Mobilizing for Elections

Politicians in Southeast Asia, as in many other regions, win elections by distributing cash, goods, jobs, projects, and other benefits to supporters, but the ways in which they do this vary tremendously, both across and within countries. Mobilizing for Elections presents a new framework for analyzing variation in patronage democracies, focusing on distinct forms of patronage and different networks through which it is distributed. The book draws on an extensive, multi-country, multi-year research effort involving interactions with hundreds of politicians and vote brokers, as well as surveys of voters and political campaigners across the region. Chapters explore how local machines in the Philippines, ad hoc election teams in Indonesia, and political parties in Malaysia pursue distinctive clusters of strategies of patronage distribution – what the authors term electoral mobilization regimes. In doing so, the book shows how and why patronage politics varies, and how it works on the ground.

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Mobilizing for Elections

Patronage and Political Machines in Southeast Asia

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This book is the culmination of a multiyear and multistranded research effort, and our eighth major publication to date from a study of money politics in Southeast Asia that we began in 2012. In the succeeding years, we collaborated with large teams of local researchers to observe on-the-ground dynamics in the Malaysian national elections in 2013, Indonesian national elections in 2014, and Philippine national elections in 2016. Our original plan was to undertake a similarly detailed examination of the Thai national elections, supposed to have been held sometime around late 2014 or 2015, but the military coup of May 2014 put those plans indefinitely on hold. We have, however, had the opportunity to observe a range of other elections in the region, including the 2013 and 2019 midterm elections in the Philippines, the 2016 state elections in Malaysia’s Sarawak, and numerous polls in Indonesia: village-head elections, the 2019 legislative and presidential elections, and a range of pilkada (from pemilihan kepala daerah, or elections of regional heads) – most especially the large, simultaneous pilkada exercise held in seven different locations across the archipelago in February 2017. We also conducted similar research, though at a smaller scale, in Timor-Leste, Singapore, and Thailand. These discrete strands of research fed into the publications preceding this one, including several edited volumes on particular countries, featuring cases studies of “money politics” across locales, mostly written by our

1 Author order for this book was determined randomly.
2 These publications include Weiss 2014; Aspinall and Sukmajati 2015, 2016; Weiss and Puyok 2017; Aspinall and Berenschot 2019; Hicken, Aspinall, and Weiss 2019; Muhtadi 2019; Weiss 2020c; Teehankee and Calimbahin 2022. In addition, a contribution to debates on constitutional revision in the Philippines drew major inspiration from this project; see Hutchcroft 2019b. The project’s findings have further generated a wide range of articles (too numerous to list here) and contributed to several dissertations on related topics.
Acknowledgments

Southeast Asian research partners. The objective of this book is to synthesize and build from our earlier studies, and to present our key findings and identify critical patterns across all our country cases – with a particular focus on national-level characteristics and subnational variation in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

Involving more than 200 researchers across 6 countries, our project has benefited enormously from collaboration with leading universities and public-opinion survey firms. We express our deep thanks to those local research partners and institutions, without whose insights, guidance, and collaboration we would not have been able to conduct such an ambitious study nor bring together such a rich array of observations. Our partners included Universitas Gajah Mada (especially Mada Sukmajati, Amalinda Savirani, Wawan Mas'udi, the late Cornelis Lay, and the other members of the PolGov research center) and Lembaga Survei Indonesia (especially Burhanuddin Muhtadi) in Indonesia; University of Malaya (especially E. Terence Gomez and Surin Kaur), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (especially Arnold Puyok), and the Merdeka Center for Opinion Research in Malaysia; and De La Salle University (especially Julio Teehankee) and Pulse Asia Research (especially Ronnie Holmes) in the Philippines. We learned a great deal from all these individuals and their organizations, shared many memorable experiences with them, and owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

We worked closely with scores of researchers in each country. Though they are too numerous to name individually, we wish particularly to thank, in Indonesia, Burhanuddin Muhtadi, Noor Rohman, Zusiana Elly Triantini, David Efendi, Muhammad Mahsun, Rudi Rohi, and Muhammad Uhaib As'ad; in Thailand, Noppadon Kannika, Viengrat Nethipo, and Prajak Kongkirti; in Malaysia, Andrew Aeria, Chik Phaik Fern, Faisal Hazis, Regina Lim, Ng Ik Tien, and Tony Paridi Bagang; and in the Philippines, Tetchie Aquino, Cleo Calimbahin, Grace Labalan, Regina Macalandag, Neil Pancho, Ditas Ravanilla, Allen Surla, and Glenn Teh. Joel Rocamora provided particularly valuable insights from his national- and local-level perspectives. We thank Dotan Haim and Michael Davidson for research assistance and coordination and Nico Ravanilla for his collaboration with the broker-survey work in the Philippines. In Timor-Leste, we benefited hugely from our close research collaboration with the late James Scambary, a scholar whose generosity of spirit and commitment is greatly missed. In the course of conducting research for this volume, Edward Aspinall was working on a related book (on Indonesia) with Ward Berenschot; Aspinall's contribution to the current volume owes a large intellectual debt to this collaboration. Meredith Weiss was likewise working on a related book on Singapore and Malaysia; she thanks especially Eileen Lee and Loke Hoe Yeong in Singapore and Anna Har in Malaysia, beyond those listed above, for their insights and help. Paul Hutchcroft’s four-year stint as Lead Governance Specialist for the Australian

