Committed or Conditional Democrats?
Opposition Dynamics in Electoral Autocracies

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Abstract

In electoral autocracies, opposition coalition formation offers the best hope of getting to democracy. Yet forming electoral coalitions also entails convincing opposition voters to ignore compromises and engage in the cross-party voting necessary for opposition victory. To what extent are voters committed to defeating the autocratic incumbent even if it would result in dislikeable outcomes? A survey experiment in Malaysia finds that opposition voters overwhelmingly express pre-treatment support for the opposition coalition. But when exposed to a treatment vignette about which member party might lead the next government, many voters retract their support. Specifically, voters' support for the coalition declines when their least preferred member is expected to control the government and when they can vote for a closer ideological alternative outside of the coalition. While voters are committed to opposition unity and democratic transition, that commitment is sensitive to the anticipated consequences of an opposition victory.

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Introduction

Supporting opposition parties carries significant risks in autocracies. Autocrats possess a "menu of manipulation" that enables them to disenfranchise, disadvantage, intimidate, and repress opposition voters (Levitsky and Way 2010, Schedler 2002). Yet many voters consistently show up at the polls to support challengers to autocratic rulers and parties. In spite of incumbent tactics to win, voters often support the opposition because they support democracy. Having limited experience with power, opposition parties often find that the most potent issue around which they can mobilize is political change (Tucker 2006).

But getting to democracy via the ballot box often requires forming opposition electoral alliances (also known as pre-electoral or electoral coalitions) (Howard and Roessler 2006, Wahman 2013, Donno 2013, Bunce and Wolchik 2011, Ziegfeld and Tudor 2017). An opposition alliance is a group of parties that cooperate with each other to compete against a dominant autocratic incumbent in an election. Such alliances require parties to coordinate their candidate offerings. By preventing opposition voters from splitting their votes among too many alternatives, electoral coalitions have helped the opposition win against autocrats in places such as the Philippines (1986), Kenya (2002), and Ukraine (2004).

While intra-opposition candidate coordination within an alliance may offer the best chance for a transition at the ballot box, it comes with significant challenges. First, these alliances require at least some opposition voters to engage in cross-party voting. In other words, for the coalition to win, some voters may be required to vote for a candidate or a party who is not their most preferred outcome. Second, electoral coalitions, by definition, require compromise among parties on a variety of important issues: who gets to run where, how political offices will be divided, and which policies will be pursued once in office. These challenges result in a dilemma for some opposition voters: if getting to democracy requires voting for a coalition that

may implement policy outcomes they do not like, should they remain committed the alliance? Or should they prioritize their policy commitments over democracy and turn away from the coalition?

We argue that when faced with a trade-off between their ideological commitments and democracy, voters will abandon an opposition alliance under two conditions: first, if they expect that a coalition victory will result in their *least* preferred policy outcome and second, if they have an alternative option which is closer to their policy preferences, whether the incumbent or another opposition party outside the coalition. Voters in autocracies do care about policies. They are willing to go along with some policy compromises they feel are not too far from their preferred views. But not all are willing to pay any price to achieve an alternation in power, especially when an ideologically closer alternative is apparent.

We investigate this argument during the run-up to the May 2018 parliamentary elections in Malaysia, a robust electoral authoritarian regime for almost half a century (Pepinsky 2009, Slater 2010, Gomez 2016). For this election, four opposition parties – DAP, PKR, BERSATU, and AMANAH – committed to an electoral coalition, Pakatan Harapan (PH), against the incumbent, the Barisan Nasional (BN). We find that opposition voters express clear preferences for an alternation in power and express pre-treatment support for the coalition – findings that are consistent with the strong support the opposition received in the last general election in 2013. Yet for some, their support for the alliance is revealed to be conditional on post-electoral outcomes. Specifically, when BERSATU supporters learn that elections may result in outsized influence for the DAP – the party within the coalition that is most ideologically distant from them – they are more likely to desert the coalition than the supporters of other parties within the coalition. The reaction of DAP supporters to a message about possible BERSATU control of

government is not as strong. We believe that the difference in the strength of the reaction between BERSATU and DAP supporters is due, in part, to the presence of an alternative for the former, but none for latter. BERSATU supporters had the luxury of also choosing either the BN itself or PAS, an opposition party outside of the coalition. Policy differences between opposition parties and the strategic positioning of regime parties leads some opposition voters with an unsavory choice between policy and democracy. The fact that some of them choose to prioritize the former contributes to the longevity of authoritarian rule.

Our argument is related to the literature on electoral alliances in both democracies and non-democracies. The main lines of inquiry within this literature have been twofold. One strand focuses on the consequences of alliances for important outcomes such as government formation and survival in democracies, and regime survival in dictatorships (Howard and Roessler 2006, Carroll and Cox 2007, Resnick 2011, Donno 2013, Wahman 2013, Chiru 2015). A different set of studies investigate the mostly political conditions for the formation of these coalitions (Golder 2006, Wahman 2011, Arriola 2013, Gandhi and Reuter 2013). These studies typically focus on the incentives of party elites to enter and maintain such alliances. Very rarely do they focus explicitly on voters (see Gschwend and Hooghe 2008 for an exception). Yet an electoral alliance is successful only to the extent that some party leaders within the alliance believe that they can persuade their own supporters to engage in strategic cross-party voting. But there is very little evidence to evaluate their conditional success. Consequently, this issue is crucial for any parties attempting to improve their electoral fortunes through an electoral alliance.

The context of opposition parties struggling against powerful authoritarian incumbents layers an additional dimension to the problem of strategic voting. A vote for an opposition alliance in this context is an action in support of democracy because it makes ending

authoritarian rule more likely. Yet ideological divisions frequently make such anti-incumbent coalitions difficult, if not impossible (Magaloni 2006, Greene 2007). In this regard, our work also relates to the larger question of when citizens are willing to prioritize democracy above their ideological and material goals (Sartori 1976, Bermeo 2003, Acemoglu et al. 2013, Svolik 2017). While these works examine the conditions under which citizens support the maintenance of democracy, we examine individuals' willingness to fight for it.

Electoral alliances in dictatorships

Opposition collective action is often critical to bringing about the end of an authoritarian regime. Collective action against the incumbent can emerge as protests or boycotts, but most attempts at coordination in electoral autocracies take the form of electoral alliances. Alliances that entail strategic coordination around candidates address a common problem confronting opposition parties: the fracturing of the anti-regime vote which enables the incumbent to win reelection. In 1992, Kenya's Daniel Arap Moi faced 7 opponents and won reelection with only 37 percent of the vote. In South Korea, the military regime's candidate, Roh Tae Woo won the 1988 election with 36 percent of the vote because neither of the main two opposition candidates (who collectively polled 54 percent) was willing to step down.

When formed, an electoral alliance can constitute a danger to the incumbent. Opposition alliances increase the likelihood of political liberalization as well as the probability of incumbent defeat (Arriola 2013, Donno 2013, Wahman 2013, Bunce and Wolchik 2011, Howard and Roessler 2006, Ziegfeld and Tudor 2017). In the 2002 election, Kenya's Arap Moi went down in defeat, ending nearly 40 years of KANU rule, because opposition parties were finally able to form an alliance that supported one challenger. In the Philippines, Corazon Aquino defeated

Marcos by a slender margin of 800,000 votes thanks to the alliance she formed with Salvador Laurel. Coordination helps opposition parties achieve victory in parliamentary elections as well. Figure 1 shows the frequency of incumbent defeat is positively correlated with the presence of an opposition alliance in parliamentary autocracies such as Malaysia's (Wahman 2013). In the 2013 general elections in Malaysia, an electoral coalition came the closest anyone has ever come to ending 43 years of BN rule (Pepinsky 2015). An opposition alliance with a slightly different composition was finally able to achieve electoral victory in 2018.

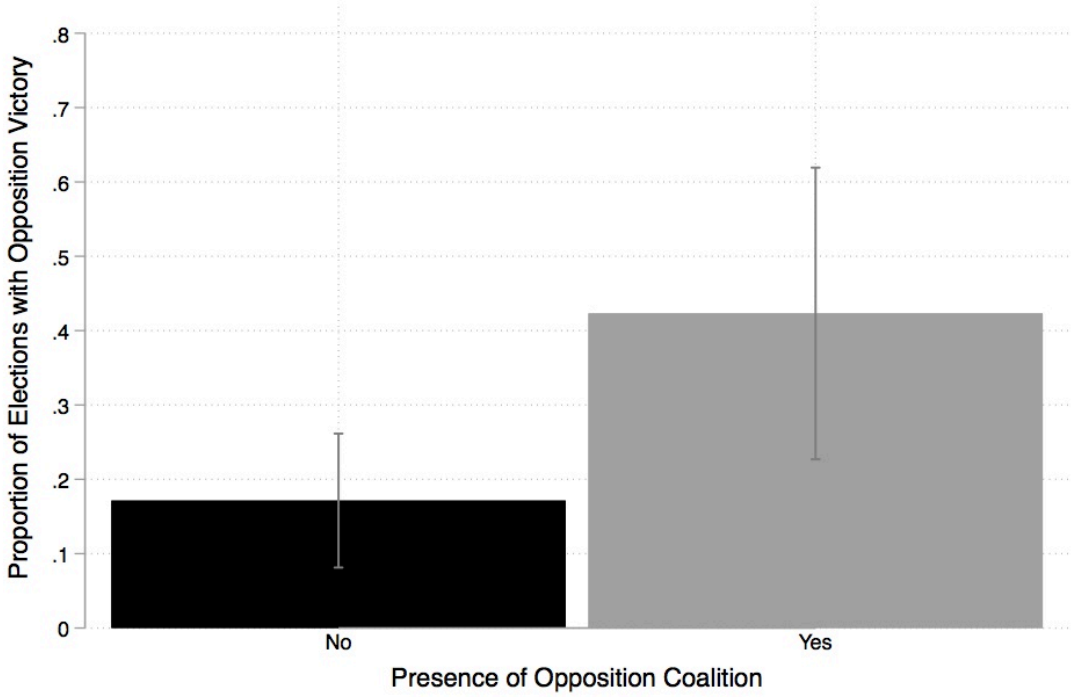

Figure 1: Opposition Coalition and Victories in Parliamentary Electoral Autocracies (1970-2004)

While electoral alliances can have potentially big payoffs for opposition forces, they are not easy to form. Party leaders may need to compromise on their policy commitments in order to run on a common platform. Because more ideologically distant partners need to compromise

more, electoral alliances are more likely to occur among parties that are closer in policy preferences (Golder 2006, Wahman 2011). Party leaders also need to agree to a division of the spoils if the coalition were to actually win office. In distributing political offices, there may be a tension between recognizing parties' respective bargaining power and adequately compensating kingmakers (Carroll and Cox 2007). Finally, parties must determine a way to enforce these pre-electoral agreements about sharing the spoils *after* the election. Making credible commitments seems especially difficult for opposition parties that have short time horizons and few reputational considerations to lean on (Arriola 2013, Gandhi and Reuter 2013).

