

Book review: Okamoto Masaaki, Jafar Suryomenggolo (eds): Indonesia at the Crossroads - Transformation and Challenges

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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Rezension / review

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Satriyani Puspita, S. (2023). Book review: Okamoto Masaaki, Jafar Suryomenggolo (eds): Indonesia at the Crossroads - Transformation and Challenges. [Review of the book *Indonesia at the Crossroads: Transformation and Challenges*, ed. by O. Masaaki, & J. Suryomenggolo]. *International Quarterly for Asian Studies (IQAS)*, 54(3), 333-335. <https://doi.org/10.11588/iqas.2023.3.23474>

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with an afterword in the form of a conversation between two prominent scholars on Myanmar. The conversation attempts to complete the circle of this elegant collection by refocusing on the ways in which Myanmar's long and contested history shaped the gender norms and the scale and scope of the gendered transformations leading up to the transition period, which eventually shaped the aftermath of the February 2021 military coup.

Overall, the volume stands as a radical intervention against the articulation of Buddhist Romanticism long hailed in the Western World – both in academic and popular discourse. The strength of the book and its unique selling point lies in its anthropological nuances that persistently penetrate the unwavering religious and cultural practices that shape the role of women and their position in society. It is more than recommended for anyone interested in taking a look behind the orthodox account of the conflict, gender and peace-building initiatives in Myanmar. With sharp analysis, it offers an important and compelling account of political and social action by women and for women in a volatile and unpredictable terrain and suggests a reckoning with the past to guide the future.

Anas Ansar

OKAMOTO MASAOKI / JAFAR SURYOMENGGOLO (EDS), *Indonesia at the Crossroads: Transformation and Challenges*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2022. 420 pages, \$49.95. ISBN 978-1-9256-0837-3 (pb)

This co-edited volume about Indonesia post-1998 reformation was published in 2022, but the works compiled are based on a workshop conducted in 2017. Given the wide temporal gap between the time of writing and the publication of the volume, and given that the co-editors did not explicitly explain the choice of the word “crossroads” in the title, readers are left to wonder exactly what “crossroads” are being referred to. Nevertheless, the editors have clearly stated the publication's objectives and the contributors' professional backgrounds in the Introduction. One objective of this co-edited volume is to showcase the voices of contributors who do not usually publish their works in English, the dominant language of most contemporary debates and literature on the study of Indonesia. Another objective of the volume is to enrich the dialogue between academics and others who work in the field of Indonesian Studies. The volume compiles observations of post-Suharto Indonesia made not only by scholars, but also by field researchers and NGO workers based in Indonesia, Japan and South Korea. This admirable aim is somewhat undermined, however, by the lack of clarity with which the sources of some of the statistical data are presented in a few footnotes in the Introduction (pp. 8, 10, 21). Scholars often express

dissatisfaction with the availability of statistical data in Indonesia. Hence, clear citation of the sources could buttress the reliability of the editors' arguments while providing valuable resources of credible information for other scholars to analyse in their ongoing and future research.

The book comprises 12 chapters, divided into 3 parts. The first part discusses the dynamics of maintaining peace in heterogeneous societies. The three chapters in the first part analyse cases of policymaking at the national level, such as the claiming of space to express group identity through street art in Yogyakarta, the violence against religious minorities in Madura, and the meaningful inclusion of indigenous people in Papua's subnational governments. The second part then explores problems of inequality in four sectors: education, urban poverty, rural land and infrastructure. Finally, the third part deals with issues of corruption, human rights, security and the intelligence apparatus.

Chapter 1 by Thung Ju Lan problematises the discourse on "multiculturalism" within the Indonesian state and society. The article unpacks how Indonesia's state ideology and government policies mitigate the complexities of its society's diverse levels of social mobilisation by religious and ethnic affiliation. Her article stimulates readers to question why reparations and repatriation remain challenging for a government such as Indonesia, given its narrow conceptualisation of multiculturalism. By reparation, I mean the actions within the United Nations framework to address past human rights violation; and by repatriation, I mean the return of profits earned from indigenous land (*tanah adat*) to its communities (*masyarakat adat*).

Lan's arguments about the problematic conceptions of multiculturalism held by many national-level policymakers, which impact the legitimisation of discrimination and violence against minorities, is echoed by chapters two to four. Brigitta Isabella (Chapter 2) demonstrates how various groups in Yogyakarta assert their power through murals of local pride, political satire and provocative messages. While some messages are peaceful, others are hateful (e.g. anti-LGBT content) – coined by Brigitta Isabella as "moralist messages" (p. 66). Kayane Yuka (Chapter 3) explains how violence against the Shia community in Madura is a manifestation of power struggles between the less and more popular religious authorities, in addition to struggles between politicians at the local and state levels seeking electoral support from religious authorities and their flocks. Rosita Dewi (Chapter 4) traces the national government's affirmative action policies on Papua since the Dutch occupation in 1942 and discusses their impacts on Papuan autonomy to date.

Authors of the three chapters that follow (Chapters 5–7) highlight the significance of education in lessening social and economic inequalities. Abdul Amin (Chapter 5) uses data at the regency level to illustrate disparities in secondary school enrolment rates based on ethnicity and gender. Ernoiz Antriyandarti and Susi Ani (Chapter 7) use data at four sites of rice production in Central and

East Java to show how farmers with small land parcels and low education levels tend not to lease out their land because they are unable to generate income from other sources – thus increasing the chance that they will live in poverty.

Other contributions to this edited volume call for greater collaboration among different government agencies in producing policies to resolve economic problems. For example, Asep Suryahadi and Cecilia Marlina (Chapter 6) compare statistical data of households at the national level with those at the Greater Jakarta area / metropolitan level to show the need for better coordination among the city governments of Jakarta, Bogor, Depok and Tangerang. Maxensius Sambodo and Latif Adam (Chapter 8) examine the fiscal policies since the 1997 Financial Crisis, which have impacted government spending on infrastructural projects in the long run, to argue for better coordination among state-owned enterprises. Furthermore, authors such as Adnan Husodo, Suh Jiwon, Okamoto Masaaki, Muhammad Haripin and Diandra Mengko illustrate in their respective chapters the Indonesian state's capacity to enable its institutions for corruption eradication, human rights, law enforcement and national security to function effectively, thus linking their analysis to wider questions of government accountability amid years of democratisation (Chapters 9–12).

The volume's main contribution lies in the various and new perspectives offered to analyse Indonesia's development since *Reformasi*. Each chapter stimulates readers to enquire about the correlation between years of political reform or economic development and the strengthening of state capacity to resolve conflicts – not only with authority but also with fairness and equity. The presentation of such a wide range of themes on Indonesian development is laudable, and this co-edited volume is helpful for readers who would like to grasp a broad understanding of Indonesia's political development since its democratic transition in 1998. Moreover, the selection of contributors is worthy of special mention. The volume presents a gender-balanced configuration of contributors. In fact, 9 of the 17 contributors are women. Hence, the editors merit appreciation for their efforts in mitigating the lack of women's representation in academia and scholarship on Indonesia in particular.

This book should be of particular interest to a wide range of readers, from those with minimal knowledge about Indonesian politics to advanced graduate students and scholars of Indonesian studies around the globe. I can also imagine that this co-edited volume could be useful for foreign diplomats who need to familiarise themselves with Indonesia's key developments and make meaningful connections with their Indonesian counterparts.

Sabina Satriyani Puspita