

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/regime-resilience/>

The speaker discusses the developments regarding regime resilience in Malaysia and Singapore since the publication of the book they co-edited in 2018, which focused on the political dynamics in both countries.

In Singapore, the People's Action Party (PAP) continues to hold dominance as a one-party state, maintaining control despite a leadership transition. The PAP's ability to manage this transition reflects its strong grip on power, with little expectation of significant change in governance or political structure.

Conversely, Malaysia's political landscape has shifted significantly. The Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition, previously believed to be in control, lost power in the 2018 elections, marking a historic shift. Although BN regained influence through a coalition government, it operates in a minority status, indicating a decline in its formerly unassailable position. Despite this change, the structural authoritarian features of Malaysia's governance remain, even under new leadership.

The speaker emphasizes that both countries exhibit authoritarian characteristics with democratic features, suggesting a complexity in their political evolution. In Malaysia, while civil society once flourished, it has been weakened, particularly after the coalition government absorbed its leaders. Concurrently, conservative Islamic civil society is gaining influence, steering the country towards greater conservatism.

Overall, while the PAP in Singapore remains consistent and predictable, Malaysia's political environment is characterized by greater messiness and change, navigating various internal and external challenges as it evolves towards potential democratization. The speaker concludes with a cautiously optimistic view of Malaysia's ability to manage these transitions despite the conservatism that increasingly defines its identity.