Opposition voters

While we know about the difficulties of coalition formation from the standpoint of party leaders, we know less about them as seen from the perspective of voters (see Gschwend and Hooghe 2008 for an exception). In a parliamentary system, when opposition parties are running as an alliance, some voters will be able to vote for their most preferred party within their legislative districts. But other voters will need to engage in cross-party voting in order to support the alliance.

Assume two parties, A and D, in an electoral alliance to challenge the Incumbent, I. On some policy dimension, the parties are ordered as: $I - A - D$. These parties compete in a parliamentary system with majoritarian elections. There are j districts. Whichever party wins the most number of districts gets to form the next government, taking the position of prime minister and deciding on an allocation of portfolios. If party A wins the most districts, then the leader of party A becomes PM and gives some portfolios to party D, and vice versa. Since this is an

electoral autocracy, if party *I* wins the most districts, then it retains the premiership and keeps all portfolios. Finally, whichever party controls the premiership sets policy at its ideal point.

In district *j*, the electoral alliance will sponsor only one candidate – *A* or *D* – so that opposition voter *i* must make a choice between {*A* or *D*} and *I*. Voter *i* cares about three things.[1] First, since he is an opposition supporter, he places some value on alternation in power (i.e., value of democracy). Second, he cares about what types of policies will be implemented after the election. Finally, voter *i* places value on political office for his preferred party for reasons other than implementation of his preferred policy. He believes control of the premiership would bring the most adherents and resources to his party with other portfolios bringing slightly less value.

With this stylized framework, consider three scenarios. First, opposition voter *i* whose preferred party is *A* and is deciding between candidates from party *A* and *I* in district *j*. In this baseline case, the choice is easy. Voting for party *A* helps to bring about alternation in power, party *A*'s control over the premiership, and post-electoral policies in line with voter i's preferences. Both the PM and policy are at the voter's ideal point. In comparison, voting for the incumbent brings no alternation, no portfolios, and policy at party *I*'s ideal point. So the opposition voter chooses *A*.

Second, opposition voter *i* whose preferred party is *A* and is deciding between *D* and *I* in his district. Voting for party *D* still helps to bring about alternation in power. But now party *D* – rather than the voter's preferred party *A* – will receive the premiership and will be able to set policy close to its ideal point. Party *A* receives only some portfolios. In comparison, voting for the incumbent brings no regime change, no portfolios, and post-electoral policy at close to party

[1] We do not consider the coordination problem of voters. Here we assume voter i is pivotal and district j is pivotal for a party to win the election.

I's ideal point. So the voter will choose the opposition alliance's candidate only if after the election, the value of portfolios party *A* will receive can compensate for the larger policy distance between *A* and *D* (in comparison to *A* and *I*). As the policy distance between *A* and *D* increases, we expect the likelihood that voter *i* supports *D* declines. If the value of democracy does not factor into the voter's utility or the incumbent can credibly promise portfolios to party *A* as well, then it becomes even more difficult to hold this voter's support for the opposition alliance.

Finally, consider opposition voter *i* whose preferred party is *D* and is deciding between *A* and *I* in his district. The choice for *A* brings alternation, portfolios for his preferred party, and policy at party *A*'s ideal point. A vote for the incumbent makes more likely no alternation, no portfolios for party *D*, and policy set at party *I*'s ideal point. In other words, this voter faces the same dilemma inherent in cross-party voting that the voter in our previous situation encountered. But now, it is in his best interest to still support the opposition alliance and vote for *A* since the incumbent party is further from *D* than *A* in policy terms.[2] The absence of a close ideological alternative makes the decision to defect from the opposition alliance less likely.[3]

Our main contention, then, is that some opposition voters may stray from supporting the alliance because they prioritize their policy commitments over their desire to see democratic turnover and when there is an alternative. When cross-party voting requires supporting a party that stands for undesirable policies and there is another party outside the alliance that represents

[2] If the incumbent can credibly offer portfolios to *D* as well, then as long as *A*'s offer of policy and portfolios beats the offer made by *I*, *A* will get the voter's support. But note that the incumbent will need to offer a lot of portfolios in order to compensate for the policy distance with *D*.

[3] Our setting is a parliamentary election with majoritarian electoral rules, but the dynamic outlined here is more general. Under proportional representation, parties within the coalition form joint lists that may force voters to support lists that do not prioritize candidates from their preferred parties.

more desirably policy outcomes, some voters will defect from supporting the opposition coalition.

Our argument implies a source of incumbency advantage that is distinct from the results of fraud, manipulation, or intimidation: the electoral loss to the opposition associated with the need to form ideologically diverse alliances. And while centrist incumbents seem good at dividing and conquering the opposition (Magaloni 2006, Greene 2007), the incumbent has considerable room to position himself and still damage an opposition alliance. Its ability to lure opposition voters away from the alliance depends in part on the composition of the coalition itself.

While we have focused on voters, their dilemma is not unrelated to the decisions of opposition elites. If party leaders do not believe their constituents will engage in cross-party voting, or fear that asking them to do so will result in some sort of backlash, they will not form an opposition coalition in the first place. So besides idiosyncratic disagreements or problems of commitment (Arriola 2013, Golder 2006), anticipation of voter reactions may be a source of fragmentation among the opposition.

Empirical context

Key features

We use a survey experiment in the run-up to the May 2018 general election in Malaysia to test the idea that as the policy distance between parties *A* and *D* within the alliance increases, support for the coalition declines among party *A* voters who are "treated" to the idea that party *D* will control the premiership because party *A* voters have an alternative outside of the coalition for which to vote. Three specific features of this election are important for our approach. First,

policy distinctions within the opposition alliance. Besides *A* and *D*, there are two parties – *B* and *C* – which lie between them in terms of policy positions. This enables us to compare the reaction of party *A* voters to those of voters from parties *B* and *C*. In response to hearing that party *D* is likely to control the premiership, we expect party *A* voters will be more likely to defect from the coalition than voters from parties *B* and *C* because the policy distance between *A* and *D* is greater than between *B* (or *C*) and *D*. Second, the presence of alternatives outside of the alliance. Besides the incumbent party which has policy positions close to that of party *A*, a spoiler opposition party outside of the coalition lies to the left of *A*. In contrast, there is no credible alternative to which party *D* voters can defect. Consequently, our expectation is that party *A* voters exposed to the treatment about party *D* will defect while party *D* voters exposed to the treatment about party *A* will not. Finally, the timing of the study. At the time of our survey, of the four coalition parties, *A* and *D* were the likeliest contenders for the premiership, but the coalition had given no indication of its post-electoral plans: either which party would lead it or what policies would be proposed. Consequently, our vignettes about A and D as possible leaders of government were plausible, but there was enough uncertainty among voters that would enable our respective treatments to have some effect. And in the absence of a common policy platform the time of the survey experiment, it would not be unreasonable for voters to believe that the party that controlled the government would determine policy.

The Case of Malaysia

For the May 2018 election, the Barisan Nasional (BN) was the incumbent ruling coalition, led by United Malays National Organization (UMNO), and including almost a dozen smaller parties, such as the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Gerakan, and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). While historically the coalition's electoral success was partly due to its

multi-ethnic composition and the rapid growth of the economy, repressive tactics against the opposition (Slater 2004) and the manipulation of electoral rules (Ostwald 2013, 2017) have been critical as well. In particular, the BN has benefited from gerrymandered districts that overweight their supporters, especially in rural areas. Since the early 1990s, however, the BN's electoral fortunes have swung substantially. Figure 2 shows the share of seats won in each election for the national parliament by the BN (and its precursor, the Alliance) and the largest opposition parties.

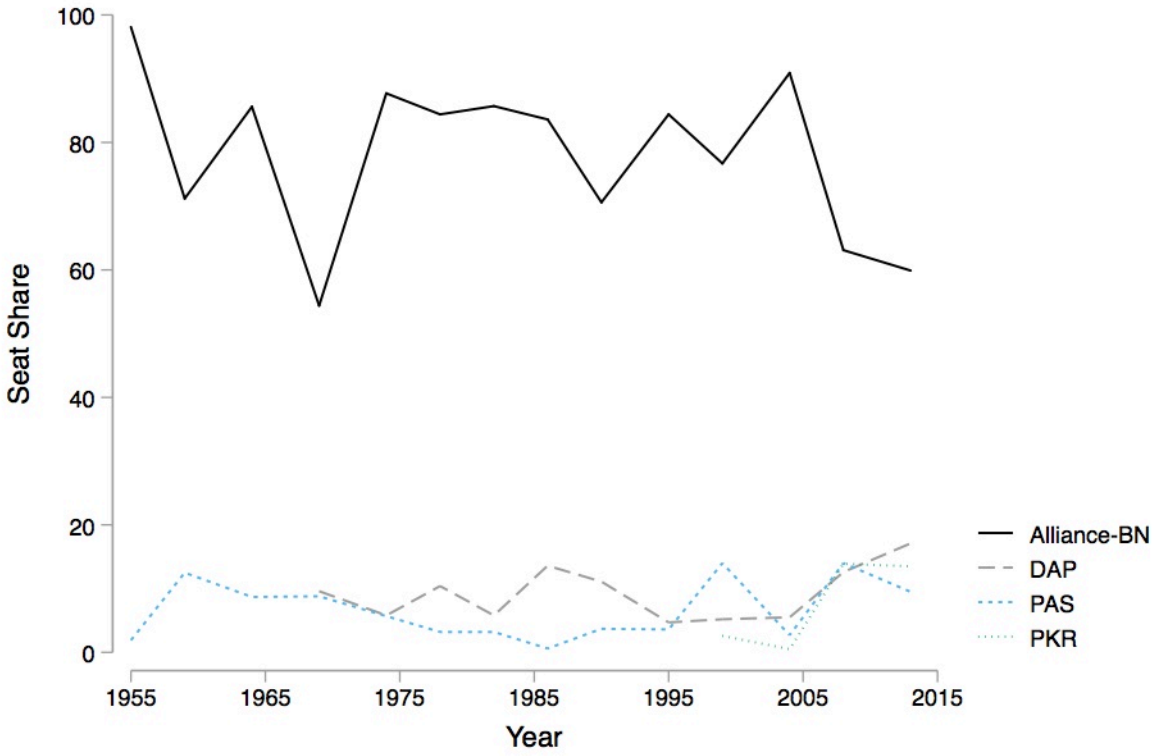

Figure 2: Seat Shares of Alliance-BN and Opposition Parties (1955-2013)[4]

[4] Before 1969, the ruling coalition was called the Alliance. PAS was part of the BN in the 1974 election. Sources include: Wong et al. (2010), Weiss (2013), and the Inter-parliamentary Union website.

Approaching the elections, a new opposition alliance, the Pakatan Harapan (PH), was formed by four opposition parties: BERSATU, PKR, AMANAH, and DAP (which correspond to our parties *A, B, C,* and *D*). The Democratic Action Party (DAP) is the oldest party in the alliance, having competed in elections since its founding in 1966. The People's Justice Party (Parti Keadilan Rakyat / PKR) was born out of splits within the regime in 1999 – between Prime Minister Mahathir and his deputy Anwar Ibrahim. The National Trust Party (Parti Amanah Negara / AMANAH) is a moderate Islamist party recently formed by former members of the more hardline opposition Malaysian Islamic Party (Parti Islam se-Malaysia / PAS). Finally, the Malaysian United Indigenous Party (Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia / BERSATU) is another product of a regime split with UMNO's former leader, Mahathir Mohamad, forming the new party in September 2016.

