

Parachin, Victor. *Eastern Wisdom for Western Minds*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2007.

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Indonesia's Changing Political Economy: Governing the Roads. By Jamie S. Davison. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. xvii+292 pp.

The past decade has witnessed a surge of interest in infrastructure as a mediating concept and object of analysis for humanistic and social scientific inquiry. Historians have detailed how infrastructure's technological forms came to enable new modes of statecraft and governmentality in (post-)colonial settings. Anthropologists have investigated how different infrastructural modalities — ranging from transportation to telecommunications — have shaped the unprecedented movement of people and values across wide swaths of space and time. And political scientists, drawing on the New Institutional Economics literature, have examined infrastructure investment in the developing world, evaluating the relations between endogenous institutions and private investment. It is within and against this third line of inquiry that Jamie S. Davidson critically situates his latest book, *Indonesia's Changing Political Economy: Governing the Roads*, the first major account of toll-road development in post-Soeharto Indonesia. The timeliness of Davidson's book is noteworthy, as it appears in the context of President Joko Widodo's prioritization of *infrastruktur* projects across a sprawling archipelagic nation. Davidson's book will serve as a guide and an example for researchers interested in the increasing salience of these projects as they come to define the president's vision and shape the national imagination.

The author centres his study on the development of a trans-Java expressway linking Jakarta and Surabaya, and evaluates the obstacles faced by Indonesia's central government in bringing the mega-project to fruition in the wake of administrative decentralization. Marshalling a variety of press reports and consultancy studies, and drawing on almost one hundred interviews conducted with government officials, bankers and concessionaires from 2007 through 2014, Davidson traces the socio-political and historical relations between different actors involved in toll-road projects by examining the ways that these relations have shaped and stymied policy development and implementation. In illuminating political entanglements between formal and informal institutions, he complicates economic and technocratic approaches to infrastructure development associated with the New Institutional Economics literature.

In a chronologically ordered series of expository and analytic sketches, Davidson describes how Indonesia's different presidential administrations have navigated the political, economic and civic issues associated with governing the nation's toll roads. Using then first-term President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's failed 2005 infrastructure summit as a point of departure, the book's introduction characterizes infrastructure as "a political problem" (p. 8), and asks how "a weakened democratic government with a checkered past of enforcing property rights and contracts" might "establish a regulatory framework to promote private sector investment" (*ibid.*). Davidson highlights the importance of roads as a particular empirical focus in Indonesia, noting the infamous role played by Soeharto's children in toll-road development, and explaining how the sector occupies a "middle ground" (p. 15) between telecommunications with its high profit margins and the supply of clean water with its low competitive returns.

Chapter 1 describes how infrastructure has attracted political-economic scholarly interest because it serves as a point of entry for examining the state's shifting roles in a market economy. Davidson forcefully argues that the mainstream literature's focus on formal institutions overlooks the crucial role of non-institutional dynamics,

and introduces his readers to a political sociology of infrastructure development in order to address this gap. This framework is deployed throughout the book to shed light on the impact of extra-parliamentary rule-making, to draw attention to the Indonesian state's graduated and distributed agency in enforcing eminent domain, and to examine how competing interests configure rent-seeking outcomes. Chapter 2 sketches the governance of roads in the period before the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis, a period of development organized by a New Order–led model of infrastructure investment. The author describes how Soeharto distributed control of an expressway across Java among networks of *pribumi* concessionaires. Chapter 3 examines how the financial crisis and Soeharto's fall shaped infrastructure investment under subsequent administrations, with particular attention to liberalizing reforms and challenges to the government's exercise of eminent domain. Chapter 4 expands on these issues by analysing legal and political hurdles to land acquisition, and explains how — in spite of the president's own popularity — Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's Democrat Party (*Partai Demokrat*) lacked sufficient political capital at the local level to coordinate and carry out land acquisition productively.

Chapter 5 examines individual stakeholders, describing rent-seeking efforts by Jusuf Kalla and Aburizal Bakrie — now two-time vice president of Indonesia and head of the Golkar Party's advisory council, respectively — which delayed expressway construction. Chapter 6 brings the strength of Davidson's political sociological approach into full focus, as he attends to local dynamics of toll-road development by evaluating how issues like “Not in My Backyard” (NIMBY) movements and corruption among local officials bear on larger issues of state underperformance.

This is a book whose intended primary audience is political scientists, sociologists and economists of Indonesia. Anthropologists, historians and general area studies specialists might not fully appreciate the careful interventions in the New Institutional Economics literature that Davidson stages, and might find themselves searching for an examination of the ways that infrastructure development shapes

the lived experience of ordinary people — a focus that the author readily acknowledges is beyond the scope of his project. Nevertheless, Davidson's timely, incredibly detailed and meticulously researched book deserves wide cross-disciplinary readership on the part of students and scholars attuned to the increasingly salient politics of *infrastruktur* in a developing archipelagic nation.

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Luk Thung: The Culture and Politics of Thailand's Most Popular Music. By James Leonard Mitchell. Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2015. 208 pp.

Impressively researched and well written, this is the first book-length introduction in English to the most popular Thai music genre, *phleng luk thung* (songs of children of the fields). It treats the genre's historical development, performers, songwriters, producers, audiences and wider socio-political impact. Other than a few journal articles, university theses — including Mitchell's own dissertation — and books on Thai or Southeast Asian popular music, little has appeared on *luk thung* in English by Thai or Western writers. Indeed, except for that on Indonesia, the English-language literature on popular music in Southeast Asia is modest in comparison to that on regions such as South Asia, Latin America and especially Sub-Saharan Africa. This book should thus find an audience among Southeast Asianists, ethnomusicologists and scholars of popular music or culture.

Most Thai and some foreign scholars contend that *luk thung* arose either as an updated folk or acculturated urban music in Central Thailand. But Mitchell argues that *luk thung* derives from, and is largely a product of, Isan, the traditionally impoverished and culturally distinct northeastern region historically marginalized and