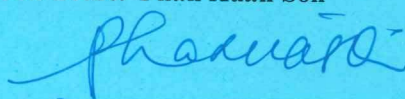


**The thesis is completed at  
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**Supervisor: Prof. Dr.Sc. Phan Xuan Son**



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**HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS**

**NGUYEN VIET CUONG**

**PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE  
IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS OF SOME ASEAN  
COUNTRIES  
THROUGH CASE STUDY OF  
INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND THAILAND**

**SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS  
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**Code: 9 31 02 01**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. The rationale of the thesis**

Party system plays the role of one of the important institutions that build a democracy. The emergence and development of party system by originally founded political parties, in fact, come under the influence of factors that shape a democracy and the democratization process. Nevertheless, party systems influence the democratization process as well.

Therefore, the party system change is associated with democracy and the process of democratization. Researching the party system change during the democratization process in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand helps to indicate which factors of the democratization in these states have an impact on party systems and sheds light on the role of one important institution, i.e. party system, towards the democratization process. Furthermore, the research could open the door to more reference and comparison for the Communist Party of Vietnam during the process of building a socialist democratic state. Therefore, I chose “Party System Change in the Democratization Process of some ASEAN Countries through case studies of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand” as my political science PhD thesis.

### **2. Research question**

How has the party system in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand changed during the democratization of these three countries? Will the transformation of the party system affect the democratization process in these three countries? And if so, what is the impact? The interpretation of these research questions provides an overview of the role of institutions in the democratization process.

### **3. Aims and research tasks**

### **3.1. Research aims**

Based on theoretical and practical issues related to the party system change and the democratization process, coupled with researching the reality of this transformation during the process of democratization in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, the thesis presents a general overview of the democratization process in ASEAN and Southeast Asia, and thus offers reference suggestions for the process of democratization in Vietnam.

### **3.2. Research tasks**

(i) Clarify some theoretical issues about the party system change during the democratization process;

(ii) Identify and Analyze the transformation of party systems during the democratization of researched states (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand);

(iii) Compare the party system change in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand to shed light on its similarities and differences among three states;

(iv) Offer reference suggestions for the democratization process in Vietnam from the research.

## **4. The object and scope of the research**

### **4.1. Research objects**

The party system change in the democratization process in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand

### **4.2. Research scope**

- Spatial scope: Research on Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and to some extent, on political systems of ASEAN countries.

- Chronological scope: The party systems are studied since the foundation of democracy in three chosen countries, particularly since

democratic transition landmarks (from 1990s onwards)

## **5. Research Methods**

The thesis is built on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh ideology, as well as on the position of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and methodologies of dialectical materialism and historical materialism. Specifically, the methodologies include meta-analysis method, historical method, logical method, comparative method, document analysis method, systematic method, and structural functionalism method.

## **6. Scientific and practical significance of the thesis**

### **6.1. Scientific significance**

Demonstrate the relationship between the party system change and the democratization process in ASEAN countries. Offer reference values, and thus foster awareness of the research on the role of party systems towards the democratization process, as well as the impact of the democratization on the party system adaptation to current affairs.

### **6.2. Practical significance**

The thesis could be used as a reference material for researching and teaching Political Science concerning political party issues and the democratization process in ASEAN countries.

## **7. New contributions of the thesis**

(i) Systematize theoretical issues of democracy, democratization process, party systems in general, and those of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand in particular;

(ii) Analyze and clarify the impact of the democratization process among ASEAN countries, with case studies in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, on the party system and its role in the process of democratization;

(iii) Offer suggestions about the role of party systems based on comparing and contrasting the party systems change in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, thus shed light on similarities as well as differences concerning political systems and process of democratization in these states.

## **8. Structure of the thesis**

The thesis includes four chapters, twelve sections, along with Introduction, Conclusion and Bibliography.

### **Chapter 1**

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1.1. Theoretical issues of party systems change in the process of democratization**

##### ***1.1.1. Party systems***

Conduct research on: (1) Origin and Formation of party systems; (2) Types of party systems; Factors that determine the categorization of party systems; (3) Evolution of party systems

##### ***1.1.2. The role of party systems towards the democratization process***

In addition to considering the impact of political institutions on party system, research sees party system as a factor that influences the democratization process and democratic consolidation as well.