The existing ethnic, religious, and class cleavages within Malaysian society structure the ideological positioning of the parties within the opposition coalition (Ong K. M. 2015). While the constitution protects freedom of religion, there have long been debates about the state's appropriate relationship with Islam given that over sixty percent of Malaysians are Muslim. In addition, Malaysian society is multi-ethnic: Malays and *Bumiputeras* constitute almost 70 percent of the population, Chinese over 20 percent, and Indians just under 10 percent.[5] Worries over the relative size and economic status of the Malay-Muslim community have led to affirmative action programs for Malays and indigenous peoples (i.e., *Bumiputeras*) that have been in place since the 1970s, such as the New Economic Program (Gomez and Saravanamuttu

[5] *Bumiputeras* include Malays, natives from Sabah and Sarawak, and members of the Orang Asli community.

2013). These programs have led to increased education, employment, and ownership among the Malay and *Bumiputera* communities, but have drawn criticism from non-Malays.

How do the opposition parties compare in their policy positions on these ethnic, religious, and class cleavages? The biggest policy differences fall between the two most prominent members of the alliance - DAP and BERSATU. The DAP is a secular leftist party that has been a consistent advocate for equal treatment of the various ethnicities (i.e., against *Bumiputera* privileges), cultivating its support mostly from the quarter of Malaysia's population that is ethnic Chinese or Indian. It won 38 seats in the previous general election – the most number of seats among all the opposition parties. BERSATU, in contrast, is fully invested in a pro-Malay program (Wan Saiful 2018). Mahathir, its current leader and Malaysia's Prime Minister for 22 years (1981 to 2003), cited the necessity of this strategy in order to compete with UMNO: "UMNO's popularity is because it is a racial party… If the new party is to compete with UMNO, it must give the people in the rural constituencies and the unsophisticated urban constituencies the kind of comfort associated with UMNO's kind of racism."[6] Accordingly, full membership within the party is open only to *Bumiputeras* while non-*Bumiputeras* may join the party only as associate members.

The other parties in the coalition are more moderate and less prominent. Emphasizing its commitment to progressive Islam, AMANAH's positions are less polarized from those of its fellow alliance members. As a newly formed small splinter party from the much larger PAS, it has strongly advocated that alliance members put aside their differences to concentrate on defeating the BN. The multi-ethnic PKR similarly has emphasized a willingness to compromise

[6] "Mahathir explains why his New Party is Race-Based," *Free Malaysia Today,* 17 August 2016. http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2016/08/17/mahathir-explains-why-his-new-party-is-race-based/ (Accessed September 15, 2017).

and a focus on defeating the BN, which has helped in drawing multi-ethnic mass support. The party had 28 legislators at the time of the election, but factional infighting and imprisonment of its long-time leader Anwar Ibrahim diminished the party's standing within the coalition.

If the supporters of the BERSATU and DAP, the two opposing poles of the coalition, do not wish to vote for candidates from the opposition coalition, then what are their alternatives? DAP's mostly Chinese and Indian supporters can potentially vote for one of the non-Malay parties of the BN, such as the Chinese-based MCA or Gerakan, or the Indian-backed MIC. But this is highly unlikely. Since the 2008 "tsunami" general elections, non-Malay voters have largely deserted the BN (Chin 2010, Khalid and Loh 2016). The BN's gradual marginalization of Indian and Chinese interests over the decades has led to growing disillusionment over the MCA, Gerakan, or MIC's claims that non-Malay interests can be protected and advanced only within the dominant ruling BN coalition. As a result, even if DAP's supporters wish to protest against a BERSATU-dominant opposition alliance, they have little choice beyond the DAP itself. At best, they can simply abstain from voting.

BERSATU's Malay-Muslim supporters, however, have the luxury of more alternatives. As supporters of a newly formed splinter party from UMNO, they can potentially switch their support back to UMNO if UMNO can credibly commit itself to reforms to rid itself of corruption. A potential signal of credible commitment to reform may involve the costly move of replacing the current Prime Minister Najib Razak, who has been mired in a global money laundering and corruption scandal.[7] Although such a move may appear drastic, it is not without precedent, as UMNO had previously galvanized to force the unpopular Abdullah Badawi to

[7] For an overview, see the *Wall Street Journal*'s series of articles at http://www.wsj.com/specialcoverage/malaysia-controversy (Accessed January 11, 2018).

retire as Prime Minister in 2008. Moreover, BERSATU's supporters can also potentially vote for PAS, the conservative Islamic opposition party who is not a member of the Pakatan Harapan opposition alliance. While PAS's consistent advocacy of an Islamic state for Malaysia may be unpalatable for some voters, it is a much more acceptable option for pious Malay-Muslims than living under a non-Malay, secular DAP-dominant regime.

Consequently, we expect that BERSATU supporters are most susceptible to defection from the opposition coalition if they expect the DAP will control government. The prospects of a BERSATU-led government, however, will do little to push DAP supporters to desert the coalition since they have no other alternatives.

Research design

Survey experiment

We commissioned a telephone survey of Malaysian citizens between August 14 and September 25, 2017. The response rate was 5.75 percent. Of the 6,767 individuals who initially responded, 61.08 percent revealed themselves to be supporters of one of the parties within the incumbent ruling coalition, the BN. Removing them from the sample, and removing observations with missing responses, under-aged respondents, or enumerator error, leaves us with a sample of 2,195 opposition supporters.[8] We also exclude respondents from Sabah and Sarawak since politics in these two East Malaysian states is quite distinct from the rest of the country.[9] Of this

[8] Enumerator error was low. Out of the initial 2,298 sample of opposition supporters who provided full responses to all questions, only 52 respondents were found to have been wrongly asked questions for the treatment vignettes. Under-aged respondents was also low. Out of the 2,246 sample of opposition supporters who provided full responses to all questions and who were correctly assigned to one group, only 51 respondents were under the voting age.
[9] The main opposition parties are localized, advocating for local ethnic minority groups, and electoral politics is relatively more multi-dimensional (Hazis 2012, Weiss and Puyok 2017).

sample of opposition supporters, 1,277 individuals supported a member party of the Pakatan Harapan opposition coalition while 918 respondents indicated support for PAS.[10]

Our outcome of interest is in determining support for Pakatan Harapan among respondents who support one of its member parties. We expose all respondents to a general text, after which we survey their support for PH. The key feature of this text is that it makes no reference to post-electoral differences in outcomes among the coalition parties. With all respondents being exposed to this message first, we get a baseline assessment of how much they support the alliance:

> *Recent surveys done show that if the four parties of the Pakatan Harapan were to contest the elections separately, the Barisan Nasional for sure would obtain the majority of seats needed to form the next government. How likely would you cast a vote for candidates from Pakatan Harapan parties?*

All respondents then go on to answer a variety of questions eliciting demographic information. (For the ordering of questions, see the survey instrument in Appendix Table A.2, Supplementary Information pp.6-9) We randomly assign our sample into one of three groups: one control and two treatment arms.[11] The control group gets a message which is a repetition of what they learned about the PH earlier, again omitting any discussion of post-electoral differences among coalition parties:

> *Recent surveys show that if the Pakatan Harapan coalition stays together, it may win*

[10] For more information about the representativeness of the survey, see Appendix Table A.1, Supplementary Information pp.4-5.

[11] Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the three groups via a random number generator. Respondents assigned to group 1 were in the control group. Those assigned to group 2 were in the DAP treatment group. Those assigned to group 3 were in the BERSATU treatment group.

enough seats in the next election so that it – rather than the BN – would be able to form the next national government. How likely would you cast a vote for [candidates from] the Pakatan Harapan?

The treatment groups receive a message that has the same opening line as the control group message. But each treatment group receives an additional two sentences which remind that an electoral victory will result in one of the parties – the DAP or BERSATU – gaining control of the government.[12] The DAP [BERSATU] treatment group receives the following:

Recent surveys show that if the Pakatan Harapan coalition stays together, it may win enough seats in the next election so that it – rather than the BN – would be able to form the next national government. ***In addition, recent extra surveys done also show that the party with the most number of seats within the coalition will be the DAP [BERSATU]. Therefore, the DAP [BERSATU] leader will be the next prime minister.*** *How likely would you cast a vote for [candidates from] the Pakatan Harapan?*

Responses to these questions provide a post-treatment measure of support for PH. This set-up enables us to examine within-subject differences in attitudes towards the coalition that differ across subjects. Table 1 summarizes the format of the survey.

	Groups		
	Control	DAP treatment	BERSATU treatment
Pre-treatment text	Main text	Main text	Main text
Pre-treatment outcome	*Support* PH_0	*Support* PH_0	*Support* PH_0
Treatment text	Placebo text	DAP text	BERSATU text
Post-treatment outcome	*Support* $PH_{control}$	*Support* PH_{DAP}	*Support* $PH_{BERSATU}$

Table 1: Format of Survey.

[12] We focused on these two parties in our treatment arms since we have little reason to believe that the PKR will elicit conditional support given its centrist platform. We also did not construct a treatment arm for AMANAH because the party's likelihood of controlling government is so low so as to make that hypothetical unrealistic.

Estimation methods

Our main interest lies in a three-way comparison: within-subject differences across control and treatment groups for a specific party versus other parties within the coalition. We expect the DAP treatment to make BERSATU voters more likely to decrease their willingness to vote for the coalition than other voters. We expect the BERSATU treatment to have little or no effect in making DAP voters switch away from supporting PH in comparison to other voters. Note that we are interested in only comparisons between the control and DAP treatment groups and between the control and BERSATU treatment groups. We do not have theoretical expectations for the comparison between the DAP and BERSATU treatment groups.

We carry out a differences-in-differences analysis in which we expect that for BERSATU supporters:

$[\text{Post-treatment support PH} - \text{Pre-treatment support PH}]_{\text{DAP treatment}} - [\text{Post-treatment support PH} - \text{Pre-treatment support PH}]_{\text{control}} < 0$

We can express our quantity of interest in regression format as well:

$$\textit{Support PH}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \textit{DAP treatment}_i + \beta_2 d_t + \beta_3 \textit{BERSATU voter}_i + \beta_4(\textit{DAP treatment}_i * d_t) + \beta_5(\textit{DAP treatment}_i * \textit{BERSATU voter}_i) + \beta_6(\textit{BERSATU voter}_i * d_t) + \beta_7(\textit{DAP treatment}_i * d_t * \textit{BERSATU voter}_i) + \boldsymbol{\beta X}_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where *i* stands for individual and *t* for time (i.e., before or after treatment). *BERSATU voter* is a dichotomous indicator equal to 1 if the individual indicates pre-treatment support for that party; *DAP treatment* is a dichotomous indicator equal to 1 if the individual undergoes that treatment; *d* is a dummy that is equal to 1 if the response is post-treatment; and, ***X*** stands for various covariates. The coefficient β_7 captures the within-subject treatment-by-covariate interaction effect of the DAP treatment on support for the coalition over time for BERSATU versus other

supporters. The same procedure applies in determining whether DAP voters are more likely to turn away from the coalition after receiving the BERSATU treatment.

