

Heryanto, Ariel, ed. *Popular Culture in Indonesia: Fluid Identities in Post-Authoritarian Politics*. London: Routledge, 2008.

Ryter, Loren. “Youth, Gangs, and the State in Indonesia”. Doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, 2002.

James B. Hoesterey

Department of Religion, Emory University, S214 Callaway Center, 537 Kilgo Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30322, USA; email: jbhoesterey@emory.edu.

DOI: 10.1355/sj31-11

Indonesian Women and Local Politics: Islam, Gender and Networks in Post-Suharto Indonesia. By Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi. Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2015. xxi+246 pp.

The central question addressed in this informative and well-researched book is whether Indonesian political brokers are willing to select, and the general public to elect, female candidates in a predominantly Muslim country. A secondary question, which follows from this first one, is whether, once in power, female political leaders are more likely than their male counterparts to pursue gender-focused policies and projects.

The book — the product of the author’s doctoral research — has both a “good news” and a “bad news” story. On the one hand, a number of female candidates have been successful at both the regency and provincial levels in Indonesia, and indeed at the central government level during the presidency of Megawati Sukarnoputri. On the other hand, their numbers are low, suggesting that female political leaders are perceived as outside the norm and that their electoral success is dependent on particular circumstances. A further dispiriting finding is that female incumbents are not necessarily committed to policies and projects that address the specific needs and interests of female constituents.

To explore the range of factors that support, condition and impede women’s candidacies for political office, Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi analyses the political careers of three female former regents in Central and East Java. The first case study is that of Rustriningsih, the two-

term regent of Kebumen (2000–2005 and 2005–10) who resigned her position to run — successfully — as a vice-gubernatorial candidate in the 2008 direct election for the governor of Central Java. The second case study is that of Siti Qomariyah, who was elected as vice-regent (2001–6) and then as regent (2006–11) of Pekalongan. The third case is that of Ratna Ani Lestari, the one-term regent of Banyuwangi (2005–10).

One common factor among these three women that Dewi identifies is the importance of presenting an image of themselves as pious Muslim women. This does not mean that Islam posed a barrier to their selection as candidates or election as regents. On the contrary, the author argues that their intersecting gender and religious identities proved crucial to their electoral successes. This factor is clearest in the cases of Rustriningsih and Siti Qomariyah; their credentials as pious Muslim women helped to secure political support from local *ulama*. Their image as pious Muslim women also reinforced gender stereotypes relating to women's greater moral capital. They deployed this association strategically during their campaigns to buttress their images as “clean” candidates.

While Dewi argues that the display of gendered piety was a crucial element in the success of each of the three women that she studies, Ratna Ani Lestari's success was perhaps not so closely tied to her identity as a Muslim woman. Ratna's Muslim identity was ambiguous, compromised by her marriage to a Balinese Hindu. In addition, her political power base drew on the political networks to which her husband had access as regent of Jembrana and powerful member of the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) rather than on the local *ulama*. Further, and while the author explicitly rejects this view, a type of transactional politics seems to have strongly informed the social welfare commitments made during Ratna Ani Lestari's campaign.

However, the very fact that I can disagree with Dewi in my understanding of Ratna Ari Lestari's political identity serves as testimony to the richness and objectivity of the data that her book provides. Its scholarship is impressive. Not only has the author conducted extensive fieldwork but she also engages with a range of

scholarship spanning comparative political theory (particularly as it relates to gender), Indonesian political history and anthropological discussions of Muslim women's agency. The book is thus highly stimulating and a work of interest beyond the study of contemporary political developments in Indonesia.

The one section of the book that I found disappointing was the conclusion. I expected the author to take a position on a number of debates canvassed but not fully resolved in the earlier chapters. For example, the author notes that politically less-well-connected female candidates enjoyed greater opportunities in the first decade after the end of the New Order era than they do in the present, but she does not explain this shift. She also fails to take a position on the quota system for female candidates and, specifically, on the question of whether this regulation would result in greater attention to the needs and priorities of women. Finally, in addition to listing the names of female local government leaders, it would have been useful for the author to inform readers of the percentage of female members of local parliaments and the trends in those percentages.

Despite these minor reservations, this a great study of the rise — and in two cases decline — of three female local government leaders and of the role of Islam, gender and political networks in their electoral careers.

Wendy Mee

Department of Social Inquiry, La Trobe University, Level 4 Social Sciences Building, Melbourne 3086, Australia; email: w.mee@latrobe.edu.au.

DOI: 10.1355/sj31-1m

Les Oracles du Cao Đài: Étude d'un mouvement religieux vietnamien et de ses réseaux [The oracles of Cao Đài: A study of a Vietnamese religious movement and its networks]. Preface by Georges Condominas. By Jérémy Jammes. Paris: Les Indes savants, 2014. xvi+614 pp.

Les Oracles du Cao Đài is a very impressive work, over six hundred pages long, based on over fifteen years of research in