



Parties and Parliaments in Southeast Asia: Non-Partisan Chambers in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand (Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia Series)

Roland Rich

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Political parties are an essential ingredient in a modern democracy. They are also seen as the least trusted and most problematic institution in most democratic systems. While there have been attempts to strengthen parties through institutional design and capacity building, a new strategy has been to quarantine them from parts of parliament. Within the space of a few years the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia implemented designs for parliamentary representation that proscribed the established political parties from a parliamentary chamber or part thereof.

Using these three countries as case studies, this book traces the historical context for institutional designs, the intentions behind them and their implementation through at least one full parliamentary term. It investigates the conceptual architecture of the non-partisan designs, identifying corporatism as one (discredited) alternative and "championship" as another. While there is a yearning for exemplary people as representatives, the designers have struggled to find a successful means of having these champions elected to office. The book concludes that non-partisan chambers, based on the evidence to date, are not viable.

This book is of interest to scholars of Southeast Asian Politics, Party Politics, Governance Institutions and Democracy.

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