant PKI organisation in East Java led to the imprisonment of around 800**, including further purges of hundreds of more military men with suspected PKI links.
- Suharto's New Order also **clamped down on separatist insurgents using violent military action**, most notably in the invasion of East Timor in 1965.
- Kopkamtib (Operational Command for Restoration of Security and Order), the government's security organisation was tasked with close surveillance of the citizenry.
 - **Organised demonstrations with mobilised popular support were harshly dealt with.**

3.15 Rise of popular opposition: **Student movements**

- There was little campus-based opposition to Suharto in the early years of the New Order regime. Leftist students and scholars had been purged and those who remained were largely supportive of his commitment to opening the economy to world markets.
- However, a **series of student protests began in the 1970s in response to growing criticisms of the Suharto government over allegations of corruption and political repressiveness:**
 - 1970: Series of student demonstrations against corruption sparked by the findings of a Suharto-appointed commission that found corruption was widespread throughout government. Student protests were subsequently banned.
 - The **'rice crises' of 1972 and 1973 pushed many Indonesians back into hard economic times and led to political instability**, expressed mostly again by student demonstrations.
 - **1974 Malari Riots**
 - During a visit of Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, **student demonstrations broke out** involving tens of thousands and led to violence, looting and fires.
 - Students and youth burned about 800 cars and 100 buildings and looted many shops selling Japanese goods in Jakarta's worst riot since the fall of Sukarno.

- The **New Order regime clamped down harshly**. 11 died and 200 were seriously injured. Kopkamtib¹³ arrested a further 770 people.
- **Impact of the Malari Riots: Hundreds of Indonesians, among them many students, were put on trial** and prominent student leaders and several faculty were **imprisoned**. Critical journalists were also jailed and six of Jakarta's most independent newspapers were closed down. Academic freedom and freedom of expression were gradually called to a halt.
- o **Another major student protest movement emerged in 1977** in the wake of parliamentary elections in May that year.
 - Public criticism of the government grew, with critics **continuing to attack economic policies they saw as favouring a handful of wealthy capitalists with access to Suharto**.
 - Student leaders in the major student cities staged a series of rallies calling for Suharto's replacement and an overhaul of the economic and political system.
 - **Government response:** The government **clamped down** and, through a policy formally known as 'Normalisation of Campus Life' and the establishment of a 'Campus Coordinating Body', **the government banned political expression and placed all student activities under the supervision and control of university rectors**. Student councils ceased, campus newspapers were heavily censored, public meetings on current events were banned. **Student rallies were routinely broken up by security forces**.
 - After 1978, scores of **students were imprisoned for political crimes**, many under broadly worded laws criminalising deviation from the state ideology, disrespect for the president or vice-president, and public expression of hate or insult directed against the government.
- **Analysis:** Economic growth had resulted in dramatic expansion of the education landscape to serve the children of an expanding middle class. **At the same time, a wide range of Indonesians (including the new middle class) was increasingly demanding greater freedom of expression and the opening of the political system to broader citizen participation.**
- **Concessions made by the Suharto government:** A new higher education law passed in 1989 and included guarantees for both academic freedom and scientific autonomy while Suharto himself publicly endorsed broader openness in Indonesian

¹³ The Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order, or Kopkamtib, was a military body established to deal with the 1965 coup attempt operation in Indonesia, and was subsequently used by President Suharto's New Order regime to suppress dissent.

society. In response, students and intellectuals took advantage of the opening to push for more fundamental reform.

- **Evaluation:** The government however repeatedly insisted that the kind of openness it endorsed was “responsible openness”. But because there was no real protection for basic rights, citizens never could be sure what the exact meaning of 'responsible' was and how far the opening extended.

3.16 Rise of popular opposition: Protests from religious groups

- **1984 Tanjung Priok demonstrations:** Anti-government and anti-cukong demonstrations were held by a mosque-inspired crowd in the Tanjung Priok district of Jakarta in reaction to government attempts to limit the political activity of Islamic groups.
 - ABRI opened fire and killed at least 28.
 - Violence continued into 1985 with fires being set to major shopping malls in Chinatown and Jakarta's business district. Liem Sioe Liong's Bank Central Asia was the first target of arson attacks.
 - The riots were finally put down when the government jailed about 30, including some of prominent standing such as former military commander Dharsono, who was also the first ASEAN Secretary-General.
 - Essentially, the ABRI's timely clampdowns on religious groups ensured that Islam never amounted to a serious domestic political threat during Suharto's regime.

3.17 Increasing challenges to authoritarian rule in the 1980s

- From the late 1970s, political challenges began to emerge and targeted the regime's blatant nepotism and corruption.
 - Challenges were in part provoked by the excesses of Suharto's family members.
 - It was commonly estimated that by 1977, corruption consumed 30% of all overseas aid and government expenditures.
- Challenges from the military tended to come from retired military officers or those who lost favour with Suharto.
 - The impact of these challenges was mostly limited by Suharto's economic payoffs as well as the Javanese culture of deference to authority which inhibited officers from pursuing full-blown anti-regime actions.
- From 1979-1980, a challenge emerged from fifty leading citizens who signed a petition that stemmed in part from what they perceived as Suharto's high-handed measures in mobilising the ABRI for Golkar votes in the 1977 elections.
 - Suharto's family deals also came under fierce criticism for discrediting the image of the ABRI.

- The petitioners included former ABRI figures who had played key roles in the establishment of the New Order such as General Nasution and Dharsono.
- The petition was circulated for two months and while it failed to hurt the regime physically, it **established a precedent for military dissidence against the President.**
- Suharto managed to put down the petitioning group by threatening to cut them off from the system of privileges and rewards his regime had established.
- As **Suharto moved to reduce the influence of the ABRI, ABRI discontent against Suharto continued to fester in the 1980s.**
 - More open disagreements broke out such as in **1988**, when it openly rejected Suharto's choice of Sudharmono¹⁴ as Vice President - but to no avail.
- From **1987-1994**, there was a period of **greater openness (or keterbukaan)** due to rival groups angling for more supporters. This heralded a process of increasing political challenge from various groups and culminated in Suharto's fall in 1998.
 - **Late 1980s:** Episodic **student protests** broke out against government policies e.g., power rate hikes (1988), new traffic laws (1992) and state-sponsored lottery (1993).
 - **May 1994:** Trade Union such as the Prosperous Workers' Union of Indonesia organised Medan strikes in May 1994, where clashes with the military led to the arrest of over a hundred people.

3.18 The **Asian Financial Crisis** and the end of the New Order in 1998

- Suharto was **ultimately unsuccessful in consolidating power for his country in the long run.** While he may have generated a lot of wealth for Indonesia, it was through a heavy hand which was also clearly corrupt. Some sectors of the population got much richer than others, creating social tensions across class and race.
- **Students slowly started getting involved in politics. The first protest took place in 1977.** Despite clampdowns, they eventually became a force to reckon with, which led to the downfall of Suharto during the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997.
- When the **economy collapsed in 1997**, **Suharto failed to respond appropriately** and seemed out of touch with reality, **culminating in his decision to raise taxes on fuel just when the financial crisis reached its worst point.** He was **forced out of office** by the **widespread demonstrations** that broke out across Indonesia attacking his rule and groups that had prospered during his regime.

¹⁴ Sudharmono- Indonesian politician and army officer, who served as the 5th Vice President of Indonesia, under the New Order regime of president Suharto.

- By **1998**, student mobilisation reached the scale of a national movement beyond individual campuses. The University of Indonesia was at the heart of the movement, with their banner 'New Order Struggle Campus' stretched across their entrance in February 1998.
- When soldiers fired and killed 4 students **in the Triskati University protests on 12 May 1998**, protests escalated beyond what the New Order could control.
- Cracks within the ABRI also played a role. When the students marched from Parliament to the Presidential Palace on **18 May**, they were flanked by military officers from the Air Force, Navy, and Marines, to protect them from government forces.
 - Students occupied the Parliament building without being punished by the military.
 - Similar rallies occurred outside Jakarta, where half a million gathered at the Sultan's palace at Jogjakarta.
- On **21 May 1998**, Suharto resigned and turned power to Vice-President Habibie.

3.19 B.J. Habibie and Abdurrahman Wahid (1998-2000)

- Although **Habibie and Abdurrahman Wahid moved towards more open politics**, they were still confronted with the mammoth task of combating the dire economic conditions.
 - By **mid-1998, inflation reached 65% with 56% of the population estimated to be below the poverty line**.
- Under Habibie, Indonesian politics became more conciliatory.
 - Student activists and political prisoners were released.
 - There was a resurgence of party politics as new political parties were formed, including Amien Rais' PAN (National Mandate Party) and Abdurrahman Wahid's PKB (National Awakening Party). **Golkar reconfigured itself as the 'New Golkar' to dissociate itself from the negative legacy of the Suharto era**.
- **Golkar suffered its first lost in the April 1999 elections**.
 - Of the 462 seats in the national parliament, 38 continued to be reserved for the military.
 - **Megawati Sukarnoputri's PDIP won the elections with 33.7% of the valid votes, Golkar came in second with 22.4%.**
 - Significantly, Golkar lost a lot of support from Java - 80 of its 120 seats came from outside Java.
 - The People's Consultative Assembly elected Abdurrahman Wahid as President and Megawati as Vice-President in October 1999.
- **Similar to the 1955 elections when no party won the clear majority; political stability remained an issue for Indonesian politics**.

Paper 2: Developments in Southeast Asia (Independence – 2000)
Theme I: Forming Nation-States – Establishing Political Structures and Legitimacy

- In 1999, politics was more open and competitive than it had been under the New Order but also more unstable.
 - Abdurrahman continued to encourage openness and pluralism.
 - He allowed Chinese to conduct their religious ceremonies openly, and gave Aceh and Papua more rights, short of separation from Indonesia.
- Hampered by ill health and political inexperience, Abdurrahman failed to end the internal chaos among different groups.
 - In 2001, he was dismissed by the People's Assembly and Megawati became Indonesia's fifth President.

4. Case Study 4: The Philippines

4.1 Overview of Case Study

This case study provides one example of authoritarian government under Marcos and one example of restoration of liberal democracy after Marcos.

i) Effectiveness of authoritarian governments

<i>Ability to harness traditional institutions</i>	<i>A negative case study, Marcos was not able to tap on religion as a source of legitimacy. Instead, the influence of religion ultimately posed a challenge to his consolidation of power.</i>
<i>Ability to maintain order and stability</i>	<i>A negative case study, Marcos was not able to decisively defeat the communists and seek ceasefire with the MNLF. Eventually, Marcos would also be overthrown by popular protests – the EDSA revolution.</i>
<i>Ability to promote constitutional forms and practices</i>	<i>Marcos' "New Society" is useful to show how democratic forms and practices were subverted and used to legitimise authoritarian government. Hence you need to know how the democratic forms and practices were farcical and certainly did not mean an opening up and sharing of political space with other parties. Litmus test to evaluate effectiveness of using democratic forms and practices to gain legitimacy would be in the form of popular protests.</i>
<i>Ability to promote socio-economic development</i>	<i>Another negative case study, especially on corruption and nepotism.</i>

ii) Return to Phase III – democratic practices

This is the most relevant case study to show SEA countries can revert back to democracy even after decades of authoritarian government, hence showing the resilience of democracy in Philippines.

iii) Factors contributing to the consolidation of power in authoritarian governments: Negative case study for the factors.

4.2 A chronological overview of the political transitions over time:

- **1946:** Democratic constitution announced and democracy was adopted.
- **1946-1972:** Multiple transitions of power occurred during the Philippines' phase of democratic governance.
 - **1946-1948:** Manuel Roxas
 - **1949-1950:** Elpidio Quirino
 - **1951-1957:** Ramon Magsaysay
 - **1957-1961:** Carlos Garcia
 - **1961-1965:** Diosdado Macapagal
 - **1965-1972:** Ferdinand Marcos
- **1972-1986:** Authoritarian government
 - **1972-1981:** martial law under Ferdinand Marcos
 - **1981-1986:** martial law lifted, in name, under Marcos as authoritarian rule continued
- **1986-2000:** Democratic government
 - **1986-1992:** Corazon Aquino
 - **1992-1998:** Fidel Ramos
 - **1998-2001:** Joseph Estrada

4.3 The Authoritarian Government phase: 1972 – 1986

- On **September 21, 1972** **President Marcos issued Presidential Proclamation No. 1081 placing the entire country under martial law**, which was meant to save the republic, and to "reform the social, economic and political institutions in our country".
- Under martial law, Marcos wanted to create a political structure called the **'New Society'**.
- In the New Society, people were expected to be more communal in spirit. This communality of feeling and spirit was to do away with the individualist, the selfish, and even class interest.
- Since **1973** several mock referenda were held (**local – 1980, parliamentary – 1978 and 1984 and presidential elections – 1981 and 1986**) & Marcos was given a "popular approval" to continue on with his martial law.
 - These allowed him to **extend his term of office, to concurrently hold the office of President and PM** and to create a **National Assembly**¹⁵ (Batasang Pambansa).