	Means		Differences in means		Means		Differences in means	
	Control (N=716)	DAP Treatment (N=736)	T-statistic	P-value	Control (N=716)	BERSATU Treatment (N=743)	T-Statistic	P-value
Political views								
Support PH_0	3.09	3.10	-0.254	0.800	3.09	3.13	-0.854	0.393
Support PH_0 (dummy)	0.78	0.79	-0.147	0.883	0.78	0.79	-0.241	0.810
Previous vote for coalition	0.73	0.80	-2.628	0.009	0.73	0.76	-0.984	0.326
Alternation important	2.79	2.75	1.552	0.121	2.79	2.81	-0.767	0.444
View of leader	1.84	1.77	1.596	0.111	1.84	1.76	1.889	0.059
View of regime	1.87	1.85	0.487	0.626	1.87	1.82	1.582	0.247
Coalition chances	2.79	2.82	-0.926	0.355	2.79	2.82	-0.885	0.376
DAP likely winner	0.31	0.31	0.123	0.902	0.31	0.35	-1.727	0.084
BERSATU likely winner	0.23	0.21	1.293	0.196	0.23	0.21	1.007	0.314
PKR likely winner	0.39	0.40	-0.221	0.825	0.39	0.33	2.608	0.009
AMANAH likely winner	0.07	0.09	-1.799	0.072	0.07	0.11	-3.015	0.003
Demographic characteristics								
Gender	0.72	0.71	0.541	0.588	0.72	0.75	-1.314	0.189
Age	39.37	38.76	0.876	0.380	39.37	39.91	-0.771	0.441
Malay	0.73	0.75	-0.850	0.396	0.73	0.72	0.207	0.836
Chinese	0.22	0.22	0.021	0.984	0.22	0.24	-0.869	0.385
Indian	0.05	0.03	1.304	0.192	0.05	0.04	1.063	0.288
Other ethnicity	0.01	0.004	1.313	0.189	0.01	0.01	0.644	0.520
Income	2.34	2.37	-0.508	0.612	2.34	2.43	-1.626	0.104
Internet access	0.78	0.79	-0.466	0.641	0.78	0.78	0.003	0.998
Public employment	0.06	0.06	0.462	0.644	0.06	0.08	-0.929	0.353
Private employment	0.41	0.42	-0.251	0.802	0.41	0.44	-1.191	0.234
Self-employment	0.31	0.30	0.293	0.770	0.31	0.30	0.525	0.600
Retired	0.07	0.07	-0.266	0.790	0.07	0.08	-0.609	0.543
Unemploy./Student	0.15	0.15	-0.153	0.878	0.15	0.11	2.247	0.025

Table 2: Balance Between Control and DAP Treatment Groups and Between Control and BERSATU Treatment Groups on Pre-Treatment Variables. Notes: The control group across the two comparisons refers to the same set of respondents.

To assess whether the groups are balanced on observable characteristics, we examine political attitudes and demographic characteristics of the respondents that were measured prior to the intervention. The left side of Table 2 shows means and differences in means between the control and DAP treatment groups while the right side makes a similar comparison for the

control and BERSATU treatment groups. (For descriptive statistics, see Appendix Table A.3, Supplementary Information p.10) There is substantial balance in pre-treatment covariates across the two sets of comparisons. Stratifying the comparison by respondents' partisan affiliation shows similar balance (see Appendix Tables A.4 and A.5, Supplementary Information pp.11-12).

In terms of political views, our respondent pool displays consistent attitudes. First, respondents are resolutely in support of democracy. Over 95 percent of them believe that it is important for "the party that controls the government to change from time to time." This demand for alternation in power makes opposition voters unique from BN supporters. Consistent with this view, our analysis of the latest Asian Barometer survey from late 2014 also reveals that BN voters were 10 to 20 percent more likely to state that "only one political party should be allowed to stand for election and hold office" (See Appendix Table A.11, Supplementary Information p.18).[13] Second, respondents are dissatisfied with the current government. Four out of five supporters of one of the coalition parties takes a dim view of the regime and of Najib Tun Rakak, the incumbent Prime Minister, rating them as "somewhat" or "very" negatively. Third, respondents believe that an opposition victory is possible. Approximately the same proportion of respondents believe that the opposition coalition has a good chance of winning a majority and forming the next government. In pre-treatment questioning, over 90 percent of respondents voice intention to vote for PH. Important to note is that these views are shared consistently across supporters of all four parties. Opposition supporters clearly embrace the importance of alternation in government and their support for PH as a way to achieve this goal.

[13] The Asian Barometer Survey is a research network comprising of 14 country teams, and is part of the Global Barometer Survey network. Its regional headquarters is co-hosted by the Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica, and the Center for East Asia Democratic Studies at National Taiwan University. For the background and methodological details of the ABS, refer to the project's website: www.asianbarometer.org.

Results

As a first test of our hypothesis, we track the post- and pre-treatment change in *Support PH*, a dichotomous indicator of support for PH that takes the value 1 if the respondent is very or somewhat likely to vote for PH, 0 if he is very or somewhat unlikely to support the coalition. Support for the coalition declines by 0.32 among BERSATU supporters who receive the DAP treatment in comparison to BERSATU supporters in the control group. In contrast, among DAP supporters, exposure to the BERSATU treatment results in no change in support for the alliance. (For the full set of results, see Appendix Table A.6, Supplementary Information p.13).

To evaluate more precisely treatment effects, however, we need to compare these respondents to supporters of other parties within the coalition as well as control for covariates. For this, we use a linear probability model in which our dependent variable is *Support PH* (defined above).[14]

[14] A Brant test provides evidence that our data violate the parallel regression assumption. Therefore, we use generalized ordered logistic rather than ordered logistic regression and find similar substantive results. We collapse the dependent variable into a binary indicator and use OLS regression for ease of interpretation. Our results also hold using binary logistic regression. For these alternative models, see Appendix Tables A.7 and A.8 in the Supplementary Information pp.14-15.

	Model 1				Model 2			
	Coeffic.	Std. err.	p-value	Adj. p-value	Coeffic.	Std. err.	p-value	Adj. p-value
Constant	0.907	0.010	0.000		0.604	0.082	0.000	
DAP treatment	0.012	0.021	0.596		0.010	0.021	0.635	
Time	0.021	0.013	0.147		0.021	0.013	0.147	
BERSATU supporter	-0.008	0.039	0.844		-0.032	0.043	0.472	
DAP treatment * Time	-0.096	0.034	0.017	0.117	-0.096	0.034	0.017	0.201
Time * BERSATU supporter	0.062	0.042	0.165		0.062	0.042	0.165	
DAP treatment * BERSATU supporter	0.010	0.048	0.841		0.020	0.050	0.693	
DAP treatment * Time * BERSATU supporter	-0.303	0.079	0.003	0.019	-0.303	0.079	0.003	0.032
Alternation important					0.057	0.015	0.003	0.034
Coalition chances					0.049	0.016	0.010	0.122
DAP likely winner					0.006	0.025	0.818	
BERSATU likely winner					0.018	0.031	0.572	
PKR likely winner					-0.005	0.030	0.863	

Table 3: Difference-in-Difference Estimation of Coalition Support for Supporters of BERSATU versus other coalition parties. Notes: Regressions use OLS with standard errors clustered at the state level. Bonferroni adjusted p-values are included for coefficients with unadjusted p-values that reach conventional levels of significance. 1,277 respondents.

Table 3 shows the effects of the DAP treatment on respondents. On the left side of the table are results from the baseline model while the model on the right includes controls that were found to reach conventional levels of significance in a model including all pre-treatment covariates without significantly reducing sample size. (For results of these larger models, see Appendix Tables A.9 and A.10, Supplementary Information pp.16-17) The results show that BERSATU supporters were 30 percent less likely to continue supporting the coalition after learning that the DAP might form the next government, as compared to supporters of other opposition parties.[15]

[15] Substantively similar results emerge if we remove DAP supporters from the sample.

	Model 1				Model 2			
	Coeffic.	Std. err.	p-value	Adjusted p-value	Coeffic.	Std. err.	p-value	Adjusted p-value
Constant	0.923	0.015	0.000		0.600	0.082	0.000	
BERSATU treatment	-0.026	0.033	0.453		-0.027	0.032	0.409	
Time	-0.047	0.013	0.005	0.032	-0.047	0.013	0.005	0.055
DAP supporter	-0.022	0.031	0.504		0.002	0.031	0.949	
BERSATU treatment * Time	0.085	0.029	0.014	0.097	0.085	0.029	0.014	0.167
Time * DAP supporter	0.040	0.022	0.091	0.639	0.040	0.022	0.092	
BERSATU treatment * DAP supporter	0.025	0.055	0.654		0.017	0.053	0.754	
BERSATU treatment * Time * DAP supporter	-0.078	0.044	0.107	0.747	-0.078	0.044	0.107	
Alternation important					0.062	0.015	0.001	0.016
Coalition chances					0.049	0.016	0.009	0.112
DAP likely winner					0.001	0.025	0.963	
BERSATU likely winner					0.001	0.027	0.983	
PKR likely winner					-0.009	0.032	0.780	

Table 4: Difference-in-Difference Estimation of Coalition Support for Supporters of DAP versus Other Coalition Parties. Notes: Regressions use OLS with standard errors clustered at the state level. Bonferroni adjusted p-values are included. 1,277 respondents.

Table 4, in turn, shows the effects of the BERSATU treatment on respondents. Both the baseline and full models show that we cannot rule out the null hypothesis. The likelihood that DAP supporters lower their support for the coalition once they learn that BERSATU will control the government is not significantly different from zero, as compared to the supporters of other opposition parties.[16] DAP supporters simply have no other alternative to the coalition.

[16] Substantively similar results emerge if BERSATU supporters are removed from the sample.

Exploring the mechanisms

Is it really differences in ideology between DAP and BERSATU supporters that is driving the result? We make the affirmative case by showing that the DAP treatment has a similarly large effect on supporters of PAS – a party that is outside of the coalition, but one that has strong ideological conflicts with the DAP. We also address rival motivations for BERSATU supporters: asymmetry in party size, DAP as unlikely winner, and ethnic chauvinism.

The reaction of PAS supporters

We examine the effect of the DAP treatment on PAS supporters. PAS was formed as an Islamist party in 1951. Twice in the past, PAS and the DAP have formed electoral coalitions that eventually collapsed because of ideological disagreements, specifically over the place of religion in politics. Even though the parties, in the 1999 Barisan Alternatif coalition, had agreed to set aside their core policy demands, PAS became more assertive on the implementation of Islamic law once it gained control of subnational state governments after elections (Ufen 2009, Noor 2014). DAP leaders saw such actions as confirmation of their fears, withdrawing from the coalition in 2001. Similarly, PAS left the 2013 coalition and refused to join the current one again because of its strained relations with the DAP. As late as May 2017, the president of PAS, Hadi Awang, reiterated that his party was opposed to DAP because DAP was "against the role of Islam in the country, although Islam is the religion of the federation."[17] The long history of policy disagreements between the two parties lead us to expect PAS supporters to mirror the behavior of BERSATU voters.