#### **1.2. Research on the transformation of party systems in the democratization process in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand**

##### ***1.2.1. The party system in Indonesia in the process of democratization***

Research evaluates the quality and prospects of post-Suharto Indonesian democracy, assesses its role towards democratic consolidation according to the degree of institutionalization of the party

system, and deliberates reasons during the period from the democratization process to the formation of multi-party systems and the fragmentation of party system.

### ***1.2.2. The party system in Malaysia in the process of democratization***

Research indicates the nature of democracy in Malaysia after every period of transformation, leading to the formation of coalition within the party system.

### ***1.2.3. The party system in Thailand in the process of democratization***

The party system in Thailand is evaluated from the angle of political culture influences. The research indicates that the party system is deeply rooted in and influenced by factors of political culture that determine the nature of democracy in Thailand.

## **1.3. Reference suggestions for the democratization process in Vietnam**

Research has put forward models of a dominant party system and the issue of nature of democracy in Vietnam, and thus proposes suggestions for the democratization process and the transformation of political system to pave the way for the national development. These issues have been looked at by ample research papers, theses, and dissertations.

## **1.4. Researched issues in previously published scientific journals and Issues that requires more research**

### ***1.4.1. Academic work in previously published scientific journals***

- Party system and political parties: formation origin, political foundation, cleavage theory about nature of party systems fairly reasoned by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Research also shows that party systems always have the potential for change in the democratization process.



- The relationship between party systems and the democratization process is looked at on two aspects: (1) factors that impact the democratization, and (2) outcomes of democratic consolidation. The degree of party systems institutionalization is seen as the contributing factor in the democratization process.

- Party systems in the democratization process in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand: The evolution of democracy in these countries over periods of time has not been thoroughly analyzed in terms of political culture, institutions, nature of democracy, and how these factors have impacted the transformation of party systems.

- Dominant-party system in some Asian democracies and political system in Vietnam: reference values for Vietnam in terms of “Party leads, State administers” mechanism. The nature of democracy in Vietnam and its association with goals of national growth and modernization have been fairly looked at.

#### ***1.4.2. Issues that require more research***

(1) The reciprocity between the democratization process and party systems in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand;

(2) The impact of quality and political tendency of parties on the quality of democratization process;

(3) Similarities and differences in political systems and democratization process in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand;

(4) Offer suggestions for the role of party systems in ASEAN countries in general, and for the democratization process in Vietnam in particular.

### **Chapter 1 Conclusion**

Chapter 1 presents the literature review related to the thesis. Still, there are scientific gaps between research outcomes and research

questions that need answering in terms of the reality of party systems in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Therefore, this thesis is conducted to fill these academic gaps.

## **Chapter 2**

### **THEORETICAL ISSUES ABOUT THE POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS**

#### **2.1. Some Approaches and Concepts of the thesis**

##### **2.1.1. Democracy**

The thesis proposes that: Democracy is a political system (the organization of state power) where sovereignty belongs to the people, along with their exercised political and civil rights. Political institutions, such as electoral systems and political parties/ party system, are necessary for the political system to put democracy into practice.

##### **2.1.2. Democratization**

The thesis sees that: Democratization is a process through which a political system (State) becomes democratic. This process consolidates equality, along with political and civil freedom. The democratization process is always associated with political and social institutions, such as party system. Therefore, the democratization process, including progress and regression of democracy, is associated with the transformation of party system.

##### **2.1.3. Party system**

The thesis applies the definition: *“A party system is precisely the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition”*. Factors that define the nature of a party system are associated with the number of parties in the system as well as the way they interact. The analytical framework of the party system change in the democratization process

includes System fragmentation (the number of political parties); System polarization (ideological differences); System volatility (change in the political parties position after elections); and Power exchange between and among political parties in the system (party alternation in government after elections). These factors are associated with official and unofficial institutions within a democracy. In other words, the analytical framework mirrors the party system change associated with the democratization process.

## **2.2. The impact of democratization process on party system**

### ***2.2.1. Political institutions***

The difference between presidentialism and parliamentarism leads to different degrees of power separation (between executive branch and legislative branch), and thus impacts the model of party systems. The presidential system has smaller party systems in scope than that of the parliamentary system since the former tends to reduce political parties that are likely to run for president, and the latter is about competing for seats in the parliament.