¹⁵ The National Assembly was formed merely to **validate and ratify Marcos' decrees**, so this is indeed **another rubber-stamping tool** created by Marcos during this period of authoritarian government.

- The **parliamentary elections of 1978**, the first one since the imposition of martial law, **was full of fraudulence** & as expected, **Marcos' "New Society Movt" party members** won all the places in the National Assembly. With **limited opportunities given to the opposition** in the midst of an **unlimited political repression** unleashed by the Marcos government, his party won most local elections.
 - The main opponent of the New Society Movement was the Lakas ng Bayan (LABAN), a **coalition of political opposition parties**.
 - Immediately **after the elections**, Marcos **arrested hundreds of his opponents from LABAN**, proving that the 1978 Elections were held only to burnish his international image.
- **Cronyism**: The government became progressively the preserve of the **Marcos family, their relatives, friends, and supporters**. **Imelda Marcos was appointed governor of Manila in 1975 and was also appointed as a Cabinet Member, heading the Ministry of Ecology and Human Settlements, in 1978.**
- **In 1981, Marcos ended martial law and held elections in 1982, which he won in the most lopsided elections victory in Philippine history (80% of the votes)**, since most of the **opposition parties had boycotted it**. This victory allowed him to **serve a third term (1981-86)**, though by this time it was obvious **he was no longer following the Philippine Constitution's rules of presidential service**.
 - Although Marcos had ended martial law in name, he created a new constitution that gave significant power to the President who would then appoint a Prime Minister within a parliamentary system.
 - Marcos' victory in the 1982 elections bore testament to the **temporary success he had achieved in legitimising his power through undesirable means** even further, rather than Filipinos genuinely supporting him.

4.4 Use of heavy-handed tactics against political opponents and threats

- Marcos **restricted political activities** with a **series of executive orders** soon after he declared martial law.
 - **Under General Order No. 2**, Marcos forced the **military to arrest and detain a list of people including leading politicians and leaders of suspected subversive organisations**.
 - He **confiscated their assets** and **detained them for political crimes**.
- He crippled the power of landowners - who were influential in the Philippines' political scene - by creating the state-run Philippines Sugar Exchange that controlled the selling of sugar abroad.
- In **1977**, approximately **70,000 Filipinos were detained** as political prisoners.

- Notably, while Marcos' heavy-handed tactics removed perceived sources of threat, they also **made him new political enemies** and his methods were an **increasing source of discontent for the Philippine people.**

4.5 Changed role of the military: Increasing politicisation

- The establishment of martial law would not have been possible without the support of the military. Under martial law, the **military extended its influence** in society.
 - Marcos consulted the army in all his acts, thus **giving the military a political role for the first time in Filipino history.**
 - It was **given control of the media, public utilities and industries like steel.**
 - The field **campaigns against the Marxist New People's Army (NPA).** and **the Moro National liberation Front (MNLF)** inevitably meant that the army had a greater decision-making role in the political structure.
- During the nine years of martial law, he **tripled the armed forces** to some 200,000 troops, **guaranteeing his grip on government.** This led to many **arrests of political sympathizers of the Communists as well as Marcos' political rivals.**
 - For eg, the fiercest opponent of martial law was **Benigno Aquino.** He was soon **arrested and exiled.**
- However, **the emergence of the military as a structure with political significance had its antecedents in the 1950s,** when the Philippine military assumed an **internal peacekeeping role,** in addition to its customary duty of external defence, when it became clear that **the Huks** would challenge the Manila government.
 - Magsaysay allocated non-military socio-economic activities to the defence establishment.
 - Under the name of civic action, the **military embarked on projects like land resettlement.**
 - It was also used to police the electoral processes in the 1950s and counter the influence of the Huks.
- The **intervention of the military in government** turned out to be a **mixed blessing** for Marcos. Its **growing influence** later made it a **decisive factor in the overthrow of the regime.**

4.6 Summary of role of Marcos to consolidate power

- Fundamentally, Marcos **desired for absolute power;** he **subverted constitutional process** and **declared martial law** due to the fact that he **could not run for election for Presidency for a 3rd term.**

- A master manipulator of constitutional and extra constitutional manoeuvres, he had a talent in working the patron-client system both within the law and outside the law.
- Marcos **restricted political activities** with a series of executive orders, one of which compelled the military to arrest and detain a list of people, including leading politicians and leaders of suspected subversive organisations. Used **his executive powers to eliminate political opponents**: confiscated their assets, detained them for political crimes.
- **Co-optation of the military as 'junior partner'**: Expanded their role for their support.
- **Corruption and cronyism**: All power was concentrated in the hands of Marcos' and his family and cronies.

4.7 Challenges to Marcos' New Society Regime

- **Three main sources** of challenges were observed:
 - **Socio-economic grievances** created by the Philippine social, political and economic structure that **made Communism popular in the countryside**,
 - Sharp **ethnic-based divide between Christian north and Muslim south**, and
 - **Urban unrests taking place**, led by disgruntled students and city-dwellers to protest the **declining economy** and **ongoing political problems in the Philippines**.
- There had been **increased insurgency** in the central Luzon led by the **Marxist New People's Army (NPA)**.
 - Drawing on the same roots of agrarian discontent as the Hukbalahap, the NPA provided an **alternative political structure** that had grave implications for the future of the Philippines.
 - The **economy took a dive**, made worse by the **unfortunate coincidence of natural disasters** and the **lavish use of funds** in the election year of 1969.
 - The fear of a general insurrection in Luzon was also fuelled by two huge explosions on 21 August 1971 at the Plaza Miranda (Manila), killing and injuring many at a political rally. This incident had provided the occasion for Marcos to proclaim martial law.
- **Increased Islamic insurgency** in the **southern Philippines from 1969**.
 - This phenomenon was not new. From the start of Spanish rule from the 1560s to the present day, there had been a continuous struggle by the southern Philippines Muslim community to defend their territories from the control of the north (whoever held power there: Spanish, American, Japanese and subsequently Filipino).
 - The **Muslim grievances were an expression of opposition to the numbers of Christian migration from the north to their lands**. This migration **threatened to**

Christianise the south as well as posing a danger to the Muslim control of land. The local economic infrastructure also came to be heavily dominated by the local Christian sector.

- Thus the Muslims formed the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) with its goal of separation from the Philippines. The MNLF was to go to war against the Marcos martial-law government in late 1972 with the support of Libya, members of the Islamic Conference and the Malaysian state of Sabah.
- By the end of the 1970s, this war had resulted in the deaths of thousands of Filipinos, and many had become refugees. Excesses committed by the Philippine military units sent to fight the Muslim rebels did not endear Manila to the population in the south.
- In 1976, the MNLF was able to force the Manila government to sign an agreement in Tripoli in which the government agreed to grant the Muslim Filipinos an autonomous region, and a ceasefire was proclaimed.
- This proved to be short-lived because both sides accused each other of bad faith. In particular, the Manila government appeared to have undermined the agreement regarding autonomy by holding plebiscites in the areas of the proposed autonomous region. Conflict resumed in 1977.

4.8 The end of the Marcos regime

- The authoritarian government of Marcos' political structure seemed to be impregnable and beyond challenge. Even when martial law was lifted in 1981, that facade of power remained. All proclamations and orders issued under martial law continued in force. It was therefore a significant event when, in **February 1986**, a hitherto unknown homemaker, albeit the wife of the slain Senator Benigno Aquino, was able to topple Marcos in a peaceful 'revolution'.
- Certain mistakes and failures sealed his fate.
 - The inability of Marcos to even achieve the official reasons for declaring martial law was particularly damning.
 - The NPA revolt was barely being defeated, and pointed to the danger of the extension of communist influence¹⁶. This was unsettling for the United States, which refused to support Marcos wholeheartedly owing to the controversial nature of Marcos' rule.
 - The Catholic Church was also outspoken. While it supported Marcos' contention that the NPA posed a threat to security and endorsed attempts

¹⁶ In 1985, the Defense Ministry revealed that the NPA had been growing annually at the rate of 23% since 1981 and stands at official strength of 20,000. They had even set up their own government in parts of Mindanao and Negros.

to combat corruption and to restrict the illegal use of firearms, it felt that the implementation of martial law was immoral. It soon began to condemn the abuses of the New Society and in fact publicly proclaimed its withdrawal of support from Marcos.

- Marcos was also widely known to be manipulating the economy to his own benefit, through a practice called 'crony capitalism'. Most of his economic reforms made him exceedingly wealthy through corruption, and little of the profits reached the state, even as the economic plans themselves started to fail.
- Finally, the last straw came when Marcos allegedly assassinated an opposition politician, Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983, who had been the fiercest critic of martial law.
 - In 1983, he was shot at Manila airport when he returned from the USA after getting medical treatment for a heart condition, possibly aggravated by his treatment in prison after Marcos arrested him.
 - Immediately, suspicion fell upon Marcos for murdering Benigno Aquino, although the assassin was immediately shot and killed himself (it has been claimed that the extrajudicial execution of the assassin itself was proof of Marcos' guilt, to prevent the assassin from revealing Marcos' involvement at the trial that would follow Aquino's death).

4.9 Marcos' downfall

- The outrage at Aquino's death was so great that his widow, Corazon Aquino, mobilised a mass political movement against Marcos.
- In a gamble to regain some political legitimacy, and secure continued US support for his regime, Marcos announced that a "snap" presidential election would be held in February 1986, a year before his term was to expire.
 - Marcos fully expected to win the election, considering his well-oiled political machine and the divided nature of the opposition.
 - But Cardinal Sin arranged an opposition alliance, convincing Corazon Aquino to run for president and Salvador Laurel to run for vice president. Aquino by now has emerged as the national symbol of opposition to the authoritarian Marcos regime.
- The final tally of the National Movement for Free Elections, an accredited poll watcher, showed Aquino winning by almost 800,000 votes. However, the government tally showed Marcos winning by almost 1.6 million votes.
 - This appearance of blatant fraud by Marcos led the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and the United States Senate to condemn the elections claiming

the election had been “a fraud unparalleled in history” and that it was “fatally flawed”. Marcos’s claim of victory rang hollow.

- **Turning point:** On February 22, two of Marcos’s key military supporters publicly turned against him.
 - Secretary of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile and Deputy Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos staged a military mutiny, seizing two vital military installations in Manila, and pledged support to Aquino.
 - This mutiny presented Marcos with an immediate challenge that his armed forces chief of staff, General Ver, wanted to meet with decisive force.
 - In a radio broadcast, Cardinal Sin summoned the Philippine people into the streets to block General Ver’s tanks.
 - Within 24 hours, thousands of civilians flocked into the streets and eventually over a million Filipinos formed a human barricade on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA), the main boulevard between the two military bases.
 - Marcos’s troops lacked either the brutality or the political will to attack unarmed civilians, and they were effectively immobilised by the strong show of what Filipinos called “people power”, which had accomplished a spectacular, bloodless revolution.
 - It was then called the **EDSA Revolution** (also known as the People Power Revolution).
- Marcos and his family were driven into exile and fled the Philippines for Hawaii on February 26 and Aquino was installed as the next president.
- Unfortunately for the Philippines, Marcos then fled with untold billions of dollars, which the Philippine state has sought to recover to the present day.

4.10 Analysis of Marcos regime

- The problem behind Marcos’ reign was that he removed structures and institutions of control, without creating new ones. In contrast, Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore and even Suharto of Indonesia developed effective structures.
 - He succeeded in establishing himself in power and getting rid of rivals, but at the cost of rule of law.
 - He also failed to crush the insurgencies even with martial law, which was itself brutalising the people. He had failed to improve the lives of the people, and rampant corruption was highly visible.
- However, the political structure that had emerged to remove Marcos had been, fatally for it, a spontaneous one. A virtual ‘Parliament of the Streets’, after it immobilised the government and toppled its leader it then disappeared as soon as its objective was attained.

- Although Corazon Aquino rode to power on the back of this Parliament of the Streets, she no longer relied on it when she, in her turn as President, faced political challenges from the military.
- Of all the SEA states, Authoritarian Government was most clearly on the retreat in the Philippines from the 1980s, and indicated a return to the old days of pluralistic political structures.
 - Corazon (1986-92) introduced a new democratic constitution abolished by Marcos in 1973. It allowed only 6-yr term presidency & an elected president was not eligible for re-election.