[17] Kassim, Yang Razali. "Is a New PAS Emerging?" *The Straits Times,* 5 May 2017. http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/is-a-new-pas-emerging (Accessed September 14, 2017).

	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value	Adjusted p-value
Constant	0.377	0.073	0.000	
DAP treatment	0.004	0.022	0.877	
Time	0.021	0.013	0.147	
PAS supporter	-0.234	0.021	0.000	0.000
DAP treatment * Time	-0.096	0.034	0.017	0.150
Time * PAS supporter	-0.064	0.014	0.001	0.008
DAP treatment * PAS supporter	-0.016	0.023	0.491	
DAP treatment * Time * PAS supporter	-0.141	0.036	0.002	0.022
Alternation important	0.038	0.026	0.134	
Coalition chances	0.145	0.026	0.000	0.001

Table 5: Difference-in-difference Estimation of Coalition Support for Supporters of PAS versus other Parties. Notes: Regression uses OLS with standard errors clustered at the state level. Bonferroni adjusted p-values are included. 1,934 respondents.

Table 5 shows the effects of the DAP treatment on PAS supporters as compared to the supporters of other opposition parties. Prior to treatment, about 55 percent of PAS supporters expressed a willingness to vote for PH. The lower baseline support for PH is not surprising given that PAS is not included in the opposition coalition. Once exposed to the DAP treatment, however, a PAS supporter is almost 14 percent more likely to withdraw their support for the coalition in comparison to other opposition supporters.

Asymmetry of size as a possible motivation

The aversion of BERSATU supporters to a DAP-led government also could be due to asymmetries in size between the respective parties. Differences in size and strength among potential coalition partners may influence party leaders' decisions to enter into electoral alliances and voters' willingness to support these coalitions (Ibenskas 2016, Golder 2016, Meffert and Gschwend 2011). Specifically, the asymmetry of an alliance provokes supporters of smaller partners to turn away from the coalition (Gschwend and Hooghe 2008, Wegner and Pellicer 2013). This is because the supporters of smaller parties may be concerned that an electoral victory for the coalition will serve to only magnify these differences in strength.

But if asymmetries of size is of paramount consideration for voters, then we would expect to see AMANAH supporters exhibit attitudes similar to those of BERSATU voters. At the time of the campaign, both AMANAH and BERSATU were recently-formed parties: they had little parliamentary representation and their popularity was unproven in an election. So if concerns about the relative gains of parties within the coalition was a dominant motivation, then the behavior of BERSATU and AMANAH supporters should be quite comparable.

	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value	Adjusted p-value
Constant	0.603	0.068	0.000	
DAP treatment	0.018	0.023	0.443	
Time	0.044	0.008	0.000	0.002
AMANAH supporter	0.001	0.028	0.966	
DAP treatment * Time	-0.174	0.029	0.000	0.007
Time * AMANAH supporter	-0.067	0.039	0.113	
DAP treatment * AMANAH supporter	-0.014	0.044	0.765	
DAP treatment * Time * AMANAH supporter	0.137	0.044	0.009	0.085
Alternation important	0.058	0.016	0.004	0.037
Coalition chances	0.047	0.015	0.010	0.090

Table 6: Difference-in-Difference Estimation of Coalition Support for Supporters of AMANAH versus Other Parties in Coalition. Notes: Regression uses OLS with standard errors clustered at the state level. Bonferroni adjusted p-values are included. 1,277 respondents.

The results in Table 6, instead, show that AMANAH supporters do not share the same hesitations about a DAP-led government. Exposure to the DAP treatment makes AMANAH supporters increase their support for the coalition by almost 14 percent compared to other opposition supporters. We attribute this effect to the close relationship between the DAP and AMANAH leaders. The DAP supported AMANAH's leaders, such as Mohamad Sabu, Khalid Samad, Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad, and Dr. Siti Mariah, even when they were still just a progressive faction within the conservative Islamic PAS. Their defection from PAS to form AMANAH in late 2015 also garnered support from the DAP (Hew 2016).

DAP as unlikely winner

An alternative explanation for BERSATU supporters' strong reactions to the DAP treatment may be that their initial expectation about the prospects of a DAP-led government were low and the treatment vignette suggesting a DAP premiership simply led to shock that triggered a shift away from the coalition. In this case, the reaction of BERSATU supporters is an artifact of their pre-treatment beliefs.

The prospect of a DAP-led government, however, was not viewed as low by anyone. First, of the four parties in the coalition, the DAP won the largest number of seats in the previous general elections (38 seats). So the DAP's statement – as early as March 2017 – that the party "confidently forecasted it is going to win more than 40 seats…" in the election could be viewed as credible.[18] Second, we asked respondents a pre-treatment question about which opposition party they believe would win the most number of seats. Among them, 32 percent projected the DAP compared to 22 percent BERSATU. The majority of each party's supporters believed its own party would likely win the most seats. But respondents do not significantly discriminate among the rest of their choices. In addition, the right-side panels in Tables 3 and 4 show that inclusion of indicators of which party is projected to gain the most seats (*DAP likely winner*, *BERSATU likely winner*, *PKR likely winner*; AMANAH as the omitted category) does not change our substantive findings.

[18] "DAP Will Decide Who Becomes Prime Minister," Malaysia Today, March 26, 2017. http://www.malaysia-today.net/2017/03/19/dap-will-decide-who-becomes-prime-minister/ (Accessed July 31, 2018).

Ethnic chauvinism

The policy differences between BERSATU and the DAP run deep. At stake is a raft of economic, educational, and employment policies that have been critical in raising the material well-being of ethnic Malays since the 1970s. Due to the overlap between policy differences and ethnic divisions, however, ethnic chauvinism and policy considerations by BERSATU voters can produce observationally equivalent responses to the DAP treatment.

We cannot discard the possibility that prejudice is a factor. Still, various pieces of evidence suggest that the "ethnic factor" cannot completely account for political attitudes. First, opposition and government supporters are divided by their beliefs in the importance of democracy. As mentioned earlier in the paper, Asian Barometer data show that opposition respondents attach greater importance to political competition and alternation in power than BN supporters. While the Asian Barometer survey occurred before the emergence of BERSATU, there is no reason to think that BERSATU supporters would not similarly value democracy as other opposition voters. But this would imply that while BERSATU and BN supporters may share their desire for pro-Malay programs, there is another issue – democracy – which divides them. Second, in response to a post-treatment question about the reasons for critical views of the DAP, over two-thirds of BERSATU and PAS supporters claim "the party does not represent majority interests." This response suggests that the root of their objections lie over policy. Finally, if defection from the PH opposition alliance was purely about inter-ethnic rivalry, then we should observe equal rates of defection from both sides – DAP supporters would reduce their support for PH given the BERSATU treatment, and BERSATU supporters would reduce their support for PH given the DAP treatment. Yet what we find is uneven defection: DAP supporters

maintained their support for the coalition despite the possibility of a BERSATU-led government. Inter-ethnic biases may be important, but the presence of an alternative in the policy space seems equally important.

Concluding Discussion

In the May 2018 election, the Pakatan Harapan pulled off a stunning upset. With nearly half of the popular vote, it won 113 seats – just enough to win a simple parliamentary majority. If the problem of cross-party voting was so serious, how did the coalition manage to win? Events subsequent to our study point to the fact that political elites in Malaysia recognized the vulnerability of PH's support among ethnic Malay-Muslim voters, especially BERSATU's followers. The incumbent BN thus sought to exploit this vulnerability while PH leaders took great pains to mitigate it.

As the elections approached, the BN drew themselves closer to the conservative Islamic PAS, organizing multiple events where incumbent Prime Minister Najib Razak and PAS leader Hadi Awang were both seen together.[19] Field interviews with candidates and academics during the election also revealed that the BN had provided financial incentives to PAS to run more than 150 candidates in the 222 constituencies across the country. It was the greatest number of candidates that PAS had ever fielded. By forcing three-cornered contests in multiple districts between BN, PAS, and PH candidates, the aim was to induce PH's Malay-Muslim supporters,

[19] Boo, Su-Lyn. "Another UMNO-PAS event, but GE14 alliance unlikely, analysts say." *Malay Mail*, 22 December 2017. https://www.malaymail.com/s/1537911/another-umno-pas-event-but-ge14-alliance-unlikely-analysts-say (Accessed October 3, 2018).

especially those from BERSATU, to switch to either PAS or BN.[20] The BN also launched several campaigns to stoke fears of a DAP-controlled government.

In a bid to counter the BN's efforts, Pakatan Harapan announced in January 2018 that BERSATU's leader, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would be the next prime minister and Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, PKR's leader, would be made deputy prime minister, should the opposition form the next government. This was the first time that any opposition coalition in Malaysia's history had formally announced its post-electoral cabinet ahead of impending elections. The announcement of an executive branch with two Malay-Muslim leaders served to resolve the uncertainty over who would control the government and to reassure Malay-Muslim opposition supporters that a DAP-dominated government would not be the outcome. This declaration was critical for the coalition's success. Forty constituencies that BN won in 2013 switched to one of the parties within the coalition in 2018. If BERSATU voters constituted on average 24 percent of coalition voters in each constituency (as in our sample) and 30 percent of them had defected (as in our results), the coalition would have lost 5 to 12 of these seats (See Appendix Table A.12, Supplementary Information pp.19-20). Given that the coalition won a majority by just one seat, defection by these 7 percent of opposition voters would have resulted in defeat.

The Pakatan Harapan's experience in Malaysia suggests that one important source for the failure of opposition coalitions – to form or win elections – stems from opposition voters themselves. Party leaders may anticipate supporters' hesitation to engage in cross-party voting and decide that the formation of a coalition is not worth the costly effort. Even when leaders

[20] Naidu, Sumisha. "Multi-cornered fights and fresh faces in Selangor for upcoming Malaysia election." Channelnewsasia, 24 April 2018. https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/multi-cornered-fights-and-fresh-faces-in-selangor-for-upcoming-10171198 (Accessed October 3, 2018).

successfully negotiate coalitions, not all of their supporters may be willing to follow them into the gamble. When opposition coalitions include ideologically distant partners and supporters see more attractive options outside of the coalition, they are willing to abandon the coalition. This may be true even if they view democratic turnover in office as important and even if desertion of the coalition means abandoning this goal.

So how might opposition parties solve this problem? One important element is to reduce the uncertainty of voters over what a post-electoral government would look like if the opposition were to win. Parties may strive to do this by issuing common policy platforms which reflect inter-party agreement on policies the coalition will implement if it would win office (Ong E. 2017). Another approach is to have coalition parties divide up political offices. The Malaysian experience teaches that critically, such deals must be made public and they must compensate important coalition members. The proposed division of offices among coalition members may not be "fair"; it will depend on which parties' supporters have credible alternatives to which they can defect.