### ***2.2.2. Electoral system***

Different electoral systems bring about different party systems. Proportional representation systems tend to create many separate political parties. Two-ballot majority runoff systems tend to create coalition between and among political parties. Majority voting systems are likely to create a two-party system.

### ***2.2.3. Political culture***

A distinctive political culture would lead to its corresponding party system. That is to say, homogeneous-active culture or polyarchal cultures paves the way for the development of competing multi-party systems. And due to its culture homogeneity, this model of party system,

to some extent, would not be too fragmented or too polarized. Secondly, anarchic or heterogeneous-active culture leads to a model of party system that would be too fragmented and ideologically polarized. Finally, homogeneous-passive cultures or collectivist cultures has the impact on the formation of concentrated party system, with little ideological competition among political parties. In other words, this is a hegemonic party system dominated by a single party without any political opponents.

#### ***2.2.4. Method of organizing and exercising state power***

Democratization, in short, means “engineering” new political institutions, such as new Constitution, election organization, formation of new party systems, and the relationship between executive branch and legislative branch. These are crucial matters. Organizing democratic elections is considered as the first step in the democratization process, which requires real competition among political parties, and a strong, fair party system.

### **2.3. The impact of party system on the democratization process**

#### ***2.3.1. In terms of democratic values***

*The first factor* that impacts democracy comes from the fragmentation of party system. To establish a solid, stable democracy, it is necessary to set up a party system that could avoid innate weaknesses of a multi-party system.

*The second factor* that impacts democracy is the stability (degree of institutionalization) of party system.

*The third factor* that impacts democracy emanates from a dominant-party system. One-party governance would be considered as a core factor for the success of democracy, particularly in developing countries.

### ***2.3.2. In terms of political system***

The role of party system within the political system could be assessed based on the relationship between the party system and the government. To some extent, the role of party system towards government institutions could be generalized according to the impact of party system on the stability of government and the formation of governing coalition. Overall, representation of separate political parties depends mainly on the nature of party system as well as the ideology of the dominant party.

### ***2.3.3. In terms of political culture***

The role of party system towards political culture is evaluated based on democratic consolidation through democratic values and standards in a country. The impact of party system on political culture could be considered within the relationship of three factors: party system (political institutions); political culture; and democratic consolidation. An institutionalized party system, to some extent, would play a key role in building a stable environment of political culture, both predictable and beneficial to democratic consolidation.

## **Chapter 2 Conclusion**

Chapter 2 identifies crucial matters, i.e. the existence of a dialectic relationship between democratization process and party system. That is to say, the democratization process brings about factors that impact the party system; on the other hand, the party system influences democratic values and democratization process as well. The aforementioned dialectic relationship between party system and democratization process asserts the suitability of the analytical framework and the definition of democracy, which is proposed by the thesis.

### Chapter 3

## PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, AND THAILAND

### 3.1. Party system change in the democratization process in Indonesia

#### 3.1.1. *Democratization process in Indonesia*

(i) *Parliamentary Democracy Period (1945-1955)*: The emergence of highly fragmented party system

(ii) *Autocracy Period (1955-1965)*: “Guided Democracy,” along with the key role of Sukarno in the political arena. The army emerged as a major political force while other political parties held little to no power.

(iii) *“New Order” Period (1966-1998)*: Maintenance of 1945 Constitution, and no restoration of the parliamentary system formed in 1957.

(iv) *Post-Suharto Period (after 1998)*: The democratization process made tangible progress, yet easily became more vulnerable due to having to resolve a legacy of past autocracy.

#### 3.1.2. *The impact of democratization process on the party system in Indonesia*

Factors of Indonesian democracy and the impact of democratization process on the party system in Indonesia include:

(i) Philosophical basis of an Indonesian religiosity independent democratic state (as known as Pancasila democracy);

(ii) Recognition of the role of socio-cultural groups in the political arena (as known as Aliran). Aliran, considered as cultural and political forces, plays the role in rallying political support that impacted political culture during the periods of Sukarno and Suharto;

(iii) Decentralized governance: Decentralization started since the end of Suharto New Order regime and is seen as an important symbol of the democratization process;

(iv) Acceptance of Indonesian Islam into modern democratic values. During the transition to democracy in 1998, Indonesian Islam leaders emphasized the compatibility between Islam and democracy. The restoration of Islam did not go against democracy.