4.11 The Restoration of Liberal Democracy, 1986 onwards

- Leaders after Marcos sought to restore liberal democracy in the Philippines, solve its problems and create growth. However, up to 2000 their performance was mixed, since the reasons for the problems faced were so deeply set in the structure of the state.
- To a significant extent, Philippine-style liberal democracy was restored, and the military de-politicised after a long period of unrest. The threat from Communism was also finally ended, although this coincided with the global decline of Communism in general. Also, there still remain armed Communist groups in the Philippines today, indicating that the factors that made Communism attractive are still prevalent.
- However, the economy remained underperforming, corruption and cronyism rampant, a society sharply divided along economic and familial lines, the political elite still jockeying amongst themselves for power, and the southern Muslims still bent on separation, with an increasing willingness to use violence among these last two groups.
- As demonstrated by Estrada's rise to power, Philippine success remained based on personal popularity of leaders, reinforced with corruption and the use of force, than on rule of law.

4.12 Limited reforms under Corazon Aquino (1986-1992)

- Corazon Aquino moved to restore civil liberties and write a new constitution.
 - However, she left the underlying structures of Filipino politics intact.
 - The 1987 Constitution, in response to fears of individuals consolidating their power, ensured that presidents could only stay in power for a single six-year term.
 - Moreover, the President could only be elected independently of the Vice-President and this served as another layer of check.

- In addition, **there were term limits of three three-year terms** for other positions.
- In an effort to reduce the power of the elites, **a multi-party system was developed with the Nacionalista and Liberal parties joined by other parties.**
 - However, **connected elites dominated the political scene and political dynasties persisted.**
 - Politicians associated with Marcos regained their offices at both national and local levels after **1987**. Aquino endorsed Fidel Ramos - a Marcos ally who had turned on him in 1986 - when he contested the presidential elections in **1992**. In the same **1992 Presidential elections**, political patronage was evident because:
 - Ramos' opponent, Joseph Estrada - who later won the 1998 elections despite losing the 1992 one to Ramos - was endorsed by Eduardo Cojuangco, a close ally of Marcos and estranged cousin of Corazon Aquino.
- Aquino moved to **depoliticise the military**, such that the military would no longer act on its own but together with the government agencies when taking on developmental projects.
 - In a **1987** military seminar, the military stated its purpose to revert to its three-fold function as outlined in the 1935 Constitution which **limited its role to external defence; internal security against rebellion, sedition, and subversion; and the maintenance of law and order through the police and constabulary forces.**
- The early years of Aquino's presidency were marked by instability as **elite disunity persisted.**
 - Although Aquino, Enrile and Marcos had worked together to depose Marcos, Enrile opposed Aquino once she became President.
 - Simultaneously, **Aquino had to deal with a series of Marcos-instigated military coups against her from 1986 to 1989.**
 - The **New People's** Army continued to stir up unrest.
 - Aquino later lost the trust of the military due to her dealings with the communists and investigations into human rights abuses during her rule.
- The varied interests of different groups, as well as Aquino's reliance on them for support, slowed down her attempts to reform the political system.
 - In order to remain a transitional President, **she was forced to scale back on her reforms to ensure the perpetuation of the democratic system.**
 - She was forced to allow the very people whom had initially removed from power to contest the 1987 elections and win seats.
 - She halted land reforms and the abolition of trade monopolies, while appointing Fidel Ramos as the commander of the armed forces.

- She ceased negotiating with the Communists, and allowed the military to continue their fight against them.

4.13 The persistence of patron-client politics under Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada (1992-2000)

- Fidel Ramos restored the privileges of many of Marcos' cronies, ensuring that the elites would not work against the government as they had against Aquino.
 - He tended to employ the practice of pork-barrelling, that involved distributing gains for political support, in order to secure the passage of important bills in Parliament.
 - It was estimated that about **40% of the state funds** dedicated to infrastructural projects under Ramos was in excess of actual projects and ended up with Congressmen instead.
- Political dynasties persisted as seen in how in **1994**, virtually all members of the Senate had multiple relatives in elective and appointive government positions.
- Despite Ramos' wish to change the Constitution to stand for re-election in the 1998 elections, he ran into determined opposition from Aquino and Cardinal Sin.
 - The Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution could not be amended simply by mobilising popular support.
 - This was possibly an indication of the increasing commitment to democratic norms among state institutions, even if leaders persisted in their old habits of patron-client relationships.
- In **1998**, Joseph Estrada succeeded Ramos on the back of a series of populist promises. As a famous movie star, he was able to exert his influence while commenting rather vaguely on policy matters.
- Estrada continued the tradition of pork-barrelling, guaranteeing support for his clients, and protecting his patrons:
 - The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCCG) negotiated a deal allowing the Marcos family to retain much of the **US\$13 billion** that had been usurped under his watch.
 - There were suspicions that this favourable settlement had come about in return for the support of Marcos' family for Estrada's campaign.
 - Estrada pressured the head of the Philippine Stock Exchange to exonerate Dante Tan for stock manipulation. Dante Tan had been accused of misappropriating US\$9 million meant for the poor.

5. Case Study 5: The Federation of Malaya / Malaysia

5.1 Overview of Case Study

This case study provides one example of authoritarian government during the period 1969-1971 and how democracy has been modified after 1971.

i) *Effectiveness of authoritarian governments: Malaysia would be used as a case study to show how even democratic governments need to adopt characteristics of authoritarian governments during times of national crisis, hence suggesting that authoritarian government was necessary to maintain order and stability. However, with the resumption of Parliament in 1971, democratic practices continued, albeit with some permanent modifications to the Malaysian political structure such as the NEP and the Sedition Act.*

ii) *Return to Phase III – democratic practices*

This is another relevant case study to show SEA countries can revert back to democracy, albeit modified, even after decades of authoritarian government, hence showing the resilience of democracy in Malaysia.

<i>Ability to harness traditional institutions</i>	<i>A positive case study in the short term as the government was able to co-opt leaders of the Islamic groups. However in the late 1970s, Islamic influence grew and posed a threat to the government's consolidation of power.</i>
<i>Ability to maintain order and stability</i>	<i>A positive case study- communism did not pose a political threat by the late 1970s and use of Internal Security Act to arrest dissidents.</i> <i>There are no popular protests ever since the May 13 Racial Riots in 1969.</i>
<i>Ability to promote constitutional forms and practices</i>	<i>A positive case study, in which the Barisan Nasional managed to consolidate and maintain its hold on power through regular elections. However, tensions among racial groups and within UMNO continued to surface in Malaysian politics.</i>
<i>Ability to promote socio-economic development</i>	<i>Another positive case study with NEP's provision of economic opportunities to the Bumiputras, albeit institutionalizing racial differences.</i>

iii) *Factors contributing to the consolidation of power in authoritarian governments: Not relevant because Malaysia only experienced a very short period of authoritarian government.*

5.2 A chronological overview of the political transitions over time:

- **1957:** Malaya gains independence from the British
- **1957-1970:** Tunku Abdul Rahman
- **1963:** Singapore merges with the Federation of Malaya, Sarawak, North Borneo (Sabah) to form Malaysia on 16 September.
- **1964:** Racial riots occurred in Singapore, a contributing factor to Singapore's eventual expulsion from Malaysia.
- **1965:** Singapore is officially separated from Malaysia.
- **1969:** Communal politics contributes to the 13 May racial riots.
- **1969-1971:** The National Operations Council (NOC) rules Malaysia and parliamentary elections are suspended during this period.
- **1970-1976:** Tun Abdul Razak Hussein
- **1976-1981:** Hussein Onn
- **1981-2000:** Mahathir Mohammad

5.3 Authoritarian Government phase (1969-1971)

- The racial riots of 1969 in Malaysia provided the occasion for a drastic overhaul of the political structures in that country. When Parliament was suspended at the outbreak of the riots, a **National Operations Council**, chaired by the deputy Prime Minister, **Tun Abdul Razak**, was formed to take its place.
 - The council had branches at the state level, and its **membership included the armed forces**. The military's relationship with the cabinet was not clear but none of its decisions was ever over-ruled.
 - The Tunku came under heavy criticism and in an ensuing UMNO power struggle, he resigned as PM in 1970 and as UMNO President in 1971. With his resignation, the government came to be dominated by Malay ultras.
- The NOC's principal contribution was the establishment of a **National Consultative Council** in January 1970 to **examine the ethnic, political, economic and cultural problems affecting national unity**.
 - Its sixty-seven members included representatives from the trade unions, professionals, religious bodies and most political parties, but it was boycotted by the Democratic Action Party and the leftwing Partai Sosialis Rakyat.
 - It was **intended as a forum for the government** and other groups to **discuss communal problems while parliament was suspended**.
 - Its deliberations resulted in the far-reaching decision **to ban public (and parliamentary) discussion on:**
 - The **special position of the Malays** and other indigenous groups.

- The use of Malay as the national language.
- The citizenship rights of any ethnic group.
- The position of the Malay rulers.
- o These articles were later passed by the Parliament and became known as the **Constitutional Amendments and Sedition Act** in February 1971.
- Once this was finalised, a definitive political structure was implemented for Malaysia.
 - o Parliament – now significantly reduced in legislative authority – was reconvened in 1971 as the nation's supreme law-making body.
 - o The National Operations Council was renamed the National Security Council, dealing mainly with security (principally communist) affairs.
 - o The armed forces returned to their strictly military role.
 - o The National Consultative Council was retained to discuss communal issues which parliament could not consider.
 - o A Department of National Unity was also set up to formulate a national ideology, called **Rukunegara**¹⁷, modelled after and similar to Indonesia's Pancasila, to serve as a focus for the multi-ethnic population.
 - o One of the most important results of the riot was the launching of the **New Economic Policy** to eradicate poverty among all races and to eliminate the identification of race with occupation.

5.4 The New Economic Policy, 1971

- The NEP was an ambitious and controversial socio-economic restructuring affirmative action program launched by the Malaysian government in 1971. It ended in 1990 and was succeeded by the National Development Policy in 1991.
- Although the policy was socio-economic in orientation, it had serious implications for the political structure. **Before 1969, the focus of Malaysia's economic policy was on rural development programmes that aimed at reducing disparities of income between the Malays and the urban Chinese.** It did not create specific policies to assist the Malays, however.
- After the inauguration of the New Economic Policy, the objective was transformed so as to concentrate on **the large-scale uplifting of the bumiputra through urbanisation and the creation of a bumiputra middle class.**

¹⁷ Malaysia's national ideology, the **Rukunegara**, ('National Principles') was formulated with the purpose to serve as a guideline in the country's nation-building efforts. The Rukunegara was proclaimed on August 31, 1970 by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong IV and is the **de facto Malaysian pledge of allegiance**. It was inspired by Indonesia's Panca Sila and is also based on five guiding principles.

- It immediately aroused the suspicion of the non-Malay middle class which was established through the colonial economic system.
- The strengthening of the bumiputra middle class undermined the support previously given to the Alliance by the non-Malays.
- The emergent Malay middle class was wholly dependent on the government for its continued growth.
- Evaluation of the NEP:
 - Although the NEP was hailed in some quarters as having reduced the socio-economic disparity between the Chinese minority and Malay majority, others accused it of having reduced non-Malays to the status of second-class citizens by cementing ketuanan Melayu (Malay supremacy).
 - The NEP is often invoked as part of the Malay Agenda, which is in turn part of the Malaysian social contract granting Malays special rights in return for non-Malay citizenship.
 - The NEP's success is a subject of heated debate. The NEP targeted a 30% share of the economy for the Bumiputra, but according to official government statistics, the NEP did not succeed in reaching this target.
- Although the policy ended officially in 1990, Malaysians often refer to the NEP in the present tense because many of the tangible economic benefits it offered the Bumiputra are ongoing.
- **Impact of the NEP on Malaysian politics:** *"The NEP led to various changes in the state's functions which created enormous concentration of power in the hand of the government. A partnership was formed between government and business and various forms of monopolies were created as a result. As the UMNO came to dominate the government, it became a means for the accumulation of wealth. This combination of political and economic patronage naturally created numerous conflict-of-interest situations. Money politics has now become the norm. After 20 years of the NEP, significant Malay groups, particularly those from UMNO as well as from the aristocracy, have acquired substantial corporate wealth while the majority of the Malays continue to remain on the economic periphery. As for the problem of racial polarization, the NEP, far from solving it, has intensified it by institutionalizing the racial difference through the bumiputra-non bumiputra dichotomy."*
- Thus, Malaysia paved the way for a society where Malays were given special economic privileges despite other Chinese & Indian ethnic minorities. The Malaysian political system has been designated as **racial socialism** → from multi-racialism to Malay-dominated polity. This mode of governance was key to Malaysia's ability to keep ethnic and societal peace in a plural society.

