

help or allow minority groups to practice their religion (pp. 59–80).

This book is based on A'an Suryana's extensive ethnographic fieldwork in the communities of West and East Java. Research materials include in-depth interviews with community and religious leaders, state officials, security forces, and prominent politicians. Data collection was carried out using ethnographic methods and in-depth interviews with sources related to this research.

A'an Suryana succeeds in presenting a new approach to the problem of Islam, violence, and the state in Indonesia, and this book will be interesting for researchers of Southeast Asian politics, Islam and politics, conflict resolution, state and violence, terrorism and political violence.

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The Vortex of Power: Intellectuals and Politics in Indonesia's Post-Authoritarian Era

AIRLANGGA PRIBADI KUSMAN

Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

There has been substantive growth in the scholarship of post-authoritarian Indonesian politics in the past two decades. We know more about the achievements and limitations of Indonesian democratic politics as a vibrant democratic performer that continues to struggle against illiberal and oligarchic influences. Making an important addition or contribution to this rich body of literature can be challenging, especially on research pertaining to the relationship between local politics, oligarchic power, and competing social forces. This is the task that Airlangga Pribadi Kusman tackles quite successfully in his book.

Anchored in the Marxist theoretical tradition of the Murdoch School of Asian political studies (Hameiri and Jones 2014), Kusman looks at the role intellectuals such as academics, social activists, and journalists play in local politics in East Java, Indonesia's second most populous province, and the extent to which they challenge or enable oligarchic hegemony. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Kusman argues that Indonesian intellectuals do not always serve as the vanguard of pro-democratic ideas and politics. In a detailed manner, he shows that the increasingly political class of intellectuals sometimes influences policies in the service of predatory political and economic interests. He establishes his argument in several steps. In the first two chapters, he introduces his thesis and rules out three competing explanations: the neo-institutionalist account with its rosy picture of intellectuals as the torchbearers of pro-market and liberal democratic ideas, the neo-Foucauldian analysis of the entanglement of intellectuals within the discursive power play and relations, and the neo-Gramscian critique of intellectuals as agents of transnational capitalist class. True to the spirit of the Murdoch School, Kusman instead offers an analysis of the role of intellectuals in supporting the political project of the dominant politico-business interests that is more attentive to domestic political economy and local political contingencies. Intellectuals, he argues, have always been involved or entangled in power struggles, whether in the United States, Britain, Latin America, or Southeast Asia.

The rest of the book (Chapters 3–7) gives robust empirical grounding to Kusman's argument by detailing the ambivalent position of intellectuals vis-à-vis state and capitalist power. In the post-authoritarian context, East Javanese intellectuals play a range of roles in local politics, not only as advocates of social transformation but also as political consultants, spin doctors, and informal advisers for predatory elites. In other words, intellectuals also have their share of "sin" in the perpetuation of oligarchic power at the expense of ordinary and marginalized citizens.

Though this book is local in scope, Kusman also attempts to show the connection between national and provincial oligarchic power by analyzing the infamous Lapindo mudflow case in East Java in Chapter 7. This accident was a result of a botched drilling operation by PT Lapindo Brantas, a corporation owned partly by the oligarchic Bakrie family. The case, which received national attention, is an example of how local and national political dynamics intersect in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Kusman once again tells us that intellectuals too can be found on both sides of the conflict: as the defenders of the mudflow victims as well as the agents of elite coalition supporting the corporation and the Bakries.

Kusman concludes by reiterating that "intellectuals are not innocent from dealing and contributing to the power struggles that shape the landscape of contemporary Indonesian politics" (p. 237). I agree. All in all, Kusman presents a convincing analysis of how intellectuals serve oligarchic and predatory interests in post-authoritarian Indonesia. By doing so, he specifies one major mechanism through which oligarchy operates, namely, the cooptation of intellectuals by established politico-business interests.

However, there are several aspects of Kusman's work that could have been improved. In terms of his case selection strategy, Kusman could make a better case for East Java as his chosen focus by explicitly laying out the importance of this province compared to other localities in Indonesian politics. Substance-wise, I would like to see more explanation on the thinking and ideas behind the intellectuals that he studies. Kusman rightly points out that material factors, especially the local political economy constellation, matter. However, he misses another factor in the equation, namely, the ideational dimension of intellectuals' political engagement. These added nuances would make the book even more interesting to read and strengthen Kusman's overall argument.

Some other points are also worth mentioning. Kusman pessimistically yet prematurely claims in the conclusion that the absence of "vibrant liberal reformists or social democratic forces" significantly "limits the options available to intellectuals" (p. 238), a prognosis that is emblematic of some analyses in the Murdoch School approach. Although this assessment is mostly accurate, it does not capture the whole picture of Indonesian politics. Sure, oligarchic rule remains triumphant, but as a student of Indonesian politics and social movements, I can list a number of advances made by lower-class groups and their activist allies, ranging from local policy changes to solidarity economy initiatives (Anugrah 2019a; 2019b). One does not have to adopt a naïve liberal pluralist view of politics as a mutually beneficial arena of interest exchange and competition to argue that under certain conditions popular agency for progressive agendas can make a breakthrough. Perhaps another question that the book and the broader literature should ask is why there has been a lack of an effective progressive social coalition for change and the role of intellectuals (or the lack thereof) in the said political project.

My last criticism is stylistic: at times, this book reads like a dissertation. This is understandable, given that the book is indeed a remake of the author's PhD dissertation (Kusman 2015). However, the book's structure and language could be made crisper and more engaging. In particular, I personally think that the brief discussion on intellectuals and political struggles in South-east Asia and other regions should be turned into a separate chapter on its own or integrated into the concluding chapter to show the applicability of Kusman's investigation to other world regions, thereby strengthening his analytical framework.

These criticisms aside, Kusman's book manages to enrich our understanding of how oligarchy operates in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Adding novelty to the Indonesian oligarchy scholarship is a challenging task, and Kusman deserves applause for doing that excellently.

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The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War

JEREMY A. YELLEN

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This book is probably the first English book exploring the rise and fall of the Japanese Empire during the late 1930s and early 1940s with a particular focus on Japan’s ambiguous relationship with two Western colonized countries in Southeast Asia, Burma and the Philippines. As the author, Jeremy Yellen, clearly points out in his introduction: “there are no book-length monographs in English that explore the Japanese Co-Prosperity Sphere from the perspective of Japanese high policy” and former “English-language literature on the Sphere often focuses on the initial stage of the Pacific War” (p. 11). In other words, the “brutal” aspects of the Japanese occupation, such as the attacks on Pearl Harbor as well as the Naval Battle of Malaya, and US withdrawal from the Philippines and the ensuing “Bataan Death March,” have attracted English-language scholarly circles. With his excellent command of Japanese and use of rich Japanese sources, however, Yellen reveals the ambivalence evident in Japan’s policy making and implementation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. On one hand, the empire attempted to bring liberation to the people in the sphere; but on the other hand, it turned out to be yet another imperial/colonial order in the region. This perspective is most clearly explained in the book’s conclusion, which states that Japanese tensions “between idealism and self-interest, between utopian dreams of and the realist pursuit of national power, were shared among modern empires” (p. 206). The reviewer believes this insightful statement dismantles the “Orientalist” image of the Japanese Empire, reinforced in academic scholarship, and will generate further English-language research on the topic through comparisons with other empires of the twentieth century.

The book consists of two parts: a discussion of the rise and fall of the Japanese Empire, followed by an examination of the counterreactions as well as commitments from “liberated” Burma