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978-0-521-16545-7 - Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia

Dan Slater

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Ordering Power

Like the postcolonial world more generally, Southeast Asia exhibits tremendous variation in state capacity and authoritarian durability. *Ordering Power* draws on theoretical insights dating back to Thomas Hobbes to develop a unified framework for explaining both of these political outcomes. States are especially strong and dictatorships especially durable when they have their origins in “protection pacts”: broad, elite coalitions unified by shared support for heightened state power and tightened authoritarian controls as bulwarks against especially threatening and challenging types of contentious politics. These coalitions provide the elite collective action underpinning strong states, robust ruling parties, cohesive militaries, and durable authoritarian regimes – all at the same time. Comparative-historical analysis of seven Southeast Asian countries (Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Vietnam, and Thailand) reveals that subtly divergent patterns of contentious politics after World War II provide the best explanation for the dramatic divergence in Southeast Asia’s contemporary states and regimes.

Dan Slater is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago. His published articles can be found in disciplinary journals such as the *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Comparative Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *International Organization*, and *Studies in Comparative International Development*, as well as Asia-oriented journals such as *Indonesia* and the *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*. He is also a co-editor of *Southeast Asia in Political Science: Theory, Region, and Qualitative Analysis* (2008). Professor Slater has conducted fieldwork since the late 1990s in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

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CONTENTIOUS POLITICS
AND AUTHORITARIAN
LEVIATHANS IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA

DAN SLATER

University of Chicago



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ORDER, *v.* To arrange methodically or suitably; . . . to regulate, direct, conduct, rule, govern, manage; . . . To bring into order or submission to lawful authority; . . . To give orders to or command; to direct authoritatively; . . . to domineer over, treat as a subordinate; . . . to give a . . . request that (something) be made, supplied, or served.

Oxford English Dictionary

An organizer combines disparate elements into an integrated whole. He may do this *ex tempore* if his aim is simple or passing. He must make more elaborate preparations if he is confronted with a permanent and difficult task.

Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*

The opening up of channels for the expression of manifest or latent conflicts between the established and the underprivileged classes may have brought many systems out of equilibrium in the earlier phase but tended to strengthen the body politic over time.

Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan,
Party Systems and Voter Alignments

The cause in general which moveth a man to become subject to another, is (as I have said already) the fear of not otherwise preserving himself. . . . [M]en may join amongst themselves to subject themselves to such as they shall agree upon for fear of others.

Thomas Hobbes, *The Element of Lawes*

[O]nce the common mind has received the impress of an acute danger, fear remains latent, as long as its ultimate cause is not removed.

Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*

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Acknowledgments

This book examines how states and regimes in Southeast Asia have historically tried to extract and organize political and economic resources from the societies they rule. In the process of researching and writing it, I myself have accrued a rather long history of “extracting” support and encouragement from numerous sources, both personal and professional. Whether I have managed to *organize* all this generous support and encouragement into a coherent and convincing manuscript is a matter for the reader’s judgment. If I have failed to bring it all together, it can only be because of my own incapacity to organize, not any lack of generosity among those from whom I have extracted so much for so long.

Although it grows out of my 2005 dissertation at Emory University, *Ordering Power* is very much a product of my five wonderful years as an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago. I simply cannot imagine a more stimulating, conducive, and egalitarian intellectual environment in which to write one’s first book. It was my great good fortune to arrive in Hyde Park at the same time as an absolutely extraordinary cohort of comparativist graduate students, with whom I have shared many good times and great conversations from our days as lowly “first years” to the present. At a time when Chicago’s comparativist faculty numbers have been somewhat depleted, I have gained great insights, inspiration, and sustenance from my “intra-cohort” interactions with Christopher Haid, Juan Fernando Ibarra, Diana Young-hwa Kim, Erica Simmons, and Nick Smith, as well as many other wonderful graduate students beyond this singular cohort. All of these students deserve additional thanks for leaving me to my own devices when I was finishing this book while on leave in 2008–09, despite their own ongoing advising needs. By contrast, Sofia Fenner deserves special thanks for *not* leaving me alone during this critical time, and for returning to the U of C to work closely with me as I slimmed down a rather chubby and undisciplined dissertation into the comparably svelte and sculpted tome you hold in your hands now. Throughout the rewriting process, Sofia was more like a copilot than a research assistant, often exhibiting greater command over the book’s many moving parts than its own author could sustain.

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There is scarcely a page of this book that did not benefit in some fashion from Sofia's considerable scholarly talents. The book has been strengthened as well thanks to research assistance from Bushra Asif, Narges Bajoghli, Adam Bilinski, Stacey Chung, John Cropper, Vikram Jambulapati, Damien Leonard, Amy Pond, Samantha Voertherms, Seth Winnie, and Allison Youatt.

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concerns with analytical toughness in the study of elite politics from the late, great Dan Lev.

