

Cash mars political parties



THIS book deals with the contentious subject of the relationship between money and politics.

It also explores how political party finances can create conditions and opportunities for corruption and the abuse of state power.

It uses case studies from all over the world in which there is a single-party dominance, to give context to the challenges South Africa and other developing democracies face in this regard.

In his introductory essay Anthony Butler argues that while money is essential in the operation of a democracy, it is also dangerous.

“Parties with disproportionate access to resources can buy votes, monopolise airtime during campaigns and dispense jobs and

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patronage to supporters. Within parties factions can build war chests to win internal elections and to dominate candidate lists,” Butler writes.

In his contribution, *Centre for the Study of Democracy*, Steven Friedman cites the relationship between mining magnate Brett Kebble had with the ANC and the ANCYL as an example of how wealthy individuals can use money to gain influence over political actors.

The ANC’s Chancellor House

investment arm’s involvement in the Eskom-Hitachi deal is also cited as an example of how methods of party funding can create a conflict of interest for the ruling party.

“These issues, party political finance and the conditions and opportunities it creates for political corruption and conflict of interest, real or perceived, are at the heart of the Eskom project, with regard to the involvement of Chancellor House Holdings in particular, and the conduct of business between the ANC and the government in general”, writes UCT political studies lecturer Zwelethu Jolobe in his essay.

The book states the need to regulate party funding, but what makes it effective is that it questions funding and regulation as a solution.

