

seems to have a more substantive background in Thai than any other Southeast Asian language, appears to result in a rather unbalanced depth of analysis, as seen in a comparison between the chapter on Sinophone literature in Thailand with the other chapters on Chinese writing from Malaysia, Singapore, and Borneo.

Overall, *Writing the South Seas* is an impressive and substantial accomplishment and will be an important resource for studies of Sinophone literature, postcolonial literature, the Chinese diaspora, and Chinese–Southeast Asian relations.

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Islam in Indonesia: The contest for society, ideas and values

By CAROOL KERSTEN

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Carool Kersten's book presents the contested ideas and values found in the writings of Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia. It is a contemporary intellectual history of Islam in Indonesia and a history of ideas, and focuses on the post-New Order Reformation period, which started in 1998. It details the debates and arguments within Indonesian Islam, the theological, social and political contexts of the arguments, and provides genealogies of the various strands of thought and their contenders. The book takes the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)'s 2005 fatwa, which condemned 'secularism, pluralism and liberalism', as a focus to show not only the ideas and arguments of the main camps involved in the debates, but also the diversity and transformation of thought among Indonesian Muslim scholars, and their intellectual genealogies. *Islam in Indonesia* is a continuation of the author's *Cosmopolitans and heretics: New Muslim intellectuals and the study of Islam*, which focused on the late Nurcholish Madjid, whose intellectual legacy has influenced both progressives and reactionaries.

With the recent rise of conservatism in Indonesian Islam resulting in antagonism and polarisation, this intellectual history provides helpful insights for analysing sociopolitical-religious phenomena such as the '212' (2 December 2016) rally. This rally — claimed to have drawn seven million participants — was against the Christian governor of Jakarta (Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok), demanding that he be jailed due to an accusation of blasphemy in the wake of the politicisation of local elections. Applying Kersten's intellectual history, this 212 movement is seen to reveal the sharp polarisation between progressive and reactionary Muslim intellectuals in defining non-Muslim leadership and the position of Islam, and shows the huge sociopolitical pressures that have been applied against the progressive camp through the use of theological arguments. Despite the picture of politicisation of religion, what is notable here is the growing alliance of reactionary Muslims and anti-government parties seeking a path to power. While the anti-Ahok rally may have

been part of a 'conservative turn' in Indonesian Islam, it does not signify the triumph of the conservative camp in intellectual debates. Yet, a combination of social media, the pragmatism of political parties, and regional elections transformed MUI's accusation of religious blasphemy into a national issue. In this case, Kersten's mapping of Muslim intellectual camps into progressives, conservatives and reactionists, or substantivists versus formalists, fits well.

Kersten organises his book into six chapters, excluding an introduction and a conclusion. The first chapter provides the background for the emergence of twenty-first century intellectuals of Indonesian Islam, for whom discourses on secularism, pluralism and liberalism became a focus. He shows that such intellectual discourses did not necessarily come from purely intellectual enquiry, but have been influenced by the sociopolitical situation. The second chapter maps Muslim intellectualism in the post-New Order period, from profiling leaders (such as Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid), to schools (such as Ciputat and Yogya), to camps of new ulama, organisations (Jaringan Islam Liberal, Nahdlatul Ulama's youth wing GP Ansor, and Muhammadiyah), and the individual antagonists and their organisations. It also reveals a group of new, progressive Muslim intellectuals of the twenty-first century, who are 'not traditionalist or modernists, neither secular nor Islamist' (p. 81).

Influenced by sociopolitical changes since the Reformation, the next chapter provides 'adaptations, critiques and transformation' of Islamic discourse, drawing theories from both 'the west' and 'the east'. Chapter 4 discusses the relationship between Islam, statehood and democracy. It examines the place of Islam in the state by using the notions of secularism, pluralism and liberalism. This stage shows the triumph of the state ideology Pancasila in becoming a front 'to shield Indonesia from "creeping Talibanisation"' (p. 175) and the triumph of the Madinah Charter rather than the Jakarta Charter. Following the failure of political Islam, chapter 5 examines two types of movements influencing Islamisation, namely the legal formalists versus the substantivists. Chapter 6 discusses the debate on notions of religious pluralism, human rights, and freedom of thought between the progressive and reactionary camps.

The book is remarkable as to its detail in pointing out almost all the names of progressive and reactionary Muslim intellectuals and groups who have contributed to the debates up to 2014. The author's knowledge of, and proficiency in, Arabic and Islamic traditional thought is of clear benefit in providing analytic depth. The book concludes that the intellectual contestation shows 'how Indonesian Muslims value state governance, civil society, and individual liberty and freedom. Whichever way they choose to go, it will be yet another instance of how religion ... remains intricately entwined with social transformation' (p. 288). Kersten shows here that among the main factors in the growing spirit of conservatism is the failure of the central government to take a clear stance on various aspects of intolerance in the Islamisation agenda. But above all, the ongoing contestations also reveal the strength of civil society in Indonesia.

The importance of this book is in helping readers to understand the atmosphere of political turbulence caused by different notions of the position of Islam and the state. Such contestations have happened and will continue to take place in the future. That being the case, and because of the material that Kersten has marshalled together,

Islam in Indonesia: The contest for society, ideas and values is a must-read for researchers working on Indonesia and the intellectual history of Islam, in that country, elsewhere in Southeast Asia, and globally.

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Jakarta: Drawing the city near

By ABDOMALIQ SIMONE

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Jakarta: Drawing the city near is a highly original tour de force that will delight and inspire many, and frustrate others. Surprisingly few studies of this huge city, or of any other city in Indonesia, exist. Towns are even less well documented. Yet nearly half the country's population of 250 million is urban. This eloquent, agenda-setting book ought to stimulate more researchers to turn once more to the city.

AbdouMaliq Simone has previously written about African cities. While observing places like Douala, Dakar, and Johannesburg, he developed insights into the hidden order urban residents manage to create even in the virtual absence of formal government. Kinshasa, for example, is a 'city renowned for lacking almost everything. Yet it sustains, however barely, nearly ten million inhabitants' (p. 209). This fascination with the informal as a source of positive energy proves fruitful in Jakarta as well. He admires the way traders and buyers each day move vast quantities of goods in and out of Jakarta's labyrinthine traditional markets with minimal fuss on motorcycles and handcars. Most of the land in the city has no formal title — people claim it on the basis of living there and paying taxes on it.

'Informal' often means 'illegal' as well. An anecdote relates how retailers of pirated software, in one of the mega-complexes that sell little else, have been known to initiate bogus raids on their own premises. The idea is to make the bureaucrats who are responsible for policing the trade anxious that perhaps some other government agency knows about their complicity in it, thus immobilising them (p. 49). Violence is an everyday reality. Strong-arm thugs routinely make traders pay illegal taxes and force residents to vacate valuable real estate. The massive brawls between neighbouring urban communities known as *tawuran* have been going on for decades and seem to be getting worse, yet nobody can explain why they happen.

The book's uniqueness lies in its method. AbdouMaliq Simone combines closely observed ethnography with a philosophy that owes much to Gilles Deleuze. Actually, the ethnography at the heart of it asks fairly mainstream questions. Following a trend in urban sociology since the 1990s, he has gone back to the Chicago School that founded urban sociology in the 1920s and '30s. Without naming Robert E. Park or any of the other greats, Simone shares with them the idea of the city as a social laboratory. Like them, he focuses on problem neighbourhoods, looking for ways to promote cooperative human relationships in the midst of urban disorder created by capitalism. Marx comes in, but not through an economic analysis of mechanisms of exploitation.