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***Power Broking in the Shade: Party Finances and Money Politics in Southeast Asia*. By Wolfgang Sachsenröder. Singapore: World Scientific, 2018. Hardcover: 191pp.**

Despite the multitudes of political parties in Southeast Asia, and their immense expenses and financing needs, there is surprisingly little information in the existing literature on how political parties in the region raise money. While recent studies have examined party politics, election campaigns and money politics in individual countries in the region, an in-depth study on political party financing across Southeast Asia was lacking. Wolfgang Sachsenröder's *Power Broking in the Shade* is a welcome attempt to fill that gap.

How do political parties support themselves? What are the consequences of political parties' financing practices on governance and policies more generally? Is Southeast Asia particularly unique compared to other regions? Although Sachsenröder does not explicitly articulate these questions as the central inquiry of his book, his observations bring us closer to answering them.

The book, with nine country chapters, an introduction and a conclusion, offers a broad survey of political parties' financing strategies in Southeast Asia. Relying on newspaper articles, reports published by governments, local and non-governmental organizations, and existing scholarly works, Sachsenröder sketches a picture of political parties' incentives, constraints and strategies that contribute to the pervasive practice of money politics in Southeast Asia. Each country chapter starts with an overview of the country's political history, key institutions, social and economic indicators, and is followed by a discussion of country-specific features of money politics and party financing.

Sachsenröder describes that the "basic pattern" across the countries he studied as one of a "skillful move to blur the distinction between big businesses, state funds, and political parties, in order to control and manipulate cash flows as the main instrument for securing power" (p. 1). Among other strategies, political parties in Southeast Asia raise money by recruiting wealthy entrepreneurs to become party members, leaders and candidates (pp. 144, 175), running government-linked corporations that provide transfers and contributions to the party (p. 84), extracting revenues from business projects in exchange for licences and state protection (p. 109), and placing party members on company boards and directorships (p. 163). Compared to political parties in other regions, Sachsenröder argues that parties in Southeast Asia handle much larger sums of money (p. 26), much of which originate from "creatively, sometimes ingeniously organized private sources" as opposed to regulated public subsidies and fees (p. 172).

While careful not to overstate his findings, Sachsenröder makes some conjectures throughout the book to explain why such a pattern exists. With repeated comparisons to European countries with low corruption, the author indicates that Southeast Asia's rapid economic growth and gaping inequalities (p. 53), increasingly costly administrative and campaign needs (p. 173), and close ties between the parties and the business sector, are some factors that contribute to the pervasiveness of money politics in Southeast Asia (p. 24). While running for public office and serving as politicians offer little financial rewards in Scandinavian countries and do not typically entice professionals and entrepreneurs, the situation is markedly different in Southeast Asia, where political parties are "run, led, and dominated by entrepreneurs" (p. 28)—whose money can fund the party machinery, and who expect returns on their investment.

Sachsenröder uses a similar logic to describe Singapore, which he labels the "white raven" (p. 131) of the region for its unusually low levels of political corruption. He notes that party administrative expenses and election campaigns in the city-state are notably less expensive than in its much larger neighbouring countries, especially Indonesia (pp. 132, 135). The relatively lower party expenses, coupled with strict party funding regulations, competitive salaries for civil servants, and proportionally large expenses covered by membership fees, imply that party politicians in Singapore do not suffer the same pressures and opportunities to raise funds as "creatively" as their Southeast Asian counterparts do.

While these suggestions seem plausible, the book is much less clear on how these factors fit together and shape the differences in the levels of money politics in the region. The chapters describe the significant differences in the levels of economic growth and inequality, the types of political institutions, the competitiveness of elections and the number of relevant political players across the countries in the region. One would expect these variations to imply meaningful differences in the costliness of maintaining political parties and running election campaigns, and in the incentives and opportunities to use creative financing strategies as well. Yet, without an approach that systematically compares consistent indicators of how political parties finance themselves across the different countries, readers are left with the impression that political parties and players in Southeast Asia are all similarly "creative" and corrupt, save for the exception of the People's Action Party in Singapore.

Overall, the book provides readers with a broad survey of the various manifestations of money politics in Southeast Asia and a supplement to existing theoretical and empirical studies on corruption and party politics.

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