5.5 The restoration of parliamentary rule and assertion of Malay dominance (1971)

- The 1969 elections had exposed Malay fears of the erosion of their rights and this led to a **reassertion of Malay dominance**.
- The **1971 Constitution** banned discussion on sensitive issues such as the rights of Malays and other communities.
 - In addition, the **1971 Constitution Bill** ensured the entrenchment of Malay rights. The Bill branded any challenges to the constitution, especially to Malay rights as seditious.
 - Politically, this had the effect of **reducing the number of issues that the opposition could discuss**.
 - **Analysis:** Thus, the reopening of Parliament in 1971 also marked the **tightening of political control under UMNO**.
- While **elections were held regularly from 1972** - federal elections were held in 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990, 1995 and 1999 - they **were heavily weighted against the opposition**.
 - There was a **short period of electoral campaigning, and opposition parties were not allowed to hold open air rallies**.
 - **Barisan Nasional ministers** were, however, **allowed to hold mass rallies under the guise of delivering official addresses**.
- The **restoration of parliamentary rule in 1972** was a surprising indicator of the **strength of the parliamentary system**.
 - This ensured that the primacy of parliament was unchallenged, and that the **military would not emerge as competitor for state power**.
 - In contrast, **other countries in the region had used episodes of unrest to justify stronger military presence, and military rule**.

5.6 The formation of the **Barisan Nasional** (1973)

- In recognising the **failure of the Alliance formula**, UMNO sought to **broaden the basis of political support** through the **creation of a grand coalition** with most other political elites, with the notable exception of the Democratic Action Party
- In **June 1974**, the **Barisan Nasional** that had been formed in 1973 was **registered as a coalition of nine parties**.
- The purposes of the replacing the Alliance with Barisan Nasional and expanding the coalition among political groups **was to reduce political opposition, increase the non-Malay support base and boost the role of UMNO in the coalition**.
- To avoid alienating the Islamic community, **UMNO promoted Islam at the national level and co-opted leaders of the Islamic groups**.

Paper 2: Developments in Southeast Asia (Independence – 2000)
Theme I: Forming Nation-States – Establishing Political Structures and Legitimacy

- The most prominent leader then was **Anwar Ibrahim** from the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, one of the most active Islamic organisations in the 1970s.
- This demonstrated **UMNO's ideological flexibility** which enabled the party to consolidate power amidst the various ethnic tensions.
- During the rule of the Barisan Nasional, **the press was increasingly muzzled** as UMNO either directly or indirectly influenced the major daily publications.
 - In addition, **the 1975 Amendment to the Universities and Colleges Act** prevented students from participating in political activities while the **Amendments to the Societies Act** curbed freedom of association.
- Despite formal elections, the **dominance of Barisan Nasional** severely constrained political competition.
 - The most dangerous challenge to political stability therefore arose from **within UMNO** in **1987** and **1988**.
 - These two episodes reflected the **significance of Malay unity to consolidate power**, in a political system based on Malay rights and directed by a Malay party, UMNO.

Malaysia's Prime Ministers (post-1971)	Achievements
Abdul Razak Hussein (1970-6)	He was the Prime Minister that replaced Tunku Abdul Rahman. Razak enacted the reforms as described above, his slogan being to generate Ketahanan Nasional (national strength) through political order and stability.
Hussein Onn (1976-81)	Hussein sought to generate unity, but he focused on unity through policies aimed at rectifying economic imbalances between the communal groups, so much as that he became known as Bapa Perpaduan (or 'Father of Unity').
Mahathir bin Mohamad (1981-2003)	Mahathir first came to prominence as a critic of Abdul Rahman. In the wake of the May 13 Racial Riot in 1969, he wrote a letter to the Tunku, then still Prime Minister, criticising him for neglecting the Malay community. He was sacked in 1969 for his views, and Mahathir wrote an influential book describing what he called the Malay lack of economic progress in their own country. He proposed several ideas that were in fact incorporated by the New Economic Policy.

	<p>As Prime Minister, he led Malaysia to being an economic power in its own right, and generated a lot of wealth, with the usual accompanying accusations of corruption however. Some of his grand projects, constructed to enhance national pride, included the world's tallest building, the Petronas Towers, and the transformation of a palm oil plantation near the capital into the world's first "Multimedia Super Corridor" intended to rival California's Silicon Valley.</p> <p>He also became a fierce critic of the West, and he gained an international following for his outspoken views.</p> <p>Under Mahathir's leadership Barisan Nasional also won subsequent elections throughout the 1980s. In the 1990 elections, Barisan Nasional had less of a lead although it remained politically dominant in the 1990s, losing Kelantan to PAS, the first state to be run by an opposition party.</p>
--	--

5.7 Delving deeper into the structures of Malaysian politics

- In later years various other political structures began to assume greater importance. One of these was the institution of the monarchy and the sultans in each state. The Malaysian king and his colleagues in the states occupied largely ceremonial positions.
 - In 1981, with Mahathir bin Mohamad as Prime Minister, things changed. Mahathir was the son of a commoner. He believed that there should be less emphasis on a feudal style of government which stressed loyalty, and that more attention should be paid to ability, skill and achievement.
 - Friction soon appeared between the state rulers and the elected government. In 1983, constitutional amendments were submitted to reduce the powers of the king.
- Another mention must be made of more populist political structures.
 - Communism, though significant in its own right before 1960, failed to strike roots in Malaysia because it failed to overcome obstacles like Malay nationalism and communalism.
 - In 1975 and early 1976, after a period of inactivity, there were reports of selective assassinations by communist hit squads in urban areas.
 - But these ended in 1976, and guerrilla warfare also appeared to be on the decline. The MCP itself had split in 1970 and 1974, and by 1976 the three

factions that were left **were contending among themselves** as much as against the government.

- The **late 1970s and the early 1980s were also years of active *Dakwah* movements by Muslims to intensify the spread and practice of Islam.**
 - Various pressure groups also **provided alternative centres of focus**, e.g. the Aliran Kesedaran Negara (National Consciousness Movement), ABIM (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement), and the Consumers' Association of Penang.
 - They became well known because of their outspoken comments on government policies, and **became popular among the Ultras and those who felt Barisan Nasional was not doing enough for the Malays.**
 - **From the 1990s, Islamic influence was getting stronger** in Malaysia, and increasingly the Malay and Islamic identities have been merging.
 - A RAND (Research AND Development) Report noted that: "*Islamic influence is growing in virtually every corner of Malaysian society. The merging of Islamic and Malay identifies in the last three decades had visibly changed Malaysian society. In particular, religion may replace ethnicity as the primary force in shaping national policy debates.*"

5.8 Mahathir versus Musa Hitam/Razaleigh Hamzah (1987)

- In **1987**, an internal challenge from Musa Hitam and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah led to an open split within UMNO, Mahathir narrowly won the internal election.
 - However, subsequent reprisals from **Mahathir through Operation Lalang** led to a further tightening of control over political opposition and civil society.
 - The **Internal Security Act was invoked to arrest over 100 people**, including politicians and leaders of dissident groups.
 - **In 1988, Mahathir sacked the judge responsible for organising the appeal of the Razaleigh-Musa challenge.** Subsequently, he appointed new judges that were more sympathetic to Mahathir's causes and this effectively neutered the independence of the judiciary.
- Tengku Razaleigh **Hamzah left UMNO to start an opposition party, Semangat '46 (Spirit of 46 Malay Party)**, its name alluded to the founding of UMNO in 1946 and implied a harkening back to a time when UMNO was stronger than it now was under Mahathir.
 - However, **over time, Semangat '46 lost its influence.**

5.9 Mahathir versus Anwar Ibrahim (1998)

- In 1998, a more serious split than the one that occurred in 1987 took place - this time, between Mahathir and his then Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim.
 - This rift shook the foundations of Malaysian politics.
 - Anwar undertook reforms during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis that followed more conventional IMF lines and this threatened the interests of Mahathir's associates such as Daim Zainuddin.
 - Essentially, Anwar's actions directly challenged Mahathir's policy of promoting a small group of Malaysian entrepreneurs through the privatisation of state assets.
 - Anwar was sacked from all his political posts and later arrested on alleged charges of sodomy.
- Anwar's arrest in 1998 led to an immediate upsurge in public support for him.
 - Protests and support for his Reformasi Movement gained momentum as protesters called for his release and Mahathir's resignation.
 - On 24 October, the protests turned violent as police and demonstrators clashed in the streets of Kuala Lumpur.
- The anti-Mahathir movement led to the development of a new coalition Barisan Alternatif which comprised the opposition parties People's Justice Party (KEADILAN) that was led by Anwar's wife, PAS, DAP, and Parti Rakyat Malaysia.
 - Anwar supporters from within UMNO left the party for KEADILAN.
 - In the 1999 elections, Barisan Nasional only held on to its two-thirds against Barisan Alternatif because of Chinese and Indian support.
- The entire episode of UMNO's split exposed the cronyistic practices within the government and resulted in the loss of Malay support for the party.
 - Malay and UMNO disunity had become a significant source of political instability in Malaysian politics.

The case studies that did not undergo Phase 1

6. Case Study 5: Singapore

6.1 Overview of Case Study

This section refers to the countries that did not experience party-based politics in a democratic setting from the beginning. Singapore belongs to this category because from the beginning, PAP had dominated all parliamentary seats from 1968, hence effectively a "one-party state".

i) Effectiveness of semi-democratic governments

Ability to harness traditional institutions	A positive case study, in which PAP sought to depoliticise religious groups, forestalling them from posing a threat to the consolidation of power
Ability to maintain order and stability	A positive case study, with how the PAP used the ISA to diminish the power of the leftist Barisan Socialis. There are no popular protests for this case study, the most would be the decline in popular votes for the PAP in the 1980s.
Ability to promote constitutional forms and practices	A positive case study, in which PAP managed to consolidate and maintain its hold on power through regular elections. At the same time, PAP was also committed to political reforms to open up political space, allowing for opposition parties to win seats in parliament. Case studies include the GRC scheme and Elected Presidency Scheme.
Ability to promote socio-economic development	Another positive case study.

ii) Return to Phase III – democratic practices

In the case of Singapore, democratic practices have consistently been used alongside more repressive measures; both come hand in hand.

iii) Factors contributing to the consolidation of power in semi-democratic governments: Again a positive case study for the factors.

6.2 Semi-Democratic Government since 1959: One-party rule

- **Background knowledge:** Partial self-rule 1955-59
 - From 1955, Socialist parties had overwhelmingly overtaken the old right-wing, pro-British parties, like the Singapore Progressive Party which led Singapore since 1948.
 - Between 1955-59, the PAP challenged the leadership of David Marshall's Singapore Labour Front, by exploiting the popularity of the more radical Socialist members of the PAP to gain the people's trust.
 - In 1959, the British were encouraged by the Labour Front's tough stance in the Hock Lee Bus riots, and allowed them full self-rule over Singapore.
 - This ironically led to Labour Front losing the 1959 elections to the PAP, as the Hock Lee Bus riots had made the Labour Front look anti-Singaporean and pro-British.
 - In the 1959 elections, the PAP won its first general elections with 43 of the 51 seats.
 - Lee Kuan Yew became the first Prime Minister of the self-governing state of Singapore and Toh Chin Chye was the deputy Prime Minister.
- Full self-rule¹⁸ 1959-65
 - The PAP created many plans during this time that were cornerstones for Singapore's future success, like the Central Provident Fund, the Housing Development Board and the Jurong Town Corporation.
 - However, even before Singapore became independent in 1965, Singapore had already decided to opt for **tough, paternalistic, monolithic, no-nonsense semi-democratic government**, in order to deal with various threats facing Singapore. There were clear indications of the political hazards Singapore faced.
 - The **very open politics of 1946-8**, when all political parties could operate, including the Communists, and hence allow strikes and demonstrations to take place had been a chaotic period.
 - Lee Kuan Yew's own exploitation of the **Left-Wing PAP**, which allowed him to capitalise on Labour Front's political misstep in the Hock Lee Bus riots and influence the people against them, persuaded him to secure his party from similar threats.
 - A **very politicised student body**, which had rioted several times, such as the Hock Lee Bus riots, and against the British announcement of

¹⁸ Full self-rule refers to a situation where the local government had full control over local affairs, with defence and foreign affairs still controlled by the British. It is the last stage before complete independence.

National Service in 1954 demonstrated that the tendency to take up radicalism and violence was a very real threat.

- The impact of the politics of merger and separation (1963-1965)
 - The period of Singapore's merger with Malaysia from **1963-1965** was marred by mutual suspicion and acrimony between the Singapore and Federal governments over political representation, economic concessions, and communal problems.
 - Following the **July 1964 racial riots**, racial tensions reached such levels that Tunku deemed it better to expel Singapore from Malaysia.

