

**Book review: Jemma Purdey, Antje Missbach, Dave McRae: Indonesia - State and Society in Transition. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2020. ISBN 978-1-62637-852-0**

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Wolfgang Pape in his article “From Pure Quantity to Broader Quality in Multi-Level Governance” pleads with good reason for more quality within multi-level governance and with regard to referenda on very specific and limited issues in general. The Federal Republic of Germany – against the background of the experiences during the Republic of Weimar – had drawn the conclusion that referenda at the federal level should be prohibited. On the other hand, in his argumentation for a participatory democracy the experience of the participative budget, as practiced quite successfully in many places, fits quite well all over the world. The participatory budget, invented in Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, permits the citizens on the local and regional level to decide about priorities within the budget. Therefore it is a useful tool for basic democracy. Finally, Matthias Pilz and Peter-Jörg Alexander give a good assessment of the Japanese vocational training system, yet neglect the subcontractors that employ the majority of the workforce. As the vocational training has no direct link to democratic decision-making, the reader may wonder what this has to do with democracy.

Altogether the volume offers beyond Germany and Japan a broad and useful overview of the discussion concerning the future of democracy in its divergent facets and can thus be recommended without any reservations for academic specialists as well as for the larger public.

György Széll

JEMMA PURDEY / ANTJE MISSBACH / DAVE McRAE, *Indonesia: State and Society in Transition*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2020. 261 pages, \$29.95. ISBN 978-1-62637-852-0

*Indonesia: State and Society in Transition* offers a dense and refreshing new perspective on a topic that has already received a great deal of scholarly attention: Indonesia’s history, politics and society. Indonesia’s shift from authoritarianism under the former president Suharto to democracy started some two decades ago. However, Indonesia, a nation with 270 million people and the world’s largest Muslim population, remains a country in transition even now, which is the main focus of the book. Jemma Purdey, Antje Missbach and Dave McRae argue that in the Reformation period new spaces evolved where the public could formulate criticism against the political and economic elite and exert pressure. However, the nepotism, cronyism and corruption that emerged under Suharto still permeate business and politics, and despite rapid economic growth the gap between rich and poor is widening instead of shrinking. The authors also examine the failure of the state to deal with past crimes against

humanity under Suharto, revealing a persistent inability to break with suppression. Moreover, increasing attacks on human rights organisations show new levels of intolerance. These examples show that political reforms have stagnated rather than progressed. However, as the authors rightly emphasise, compared to its Southeast Asian neighbours such as the Philippines, Thailand and Myanmar, Indonesia “has consistently maintained democratic status since the year 2000” (p. 2). In order to comprehend Indonesia’s transition and better predict the country’s future, this book contributes to a clearer understanding of the context of current events. In the first half of the book, the authors bring together insights into pre-independence Indonesia, the establishment of the authoritarian Suharto regime, political reforms after 1998 and today’s democratic-era politics. In the second half of their monograph, they dive deeper into issues of health, education and work, looking at human rights as well as the media and popular culture. To this end, they draw a comprehensive picture of the complex history-politics-society nexus of the country.

The authors Jemma Purdey, Antje Missbach and Dave McRae have visited and observed Indonesia closely for decades and are renowned for their work on the country’s historical and political processes. In compiling the book, they have drawn on their own rich experience and research expertise as well as an analysis of the literature. Thus it is very much appreciated that they have joined forces to share their knowledge with a broader audience.

With regard to health, education and work, the authors argue that inequality is not only pervasive but on the rise. At the same time, basic inequality of opportunities from early childhood impacts on nutrition, sanitation and education. Despite the expansion of the education system, schools seem not to prepare young adults for the labour market, where skilled workers are needed. Another hurdle in Indonesia’s transition to democracy examined by the authors is the continuing prevalence of human rights abuses and discrimination. The authors argue that “[t]he experience of transitional justice in Indonesia illustrates some of the larger continuing problems of governance in post-Suharto Indonesia, where the rules of the game may have changed but many of the players have not” (p. 164). Many of the old political and military elites are still in power and have little interest in reform, democratic control or the separation of powers. This affects also the media sector. Generally, according to the authors, Indonesia’s media sector enjoys greater freedom. However, powerful media oligarchies control and steer the print media and television, pursuing their own political and economic interests. The high use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter by Indonesians might therefore be one attempt to escape tendentious and manipulated information and media coverage. In fact, some examples of protest against injustice, such as the success of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in the so-called gecko versus crocodile case in 2009 show that through social media, protest and criticism

can be strengthened and reinforced. However, as the authors argue, social media can also be highly influential in election campaigns, where political smear campaigns on social media, such as the so-called Ahok case in the gubernatorial election campaign in 2016, are driven by political and economic interests.

The book's greatest strength lies in the detailed up-to-date analysis of state and society in Indonesia. It is informative and precise, enriches existing knowledge, links loose ends and is a real treasure trove of knowledge. Reflecting the broad range of current issues covered in this book, it will be of great interest for academics working in the fields of social sciences, political sciences, economics, development studies, Southeast Asian studies and Asian studies. It should not be missing in any library. As the book is written in an accessible language and style, it could also greatly benefit non-academic practitioners engaged with issues of politics and society in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, such as civil society organisations, journalists, policymakers and interested laypersons.

*Kristina Großmann*

AZMIL TAYEB, *Islamic Education in Indonesia and Malaysia: Shaping Minds, Saving Souls*. (Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia Series). Abingdon / New York: Routledge, 2018. 250 pages, £100.00. ISBN 978-0-815-36120-6

This book by Azmil Tayeb provides a comparative political study of Islamic education in Indonesia and Malaysia. What is most compelling about the book is its highly processual nature and historically embedded research. Two main questions are at the centre of the work. The first question, as explained by the author, is comprised of three parts: To what extent and under what conditions do the states in Indonesia and Malaysia functionalise Islamic education for their political ends? How do the two countries engage in such functionalisation? To what extent have such efforts of functionalisation been successful? As a second focus the author analyses why the state in Malaysia has been more triumphant in materialising a centralised control over Islamic education than the state in Indonesia.

The main thrust of the argument is that the post-colonial state in Malaysia has been more successful in centralising its control over Islamic education, and more focused on the promotion of a restrictive kind of Islamic orthodoxy, compared to the post-colonial state in Indonesia. The author argues that this is due to three factors. First, there is the control of resources by the central