among Bugis in the majority-Christian town of Kupang on Timor Island. In addition to providing one of the book's most detailed analyses of life-passage rituals, she also highlights the role of imams in providing religious education for female converts to Islam.

In the book's final chapter, Andrew McWilliam also turns his gaze to the Muslim community of Kupang. He uses the essay to provide a brilliant analysis of four 'themes or shared comparative elements of Islamisation across eastern Indonesia' (p. 219): migration; conflict and co-residence with Christians; processes of Muslim expansion; and 'tensions of tradition' with regard to local practices of Islam. This chapter is vital reading for anyone interested in a critical summary of Islamisation in modern eastern Indonesia. In this regard, the chapter's achievement is similar to that of *Mosques and Imams* as a whole: this is a deeply original and pathbreaking book in the study of Islam in eastern Indonesia. Far-ranging and readable, this fine book should be required reading for anyone interested in the history and contemporary refiguration of Muslim knowledge, authority, and practice in Indonesia and Southeast Asia as a whole.

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Indonesia

Plantation life: Corporate occupation in Indonesia's oil palm zone
By TANIA LI MURRAY and PUJO SEMEDI
Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021. Pp. xii + 243. Maps, Notes, Bibliography, Index.
doi:10.1017/S0022463423000267

Palm oil is often marketed, both locally within producer countries and internationally to major buyers, as an engine of rural development and poverty eradication. But is it? If palm oil brings prosperity, why do we researchers still see so much poverty and hardship on our various field trips into the 'Plantationocene'? The image painted by governments and corporations does not quite fit the reality that we observe on the ground.

Much of the palm oil in Indonesia and Malaysia, two of its largest producers, derives from oil palms in large commercial plantations, a legacy of colonial-era cash-cropping. While the image of the 'rags to riches' smallholder is often held up proudly in marketing campaigns, smallholdings constitute only around 40 per cent of the production base of palm oil in both Indonesia and Malaysia.

Tania Li and Pujo Semedi's study of palm oil in Indonesia attempts to provide an ethnographic version of the answer to a misleadingly simple question: Is palm oil good for the community? They focus on the communities that rub up, in various ways, against palm oil corporations: locals who have engaged in land transactions with companies licensed to establish crops on their ancestral plots, transmigrants from other parts of Indonesia brought in to work on these plantations, and those

somewhere in between. Their book focuses on two commercial plantations in Tanjung, a subdistrict of Sanggau in West Kalimantan.

What they discover is a world of 'corporate occupation', one that the authors chillingly compare to the Israeli occupation of Palestine: 'plantation corporations we studied took over huge areas of land that they secured by a combination of law and force; they degraded citizenship by turning village leaders into collaborators; and they conscripted people to forms of life within terms they could not control' (p. 186).

Anecdotally, they reference evidence for a compelling counterargument for smallholder palm oil: agronomically, there are no major economies of scale for commercial palm oil—crop management is largely manual, anyway. The cheaper and higher quality supervision afforded by smallholdings, and the absence of various forms of theft among frustrated plantation workers, can result (and indeed have resulted) in significantly higher yields in some smallholdings compared to those of commercial plantations.

As the book points out, the main limitation for smallholders is infrastructure. Fresh fruit bunches must be processed at a mill within 48 hours of harvesting before their quality drops. In Indonesia's vast frontier lands, road networks connecting smallholdings to mills are deliberately absent or badly maintained. This connects directly to the authors' larger argument: the infrastructure, regulations, and logistics of the Indonesian palm oil industry are designed to favour corporations rather than smallholders.

Why are corporations favoured over smallholders despite the evident efficacy of the latter? The context-specific language used by the authors (including 'toll booths' and 'mafia system') adds colour to their descriptions of the acts of collusion and patronage that bind corporate and government elites, dictating decision-making and policy directions. More often than not, this results in outcomes that are not necessarily good for the people of Indonesia, despite overt efforts to market them as such. A particularly arresting observation illustrates this well: 'forty years after Project Sanggau opened the door for plantation development, the district head was still hoping for prosperity to arrive' (p. 162).

A valuable addition to this tired-but-not-quite-dead horse argument is the authors' application of their findings into the context of various sustainability certification schemes. Soberingly, the book points out that since these certification schemes aim to make an unsustainable production system (large corporate plantations) sustainable, they are often meaningless box-ticking exercises that do not encourage any real change on the ground. Furthermore, since the implementation of the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) scheme is jurisdictional, it further entrenches the patronage-based legal system.

The future of the Indonesian Plantationocene is indeed looking dire. In closing, the authors point out that any well-intentioned recommendations for governance improvements and policy recommendations are unlikely to work so long as these recommendations fall within the realm of trying to 'fix' commercial plantations for the better. This returns us to their opening statement that the inherited colonial plantation system for palm oil production is inferior to the smallholder system—but it is

so strongly reinforced by patronage networks that it is likely to remain—'everything was forever, until it was no more'.

Uniquely, this book contains an appendix on collaborative practices, which describes how the authors, through some trial and error, settled on a writing style that managed to minimise tendencies for one author to dominate the other. Issues of language and positional bias are discussed candidly, and this account may serve as a valuable guide for authors who wish to undertake collaborative book projects across language and cultural boundaries.

Overall, this book on life inside the Indonesian Plantationocene is an extremely valuable contribution to the literature on palm oil. However, like many good books, in the process of providing answers, it throws up even more questions.

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Indonesia

Personal religion and magic in Mamasa, West Sulawesi: The search for powers of blessing from the other world of the gods
By C.W. BUIJS
Leiden: KITLV, 2017. Pp. 163. Glossary, Bibliography, Index, Map, Illustrations.
doi:10.1017/S0022463423000425

Personal Religion and Magic in Mamasa, West Sulawesi consists of an Introduction and five chapters. The first chapter, 'Religion and Magic', talks about 'the other world' that people seek when they cannot solve problems in their own lives. Therefore, they start a relationship with certain powers or beings (God/gods) who might help them (through prayers, offerings, incantations and the like). The author, C.W. Buijs, talks about Marcel Mauss' concept of collective representation in which magic is produced by collective forces and 'magical judgement is formed prior to the experience' (p. 11). Thus, experience simply confirms what has happened. Buijs also presents Reimar Schefold's ideas on the meaning of symbolic acts, a system of thought indicating 'a deeper layer, namely the essence, the soul' (quoting Schefold, p. 14).

The second chapter, 'Headlines of the Religion of the Torajas in West Sulawesi', gives an overview of the autochthonous religion (*aluk to yolo*) of the Torajas, who inhabit the Mamasa River region of West Sulawesi, Indonesia. Until the early twentieth century, the Torajas were isolated, mainly due to their mountainous homeland. The first Christian missionaries were allowed to enter Mamasa in 1907 after Dutch rule over the region started. By the mid-twentieth century, most Torajas had become Christians—at the beginning of the twenty-first century, only about 3 per cent still embraced *aluk to yolo* and lived in so called 'enclaves of the aluk'. The author lists all the authorities in the *aluk* and society: *tokeadá* (people of the highest rank,