6.3 Semi-democratic rule under a single dominant party (1965-2000¹⁹)

- It is plausible that the authoritarianism which emerged from 1965 was a response to the **pressing priority of ensuring Singapore's survival** after its separation from Malaysia.
 - From the government's perspective at the point of independence, the prevailing conditions Singapore faced at that juncture necessitated measures that ensured a high degree of political order and stability to facilitate economic development and ensure survival of the country.
- In view of the PAP's assessment of **the imperatives of survival, the government moved to depoliticise the populace** - it did so successfully and this enabled it to then focus on economic endeavours.
- **Since 1965 the People's Action Party (PAP) has dominated the political scene** & has controlled the parliament as its leader (Lee Kuan Yew until 1990) acted as majority leader in the parliament & as PM.
 - The ruling **PAP captured all seats of the parliament in the 1968, 1972, 1976 and 1980 elections.**
 - **Analysis:** Singapore can be seen to be a **single-party state**

6.4 Constitutional processes and elections after independence

- Similar to the situation in Malaysia where free elections were held regularly, the elections can be considered to be **procedurally fair**.
 - Unlike other countries in the region, there are **few restrictions in Singapore against the formation of political parties.**
 - There have been **no explicit rules to prevent political opposition** from organising within the political parameters defined by the government.
- **At the same time, measures such as the gerrymandering of political boundaries** was commonplace and invited criticisms from observers who deemed such moves as

¹⁹ The PAP's rule continued beyond this; 2000 denotes the end of our syllabus time frame.

less than democratic practices aimed at consolidating the power of the incumbent government.

- Gerrymandering of political boundaries often involved incorporating opposition strongholds into pro-PAP electorates.
 - After two fiercely contested elections in 1988 and 1991, Eunos GRC was subsequently absorbed by surrounding GRCs. This also happened to Cheng San GRC after a close fight in the 1997 elections.
- The government also enacted legislations to regulate inter-racial sensitivities and in doing so, it consolidated power by addressing issues pertinent to social stability. These included:
 - **Article 89** of the **Constitution** that highlights the special position of Malays.
 - The **1990 Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act** that forbids religious groups from interfering with politics.
 - In depoliticising religious groups, the government has managed to remove one potential threat to political stability.
 - The **Sedition Act** that gives Parliament the right to impose restrictions on an individual's freedom of speech in the interest of public order.
- Schemes such as the **Non-Constituency Member of Parliament Scheme (1984)** and the **Nominated Member of Parliament Scheme (1990)** sought to bring alternative voices into parliament even as it remained dominated by the PAP.
- The **Group Representation Constituencies (1988)** was another political mechanism that mandated at least one minority to be fielded within a three- to five-member team.
 - This ensured that there would be a minimum no. of representatives in parliament from each minority grp.
 - The GRC scheme was duly adopted in the amended constitution and in this way, **multi-racialism was legislated into the political structure.**
 - At the same time, this could also be construed as **a step towards the further development of authoritarian government**, as only the stronger parties could fulfill the conditions of fielding at least 3 candidates on a single slate.
- Overall, these political mechanisms constituted state-sponsored avenues for diverse voices and these, in turn, reduced the need for formal opposition that would undermine the authority of the PAP.

6.5 Lee Kuan Yew

- A brilliant Cambridge-educated lawyer, Lee built a Socialist-oriented political movement that successfully navigated the murky waters of communal and class politics in the 1950s, smoothed the transition to an unlikely independence in 1965 and served as Singapore's PM for some 30 years.
 - In this capacity, Lee was the architect of Singapore's constitutional system and governing institutions and developed the sophisticated economic strategy that was directly responsible for Singapore's rapid entry into the First World.
- Lee's early struggles with the local communists were a **decisive influence** in shaping his political outlook and political style.
 - He kept Singapore firmly but informally aligned with the US and Britain throughout the Cold War.
 - Internally, he remained convinced that Singapore's **ethnic fragility, its continuing vulnerability to the appeal of communism** (esp to the dominant Chinese community) and the **political inexperience of its elites** required a **more interventionist and paternalistic approach to governance** than that prevailed in the West.
- After independence in 1965, Lee began a program of action to ensure that the dissent that characterised the 1950s would not be repeated. In the end, the measures adopted were so thorough that Singapore as a whole resembled a **monolithic political structure** in support of Lee's leadership.
- Lee's use of **the Internal Security Act**²⁰ to nip in the bud **dangerous sources of opposition that would undermine the existing political structure** was also chillingly effective.
 - **Operation Coldstore (1963)**: A **crackdown against Barisan Socialist**²¹ **leaders** and their supporters. Under this action, 107 people including political, trade unionists and student leaders who had shown support for the Brunei Revolt were detained. Among those detainees, half of them were Barisan central leaders. Operation Coldstore severely diminished the strength of the Barisan and prevented the party from effectively taking part in the 1963 general elections. The party was eventually defeated in the elections.
- Lee's own leadership and no-nonsense style of governance gave the structure an effectiveness that would not be possible under another kind of leadership.

²⁰ The ISA was originally enacted by the Parliament of Malaysia in 1960 and extended to Singapore in 1963 when Singapore became a state of the Federation of Malaysia.

²¹ Formed by left-wing members of the PAP who were expelled from the Party in 1961. After the split, 35 branch committees out of 51 and 19 of 23 secretaries of the PAP went over to the Barisan.

- In an interview with the International Herald Tribune, Lee had this to say about decisiveness: *"If you like good, you've got to oppose bad. If you want honesty, you fight and kill corruption. If you want men with principles, you must destroy men without principles. There are no half-way houses."*
- Lee's education in law and early exposure to the values and procedures of parliamentary in the English mode helped **formed a political culture that is profoundly attached to the rule of law and is also singularly immune to the cronyism and corruption** that is endemic in most of post-independence SEA governments.
- Lee's political style was unpretentious, egalitarian and collegial and yet he was an unapologetic elitist. In fact Lee himself said that *"the single decisive factor that made Singapore's development was the ability of its ministers and the high quality of civil servants who supported them."*

6.6 Responses to political challenges and opposition after independence

- Lee Kuan Yew played a pivotal role in creating a political system that allowed Singapore's government to deal effectively with the prevailing conditions of political and economic uncertainty in 1965.
 - He discarded the socialist ideal he previously held for Malaya and adopted **pragmatism as a fundamental tenet** that drove Singapore's growth and stability.
 - By exercising a high degree of control over the space and agenda for public discussion, the government was able to deal effectively with political threats and focus on Singapore's economic development.
- In line with the idea that no government is wholly liberal or authoritarian, it should be unsurprising then that Singapore has **used a combination of coercive and non-coercive measures to maintain its power.**
- One of its **non-coercive strategies** involved **co-opting individuals** who could **potentially pose a challenge to the PAP** in the long run. These included:
 - **David Marshall** - given the opportunity to serve as an ambassador to France.
 - **Tommy Koh** - an independent-minded individual brought into the Foreign Service and made the head of the Institute of Policy Studies.
 - **Chan Heng Chee** - a critical academic who was also called upon to start the Institute of Policy Studies and the Singapore International Foundation, followed by a series of ambassadorships.
- Among its more coercive measures, **the Internal Security Act** has helped the PAP to deal with perceived threats to the state.
 - These usually included groups and individuals who threatened the government's agenda for public discourse.

- In 1987, 22 Catholics were arrested in the 'Marxist Conspiracy' for their alleged involvement in an underground communist network.
- In 1988, Francis Seow, the solicitor-general and President of the Law Society was detained under the ISA before elections were held.
 - He had previously disagreed with Lee Kuan Yew and joined the Workers' Party and opposition politics.
 - He subsequently fled into exile.
- The PAP also sought to **dismantle trade unions** in order to depoliticise the populace and reduce the influence of the Barisan Socialis.
 - In 1961, the PAP-supported **National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)** which was an **amalgamation of major trade unions**.
 - Together with the **National Wages Council (NWC)** formed in 1972, the **NTUC kept the labour movement in check** as it relied on negotiations within a **tripartite framework of employers, employees and the government**.
 - Consequently, the PAP was able to move away from the aggressive confrontation between unions and the government that were seen in the 1950s.
 - This contributed to political stability, and the remarkable economic development which provided a source of continued legitimacy for the PAP.
 - Thus, by 1972, the trade unions assumed a role within the political structure in which industrial relations were not the only concern.
- To insulate Singapore from the racial tensions that had such an adverse impact on the consolidation of power in the earlier years and led to its expulsion from Malaysia in 1965, the **PAP carefully managed racial sensitivities**.
 - Mechanisms that facilitated this management included:
 - The **Presidential Council on Minorities (1970)** that ensured bills and laws passed did not discriminate against any racial or religious community.
 - The **Housing Development Board (HDB) ethnic quota under the Ethnic Integration Policy (1989)** that stipulated the ethnic composition with public housing in order to facilitate better socialisation among the different ethnic groups.
 - The PAP's **deft handling of racial relations minimised the propensity for racial tensions to exert an undesirable force** upon the political stability of Singapore's political arena.
- To provide the government with better control over public discourse, both the local **press and external publications were subject to strict control**.
 - The Singapore Press Holdings **owns all local daily newspaper publications**.

- In **1971**, Lee Kuan Yew detained four members from the Nanyang Siang Pau under the ISA.
- In **1974**, the **Newspaper and Printing Presses Act** banned foreign and private ownership of local publications.
 - Further amendments to the Act in **1986** allowed the government to impose quotas on the circulation of foreign journals. The Asian Wall Street Journal and The Far Eastern Economic Review were among the targets of this 1986 Act.
- The PAP also created **grassroots organisations** to strengthen its position among the people.
 - The earliest institutions were the **Community Centres (CC)** and the **Citizens' Consultative Committees (CCC)**.
 - CC's were formed to combat the communists at the local level and later, with the CCC's, both took up the roles of transmitting government policies and dispensing community services to the people.
 - In **1978**, the **Residents' Committees (RC)** were formed.
 - Over time, these institutions became a **way of garnering support for the PAP and allowing the party to identify new talent**.
 - This contributed to the PAP's political renewal and ability to hold on to power.
- Other ways in which the PAP government directly engaged with the people so as to minimise sources of discontent in the first place include:
 - Members of Parliament conducted weekly **meet-the-people sessions** which provided constituents with the opportunity to voice their problems.
 - MPs were required to chair residents' committees and management committees in community centres.
 - All these links ultimately became more important than the formal structures that were created.
 - **Role of civil service**: Lee regarded the civil service as something to be integrated into the political structure in order to facilitate the achievement of government objectives. The civil service became a vital training ground for future members of parliament on the PAP ticket. The link thus established could not but enhance the role of the civil service within the political structure.

6.7 Role of the military

- The defence of the state was placed in the hands of a citizen military, where males are conscripted to serve – partly this was to ensure the armed forces were of a decent size, and partly to integrate the population by getting the young men of all races to serve together.

- The first decisive moves came after the July 1969 racial riots in KL. Lee ordered the SAF to display their tanks at the August 1969 NDP in a show of force designed to instil confidence that the political structures in Singapore were sufficiently resilient to withstand any external pressure.
- The SAF became an important component of the political structure, with 'bridges' linking them to the civilian segments. The **stress on a citizen army**, total defence and the creation of a conduit by which **high-ranking officers could cross over to participate in national politics** or be seconded to the bureaucracy, all ensured that the **armed forces would have a major role in the political structure but not a dominant one.**

6.8 Decline in popular votes for PAP in 1980s

- **Growing disenchantment with the PAP:**
 - When the **1973 oil crisis** led to a mild recession, the government did little to support Singaporeans through this period. This led to rising resentment and many withdrew their support for the PAP.
 - **Graduate Mothers Scheme (1983):** A highly controversial scheme that sought to promote and increase the marriage and child-bearing of higher-educated women in order to stem the declining birth rate. This created widespread disapproval from the populace as they felt that the PAP was impeding on their individual choice.
- **Loss of PAP monopoly of power (1981):**
 - The PAP's monopoly of parliament ended when it lost the Anson seat in the October 1981 by-election. C. V. Devan Nair had resigned from his Anson ward to become Singapore's third president. Lawyer J. B. Jeyaretnam of the Workers' Party (WP) contested the seat and won with 51.9 percent of the votes.
 - Then in the **1984 general election**, the PAP lost two of the 79 seats and its share of total votes cast fell to 62.9 percent. Chiam See Tong of the Singapore Democratic Party won the Potong Pasir seat for the first time, while Jeyaretnam was returned in Anson.
- During **the 1991 Elections**, PAP votes fell just below 60 percent. Four seats went to two opposition parties – Democratic Party (3) & Workers Party (1), while the PAP had 77 seats.
 - Questions were then raised about the party's ability to continue its political dominance.
 - Goh Chok Tong was seeking a mandate for a more open and consultative style of government.