### ***3.1.3. The impact of democratization process on the party system change in Indonesia***

#### *3.1.3.1. Electoral system and voting law led to fragmentation and increasing degree of institutionalization towards the party system in Indonesia*

The regime change in 1998, along with lifting restrictions on the formation of political parties, led to a highly fragmented party system. Direct presidential electoral system since 2004 is a principal factor that brings about “Presidentialization” within Indonesian political parties. The Indonesian party system after 2004 was divided into two party groups. That is, major parties with a high degree of “Presidentialization,” such as PDI-P (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), Golkar, and other parties (mainly Islamic parties) with less “Presidentialization.” General elections in Indonesia, from 2004 to 2019, indicated that there existed one “essential core” of 6 to 7 political parties that consistently had representatives in People’s Consultative Assembly. The existence of one “essential core” demonstrates that Indonesian party system has been institutionalized.

#### *3.1.3.2. The democratization process leads to the party system change in Indonesia in terms of polarization and interaction among political parties*

One of the outcomes of the democratization process in Indonesia is that it expands the negative influence of money politics, and thus minimizes the significance of ideology. Also, the decline in polarization among political parties contributes to the stability of party system in Indonesia. The separation between religion and secularism in the 1950s continues to impact the current Indonesian party system. Unlike the 1950s, post-Suharto party system developed centripetal forces to stabilize and maintain its systematic structure.

#### ***3.1.4. The role of Indonesian party system towards the democratization process***

##### ***3.1.4.1. The Indonesian party system contributes to the democratic consolidation through values of electoral democracy***

The Indonesian party system plays a genuinely vital role in the probability of democratization success. Since Suharto's resignation, issues about models of elections and models of party system were compatible with the democratization process. At the beginning of the democratization process, the prospect of democratic consolidation depends on the nature of party system and political leaders after every election.

##### ***3.1.4.2. The Indonesian party system contributes to the formation of political culture of consensus***

The Indonesian party system does not show major polarization among political parties, and the competition among these parties is centripetal. Therefore, this helps create political culture based on consensus in which political parties respect democratic values and promote the formation of democratic institutions.

#### **3.2. The party system change in the democratization process in Malaysia**



### ***3.2.1. The democratization process in Malaysia***

(i) *1957-2003*: Consociational democracy with UMNO as a principal dominant member of BN coalition, leading the party system.

(ii) *Post-Mahathir* (from 2004 till now): Malaysia adopted deliberative democracy

### ***3.2.2. The impact of democratization process on Malaysian party system***

(i). *Issue of ethnicity shapes political competition based on democratic values*: Malaysian politics is traditionally divided according to ethnicities. In terms of ethnicity, Malaysia has a party system based on multi-ethnic coalition which dominates the central area, and other ethnic parties on two wings. Ethnic coalition has always been the backbone of Malaysian politics. For Malaysia, competing ethnic communities, more than ever, need cooperation to build a stable nation.

(ii) *The compromise of the elite has an impact on the model of democracy in Malaysia*: For Malaysian society, the interconnection between ethnicities, religions, languages, and cultures with deep-rooted ideologies is posing serious challenges for the relationship between the elite and the stability of democracy. On the one hand, the elite could still achieve the “connection” to allow them to collaborate on specific issues (segments) so that consociationalism could be maintained. However, on the other hand, these segments also conceal defects and collapses within the elite. Then, the Malaysia elite reordered relations in ways that were more starkly asymmetrical, then reset their consociational democracy as electoral authoritarianism.

(iii) *The compromise between Islamic values and secular democratic values within the ideology of political parties*: Islamic politics in Malaysia mirrors the competition between UMNO and PAS.

For UMNO, it is the Islamization process of UMNO. For PAS (Malaysian Islamic Party), it is the process of transitioning from radical Islam to Islamic democracy. This shows the compromise among Islam values and secular democratic values within the ideology of political parties.

