

the arrival of a new specialist who, if this book is any indication, has the clear potential to make a significant contribution to the field.

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Power in a Philippine City. By Takeshi Kawanaka. Chiba, Japan: Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization, 2002. 118pp.

Scholarship on local politics in the Philippines has been dominated for a long time by society-centred perspectives which identify cultural norms and social structures as important variables in explaining the nature of power and power relations in Philippine localities. While these studies remain influential, there has also been a considerable shift in attention within the last decade, and a number of significant works have emerged that examine the role of the state and its institutions in explaining the dynamics of local politics. Kawanaka's recent book contributes to this latter perspective with his case study of local power mechanisms in Naga City.

Kawanaka takes issue with sociocultural perspectives which usually identify kinship patterns, social relationships and traditional values that reinforce the patron-client system as crucial in explaining the continuing dominance of political dynasties in the Philippines. The rise of the political machine, especially after democratic restoration in 1986, has been explained as a transformation in political relationships due to transformations in society and the economy. As Kawanaka notes, however, this perspective "still considers that society defines the patterns of local politics" (p. 10). Such arguments are not surprising considering the influence of the strong society-weak state framework in political research in developing countries.

Statist arguments have sought to present an alternative explanation of how local power is obtained and maintained. In particular, the role of the state is emphasized by identifying two important realities neglected by sociocultural perspectives: competition among political leaders in gaining access to the state's resources, and the salience of institutions that define how the state's resources are allocated. Thus, monopoly in access to state resources, and the institutional capacity to distribute these resources, become important factors in maintaining local power.

In the case study of Naga, Kawanaka devotes an entire chapter (Chapter 3) to describing the city's political history, and demonstrates that specific political leaders dominated for a certain period due to access to the state's resources. Subsequent political leaders emerged when this access, especially to national power holders, was cut and transferred to political opponents.

Kawanaka, however, differentiates his study from others which adopt the statist perspective. Other recent scholars, in examining how the state shapes local politics, utilized case studies of local "strongmen", "warlords" and "bosses," and focused on the use of illegal economic activities and political violence as mechanisms for maintaining local power and control. In this light, Kawanaka's choice of Naga City is refreshing, given the city's impressive performance since the much-awarded Mayor Jesse Robredo took over in 1988. The author explains the rationale behind his choice in a footnote as "to present a different type of local politician from that of the warlord type, and to refute the image of Philippine local politics as filled with violence and illegal activities" (p. 19). There is thus an unarticulated and yet important question that informs the research: how do political leaders who emphasize good governance manage to maintain local power? Set beside the failure of other "reformist" politicians to maintain power and sustain their governance initiatives, an examination of the success of Naga City, and in particular Mayor Robredo, provides a key to understanding the nature of Philippine local politics.

Like other recent works, the current study begins with identifying state resources and institutions that impact on Philippine local politics. Local political leaders compete for public office because it provides access to controlling important state resources such as finance, credit allocation, regulatory power, employment in the public sector, and physical coercive power through the police. In turn, important state institutions that determine how these resources may be allocated and utilized include the electoral system, the framework of central-local relations, and the spoils system in civil service appointments.

Against this institutional backdrop, the research in Naga City finds that monopoly over the control of state resources and the effective distribution of these resources are the important factors in maintaining local power, rather than cultural values, patron-client relationships and personal wealth, as argued by the sociocultural perspective. Here, the author asserts that the socioeconomic condition in a locality is an important contextual variable, since the manner in which state resources are channeled to meet the interests of local citizens differs across socioeconomic classes. In particular, Kawanaka argues that the political machine emerges as an important "strategic choice of the political elite,

especially in the urbanized socioeconomic situation...for controlling both resources and grassroots leaders” (p. 102).

Kawanaka devotes much of his attention to describing Robredo’s ascent to power in Naga and his efforts in building an effective political machine to maintain grassroots support in the city. Through a network of formal grassroots organizations that maintain close links with the mayor’s office, Robredo was able to systematically distribute benefits to urban poor residents, punish disloyal leaders and members through denial of such benefits, mobilize support during elections, and improve access to national-level resources controlled by national officials who recognize the importance of the political machine in winning elections.

Other recent studies point toward the same important roles of political machines, which emerge in the absence of cohesive political parties and because the institutional setting provides the mayor with much discretion in distributing city government resources. What is significant in Kawanaka’s study, and in the case of Naga City, is that the use of political machines does not result in the systematic plunder of state resources akin to those who have depicted Philippine local politics as characteristic of a “predatory state”. Indeed, good governance can be understood as part of the strategy for Robredo’s continued stay in power. While the majority of the urban poor are concerned about divisible benefits (through housing, livelihood and other such programmes), Kawanaka asserts that the larger segment of the middle class continues to support Robredo because his good performance results in important indivisible benefits (e.g., improved infrastructure). Consequently, good performance as evidenced through minimization of corruption in the city government and the growth of the city’s economy also results in the expansion of resources available for distribution through the political machine.

From these arguments, one can raise a number of significant questions, which are, admittedly, outside the author’s stated scope of research. First, how do local political leaders affect the formation of important political institutions? If the state and its institutions are crucial explanatory variables for understanding the nature of local power, then it is also important to understand how these institutions are formed. Kawanaka describes the importance of the 1991 Local Government Code in providing the framework for central-local relations in the country. But how have periodic changes in central-local relations affected the nature of local power, and why have these changes occurred?

Second, in the long run, do good governance initiatives affect the salience of the political machine? In particular, the introduction of mechanisms for participatory governance, such as those currently in Naga City, provides an opening for more pluralistic politics. Does this

significantly reduce the capacity of the political machine in monopolizing control and distribution of resources?

And third, how similar would the findings be when the theoretical approach is employed in a more rural setting? The author's use of a single case study provides rich empirical detail on the nature of politics in Naga City. However, further research that attempts to answer the third question may yield substantial insights on the salience of state institutions as explanatory variables that are independent of the process of urbanization.

This short but rich book is thus significant not only because of the attempt to explain the parallel existence of good governance and political machines in local politics, but also because it provokes additional questions that are important in more accurately understanding the nature of local politics in the Philippines.

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Globalization and Democratization in Asia: The Construction of Identity. Edited by Catarina Kinnvall and Kristina Jönsson. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. 276pp.

What is the relationship between globalization and democracy? For the most part the chapters in this book are concerned to explore the argument that the processes entailed in the economic, financial and cultural manifestations of globalization cannot be assumed necessarily to facilitate democratization. Historical and cultural factors can play the role of independent variables, and in Asia especially there can be observed a wide range of political and social outcomes even in ostensibly democratized states.

In reviewing the causes and consequences of the Asian financial crisis, Lowell Dittmer argues the case that the crisis marks the end of "Asian exceptionalism", global market forces now having "gained the upper hand" (p. 36). But this is not to assume that globalization will henceforth clear the way for a more thorough democratization. In reviewing the Indian case, Aswini Ray argues that local democracy has often been overwhelmed by such forces, and in the six chapters that follow, which are devoted specifically to the impact of globalization on particular Asian democracies, this message is