- On the other hand, opposition parties argued for having more alternative voices in Parliament to check the Government. All the opposition parties agreed to contest just under half of the seats so that citizens could vote for the opposition candidates without fear of unseating the ruling PAP.
- **Analysis:** The decline in overall votes for the PAP can be seen to be an indication of the growing maturing of the Singapore electorate and their growing dissatisfaction at what they perceived to be growing elitism and dominance of the PAP. Opposition groups also started to become more organised and began to grow in influence.

6.9 PAP efforts at political reforms to address decline in votes

- With **Goh Chok Tong replacing Lee Kuan Yew in 1990** as Prime Minister, the period saw a **more consultative style of governance**.
- Goh's willingness to use both coercive and non-coercive measures could be seen as providing the government with an appropriate balance in dealing with challenges. The shift towards a more consultative approach was possibly one of the factors that contributed to the **PAP's ability to regain a wider support base later in the 1990s**:

General Election Year	1980	1984	1988	1991	1997	2001
Share of votes	77.7%	64.8%	63.2%	61%	65%	75.3%

Table 15.3.5a - The PAP's share of votes in general elections from 1980-2001

- As the PAP was increasingly seen as being disconnected from the concerns of the populace due to its economic and political success, the party worked harder to relate to ground concerns. Examples included:
 - The **Singapore 21 Committee** formed in **1997**, tasked with articulating a common vision for Singapore in the 21st century that focused on 'heartware' of the people.
 - Efforts by the government to leverage on the private sector's expertise in policy-making through **government review committees** such as the **Committee on Singapore's Competitiveness of 1997** and the **Financial Sector Review Committee** in **1998**.
- Despite this change in style, the **PAP remained fundamentally committed to the consolidation of power with the party leading it**.
 - The PAP continued to determine the parameters of public discussions using Goh Chok Tong's introduction of **'out of bounds' (OB) markers**.

- The government continued its long-standing stance against any challenge to its control of public discourse.
- As long as groups operated within the confines of the OB markers, they were tolerated e.g., the Association of Muslim Professionals' (AMP) President and Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) ex-President were accepted as NMPs.
- Even as the PAP move away from invoking the ISA to deal with perceived political threats, it **continued to limit political opposition by using legal action.**
 - In **1997**, Tan Liang Hong - a member of the Workers' Party team at Cheng San - was accused of inflaming racial tensions and sued by Goh Chok Tong and Lee Kuan Yew.
 - Other **opposition politicians who faced legal charges included Chee Soon Juan of the Singapore Democratic Party and J. B. Jeyaretnam of the Workers' Party.**
- Where other countries may have failed to meet the changing demands of its populace in the longer run, Singapore's government successfully adapted its political style **as evidenced by Goh Chok Tong's leadership contributing to the PAP regaining its dominance in the 1990s.**
 - By the 1980s, Singapore's economic growth had given rise to new political demands which could no longer be effectively dealt with through the often used mantra that centred on the politics of survival. This necessitated a change in approach – seen in Goh's political style – that saw the PAP going engaging the citizenry in a more consultative manner.
 - In contrast, the region saw leadership in all other countries -except Vietnam - changing hands and even Malaysia saw increasing disunity within UMNO.

7. Case Study 6: Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)

7.1 Overview of Case Study

North Vietnam represents another case study that *did not experience democratic practices from the start*. However, N Vietnam is a very relevant positive example of a communist authoritarian government.

i) Effectiveness of authoritarian governments

Ability to harness traditional institutions	Rather than tapping on religion as a source of legitimacy, North Vietnam's case study is a positive example to demonstrate the <i>ability to subordinate religious groups to the Party, preventing them from amounting to a political threat.</i>
Ability to maintain order and stability	For N Vietnam, they were able to defeat the S Vietnamese and US military, which was even greater challenges than centrifugal threats.
Ability to promote constitutional forms and practices	<p>A positive case study, where even though N Vietnam was communist, it also <i>abided by democratic forms and practices such as a Constitution and National Assembly.</i></p> <p>Other evidence of effectiveness of the N Vietnam government would be the <i>collective leadership</i> as well as peaceful transition of power.</p>
Ability to promote socio-economic development	This would only come after Doi Moi reforms of 1986.

ii) *Factors contributing to the consolidation of power in authoritarian governments: Again a positive case study for the factors.*

7.2 Independence

- On 9 Oct 1954, the French left Vietnam, leaving it as two sovereign states divided along the 17th Parallel according to the Geneva Accords conducted earlier that year by the USSR, China, Britain and France to arrange the independence of the French colonies in SEA.
 - The Geneva Accords also provided for a general election to be held in 1956, but President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam refused to carry this out. The failure to conduct elections also left the separation of North and South Vietnam permanent for the time being.
 - Moreover, the leader of North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, did not accept the terms of the Geneva Accords (he was not even invited to participate in the negotiations, even by his allies in the 1st Indo-Chinese War, the USSR and China), and refused to accept the division of Vietnam.

7.3 The early years in N. Vietnam

- The Vietnamese Communist Party that led Vietnam to nationhood and independence officially disappeared for a time during this period, and its on-and-off appearance reflected the practical needs of the period.
- During the Japanese Occupation in **February 1941**, Ho Chi Minh created a **pan-nationalist organisation that accepted all Vietnamese nationalists regardless of their political affiliations**. This was to create a united front against foreign rule, and the organisation was called **Viet Minh**.
- In **1945**, furthering the universalist approach taken by the Communists, he formally **dissolved the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP)** as the Communists were known at that time, in order to hide its communist affiliation.
 - This was not just to reinforce the united front aspect of Vietnamese nationalism, but also to **attract support from the anti-Communist USA to pressure the French to leave their SEA colonies**.
- The Communist Party was re-founded as the *Đảng lao động Việt Nam* (Vietnam Workers' Party), or **Lao Dong Party**, at the Second National Party Congress in Tuyen Quang in **1951**.
 - It claimed henceforth to be the sole legitimate leader of the proletariat (the working classes of the people) and the sole instrument of its will.
 - It meant that the people had no other figures of leadership in society to look up to, such as religious leaders, and could not form organisations of their own, except those of the Party. **All interests must be subordinated to the Party; even professional military affairs needed to conform to Party ideology**.

- Several key members of the Lao Dong's central committee (Politburo) also doubled as important leaders of the N. Vietnam government and in this way, party beliefs could easily be translated into national politics.
- On **9 Oct 1954**, the French left Vietnam, leaving it as two sovereign states divided **along the 17th Parallel** according to the Geneva Accords conducted earlier that year by the USSR, China, Britain and France to arrange the independence of the French colonies in SEA.
- The Geneva Accords also provided for a general election to be held in **1956**, but the Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam refused to carry this out.
 - The failure to conduct elections also meant the separation of North and South Vietnam continued for the time being.
- However, the leader of North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, did not accept the terms of the Geneva Accords.
 - Ho Chi Minh had not been invited to participate in the negotiations by his allies in the First Indochina War, the USSR and China. Thus, he refused to accept the division of Vietnam.

7.4 The workings of a communist government

- **With the 1959 Constitution**, however, N. Vietnam became purely Communist, with **all other political ideologies banned**. It was similar to the USSR & the People's Republic of China, and led the way to **one-party dictatorship**.
 - The communists had departed from their earlier attempts to disguise the pervasive influence of communism in the country.
- At the helm of the executive branch (the part of the government that ensures that laws are carried out and kept) was the President and his Council of Ministers.
 - **Ho, serving as both President and Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party**, until his death in 1969, enjoyed absolute powers but he **practiced collective leadership** and the principal party leaders were given control over major power bases²².
 - Although Ho remained the towering nationalist leader, there appeared to **be no personality cult** and no attempt by him to adopt a high profile. In fact, as long as matters did not go out of hand, Ho took a back seat.
- **The legislative branch (the part of the government that creates laws) was an "elected" National Assembly**. Its duties included electing officials, including the President. As things turned out, it did not wield much influence. The National

²² Phan Van Dong was given control over the government machinery, Truong Chinh control over the National Assembly, and critically Vo Nguyen Giap over the military. Giap's leadership has been frequently cited as being instrumental in N. Vietnam's victory over the US and S. Vietnam in the 2nd Indo-Chinese War.

Assembly election was held in 1964, but the scheduled 1968 election was postponed because of severe US bombing.

- Members of the government who were not avowed Communists by then (the ex-members of the Viet Minh) were expelled from power.
- The Communist Party stayed in full control of executive, legislative and judicial branches, and filled their seats completely as it was no longer necessary by 1960 to retain the façade of a broad national front.
- Thus N. Vietnam in 1960 emerged as a totalitarian political structure with a dominant president, a disciplined communist party, and also the largest and by far most aggressive army in SEA, bent on defeating its southern neighbor and driving out foreign militaries on Vietnamese soil.
- Theoretically its government can be considered a democratic government, since it was a government formed of the people for the people – anyone could theoretically join the government, regardless of their birth.
 - However, given its extremely centralised and intolerant system, which often made it totalitarian, it was clearly an authoritarian government with very few things liberal about it.
- **Ho's death in 1969** led to a smooth transition in which the **former vice-president Duc Thuong assumed the presidency**, but the National Assembly endorsed a collective leadership.
 - Elections took place in 1971.
 - An aged and sickly Duc Thuong was re-elected president. However, his presidency was largely ceremonial and symbolic, especially when he was a Southerner – an impt qualification in Hanoi's drive for reunification.
 - Ho's powerful position as chairman of the central committee of the Lao Dong Party was left unfulfilled.
 - Real power rested in the hands of a quadrumvirate comprising of Le Duan (First Secretary of the Lao Dong Party), PM **Pham Van Dong**, **Truong Chinh** (Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly) and **Giap** (as Defence Minister).

7.5 **Role of the communist party – the Vietnam Lao Dong (Workers' Party)**

- The **Indochinese Communist Party** (ICP) was formally dissolved in 1945 in order to hide its communist affiliation and its activities were folded into the Marxism Research Association and the Viet Minh (which had been founded 4 years earlier as a common front for national liberation).

- The Party was refounded as the **Vietnam Workers' Party** at the Second National Party Congress in Tuyen Quang²³ in 1951.
 - It then henceforth claimed to be the sole legitimate leader of the proletariat and instrument of the will of the class.
 - All other interests must be subordinated to the party **and even professional military interests and attitudes must conform to party ideology.**
- Several key members of the Lao Dong's central committee also doubled as impt leaders of the North Vietnamese government and in this way, party beliefs could easily be translated into national politics.
- **Internal differences between the Lao Dong:**
 - Sino-Soviet conflict created power struggle between the pro-Chinese wing and pro-Moscow wing.
 - Generational differences between those who had combatant experience in fighting the French and the grp of party bureaucrats who were not combatants in the revolution.

7.6 Role of the army

- According to Marxist theory, the army was the handmaiden of the party in the political structure.
 - Thus, **control over the army by the Lao Dong was exercised by recruiting the commanders as party members.** In fact, **promotions in the military had to be approved by the party.**
 - Also, party cells were organized within the military for surveillance.
- Why the **army remained subordinate to party** in North Vietnam:
 - The **army needed support from the population to compensate for its technological and material deficiencies.** For this, the party was impt as it helped to organize the people into labor gangs and military welfare grps.
 - **Party propaganda was also needed to stress the prestige of military work.**
 - Thus, the fact that the army agreed to the division of Vietnam along the 17th parallel during the Geneva Conference suggested that its impact as a political structure could be blunted by other political forces, notwithstanding its remarkable victory at Dien Bien Phu.

7.7 Vietnam unified under Communist rule (1975)

- The period of reunification was a very fraught period with many problems and crises to deal with. This section will focus on the local crises here and note how the Vietnamese government responded to them.

²³ This was a town in Northern Vietnam that was held by the Vietminh during JO.