### ***3.2.3. The impact of democratization process on Malaysian party system***

#### ***3.2.3.1. Political culture of compromise leads to the change in party system models based on coalition politics***

The compromise between Islamic values and secular values within the ideology of political parties has led to political coalition in Malaysian party system. Malaysian party system mirrors the elements of ethnicity and coalition; and change from one model to others as follows:

(i) A dominant-party system (1957-1998): BN coalition dominated completely. BN coalition (with UMNO as its principal dominant member) played the role of a managerial government for more than 50 years.

(ii) A two-party system (1998-2018); A two-and-a-half-party system (2018 until now): 1998-2018 Malaysian party system was still ruled by BN. However, Malaysian party system saw the emergence of strong opposition coalitions. From 2018 until now, a two-and-a-half-party system includes two major conflicting coalitions PH and BN, and the dominant party PAS.

#### ***3.2.3.2. Political institutions prioritizing development has an impact on the formation of institutionalized party system***

Political competition in Malaysia is vividly seen through competition between BN coalition (with UMNO as the principal dominant member) and other conflicting parties (with PAS playing the

dominant role). The latest election in 2018 saw the victory of The Alliance of Hope (Pakatan Harapan – PH), leading to Malaysian party politics mainly impacted by the interaction among UMNO (BN), PH, and PAS. Therefore, Malaysian party system is mainly about the stable competition between UMNO and PAS. The stability, associated with fragmentation, polarization, and interaction among political parties in Malaysian party system, originates from the nature of Malaysian democracy and democratization process. Overall, this is an electoral authoritarianism system for a long time.

### ***3.2.4. The role of Malaysian party towards the democratization process***

#### ***3.2.4.1. The party system contributes to democratic consolidation, and forms democratic values***

Malaysian party system, along with fairly stable and highly institutionalized coalitions, has a positive impact on democratic consolidation and stability in Malaysia. Furthermore, the party system has a low degree of fragmentation and a stable number of parties, which facilitates accountability (a democratic value) of the ruling coalition, particularly when Malaysia moves from consociational democracy to deliberative democracy.

#### ***3.2.4.2. Highly institutionalized party system contributes to political culture of democracy***

Malaysian highly institutionalized party system contributes to the formation of political culture of democracy and election-related political behavior, as well as the appreciation of post-election ruling party legitimacy.

### **3.3. The party system change in the democratization process in Thailand**

#### ***3.3.1. The democratization process in Thailand***

If the democratization process in Thailand is seen as the outcome of political reforms, then these reforms should not threaten interests of the elite in Thailand's society. Democratization in Thailand is not a direct product of radical movements but rather the product of attempts of the gradual removal of the sharp edges from radical demands. Therefore, the democratic transition in Thailand has led to a democratization process that is both conciliatory and conservatively stable.

### ***3.3.2. The impact of democratization process on Thai party system***

(i) *Distinctive institutions play an important role in the democratization process:* Research models of Thai politics emphasizes the leading role of non-election institutions (distinctive institutions), including the elite, the army, and the royalty. These three are factors that determine the nature and the dynamics of Thai democracy.

(ii) *The democratization process is, from time to time, influenced by client politics (Clientelism):* Client politics is a crucial feature of Thai politics, a “political path,” and an unofficially institutionalized practice. Client politics becomes even more important due to the volatility of official institutions.

### ***3.3.3. The impact of democratization process on Thai party system change***

*3.3.3.1. Ideological differences are of little significance; the party system is not too polarized*

Ideological differences among Thai political parties come mainly from commitment, either in viewpoints or in fighting for democracy. Political institutions, democracy with the King as the Head of State, and a history of eliminating forces of the Left have limited ideologies within political parties. Therefore, polarization and ideological differences in

Thai party system are constrained.

### *3.3.3.2. Weak institutionalization and high fragmentation in party system due to the influence of client politics*

Thai political parties are characterized by "*domination of personality and influenced by money and personalism, patronism and kinship which prevail among party members*". These parties are institutionalized to the extent that they are given legitimacy by the elite in open elections and the parties are key route to achieve power, but most parties do not have any organizational identity. It is weak institutionalization within political parties and insignificance of ideologies in which parties are only seen as a "looking-for-votes" machine that leads to weak institutionalization of Thai party system. The stability in Thai party system features weak institutionalization, parties' formation, seats seeking in elections, and dissolution. The outcome of elections mirrors the increasingly elevated level of fragmentation of Thai party system.