The problem of inducing cross-party voting among coalition members should arise in democratic elections as well. But the problem in the context of an authoritarian election highlights just how much voters are willing to give up – a chance at democracy – to protect their interests. And while the concern over policy may be specific to systems in which parties have clear, identifiable positions (e.g., less party system volatility), other sources of partisanship may drive the fickleness of voters. In this regard, our work highlights another source of incumbent advantage that emerges outside of fraud, manipulation, or intimidation.

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Supplementary Information
for
"Committed or Conditional Democrats? Opposition Dynamics in Electoral Autocracies"

This version:
October 10, 2018

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Survey Details

Survey Company: Invoke Centre for Policy Initiatives Research (I-CPI Research)

Survey Implementation Dates: August 14, 2017 to September 25, 2017

Survey Sampling Frame: Random stratified sampling by gender, ethnicity, age, and state

Survey Total Respondents Called: 117,632

Survey Respondents responded with at least one party affiliation: 6,767 (5.75%)

After removing BN supporters (4,122 respondents), missing responses, under-aged respondents, respondents with enumerator error, and respondents from Sabah and Sarawak, you get 2,195 respondents. See Appendix Table A.3.

Survey sampling source: Proprietary telephone database by Invoke

Institutional Review Board Details

IRB Approval Number: IRB00089308

IRB Original Approval Date: July 6, 2016

IRB Redetermination-Not-Required Approval Date: January 4, 2017

IRB Approval Status: Exempt Review

	Malaysia in 2017 (includes Sabah and Sarawak, excludes non-citizens)	**Our Survey (BN+PH) (excludes Sabah and Sarawak, excludes non-citizens)**
Gender	Male = 50.6% Female = 49.4%	Male = 63.4% Female = 36.6%
Ethnicity	Bumiputera = 68.8% Chinese = 23.2% Indians = 7.0% Others = 1.0%	Bumiputera = 79.3% Chinese = 13.5% Indians = 7.2%
Age	0-14 years = 25.9% 15-64 years = 67.4% 65+ years = 6.8% Median Age = 28.3 years	Mean = 40.9 years Median = 39 years
State	Johor = 14.5% Kedah = 8.4% Kelantan = 7.2% KL = 7.1% Malacca = 3.5% Negeri Sembilan = 4.4% Pahang = 6.4% Perak = 9.8% Perlis = 1.0% Penang = 6.8% Putrajaya = 0.4% Selangor = 25.1% Terengganu = 4.7% *(excludes Sabah and Sarawak, includes non-citizens)	Johor = 19.5% Kedah = 12.2% Kelantan = 13.0% KL = 3.8% Malacca = 5.4% Negeri Sembilan = 6.8% Pahang = 11.4% Perak = 8.7% Perlis = 0.3% Penang = 2.2% Putrajaya = 0.1% Selangor = 13.9% Terengganu = 2.6%
Monthly Household Income	Median Income = RM5,228 Mean Income = RM6,958 *(includes non-citizens)	Less than RM1500 = 38.6% RM1500-3000 = 31.3% RM3000-5000 = 16.1% More than RM5000 = 14.0%
Occupation	Labor force participation rate = 68.0% Outside of labor force (students, housewives, retirees) = 32.0% Unemployment rate = 3.4% *(includes non-citizens)	Government sector = 10.4% Private sector = 34.3% Self-employed = 25.3% Retired = 8.7% Student/Unemployed = 21.3%

Internet Access	Yes = 85.7% No = 14.3% *(includes non-citizens)	Yes = 68.4% No = 31.6%

Table A.1: Comparison of population and survey characteristics. Sources on population include (Accessed October 8, 2018):

(1) Malaysia Department of Statistics, Population Quick Info, http://pqi.stats.gov.my/searchBI.php?tahun=2017&kodData=2&kodJadual=1&kodCiri=7&kodNegeri=00
(2) Malaysia Department of Statistics, Current Population Estimates, 2017-2018 https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemeByCat&cat=155&bul_id=c1pqTnFjb29HSnNYNUpiTmNWZHArdz09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09
(3) Malaysia Department of Statistics, Current Population Estimates, 2016-2017 https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemeByCat&cat=155&bul_id=a1d1UTFZazd5ajJiRWFHNDduOXFFQT09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09
(4) Malaysia Department of Statistics, Current Population Estimates, 2014-2016 https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemeByCat&cat=155&bul_id=OWlxdEVoYlJCS0hUZzJyRUcvZEYxZz09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09
(5) Malaysia Department of Statistics, ICT Use and Access By Individuals and Household Survey Report 2017 https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemeByCat&cat=395&bul_id=bHBzbWxkWElxRDlmaU81Q3R2ckRkZz09&menu_id=amVoWU54UTl0a21NWmdhMjFMMWcyZz09
(6) Malaysia Department of Statistics, Report of Household Income and Basic Amenities Survey 2016 https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemeByCat&cat=120&bul_id=RUZ5REwveU1ra1hGL21JWVlPRmU2Zz09&menu_id=amVoWU54UTl0a21NWmdhMjFMMWcyZz09
(7) Malaysia Department of Statistics, Labor Force Survey Report 2017 https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemeByCat&cat=126&bul_id=aEdIelhlVTBtOHhjOUxqcXhyc2pCUT09&menu_id=U3VPMldoYUxzVzFaYmNkWXZteGduZz09

Survey questions (in the order provided to respondents)	**Variables**
Q1. I am going to read to you a list of names of political parties contesting in the upcoming general elections. Among this list of political parties, can you tell me which party you feel closest to? 1. United Malays National Organization (UMNO) 2. Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) 3. Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) 4. Gerakan 5. Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) 6. Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) 7. Parti Islam se-Malaysia (PAS) 8. Democratic Action Party (DAP) 9. Amanah 10. Another party not listed here.	*BERSATU supporter* 1 supporter 0 not *DAP supporter* 1 supporter 0 not *PAS supporter* 1 supporter 0 not *AMANAH supporter* 1 supporter 0 not
Q2. For this party that you have chosen that you feel close to, can you tell me how close do you feel to them? 1. I feel a little close to this party. 2. I feel somewhat close to this party. 3. I feel very close to this party 4. I feel 100% close to this party.	
Q3. How important do you think it is for the party that controls the government to change from time to time? 1. Very important 2. Somewhat important 3. Not important	*Alternation important* 3 very important 2 somewhat important 1 not important
Q4. At the moment, how do you view the Barisan Nasional (BN)? 1. Very positively 2. Somewhat positively 3. Somewhat negatively 4. Very negatively	*View of regime* 4 very positively 3 somewhat positively 2 somewhat negatively 1 very negatively
Q5. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the performance of Najib Tun Rakak? 1. Very satisfied 2. Somewhat satisfied 3. Somewhat dissatisfied 4. Very dissatisfied	*View of leader* 4 very satisfied 3 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 1 very dissatisfied
Q6. In the 2013 GE, which party did you vote for? 1. Barisan Nasional (MCA, MIC, UMNO, Gerakan) 2. Pakatan Rakyat (PKR, DAP, PAS)	*Previous vote*

Q7. Can you tell me how many parties are in the Pakatan Harapan coalition? Enter exact number.	
Q8. Pakatan Harapan is a coalition of four opposition parties - DAP, AMANAH, PKR, and BERSATU - that is trying to win against the Barisan Nasional in the next elections. What do you think are the chances of Pakatan Harapan coalition forming the next government? 1. Very likely 2. Somewhat likely 3. Somewhat unlikely 4. Very unlikely	*Coalition chances* 4 very likely 3 somewhat likely 2 somewhat unlikely 1 very unlikely
Q9. Which party in the Pakatan Harapan coalition do you think is going to get the most number of seats? 1. DAP 2. PKR 3. AMANAH 4. BERSATU	*DAP likely winner* 1 yes 0 no
	BERSATU likely winner 1 yes 0 no
	PKR likely winner 1 yes 0 no
	AMANAH likely winner 1 yes 0 no
Q10. Recent surveys done show that if the four parties of the Pakatan Harapan were to contest the elections separately, the Barisan Nasional for sure would obtain the majority of seats needed to form the next government. How likely would you cast a vote for candidates from Pakatan Harapan parties? 1. Very likely 2. Somewhat likely 3. Somewhat unlikely 4. Very unlikely	*Support PH_0* 4 very likely 3 somewhat likely 2 somewhat unlikely 1 very unlikely
Q11. What state do you live in? Drop down list.	Dummy variables for 12 regions (including Kuala Lumpur, excluding Sabah and Sarawak)
Q12. What is your ethnicity? 1. Malay 2. Chinese 3. Indian 4. Others (Muslim or non-Muslim Bumiputera, Eurasian)	*Malay* 1 yes 0 no
	Chinese 1 yes 0 no
	Indian 1 yes 0 no

	Other ethnicity 1 yes 0 no
Q13. What is your gender? 1. Male 2. Female	*Gender* 1 male 0 female
Q14. What is your age? Enter exact age.	*Age*
Q15. What language was the survey conducted in? 1. Malay 2. Chinese 3. English 4. Tamil	
Q16. What is your occupation? 1. Government/public sector 2. Private sector 3. Self-employed 4. Homemaker 5. Retired 6. Student/unemployed	*Public employment* 1 yes 0 no
	Private employment 1 yes 0 no
	Self-employed 1 yes 0 no
	Retired 1 yes 0 no
	Unemployed/student 1 yes 0 no
Q17. Do you have internet access? 1. Yes 2. No	*Internet* 1 yes 0 no
Q18. What is your monthly household income? 1. Less than 1500 RM 2. 1500-3000 RM 3. 3001-5000 RM 4. Greater than 5000 RM	*Income* 4 > 5000 RM 3 3001-5000 RM 2 1500-3000 RM 1 < 1500 RM
<u>Control group</u> Recent surveys show that if the Pakatan Harapan coalition stays together, it may win enough seats in the next election so that it – rather than the BN – would be able to form the next national government. Q19A. How likely would you cast a vote for [candidates from] the Pakatan Harapan?	*Support PH_1* 4 very likely 3 somewhat likely 2 somewhat unlikely

1. Very likely 2. Somewhat likely 3. Somewhat unlikely 4. Very unlikely	1 very unlikely
<u>DAP treatment group</u> Recent surveys show that if the Pakatan Harapan coalition stays together, it may win enough seats in the next election so that it – rather than the BN – would be able to form the next national government. **In addition, recent extra surveys done also show that the party with the most number of seats within the coalition will be the DAP. Therefore, the DAP leader will be the next prime minister.**	*DAP treatment* 1 in DAP treatment group 0 in control group
Q19B. How likely would you cast a vote for [candidates from] the Pakatan Harapan? 1. Very likely 2. Somewhat likely 3. Somewhat unlikely 4. Very unlikely	*Support PH_1* 4 very likely 3 somewhat likely 2 somewhat unlikely 1 very unlikely
<u>BERSATU treatment group</u> Recent surveys show that if the Pakatan Harapan coalition stays together, it may win enough seats in the next election so that it – rather than the BN – would be able to form the next national government. **In addition, recent extra surveys done also show that the party with the most number of seats within the coalition will be BERSATU. Therefore, the BERSATU leader will be the next prime minister.**	*BERSATU treatment* 1 in BERSATU treatment group 0 in control group
Q19C. How likely would you cast a vote for [candidates from] the Pakatan Harapan? 1. Very likely 2. Somewhat likely 3. Somewhat unlikely 4. Very unlikely	*Support PH_1* 4 very likely 3 somewhat likely 2 somewhat unlikely 1 very unlikely
Q20. I am now going to read you 2 statements about how coalition governments make policy. Can you tell me which one is closest to your own view? 1. All the parties within the coalition have equal influence on policymaking. 2. The party that controls the position of prime minister has more weight in decision-making.	
Q21. I am not going to read you 2 statements about criticisms of DAP. Can you tell me which one is closer to your own view? 1. The party does not represent majority interests. 2. The party does not have the skills to govern effectively.	