- The south was a very different region from the north, as the North Vietnamese government was well aware .
- The people were far more independent-minded and self-reliant in the south, and capitalism was deeply embedded there.
 - Southern talent for entrepreneurship had been reinforced by years of US involvement and governmental neglect.
- As outlined in the **Second Five-Year Plan (1976-80)** and announced at the **Fourth National Party Congress in December 1976**, the plan was **to eliminate all vestiges of capitalism** and to **collectivize the economy in the South** and develop agriculture and light industry across the whole country.
 - It was aimed **that all industry and agriculture in the South would be state-controlled by the end of 1979**.
- However, these plans fell short.
 - By **early 1985**: only 66 percent of cultivated land and 72 percent of peasant households in the South had been organized into collectivised production.
 - Socialist transformation in private industry had led to decreased production, increased production costs, and decreased product quality.
 - Furthermore, many southern Vietnamese fled overseas, refusing to live under Communist rule. They set off in whatever boats they could find, often unseaworthy and / or owned by unscrupulous agents.
 - It created the 'Boat People' international incident as the global community, namely Southeast Asian states, the First World states and the UN had to find a solution to the humanitarian crisis when thousands of Vietnamese took to the ocean in rickety boats to escape Communist rule and find a better life abroad.
 - In the beginning, both the Southeast Asian states and First World States were unwilling to give them permanent homes, but eventually the First World States, particularly Australia and the USA offered to take in many of the immigrants, while the Southeast Asian states – Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore – would only temporarily house the refugees before moving them on to the next country that would settle them.
 - The Vietnamese government realised they faced a brain-drain problem too. Before reforms were undertaken that removed the need to flee Vietnam in the first place, many hundreds of Vietnamese lost their lives to the sea or to pirates.

7.8 The Vietnam-Cambodia War (1978)

- Relations with Vietnam's neighbour Cambodia had deteriorated to such an extent that the **Vietnam-Cambodia War broke out in 1978** and **Vietnam was compelled to invade and install a pro-Vietnam government in Cambodia.**
- Although the government of Cambodia was ruled by the Khmer Rouge which was also a Communist party (it shared the same roots in the ICP as did the Vietnamese Lao Dong Party), traditional ethnic tensions between the Khmer and Viet peoples combined with Cambodian distrust of what they saw as a Vietnamese desire to dominate the whole of Indo-China caused a bitter border dispute between the two countries.
- The border tensions spilled over into war on **18 April 1978** when the **Khmer Rouge invaded Vietnam**. This prompted **a Vietnamese counter-invasion of Cambodia** that overran the whole country and drove the Khmer Rouge from power.
 - On the one hand, it ended the Khmer Rouge reign of terror in their own country, but on the other hand Vietnam's neighbours were offended by the invasion, chiefly China and the ASEAN countries.
- China retaliated in the brief 3rd Indo-China War. ASEAN responded by convincing the UN to deem Vietnam the aggressor in the Vietnam-Cambodia War.
 - This resulted in Vietnam's application at the UN for aid and financial assistance to be denied.
- By the early to middle 1980s, international Communism was in the midst of a crisis. Communist governments were realising that doctrinaire Communism had serious flaws in its practicality, and the Communist states were losing ground to their capitalistic rivals. China had already undertaken radical reforms in 1979 (Deng Xiaoping's 改革开放 or 'Gaige Kaifang' Reforms), while the USSR and its satellites would undertake theirs from 1986.
 - Since the USSR was Vietnam's closest ally against both China and the USA, the USSR's growing preoccupation with its own troubles was a matter of concern for Vietnam.

7.9 The Doi Moi Reforms (1986)

- In **December 1986**, the Lao Dong Party held their 6th National Party Congress, which became **a watershed in Vietnamese Communist history**.
 - The Party candidly acknowledged of existing economic problems expressed a willingness to change in order to solve them.
 - It started a new atmosphere of experimentation and reform, apparently reinforced by reforms then being initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in the USSR.

- In the reform programme, '**Doi Moi Policy**', the economy was reformed according to capitalistic principles and made more liberal, and in fact the general political direction in Vietnam was also freed up.
- The ethnic minorities of Vietnam, like the hill tribes in the mountains of Vietnam and the ethnic Chinese, were now allowed to practice their ways of life and were no longer oppressed.²⁴
- Vietnam became the world's second largest rice exporter, after Thailand, and it sustained a **growth rate of around 7% per year from 1990 to 2012**. This made it consistently among the world's fastest growing economies.
- Vietnam also **integrated itself back into the world community**. It applied to join ASEAN, the community of anti-Communist SEA states during the Cold War and its rival in the Vietnam-Cambodian War, immediately after the end of that war and ASEAN wholeheartedly accepted it, which became official on 28 July 1995.

²⁴ Keep this in mind for future reference when we investigate the subsequent themes.

8. Case Study 7: Thailand

8.1 Overview of Case Study

Thailand is an exceptional case study because it has never been colonised and hence did not experience decolonisation. In addition, the constitutional development of Thailand started as early as 1932. Lastly, we would describe Thailand's form of government as being unstable, as it vacillated between military dictatorship to democracies.

Nonetheless, Thailand would still be a very useful case study for the following:

- *Positive eg of authoritarian government: Sarit (especially on the ability to harness traditional institutions- monarchy for his consolidation of power)*
 - *Negative eg of authoritarian government: Thanom*
 - *Role of popular protests in bringing about Phase III – democratic practices*
-

8.2 A chronological overview of the political transitions over time:

- **1945-1947: Democratic governments**
 - 1944-1945: Khuang Aphaiwong
 - 1945-1945: Thawee Boonyaket
 - 1945-1946: Seni Pramoj
 - 1946-1946: Khuang Aphaiwong
 - 1946-1946: Pridi Banomyong
 - 1946-1947: Thamrong Nawasawat
- **1947-1973: Authoritarian government**
 - 1957-1958: Pote Sarasin
 - 1947-1948: Khuang Aphaiwong
 - **1948-1957: Phibun Songkhram**
 - 1957-1957: Sarit Thanarat (Revolutionary Council- interim)
 - 1957-1958: Pote Sarasin
 - 1958-1958: Thanom Kittikhachon
 - **1958-1963: Sarit Thanarat** (Revolutionary Council)
 - **1963-1973: Thanom Kittikhachon**
- **1973-1976: Democratic government**
 - 1973-1975: Sanya Thammasak
 - 1975-1975: Seni Pramoj
 - 1975-1976: Kukrit Pramoj
 - 1976-1976: Seni Pramoj
- **1976-1992: Managed democracy**

- 1976-1977: Thanin Kraivixien
- 1977-1980: Kriangsak Chomanand
- **1980-1988: Prem Tinsulanond**
- 1988-1991: Chatichai Choonhavan
- 1991-1992: Anand Panyarachun
- 1992-1992: Suchinda Kaprayun
- **1992: Democratic government**
 - 1992-1992: Anand Panyarachun
 - 1992-1995: Chuan Leekpai
 - 1995-1996: Banharn Silpa-archa
 - 1996-1997: Chavalit Yongchaiyudh
 - 1997-2001: Chuan Leekpai

8.3 Context in the immediate post-World War II years (1945-1947)

- It is first necessary to understand the impact that the abolition of absolute monarchy in **1932** had on the political landscape of Thailand in the post-World War II years.
 - Following the abolition of absolute monarchy in 1932, Thailand's history has revolved around the military.
 - The military coup that toppled the absolute monarchy on 24 June 1932 was accomplished by a handful of conspirators with a few hundred troops.
 - These conspirators then formed Siam's first political party, the Khana Ratsadon (People's Party). Notably, the People's Party **reorganised the army and navy to put their men in key positions and began trying to build a popular constituency.**
 - Relative to their civilian rivals, the military was much more cohesive as they also had a monopoly on the use of physical force.
- Pridi's policies of political liberalisation after the end of World War II threatened the interests of the marginalised military and royalist elites.
 - He introduced a **new Constitution in 1946** to replace the 1932 Constitution.
 - It allowed for a more democratic multi-party system and sought to remove the military from political institutions.
- In retaliation to Pridi's 1946 Constitution, the military under Phibun worked at destabilising Pridi's government; it painted him as the mastermind behind the assassination of King Ananda Mahidol in 1946 despite inconclusive evidence.
 - The military also portrayed Pridi as an unreliable leader who would make Thailand vulnerable to the communists.

- The royalists and the military joined forces to stage a coup in 1947, justifying it in the name of national interests.

8.4 Authoritarian government under the military (1947-1973)

- Thailand's transition to authoritarian government shared similar traits with Indonesia and Burma - it stemmed from factors such as disunity among the leaders, tension between the civilians and the military, and general instability within the country.
- From **1947 to 1973**, Thailand would see the premiership of three military leaders: Phibun, Sarit and Thanom.
 - Under these leaders, Thailand could be described as an authoritarian government led by the military.
 - These leaders, to differing extents, expanded the role of the military and increasingly reduced the role that democratic procedures played in governance.
- U.S. investment made it possible for the Thai military to expand its influence in Thailand's political landscape.
 - The USA saw Thailand as an important anti-communist bulwark in Southeast Asia during the **Cold War**.
 - American military aid quadrupled over the 1960s and the Thai military budget grew from around US\$20 million a year in the 1950s to US\$250 million a year in the early 1970s.

8.5 The weakness of constitutional process and elections and the strength of the Thai military

- In the early period of Thai politics after World War II, politicians saw the Constitution as a suitable vehicle to legitimise their interests.
 - Consequently, constitutions were frequently suspended, rewritten or amended. This had the ironic effect of destabilising Thai politics as leaders manipulated formal processes to hold on to political power.
- Due to the weakness of the constitution and the political system, political leaders in Thailand were able to mould the system to suit their interests.
- Unlike the military's supporting role to civilian regimes in Indonesia and the Philippines, the Thai military led its authoritarian government regime throughout this period. Political changes from the promulgation and abrogation of constitutions, and regime-changing coups were all led by the military.
- With the help of U.S. investments, the military firmly entrenched itself in a position of political dominance.
 - The military's dominance of Thai bureaucracy saw parallels with Suharto's Indonesia, where both governments saw an extended period of military control.

- The **Cold War context** thus played an important role mainly through the provision of U.S. aid as the USA regarded Thailand as a bulwark against the communist threat.
 - Similar to Indonesia and the Philippines, **the Cold War led to U.S. support for the suppressive tactics of some military leaders**, as long as the communist challenge was adequately contained.
- However, **U.S. aid was not wholly beneficial to the Thai military** because the large amounts of aid **widened the scope of rivalry among the competing factions**.
 - This differed from Indonesia and the Philippines where U.S. links enriched the state and enabled the expansion of state capacity and stability.
- Soon after deposing Pridi from power, the military's incompatibility with the royalist democrats came to the fore.
 - Despite introducing the **1949 Constitution** after the military overthrew Pridi, this would soon be **abolished in 1951** when Phibun launched yet another coup to consolidate his power over the royalist democrats.
- By **1957**, however, Phibun faced competition from yet another source. This time, it came from within the military as Sarit's faction posed an increasing threat.
 - To counter the threat, Phibun lifted the ban on political parties and eased press censorship in 1955. An election was scheduled for 1957.
- At the 1957 elections, **Phibun's party won amidst allegations of fraud and mass demonstrations soon followed** as the people protested against the results.
 - Sarit seized the opportunity provided by the widespread instability and crushed his political opponents with a coup in **September 1957**.
- Evidently, the strength of the military did not mean it had no problems. It was characterised by factional infighting and the constant search for new political allies among the different factions.
 - From 1948 to 1951, Phibun's regime was **challenged by 3 coups and he was eventually deposed by Sarit in a 1958 coup**.
- Military factions tended to look to external sources of support in view of the high degree of factional infighting. One such example was the popular legitimacy that Sarit derived from the association with the Thai King.
- The military's participation in businesses compounded divides in the military.
 - For example, during Phibun's rule, the military's involvement in business ventures resulted in the division of the 1947 Coup group into two competing factions, popularly known as the Rajakru and Sisao Deves cliques.

8.6 Sarit Thanarat (1958-1963)

- In **1958**, Sarit imposed martial law with strict controls and ended the brief period of political participation that had emerged in 1955.
- Formal elections in Thailand thus failed to provide legitimacy and instead, gave the military the opportunity to dominate Thai politics - as seen in Sarit's coup in 1957.
- Sarit was a traditional military strongman who had been educated in Thailand - this meant this his political education embodied a distinctly Thai approach that differed from that of his peers who had been afforded an overseas education.
 - Sarit was essentially a career soldier who espoused **martial values** which he introduced into the political system that saw him disregarding political conventions.
- Sarit was able to consolidate power in the period after Phibun's lack of political support had been exposed.
 - At the same time, his rule also set the stage for the **revival of the king** and laid the foundations for private businessmen to enter politics.
- Sarit **also supported the formation of business conglomerates, especially with the inflow of American aid in the 1950s and the 1960s**, where Sarit took steps to scale back the enterprises of his political rivals.
 - This **created room for private businesses to flourish**.
 - Similar to Indonesia and the Philippines, extensive patron-client relations were built between military leaders and Chinese businessmen.
 - The **business community would thus become an increasingly potent political force**.
- Sarit began drafting a Constitution that would only be ready during Thanom's reign in **1968**, after Sarit had passed away in 1963.
 - Out of a 220-member drafting committee, 170 were from the military.
 - Thanom's completed Constitution in 1968 combined some degree of political liberalisation with military control over key political structures e.g.,:
 - The military dominated the Thai Parliament, where 128 out of the 164 nominated by the Senate were from the military.
 - The Head of Senate who was from the military would select the Prime Minister.
 - The **1968 Constitution** would be abolished in **1971**.²⁵

²⁵ As politicians in the Parliament demanded more control over the government and interfered in government administration, there were increasing delays in the passing of budget bills and attacks on government policies and ministers. This state of affairs led to increasing tensions between the government and the elected House. Consequently, Thanom, with the support of the Army, staged a coup in 1971, legally repealed the constitution, dissolved Parliament and political parties, and banned political gatherings.