### ***3.3.4. The role of Thai party system towards the democratization process***

#### *3.3.4.1. Thai party system plays a less positive role towards democratic values due to the influence of clientelism*

Thai party system is greatly impacted by "patron – client." Political parties focus only on "buying" potential candidates ahead of every election so that their parties account for more seats in National Assembly. Therefore, political parties only care about individuals that politically benefit them instead of caring about constituents. In other words, Thai party system has not contributed to democratic values because in principle, party system must play the function of a political institution that aggregates and turns individual interests into mutual

interests.

*3.3.4.2. Party system, with weak institutionalization, plays a limited role towards the formation of political culture of democracy*

The institutionalized party system plays the role in building stable political culture. However, Thai party system, with weak institutionalization, will not play a positive role in building political culture of democracy.

### **Chapter 3 Conclusion**

The thesis approach goes from the nature of democracy and the democratization process. This indicates that party systems have changed in a particular tendency and reflects features of democracy in each periods. The thesis's research on the relationship between party system change and democracy helps to answer the question about the role of party system towards the stability of democracy. This is one of the research aims in terms of the association of party system with democratization process.

## **Chapter 4**

### **SOME EVALUATIONS AND REFERENCE SUGGESTIONS THROUGH THE TRANSFORMATION OF PARTY SYSTEM IN INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, AND THAILAND IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS**

#### **4.1. Commentary on democratization process in Southeast Asia and the party system change in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand**

*4.1.1. The democratization process in Southeast Asia countries in general and three case study countries in particular has interaction and motivation among them*

The democratization process in ASEAN expands the political

process in which more people participate in the process of policymaking. The relationship between party system and democratization process in Southeast Asia could be generalized as follows: Firstly, the party system has created the foundation of modern democracy. Secondly, the institutionalized party system is not the factor that institutionalizes democracies. Thirdly, the party system plays a positive role to consolidate democracy only if the change is compatible with motives of reform controlled by the elite. Fourthly, the interaction among political parties in the institutionalized party system does not entirely mirror the process of democratic transition. Fifthly, the tendency of party system change depends on the nature of each democracy.

#### ***4.1.2. Commentary on party system change in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand***

##### *4.1.2.1. The existence of political polarization in democracies of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand*

Since 2014, Indonesia has become more politically polarized, with three elections in 2014, 2017, 2019. Consequently, it weakened the quality of democracy in Indonesia. Regarding Malaysia, political polarization is associated with issues of ethnicity and religion, thus political reform made post-election political coalitions less stable. In terms of Thailand, political polarization is the deep-rooted theoretical division between royal nationalism and the conflicting point of view argues the sovereignty belongs to Thai people. Hence, this eroded democracy gradually and led to democratic breakdowns in 2006 and 2014.

##### *4.1.2.2. The role of party system in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand shaped within the democratization process*

Party systems in Indonesia and Malaysia contributes to the

stability of democracy and the legitimacy of regime. Party system in Thailand is effective only during periods of stable parliamentary democracy. The party system change in Indonesia and Malaysia has led to a number of party system models with high institutionalization. The party system in Thailand is fragmented and does not lead to the new model of party system.

#### **4.2. Some reference suggestions, drawn from party system change in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, for the democratization process in Vietnam**

##### ***4.2.1. The democratization process, coupled with Vietnam's Doi Moi, is an objective inevitable process***

The democratization process in Vietnam is greatly tied to Doi Moi in which democracy is both an aim and a motive.

##### ***4.2.2. Reference suggestions for the process of political governing of the Communist Party of Vietnam in the democratization process***

###### ***4.2.2.1. One united party and a strong government are the democratization process's guarantee of success***

A strong, stable, and highly institutionalized Communist Party would contribute to the democratization process and help to build a socialist democracy, with distinctive features of democracy in Southeast Asia.

###### ***4.2.2.2. Democratization within the ruling party before democratization within the whole society***

Vietnamese single-party system should play the role of an institution that mirrors a wide range of interests in society. The democratization process in Vietnam must be a managed process in which interests of the ruling and the people are guaranteed.