Table A.2: Survey questions and variables created from them for use in analysis.

	Observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Political views					
Support PH_0	2,195	3.108	0.918	1	4
Support PH_0 (dummy)	2,195	0.786	0.410	0	1
Support PH_1	2,195	2.971	1.018	1	4
Support PH_1 (dummy)	2,195	0.726	0.447	0	1
Previous vote	1,654	0.762	0.426	0	1
Alternation important	2,195	2.783	0.482	1	3
View of leader	2,195	1.790	0.812	1	4
View of regime	2,195	1.845	0.813	1	4
Coalition chances	2,195	2.810	0.739	1	4
DAP supporter	2,195	0.208	0.406	0	1
BERSATU supporter	2,195	0.139	0.346	0	1
AMANAH supporter	2,195	0.071	0.257	0	1
PKR supporter	2,195	0.164	0.370	0	1
PAS supporter	2,195	0.418	0.493	0	1
DAP likely winner	2,195	0.323	0.468	0	1
BERSATU likely winner	2,195	0.216	0.412	0	1
PKR likely winner	2,195	0.371	0.483	0	1
AMANAH likely winner	2,195	0.089	0.285	0	1
Demographic characteristics					
Gender	2,195	0.728	0.445	0	1
Age	2,195	39.349	13.334	16	80
Malay	2,195	0.731	0.443	0	1
Chinese	2,195	0.223	0.416	0	1
Indian	2,195	0.039	0.194	0	1
Other ethnicity	2,195	0.007	0.082	0	1
Income	2,195	2.380	1.088	1	4
Internet access	2,195	0.783	0.413	0	1
Public employment	2,195	0.067	0.249	0	1
Private employment	2,195	0.423	0.494	0	1
Self-employment	2,195	0.305	0.460	0	1
Retired	2,195	0.072	0.259	0	1
Unemployed/Student	2,195	0.133	0.340	0	1

Table A.3: Descriptive statistics for all variables among all respondents.

	BERSATU supporters				Supporters of other coalition parties			
	Means		Differences in means		Means		Differences in means	
	Control (N=114)	DAP Treatment (N=76)	t-statistic	p-value	Control (N=316)	DAP Treatment (N=346)	t-statistic	p-value
Political views								
Support PH_0	3.45	3.45	0.000	1.000	3.42	3.47	-0.981	0.327
Support PH_0 (dummy)	0.89	0.92	-0.604	0.546	0.92	0.92	-0.064	0.950
Previous vote	0.41	0.55	-1.577	0.117	0.86	0.85	0.105	0.916
Alternation important	2.84	2.74	1.543	0.125	2.76	2.74	0.404	0.687
View of leader	1.76	1.58	1.537	0.126	1.69	1.63	1.096	0.274
View of regime	1.75	1.72	0.266	0.791	1.73	1.68	0.879	0.380
Coalition chances	3.18	3.12	0.638	0.524	2.90	2.99	-1.634	0.103
DAP likely winner	0.15	0.09	1.157	0.249	0.38	0.40	-0.419	0.675
BERSATU likely winner	0.63	0.63	0.000	1.000	0.13	0.12	0.202	0.840
PKR likely winner	0.20	0.25	-0.782	0.435	0.42	0.39	0.962	0.337
AMANAH likely winner	0.02	0.03	-0.411	0.682	0.07	0.09	-1.232	0.218
Demographic characteristics								
Gender	0.70	0.82	-1.778	0.077	0.74	0.70	1.348	0.178
Age	40.60	38.08	1.340	0.182	41.13	40.92	0.204	0.838
Malay	0.92	0.95	-0.701	0.484	0.42	0.49	-1.902	0.058
Chinese	0.02	0.04	-0.922	0.358	0.48	0.45	0.844	0.399
Indian	0.05	0.00	2.044	0.042	0.09	0.06	1.383	0.167
Other ethnicity	0.02	0.01	-0.289	0.773	0.02	0.01	1.554	0.121
Income	2.19	2.28	-0.519	0.604	2.63	2.47	1.880	0.061
Internet access	0.78	0.83	-0.951	0.343	0.79	0.80	-0.494	0.622
Public employment	0.05	0.09	-1.053	0.294	0.06	0.03	2.347	0.019
Private employment	0.31	0.38	-1.063	0.289	0.45	0.46	-0.262	0.793
Self-employment	0.44	0.43	-0.060	0.953	0.28	0.28	-0.045	0.964
Retired	0.04	0.05	-0.277	0.782	0.10	0.10	0.254	0.800
Unemployed/Student	0.17	0.04	2.722	0.007	0.10	0.14	-1.238	0.216

Table A.4: Balance between control and DAP treatment groups for supporters of BERSATU versus those of other coalition parties.

	DAP supporters				Supporters of other coalition parties			
	Means		Differences in means		Means		Differences in means	
	Control (N=136)	BERSATU Treatment (N=162)	t-statistic	p-value	Control (N=294)	BERSATU Treatment (N=263)	t-statistic	p-value
Political views								
Support PH_0	3.38	3.45	-0.841	0.401	3.45	3.42	0.504	0.615
Support PH_0 (dummy)	0.91	0.90	0.379	0.757	0.91	0.90	0.570	0.569
Previous vote	0.86	0.88	-0.412	0.681	0.69	0.63	1.239	0.216
Alternation important	2.71	2.75	-0.542	0.588	2.81	2.81	-0.009	0.993
View of leader	1.69	1.56	1.432	0.153	1.72	1.71	0.207	0.836
View of regime	1.71	1.59	1.390	0.166	1.75	1.74	0.152	0.879
Coalition chances	2.71	2.85	-1.643	0.101	3.10	3.12	-0.425	0.671
DAP likely winner	0.59	0.67	-1.397	0.163	0.20	0.24	-1.102	0.271
BERSATU likely winner	0.17	0.09	1.979	0.049	0.30	0.31	-0.231	0.817
PKR likely winner	0.24	0.17	1.481	0.140	0.43	0.32	2.682	0.008
AMANAH likely winner	0.01	0.07	-2.837	0.005	0.07	0.14	-2.402	0.017
Demographic characteristics								
Gender	0.76	0.80	-0.938	0.349	0.72	0.77	-1.373	0.171
Age	43.68	42.41	0.787	0.432	39.75	40.59	-0.742	0.458
Malay	0.07	0.04	0.874	0.383	0.78	0.83	-1.458	0.146
Chinese	0.88	0.90	-0.541	0.590	0.12	0.10	0.489	0.625
Indian	0.04	0.05	-0.213	0.831	0.09	0.06	1.368	0.172
Other ethnicity	0.01	0.01	0.176	0.861	0.02	0.01	0.554	0.580
Income	2.69	2.65	0.336	0.738	2.43	2.56	-1.441	0.150
Internet access	0.71	0.83	-2.647	0.009	0.82	0.76	1.616	0.107
Public employment	0.03	0.03	-0.073	0.942	0.07	0.11	-1.448	0.148
Private employment	0.44	0.52	-1.437	0.152	0.40	0.39	0.152	0.879
Self-employment	0.32	0.25	1.328	0.185	0.32	0.33	-0.287	0.774
Retired	0.13	0.11	0.370	0.712	0.07	0.08	-0.696	0.4647
Unemployed/Student	0.09	0.09	0.055	0.956	0.14	0.08	2.125	0.034

Table A.5: Balance between control and BERSATU treatment groups for supporters of DAP versus those of other coalition parties.

	BERSATU supporters				DAP supporters			
	Control (N=114)	DAP treatment (N=76)	t-statistic	p-value	Control (N=136)	BERSATU treatment (N=162)	t-statistic	p-value
Support PH, t_1–t_0	0.18	-0.72	7.600	0.000	0.13	-0.07	2.706	0.007
Support PH, t_1–t_0 (dummy)	0.11	-0.32	7.220	0.000	0.06	0	1.503	0.134
Lower support for PH, t_1–t_0	0.05	0.47	-7.855	0.000	0.07	0.19	-3.072	0.002
Lower support for PH, t_1–t_0 (dummy)	0	0.33	-7.436	0.000	0.01	0.07	-2.837	0.005

Table A.6: Change in Support for the Coalition Among BERSATU and DAP Supporters, by Exposure to Treatment.

	Logistic model	Generalized ordered logistic model		
Dependent variable	*Vote for coalition dummy (2 categories)*	*Vote for coalition (4 categories)*		
		C1	C2	C3
Constant	2.282	3.853	2.282	0.147
	(0.113)	(0.280)	(0.241)	(0.080)
DAP treatment	0.148	1.294	0.148	0.097
	(0.279)	(0.763)	(0.241)	(0.135)
Time	0.276	0.629	0.276	0.058
	(0.180)	(0.472)	(0.207)	(0.114)
BERSATU supporter	-0.089	0.878	-0.089	0.072
	(0.431)	(0.764)	(0.259)	(0.155)
DAP treatment * Time	-1.018	-2.931	-1.018	-0.209
	(0.396)	(0.884)	(0.322)	(0.190)
Time * BERSATU supporter	1.561	0.069	1.561	0.194
	(0.593)	(1.316)	(0.588)	(0.221)
DAP treatment * BERSATU supporter	0.116	-3.135	0.116	0.002
	(0.683)	(1.162)	(0.536)	(0.300)
DAP treatment * Time * BERSATU supporter	-2.848	0.921	-2.848	-1.259
	(0.717)	(1.627)	(0.806)	(0.436)

Table A.7: Logistic models of the effect of DAP treatment. Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. For the generalized ordered logit model, C1 refers to coefficients resulting from contrast between category 1 and categories 2 through 4; C2 contrasts categories 1 and 2 with categories 3 and 4; and C3 contrasts categories 1 through 3 with category 4. For the logit model, standard errors clustered at the state level. 1,277 respondents.

