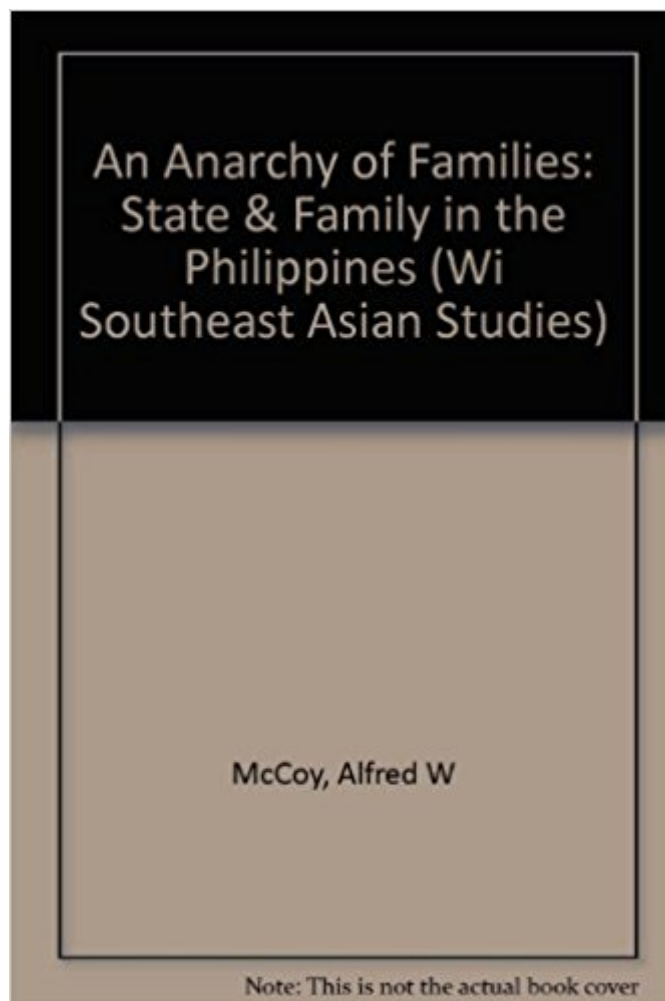


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# An Anarchy Of Families: State And Family In The Philippines



## Synopsis

Winner of the Philippine National Book Award, but now out of print outside of Asia, *An Anarchy of Families: State and Family in the Philippines* explores the dynamics of family-based oligarchies and their pervasive influence on Philippine politics. Throughout the 20th century, kinship networks radiating from elite Filipino families have acted as powerful coalitions—wielding substantial capital, exercising political sway, and sometimes backing it up with paramilitary force. This volume shows how the power of these extended families both derives from, and contributes to, a weak and corrupt state. Exploiting inherited wealth and invoking their family names, provincial and urban elites gain access to political privileges such as low-cost government credit, selective slackening of commercial regulations, licenses for state-regulated enterprises, and freedom from interference in labor disputes. Many of these families then pressure constituents to deliver, in exchange, votes for the officials who conferred the favors sought. The result is often increased factionalism, intensification of violence, and further attenuation of central government. Edited by Alfred W. McCoy, the volume offers nine essays that demonstrate the variety of style and method exhibited by the Filipino political families discussed therein. Their lives, punctuated by the mundane experiences of baptism, marriage, disputes over inheritance, and other events of the domestic sphere, have profoundly affected the life of the nation. From provincial warlords to modern managers, these familial networks have fused politics and business to subvert public institutions and reinforce private accumulation of wealth—a pattern that continues to the present day. In the years following its publication in 1995, *An Anarchy of Families* won both praise and criticism. Neither managed to add or subtract significantly from the most essential attribute of the book: It had struck the sciatic nerve of Philippine politics. In effect, the volume had identified and analyzed a sensitive, far-reaching facet—whose operation is as central to the functioning of the Philippine polity now as it was then. As reader Patricio Abinales and series editor Katherine Bowie confirm, *An Anarchy of Families* has continuing relevance and should be made available once again to students and scholars. Originally published by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, this proposed reprint will help supply our series *New Perspectives in Southeast Asian Studies* with both critical mass and intellectual gravitas.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“These vivid portraits suggest that pursuing family history provides one way to indicate how the Philippines operates and what partially inhibits a better future for its citizens.”  
—John A. Larkin, *Pilipinas*  
“[These] case studies reveal in startling detail the close interconnection between power and wealth. They also demonstrate the resilience of the elite families in the face of dramatic changes in [Philippine] politics and long periods of social turbulence.”  
—Alex Magno, *The Manila Chronicle*  
“Makes an important contribution to Southeast Asian s. These essays are based on intensive scrutiny of primary sources and they tell us much that we could not learn from other publications.”  
—Glenn A. May, University of Oregon  
“Rends the canopy of civility, and culture surrounding the ruling families of the Philippines, revealing long histories of opportunism and violence.”  
—Patricio Abinales, Kyoto University

Alfred W. McCoy is J.R.W. Smail Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His books include *The Politics of Heroin* and *A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation from the Cold War to the War on Terror*.

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