###### ***4.2.2.3. Building mechanisms to check power efficiently in the***



### *democratization process*

If the delegation of powers is considered as one of the efficient tools to check power, then it should be conducted discreetly, and thus avoid negative consequences from decentralization of powers as in Indonesia.

#### *4.2.2.4. Decreasing political polarization in the democratization process*

Political polarization should be tackled by building a great national unity and working on reconciliatory activities. Also, this could be addressed by building political culture that supports democratic discussions and reconciliation through consultation so that consensus is achieved.

#### *4.2.2.5. Encourage active participation from the people and civil society organizations*

ASEAN's commitment to democracy is not about driving political liberalization; instead, it helps to manage and expand political arena to welcome civil participation into the management of society. This could be one of core values shaping the relationship between the ruling of the Communist Party of Vietnam, state governing and civil society organizations in the democratization process in Vietnam.

## **Chapter 4 Conclusion**

The party system change in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand verifies the research hypothesis about the close relationship between the democratization process and the development and transformation of party systems in ASEAN. In addition, this offers a big picture about the context of Southeast Asia and ASEAN. Hence, suggestions are drawn for the Communist Party of Vietnam during the process of political ruling and democratization.

## CONCLUSION

Party system is an important indication of power relationship among interest groups in society. It mirrors democracy in three aspects: competition, civil participation into political process, and political and civil rights. Party system plays the role of an institution that aggregates, articulates separate interests in society, and turn them into mutual interests so that the governmental legitimacy is guaranteed. Also, party system is deeply associated with democracy of a country. The democratization process leads to dynamics of changing party system among democratic institutions. On the other hand, party system change is a factor that needs considering in the democratization process and the quality of democracy. Research on the relationship between party system and democratization process is necessary. This helps to answer questions about the impact of democratization process on the role, function, and operation of party system which is seen as the most important institution of a democracy. Also, the research clarifies the role of party system in the democratization process of a country.

As leading ASEAN countries, with distinctive features of political regime, culture, and history, three countries Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand are three case studies that have gone through profound changes of political arena in the democratization process. These three states are analyzed in terms of the party system change in the democratization process. The thesis generalizes the relationship between parties/ruling coalitions and the democratization process. The thesis aims to research the region and the world, offering reference suggestions for policymaking in Vietnam – a country in Southeast Asia and ASEAN.

The thesis structure has four chapters. From general documents, research on theoretical issues of party system, the democratization

process in Southeast Asia, in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand as well as their party systems. The thesis aims at general theoretical issues of party system change in the democratization process and the reality of party system change in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Also, the thesis aims to indicate issues that need more research so that the role of party systems towards the democratization process in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand could be better clarified.

The analytical framework of party system change is built upon dynamics of democratization process, reflected in the party system and the interactive relationship between democratization process and party system. The research outcome shows that the democratization process and the party system depend on distinctive features of each democracy, such as religions, ethnicities, the elite, the middle class, non-election institutions etc., and virtually no common features could be used to analyze the party system in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

The thesis draws some commentaries as follows: (1) Democracies in Southeast Asia focuses specifically on developmental state model, and the party system mirrors the state nature and supports the role of state; (2) ASEAN is seen as a community participating in the democratization process, yet its impact on member countries is still limited; (3) From case studies of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand as well as from the angle of Southeast Asia, some reference suggestions are drawn from the research in terms of the role of the Communist Party of Vietnam towards the democratization process in the context of Doi Moi in Vietnam. The relationship between the Communist Party of Vietnam and the democratization process is featured as well.

## LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S THESIS-RELATED PUBLICATIONS

1. Nguyen Viet Cuong (2022), "The current political party systems in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand", *Journal of Political Theory*, Vol.32 – Mar, 2022.
2. Nguyen Viet Cuong (2021), "Islamic politics and democracy in present-day Indonesia and Malaysia", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, No. 9 (258), September.
3. Nguyen Viet Cuong (2021), "Party System and Democratization Process in Thailand", *Journal of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Vietnam Social Sciences*, No.2 (206) – 2021.
4. Nguyen Viet Cuong (2022), "Southeast Asian regional governance in Covid-19 response and democratization of ASEAN", *Proceedings of International Conference "Covid-19 and International Relations"*, The gioi Publishing House, Hanoi.