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aid program in the Philippines pulled him away from most election-observation opportunities, but by late 2017 he resumed his role in the project.

Working with such a diverse group of researchers not only enriched our study, but it was also personally enriching, making our experiences in the field for this project among the most memorable – and eye-opening – of our research careers to date. Accordingly, we also express our gratitude to the hundreds of candidates, campaign staff, experts, and ordinary citizens who sat down for interviews as part of this project, or who participated in focus groups and surveys. We owe a great deal to the openness, patience, and generosity of a great many people.

Our primary financial debt is to the Australian Research Council, from which a Discovery Grant (DP140103114) funded the bulk of our research (we also drew on research funded through grants DP120103181 and FT120100742). We benefited from supplemental research grants, too. The Centre for Democratic Institutions at the Australian National University funded initial project workshops where our research framework and planning came together. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded major research efforts on elections in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and the Philippines. The University of Malaya did the same for Malaysia. We thank our own universities, as well – the Australian National University, the University at Albany of the State University of New York, and the University of Michigan – for their financial and in-kind support. We also thank our hosts for writing workshops as we completed this book: the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University (especially Carol Hau), the Penang Institute (especially Ooi Kee Beng and Ong Siou Woon), and Chiang Mai University (especially Malinee Khumsupa and Tanet Charoenmuang).

Finally, we thank our partners and families for their love and support.
### Terms and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1MDB</td>
<td>1Malaysia Development Berhad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barangay</td>
<td>village or urban ward (Philippines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barisan Nasional</td>
<td>National Front, BN (Malaysia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARMM</td>
<td>Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bersatu</td>
<td>Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia, Malaysian United Indigenous Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR1M</td>
<td>Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia, 1Malaysia People’s Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bumiputera</td>
<td>Indigenous (lit., “sons of the soil”; Malaysia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bupati</td>
<td>Regent (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAP</td>
<td>Democratic Action Party (Malaysia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPR</td>
<td>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, People’s Representative Council, national parliament (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPRD–K</td>
<td>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah–Kabupaten/Kota, rural district/city legislative council (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPRD–P</td>
<td>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah–Provinsi, provincial legislative council (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerindra</td>
<td>Partai Gerindra, Greater Indonesia Movement Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabupaten</td>
<td>rural district (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBL</td>
<td>Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, New Society Movement; or kasal, binyag, libing, weddings, baptisms, funerals (Philippines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelurahan</td>
<td>urban ward or precinct (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kepala desa</td>
<td>rural village head (Indonesia)</td>
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<td>Kota</td>
<td>city (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyai</td>
<td>religious scholar (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lider</td>
<td>vote broker (Philippines)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>Liberal Party (Philippines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>Malaysian Chinese Association</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
List of Terms and Acronyms

MCP Malayan Communist Party
MIC Malaysian Indian Congress
NU Nahdlatul Ulama, “traditionalist” Islamic organization (Indonesia)
NP Nacionalista Party (Philippines)
PAP People’s Action Party (Singapore)
PAS Parti Islam seMalaysia, Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party
PDI Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, Indonesian Democracy Party
PDI–P Partai Demokrasi Indonesia–Perjuangan, Indonesian Democracy Party–Struggle
PDP–LABAN Partido Demokratiko Pilipino–Lakas ng Bayan, Philippine Democratic Party–Strength of the Nation
Pesantren Islamic boarding schools (Indonesia)
PH Pakatan Harapan, Alliance of Hope (Malaysia)
Pilkada Pemilihan kepala daerah, regional head elections (Indonesia)
PKB Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, National Awakening Party (Indonesia)
PKI Partai Komunis Indonesia, Indonesian Communist Party
PKK Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, Family Welfare Movement (Indonesia)
PKR Parti Keadilan Rakyat, People’s Justice Party (Malaysia)
PNI Partai Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian National Party
PPP Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, Development Unity Party (Indonesia)
Preman gangsters (Indonesia)
Purok neighborhood (Philippines)
Tim sukses success team (Indonesia)
Ulama religious scholar (Indonesia, Malaysia)
UMNO United Malays National Organisation (Malaysia)
Wanita UMNO women’s wing of UMNO (Malaysia)