	Logistic model	Generalized ordered logistic model		
Dependent variable	*Vote for coalition dummy (2 categories)*	*Vote for coalition (4 categories)*		
		C1	C2	C3
Constant	2.483	3.818	2.483	0.340
	(0.214)	(0.292)	(0.159)	(0.086)
BERSATU treatment	-0.315	0.353	-0.315	-0.195
	(0.378)	(0.582)	(0.258)	(0.150)
Time	-0.525	-0.839	-0.525	-0.197
	(0.181)	(0.352)	(0.204)	(0.121)
DAP supporter	-0.271	0.239	-0.271	-0.367
	(0.387)	(0.537)	(0.252)	(0.145)
BERSATU treatment * Time	1.029	0.839	1.029	0.304
	(0.392)	(0.795)	(0.382)	(0.213)
Time * DAP supporter	0.450	0.495	0.450	0.429
	(0.259)	(0.688)	(0.341)	(0.213)
BERSATU treatment * DAP supporter	0.314	13.756	0.314	0.421
	(0.627)	(692.385)	(0.417)	(0.247)
BERSATU treatment * Time * DAP supporter	-0.955	-14.279	-0.955	-0.759
	(0.520)	(692.386)	(0.599)	(0.350)

Table A.8: Logistic models of the effect of BERSATU treatment. Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. For the generalized ordered logit model, C1 refers to coefficients resulting from contrast between category 1 and categories 2 through 4; C2 contrasts categories 1 and 2 with categories 3 and 4; and C3 contrasts categories 1 through 3 with category 4. For the logit model, standard errors clustered at the state level. 1,277 respondents.

	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value	Adjusted p-value
Constant	0.557	0.076	0.000	
DAP treatment	0.019	0.021	0.349	
Time	0.025	0.017	0.149	
BERSATU supporter	-0.021	0.026	0.421	
DAP treatment * Time	-0.098	0.029	0.001	0.018
Time * BERSATU supporter	0.078	0.033	0.019	0.470
DAP treatment * BERSATU supporter	0.003	0.046	0.955	
DAP treatment * Time * BERSATU supporter	-0.313	0.065	0.000	0.000
Previous vote for coalition	0.073	0.016	0.000	0.000
Alternation important	0.040	0.013	0.002	0.056
View of leader	-0.016	0.010	0.125	
View of regime	-0.012	0.010	0.231	
Coalition chances	0.032	0.009	0.001	0.014
DAP likely winner	-0.006	0.024	0.813	
BERSATU likely winner	0.000	0.026	1.000	
PKR likely winner	-0.018	0.024	0.442	
Gender	-0.000	0.016	0.997	
Age	0.001	0.001	0.177	
Malay	0.022	0.025	0.378	
Chinese	0.019	0.025	0.447	
Income	-0.003	0.006	0.651	
Internet access	0.044	0.016	0.007	0.169
Public employment	0.017	0.035	0.616	
Private employment	0.073	0.026	0.006	0.139
Self-employment	0.083	0.025	0.001	0.020
Unemployed/Student	0.099	0.034	0.004	0.093

Table A.9: Full model of the effect of DAP treatment with all pre-treatment covariates. OLS regression. Bonferroni adjusted p-values are included for coefficients with unadjusted p-values that reach conventional levels of significance. 979 respondents.

	Coefficient	Standard error	p-value	Adjusted p-value
Constant	0.548	0.078	0.000	
BERSATU treatment	-0.006	0.023	0.791	
Time	-0.035	0.018	0.062	
DAP supporter	0.016	0.028	0.566	
BERSATU treatment * Time	0.064	0.033	0.050	
Time * DAP supporter	0.030	0.032	0.346	
BERSATU treatment * DAP supporter	-0.027	0.039	0.492	
BERSATU treatment * Time * DAP supporter	-0.027	0.054	0.621	
Previous vote for coalition	0.070	0.016	0.000	0.000
Alternation important	0.045	0.013	0.001	0.022
View of leader	-0.011	0.010	0.274	
View of regime	-0.016	0.010	0.117	
Coalition chances	0.033	0.010	0.001	0.014
DAP likely winner	-0.009	0.025	0.727	
BERSATU likely winner	-0.010	0.025	0.689	
PKR likely winner	-0.021	0.024	0.394	
Gender	-0.002	0.017	0.880	
Age	0.001	0.001	0.126	
Malay	0.014	0.025	0.576	
Chinese	0.006	0.028	0.833	
Income	0.000	0.007	0.983	
Internet access	0.043	0.017	0.010	0.253
Public employment	0.010	0.036	0.777	
Private employment	0.072	0.027	0.008	0.195
Self-employment	0.081	0.025	0.001	0.035
Unemployed/Student	0.109	0.035	0.002	0.046

Table A.10: Full model of the effect of BERSATU treatment with all pre-treatment covariates. OLS regression. Bonferroni adjusted p-values are included. 979 respondents.

Dependent variable	*Asian Barometer Q131: Only one party should be allowed to stand for elections and hold office. (0-1)*			
	Full Sample		Limited Sample	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
BN Voter	0.119	0.107	0.203	0.168
	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.041)	(0.036)
Age		-0.003		-0.002
		(0.001)		(0.001)
Male		-0.035		-0.024
		(0.024)		(0.034)
Malay		0.219		0.330
		(0.050)		(0.058)
Muslim		-0.074		-0.170
		(0.049)		(0.056)
Urban		0.013		0.089
		(0.027)		(0.036)
Income Level		-0.045		-0.057
		(0.011)		(0.015)
Education Level		-0.082		-0.068
		(0.023)		(0.031)
Constant	0.195	0.559	0.114	0.396
	(0.016)	(0.070)	(0.036)	(0112)
R-squared	0.018	0.086	0.036	0.115
N	1207	1207	666	666

Table A.11: OLS Regression Models of Asian Barometer Survey Question 131. Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Models 1 and 2 are full sample models with all survey respondents. Models 3 and 4 are limited sample models with only survey respondents who indicated which party they voted for in the 2013 general elections. Models 2 and 4 have robust standard errors.

	PH vote			Next highest vote					
Constituency	Actual	If 30% defected from it	If 7.2% defected from it	If 30% abstained	If 30% defected to it	If 30% split b/w BN and PAS	If 7.2% abstained	If 7.2% defected to it	If 7.2% split b/w BN and PAS
Kangar (P002)	20909	14636	19404	**15306**	**21579**	**18442**	15306	16811	16059
Langkawi (P004)	18954	13268	17589	10061	**15747**	12904	10061	11426	10743
Jerlun (P005)	18695	13087	17349	12829	**18438**	**15633**	12829	14175	13502
Kubang Pasu (P006)	29984	20989	27825	16975	**25970**	**21473**	16975	19134	18054
Merbok (P014)	30902	21631	28677	20830	**30101**	**25465**	20830	23055	21942
Kulim-Bandar-Baharu (P018)	22159	15511	20564	**18299**	**24947**	**21623**	18299	19894	19097
Balik Pulau (P053)	25471	17830	23637	**19007**	**26648**	**22828**	19007	20841	19924
Tambun (P063)	38661	27063	35877	**33341**	**44939**	**39140**	33341	**36125**	34733
Tanjong Malim (P077)	24672	17270	22896	**19314**	**26716**	**23015**	19314	21090	20202
Bentong (P089)	25716	18001	23864	**23684**	**31399**	**27541**	23684	**25536**	**24610**
Sungai Besar (P093)	17350	12145	16101	**16636**	**21841**	**19239**	**16636**	**17885**	**17261**
Hulu Selangor (P094)	40783	28548	37847	27392	**39627**	**33509**	27392	30328	28860
Kuala Selangor (P096)	29842	20889	27693	**21344**	**30297**	**25820**	21344	23493	22418
Setiawangsa (P118)	34471	24130	31989	20099	**30440**	**25270**	20099	22581	21340
Titiwangsa (P119)	23840	16688	22124	**19701**	**26853**	**23277**	19701	21417	20559
Kuala Pilah (P129)	18045	12632	16746	**17845**	**23259**	**20552**	**17845**	**19144**	**18495**
Tampin (P133)	22435	15705	20820	**21433**	**28164**	**24798**	**21433**	**23048**	**22241**
Alor Gajah (P135)	29330	20531	27218	**22350**	**31149**	**26750**	22350	24462	23406
Tangga Batu (P136)	32420	22694	30086	**27761**	**37487**	**32624**	27761	**30095**	28928
Segamat (P140)	24060	16842	22328	**18584**	**25802**	**22193**	18584	20316	19450
Sekijang (P141)	19559	13691	18151	**18278**	**24146**		**18278**	**19686**	
Labis (P142)	16709	11696	15506	**13301**	**18314**	**15807**	13301	14504	13903
Pagoh (P143)	23558	16491	21862	**16631**	**23698**	**20165**	16631	18327	17479
Ledang (P144)	34706	24294	32207	**26040**	**36452**	**31246**	26040	28539	27289
Muar (P146)	22341	15639	20732	15388	**22090**	**18739**	15388	16997	16192
Sri Gading (P149)	21511	15058	19962	**18223**	**24676**	**21450**	18223	19772	18997
Simpang Renggam (P151)	18157	12710	16850	**14682**	**20129**	**17406**	14682	15989	15336
Tebrau (P158)	64535	45175	59888	27310	**46671**	36990	27310	31957	29633
Pasir Gudang (P159)	61615	43131	57179	36889	**55374**	**46131**	36889	41325	39107

Johor Bahru (P160)	50052	35036	46448	30270	**45286**		30270	33874	
Pulai (P161)	55447	38813	51455	26523	**43157**	34840	26523	30515	28519
Tanjung Piai (P165)	21255	14879	19725	**20731**	**27108**	**23919**	**20731**	**22261**	**21496**
Putatan (P173)	14106	9874	13090	**11767**	**15999**	**13883**	11767	12783	12275
Ranau (P179)	14880	10416	13809	**13804**	**18268**		13804	**14875**	
Tenom (P181)	11363	7954	10545	**10230**	**13639**		10230	**11048**	
Tawau (P190)	21400	14980	19859	**16673**	**23093**	**19883**	16673	18214	17443
Mas Gading (P192)	12771	8940	11851	**9747**	**13578**		9747	10667	
Puncak Borneo (P198)	18865	13206	17507	**14860**	**20520**		14860	16218	
Saratok (P205)	11848	8294	10995	**10859**	**14413**		**10859**	**11712**	
Selangau (P214)	11228	7860	10420	**10742**	**14110**		10742	**11550**	

Table A.12: Simulated effect of defections on 2018 electoral results in forty constituencies. These are the constituencies that switched from electing a BN representative in 2013 to a PH member in 2018. We do not know the percentage of BERSATU voters in each constituency so we simulate results under two scenarios: if PH had suffered from a 30 percent defection rate (per our results) or a 7.2 percent defection rate (24 percent of BERSATU voters in our sample*30 percent who defected). The left panel shows the actual vote for PH compared to its vote total under these two scenarios. The right panel shows for each defection rate, what would be the vote totals for the next highest vote getter (BN or PAS) if the defectors abstained, gave all their support to the next highest vote getter, or split their votes between BN and PAS. The vote total under the last condition is calculated only if both the BN and PAS ran separate candidates in the constituency. Finally, bolded numbers in the right panel indicate the condition under which the next highest vote getter (BN or PAS) would have won the seat instead of the PH.