

discusses the politicisation of culture in West Sumatra during the 1910s and 1920s, the period when the word of *kemadjoean* (progressiveness) and *pergerakan* (movement) were very popular. The landscape of political movement in the first two decades of the twentieth century was a period when Minangkabau women were deeply involved in the world of *pergerakan*, which led them to participate actively in journalism and politics and break with tradition by taking part in the male out-migration (*merantau*), leaving behind matrilocally constituted longhouses. The book brings this era to an end with a cataclysmic 1926 earthquake, which was followed by a failed communist uprising in the following year, which traditionalists interpreted as a judgement on a corrupt and collapsing modernity.

In providing a broad view of Minangkabau history and culture, Hadler gives the reader a clear insight into how the Minangkabau matriarchate survived the onslaughts of alien ideologies that were intent on dismantling it throughout the nineteenth and the first half of twentieth century. He builds his analysis around narratives that floated beneath those of colonialism and nationalism by focusing on themes which are cultural: the changing conceptualisation of a house and family; ideas of modernity which are alternatively Minangkabau, Islamic and European; and competing systems of authority and education. The author has shown how, by the twentieth century, the political role of women and the definition of family had become the central concerns of west Sumatran intellectuals, inspired by an intensive three-way contest between reformist Islam, the traditions of the matriarchate, and what would become European progressivism. Hadler postulates that the conflict and interaction between the three parties destabilised the most essential elements of Minangkabau society, and the disproportionate contribution of Minangkabau people to Indonesian national politics seems to have been a direct result of this destabilisation.

*Muslims and matriarchs* is a well-researched, expertly and elegantly written work. Hadler's integration of a vast array of source material – both European and indigenous, including Minangkabau *schoolschriften* texts preserved in Leiden University Library, the Netherlands, which seem to have been unused by other scholars – into an eminently readable and enjoyable work for the specialist produces an excellent piece of scholarship. This is a book that provides detailed insights into the Minangkabau cultural dynamic in nineteenth- and the early twentieth-century colonial Indonesia.

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*Communal violence and democratization in Indonesia: Small town wars*

By GERRY VAN KLINKEN

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Violent conflict in Indonesia has been the subject of growing scholarly concern since 1998, when the initiation of Indonesia's democratisation process created space for long-suppressed regional and localised grievances to forcefully resurface. Though

the literature on Indonesia's internal conflicts continues to expand and diversify, there is little consensus among researchers about the primary perpetrators of the violence, just as authors vary markedly in their emphasis on the ethnic, religious, cultural, political and socioeconomic factors behind the violence. There are also dissenting views on the role of state institutions and actors in engineering Indonesia's communal conflicts for personal or institutional gain.

Gerry van Klinken's *Communal violence and democratization in Indonesia* considers this relatively new pattern of communal violence in post-New Order Indonesia from a localised structuralist perspective, prioritising regional actors and their institutionalised power relations over national events and developments. In contrast to many recent political writings on violence in Indonesia, this book is dismissive of Jakarta-based conspiracy theories and downplays the activities of central political and military elites in exacerbating the country's outer island conflicts. Instead, van Klinken draws on the 'contentious politics' strain of social movement theory to convincingly argue that in a 'cruel sense, the violence was just part of normal politics' operating at the local level (p. 7).

The book is divided into nine chapters. In the first three chapters, van Klinken provides an overview of the temporal underpinnings of the post-Suharto violence and lays out his theoretical framework. It is in these introductory chapters that van Klinken puts his compelling case that Indonesia's 'frontier' conflicts were to a great extent fuelled by the predatory and parasitic intermediate classes who dominated Indonesia's local governments, 'not because they are wealthy but because they are numerous and can raise hell if they are not heard' (p. 48).

The next five substantive chapters (Chapters 4–8) provide empirically rich accounts of the causes and consequences of communal conflicts in west Kalimantan, Poso, Ambon, north Maluku and central Kalimantan. Despite diverging local contextual conditions, van Klinken highlights some key points of commonality in each case study, which he effectively summarises in the ninth concluding chapter. In all of these conflict areas, local elite power struggles over limited state resources were exacerbated rather than reduced by Indonesia's democratisation and decentralisation processes. In each case, predatory interests became embedded in nascent democratic state institutions and impeded the internalisation of crucial aspects of democratic procedure. In all cases, too, local community leaders and government officials mobilised popular resistance around communal identity in their pursuit of institutionalised power.

Though van Klinken presents a convincing argument about the role of local elites in instigating and perpetuating Indonesia's communal conflicts, he makes some nebulous claims. He argues that in 2001 Indonesian state power was not 'as weak as the term "weak state" suggests' on the grounds that 'Power and money was there in plenty, but it circulated through informal channels', such as through the establishment of a thriving black economy and an illegal logging industry in Central Kalimantan (p. 127). Yet Indonesia's black economy weakened the state from within by diverting the flow of limited material resources outside the state's institutional reach. The involvement of state actors in Indonesia's black economy further eroded state power as local authorities tended to subvert or ignore state policy directives that threatened to bring an end to the material benefits derived from these illegal business interests.

In his concluding reflections, van Klinken also claims that by mid-2001, greater stability amongst Indonesia's ruling establishment led 'militant alliances to dissolve, militias to demobilise and identities to grow less salient' in the regions (p. 141). While this was the case in van Klinken's five case studies, the opposite could be said of Indonesia's separatist regions of Aceh and Papua, where militia activity and mobilisation of nationalist minority identities escalated under Megawati Sukarnoputri's presidency. The return of military hawks to positions of political influence under Megawati contributed to Jakarta's growing reliance on military force (including the use of militia proxies) in dealing with Indonesia's internal conflicts.

These minor issues aside, Gerry van Klinken's book makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the causes and consequences of communal violence in post-New Order Indonesia. The book is theoretically and empirically important, and skilfully integrates ideas and events into an elegantly and engagingly written narrative. At a time when so much is being written about Indonesian national politics, this excellent book reminds us that the post-Suharto wave of violence has complex roots with many local variables and dimensions.

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