This book has also been shaped and improved through countless conversations with a much broader range of scholars than those mentioned above. Within the American political science community, Anna Grzymala-Busse, Steven Levitsky, James Mahoney, Hillel Soifer, Kellee Tsai, Ashutosh Varshney, David Waldner, Lucan Way, and Daniel Ziblatt have been especially helpful and influential as this project has chugged its way toward fruition. In the field of Southeast Asian studies, John Sidel and Bill Liddle have been especially keen readers and backers of this project, for which I am deeply and eternally grateful. Thanks go as well to Patricia Abinales, Jose Abueva, Benedict Anderson, Vince Boudreau, Ben Kerkvliet, Chalidaporn Songsamphan, Scott Christensen, Shawn Crispin, Jamie Davidson, Don Emmerson, Daniel Fineman, Edmund Terence Gomez, Natasha Hamilton-Hart, Paul Hutchcroft, Jomo K. S., Mike Montesano, Nipon Poapongsakorn, Patcharee Siroros, Pisit Leeahtham, Anthony Reid, Joel Rocamora, Jim Scott, and Carl Trocki for helping to guide me in various ways through the endlessly fascinating maze that is Southeast Asian political history. More impersonally but no less importantly, this project has benefited from audience feedback at more than twenty conference presentations and professional talks, including the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association (APSA), American Sociological Association (ASA), Association for Asian Studies (AAS), International Sociological Association (ISA), and Social Science History Association (SSHA); political science departments at Michigan State University, Northwestern University, the University of Florida, the University of Notre Dame, the University of Texas, the University of Vermont, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Yale University; sociology departments at Northwestern University and Princeton University; and Asian studies centers at the National University of Singapore, Northern Illinois University, the University of Malaya, the University of Michigan, and the University of Toronto.

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Acknowledgments

achieved through the coincidence of alphabetization more than my own efforts, seeing my name alongside Theda Skocpol's on the final pages of all forthcoming books in this series (at least until another "Sk" or "Sl" sneaks between us) will still be a genuine personal thrill.

Writing a book requires funds as well as friends, especially when extensive international fieldwork is involved. My fieldwork in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand has been funded by the Institute for International Education (IIE) Fulbright program, a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) International Dissertation Research Fund, an Academy for Educational Development National Security Education Program (NSEP) grant, the Ford Foundation's Vernacular Modernities program, Emory University's Internationalization Fund and Department of Political Science, and the University of Chicago's Committee on Southern Asian Studies (COSAS). While living and working overseas, I have benefited from the assistance of numerous institutions. Research affiliations at the Institute for Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) in Kuala Lumpur, the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Jakarta, and the Institute for Popular Democracy (IPD) in Manila have proven indispensable. Above and beyond offering work space and assistance with research contacts, each of these institutions provided exceptional library resources, maintained by exceedingly helpful personnel. My research was similarly aided by outstanding collections and indulgent staffers at Chulalongkorn University's Academic Resource Center and Thammasat University's Political Science Library in Bangkok, the Freedom Institute in Jakarta, and the Lopez Memorial Museum in Metro Manila. My extended overseas stays have proven to be times of great companionship, and not just hard work, thanks to my happy extended encounters with Aries Arugay, Alice Ba, Achmad Budiman, Robin Bush, Mely Caballero-Anthony, Gladstone Cuarteros, Mohamad Hanafi, Nico Harjanto, Denis Hew, Butch and Grace Jamon, Laura Kaehler, Lee Hock Guan, Lou Joon Yee, Pornwipa Limkatanyoo, Michael and Jin Montesano, Tom Piernikowski, Patrick Pillai, Qamar Siddique, Retty Timboeleng, Christine Tjhin, C. Y. Wang, Thorsten Wohland, Zarina Zakaria, and last but not least, my unforgettable nightly dinner companions from "The Spice Guy" restaurant in Seksyen 17, Petaling Jaya.

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in a nephew's development. Lars Hanson has stubbornly insisted that everything was going to work out for me, personally as well as professionally, especially at times when it seemed obvious that it would not, and he has consistently proven correct. My beloved brothers, Matt Slater and Aaron Miller, are my constant companions in spirit – especially when I see something that I know would make them laugh, and I miss them all the more. More recently, I have been very lucky to count the wonderful, thoughtful, and generous Lockaby clan, especially (but not exclusively) Jay, Judy, and Annabelle, as my family as well.

Which brings me to my favorite Lockaby of all. Tracey was alerted to my arrival in Atlanta during my first month of PhD study by Rick Doner's charming and cunning wife, Susan Zaro. Despite the ghastly implications of my fledgling academic status for my financial solvency (I was seemingly the only Atlanta resident over the age of 16 without a car at the time), and despite Tracey's curious conclusion that I "sounded fat" on the telephone, she decided that it might not be too dangerous to invite me to go out with her and her friends for burritos. I guess maybe fat guys like burritos. In any event, she luckily found me less objectionable in person than I was on paper (and on the phone). I have now spent almost eleven years happily marveling at her lapse in good judgment. She has been my partner through every step of this process – so much so that I feel as if we both now have a Cambridge book under our belts. I only hope that this book's long-awaited completion will allow her to start focusing less on what I need, and more on what she needs. As for Ria (age 7) and Kai (age 5), they have not so much as lifted a finger to help me finish this book. All they have done is help make the years I have worked on it the most fulfilling in my entire life, by a very large margin. And I suppose they deserve some thanks for that as well.

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