- Sarit **aligned the military with the Thai monarchy** in order to increase his legitimacy.
 - Domestically, Sarit tried to identify the monarch with the army. The swearing of allegiance by the troops to the throne and flag became major military occasions under Sarit. Religion was another pillar in the Sarit political structure. The Supreme Patriarch became a royal appointee, and control over the Buddhist hierarchy was ensured.
 - He enhanced the role of King Bhumibol with the restoration of many royal ceremonies.
 - Sarit's own view of democracy centred on the need for it to be indigenous. The fundamental values he wanted to protect were the three ideals of '**king, religion and nation**'. Under Sarit's leadership, the king was given a greater role domestically and internationally. Through this exposure, the king was made to identify with the policies of the regime and thus enhance its prestige.
 - Military domination was explicitly premised on its role as the guardian of the Thai state's ideology of 'nation, religion and king'.
 - This move by Sarit resulted in his military government gaining popular legitimacy among the people.
- The relative stability under Sarit and Thanom facilitated foreign investments and strong economic growth.
 - Average annual GDP growth reached 8.2% from 1961-1970 and was second only to Singapore in the region.
 - First import-substitution and later export-oriented industrialisation was promoted. Agriculture remained a key economic activity though many farming families started shifting to factories and the service sector.
 - The role of the military was expanded as the regime pushed out major economic development projects in its counter-insurgency efforts.
 - As a result, there emerged a new economic bourgeoisie and a generation of well-educated students who would become **prominent political actors in the 1970s**.²⁶
- In addition to the factional infighting within the military, the Thai state faced an increasingly potent threat in the form of communist insurgency.
 - To deal with the communist threat, a range of counter-insurgency tactics were employed, from the focus on socio-economic development under Sarit to hard clampdowns on civil liberties in an attempt to maintain order and stability.

²⁶ The number of university students grew from 15,000 in 5 universities (1961) to 100,000 in 7 universities (1972).

- For example, under Sarit, a Revolutionary Order was proclaimed, giving the power of unlimited detention to investigating officers of communist suspects and putting such cases under military courts.

8.7 Increasing challenges to authoritarian government in Thailand (1970s)

- The **Communist Party of Thailand (CPT)** exploited the economic backwardness in the rural areas, especially among the ethnic minorities.
 - By 1967, the CPT had spread through much of the north and was advancing into the south.
 - The military regime faced a major security crisis by the early 1970s and the government no longer seemed able to deal with the threat of the communist insurgency.
 - The number of insurgents in all regions of Thailand was estimated to be over 10,000 by 1979.
 - Although the government was never directly endangered, there were patches of insurgent-controlled territories throughout the country.
 - It was the decision of two military Prime Ministers – Kriangsak Chomanan and then Prem – to offer amnesties to those who abandoned the revolution to reverse the situation. By the early 1980s, the communist threat was fading away.
- The **Thai monarchy** also became an **increasingly important symbol of the state** and **provided moral leadership** that contrasted sharply with the ostentatious and corrupt lifestyles of Sarit's clique.
 - The Thai king **chastised the excesses of Thai politicians** and his intervention would play a key role in the **resignation of Thanom** at the state of Thailand's democratic interregnum in 1973.
- There was **pressure from new societal groups** who were now strong enough to provide the organisation capacity to oppose military rule.
 - Pressure from the **businessmen** for better governance started to gain momentum after the 1969 elections when they won 46% of the total seats.
 - These businessmen found allies in **radical intellectuals and student activists** who protested against the military's close ties with the Americans and demanded further liberalisation.
 - When Thanom's 1971 coup abrogated the 1968 Constitution, it provoked resentment among **civilian politicians (including the businessmen), students and the politicised public** who considered the coup unjustified.
- In **October 1973**, university students in particular began protesting the rule by military leaders who retaliated by arresting student activists for distributing leaflets.

- Massive demonstrations were organised by the **communist-influenced National Students' Centre of Thailand**, which erupted into riots against the military's unjust rule.
 - More than 500.000 students and members of the public were mobilised.
 - The military's violent suppression of the student-led uprising led to the Thai King's intervention and the forced resignation of Thanom and Praphat, resulting a short-lived period of democracy from 1973-1976.

8.8 A brief return to parliamentary/liberal democracy (1973-1976)

- The downfall of those whom some have termed the 'Three Tyrants' (Thanom, Praphat and Kris Savara) who had replaced Sarit upon his death in 1963 and the passing of the old Sarit order marked the onset of a three-year interregnum of open politics.
 - This period was characterised by violence and conflict, against a background of aggressive communist threats.
- The period was a golden opportunity for political parties who had been subservient to the military up to this point to emerge as power brokers.
 - Political parties of the right, left and centre proliferated.
- A coalition government, formed after the 1975 election, consisted of three parties: Social Action, Thai Nation, and Social Justice. However, there was no co-ordination and, in fact, three mini governments existed.
- As a result of pressure from the military, an election was called in April 1976 to create a more workable arrangement for the government. Seni Pramoj became the Prime Minister.
- **By 1976, the monarchy was firmly in support of the military again.** The king's perception was that the open politics as pursued since 1973 were tearing the fabric of the nation apart and undermining the monarchy.
 - On **6 October 1976**, with the support of the king, military units seized power from the civilian Seni government. Thus Thailand returned to military dominance and royal legitimacy after only three years.
 - A succession of military rulers now ran Thailand, with **General Prem Tinsulanonda taking office in 1980.**

8.9 'Managed' democracy (1976-1992)

- The period after October 1976 was not merely a return to the consensual polity of the monarchy and the bureaucracy.
 - The fate of the Three Tyrants had shown that the Thai people and not just the elites were becoming politicised. They had demonstrated in the streets to protest

against the Three Tyrants and then participated in the open politics of the liberal phase.

- Authoritarian rule could no longer be exercised in the way it had been in the past.
- A **new constitution** was introduced in **1978** to safeguard the interests of the military and the bureaucratic elites, while allowing for businesses to be represented.
 - The military and the bureaucracy retained control over the ministries of finance, defence, and interior.
 - The House of Representatives continued to be elected, but its power was checked by Senate which was mostly appointed by the ruling government.
 - Student and labour groups were legalised and a free print media was permitted but electronic media remained under state control.
- Furthermore, the military itself had become faction-ridden in the absence of strong men. It was no longer the unitary body it once was.
 - A faction known as the Young Military Officers Group (nicknamed the Young Turks) was formed to find a solution.
 - In **1981**, the Young Turks led a coup against the Prem government, hoping to get their viewpoint accepted.
 - However, they failed to prevent Prem from establishing a counter-coup headquarters in Korat, 260 kilometres northeast of Bangkok, with the royal family accompanying him.
 - From Korat, General Prem made repeated broadcasts that the royal family was safe with him. That sealed the fate of the coup leaders, and ensured Prem's continuation in power.
 - The **abortive coup demonstrated that the monarchy was confirmed as the most significant political structure in Thailand**. The leader who received royal endorsement was the one accepted by the state as the ruler.
- The military in the post-1976 years had taken on the dual and contradictory roles as simultaneously nurturing and limiting democracy within Thailand.
 - Two orders of the Prime Minister's Office, issued in 1980 and 1982, provided for the military to play the role of **guardian of Thai democracy**.
- During this period of managed democracy, General Prem stabilised Thai politics and this marked the **longest period of an undisputed Parliament in Thailand's history**.

8.10 Thailand under 'Premocracy' (1980-1988)

- From 1980 to 1988, General Prem ruled over Thailand.
 - He was educated in Thailand and a career military officer - a background that enabled him to remain personally untainted from allegations of corruption.
 - Prem's loyalty to the monarchy and his ability to engender consensus played critical roles in **creating a degree of political stability after the political excesses of 1976.**
 - He was a skillful strategist who managed the shifting currents of politics and balance of power to deal adeptly with international and domestic developments that weakened other groups during his rule.
 - For example, he was able to constantly reshuffle his Cabinet and power bases to ensure accommodation among the different groups.
- From 1976 to 1992, the business community continued their attempts to influence politics by sponsoring **three parties in this decade: Social Action Party, Chat Thai** and the **Democrats.**
 - With the influence of the business community, this saw the rise of what was termed **money politics.**
 - The proportion of **Assembly seats** occupied by **businessmen** rose from **one-third** in **1979** to **two-thirds** in **1988.**
 - The political influence of the business class provided a **counterbalance** in politics that made it **increasingly difficult for the military to seize power in the 1980s.**
 - In **1984**, the Parliament attacked the size and secrecy of the military budget.
 - In **1985** and **1987**, the Parliament **defeated attempts by the military to extend their influence via the Constitution.**
 - At the **1988 election**, the press and political parties launched a campaign for General Prem to retire and allow an elected Member of Parliament to rise to the premiership.
- General Prem and the King instituted reforms to liberalise power in Thailand, and called for elections in 1988.
- General Prem lost the 1988 elections to General Chatichai Choonhavan.
 - Choonhavan's rule capitalised on the economic development during this period and his rule was characterised by **money politics, big projects, bribery, corruption and other economic irregularities.**²⁷

²⁷ Think ahead to how these may have contributed to the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 that you will learn about in Theme II: Economic Development after Independence.

8.11 The 1991 coup and transition to democracy in 1992

- The prevalence of corrupt money politics under Choonhaven resulted in a coup by Class Five Officers led by General Suchinda in **February 1991**.
 - The coup was initially supported by nascent middle class and Bangkok businessmen who hoped to find a solution to the money politics and incompetence of the Chatichai government.
 - The Army had promised elections and a return to parliamentary government.
- General Suchinda later announced he would become Prime Minister in 1992 although he had not stood for elections.
 - People began to fear the military's intention to hold on to power and its backtracking on the earlier promise of elections led to widespread pro-democracy protests in Bangkok.
 - These protests were led by Chamlong Stimuang, a former Bangkok governor.
 - When the army fired at the pro-democracy demonstrators, the King put an end to the confrontation.
- Chamlong and Suchinda appeared on television, kneeling before the King as he called for the disengagement between the two.
 - A temporary Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun was appointed by the King.
- Elections were held in **1992** and led to Chuan Leekpai of the Democratic Party attaining power.
- The resolution of the Chamlong-Suchinda face-off in **1992** was significant for a few reasons:
 - The scene on television symbolically represented the role that the monarchy could play in Thailand.
 - This was the second occasion on which the King intervened to end military repression, with the first being in 1973.
 - The monarchy could thus be seen as a **stabilising force against the excesses of the military**.
 - By the early 1990s, the **growth and politicisation of the middle class in Thailand had changed political conditions irreversibly**.
 - Military attempts to circumvent or amend the Constitution were less likely to go unchallenged.
 - Mass political participation could not be brushed aside or pressed as it was in the past.

8.12 Democratic government (post-1992)

- While the political crisis of 1992 seemingly promised a transition to democratic government, this promise dissipated once political order was restored.
 - As money and politics became increasingly entangled and intertwined, the pressure for reform faded and the Thai middle class and businessmen lost interest in influencing politics to sway it towards democratic rule.
- The 1990s was marked by **unstable cabinets as the premiership changed hands three times**. This political instability persisted despite the redrawing of formal political conventions and processes to entrench the democratic system, including:
 - A **1997 Constitution** that emphasised citizens' rights and strengthened the judicial system; this was known as the **People's Constitution** - a result of the many public feedback sessions around the country.
 - An **Election Commission, National Counter Corruption Commission, and Constitutional Court** were introduced to provide checks and balances on corruption.
 - The military's political influence declined as the **military's share of the government budget declined from 22 percent in 1985 to 13 percent in 1996**.
- **Politics in Thailand tended to be a top-down process, heavily contributed to by the monarchy, civilian elites and the military, all of which have had periods when they enjoyed dominance over their rivals. It was not until the 1970s that the Thai people themselves began to have a role in the state. Yet even then the elites continued to demonstrate their influence, shown in how they the democratic process was created and sustained by them.**