

of critical race scholars to extend the context of Atlantic chattel slavery to that of the Marind, who also face issues of racialization and oppressive plantation economies. In presenting these works outside of their usual “zones of theory”, to use Lila Abu-Lughod’s term (1989), the book represents a radically inclusive assemblage of ethnography and theory, observable both through its content and its structure. This book is essential reading for those interested in finding connections between academic discourses of multispecies theory and critical race studies.

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DOI: 10.1355/sj39-2j

The Candidate’s Dilemma: Anticorruptionism and Money Politics in Indonesian Election Campaigns. By Elisabeth Kramer. New York: Cornell University Press, 2022. 216 pp.

As the largest democracy in Southeast Asia, Indonesia has held several democratic elections since the fall of the authoritarian regime in 1998, which have been lauded for their fairness and transparency. But while Indonesia has made significant progress in terms of democratic consolidation, it still faces significant challenges in terms of corruption and money politics, particularly during election campaigns. Elizabeth Kramer’s book provides a comprehensive analysis of these challenges and the strategies that political candidates use to navigate them.

The Candidate’s Dilemma is based on extensive political ethnographic work and interviews with political candidates, party

officials and campaign managers in Indonesia. The book begins with an overview of the historical and political context of Indonesian elections, including the development of political parties, campaign financing regulations, and the role of the media. Based on the 2014 Indonesian elections, Kramer argues that the high costs of running for office, combined with a lack of transparency and accountability in campaign financing, creates an environment in which corruption flourishes. Candidates must rely on wealthy donors and interest groups to finance their campaigns, a practice that often leads to a quid pro quo relationship between the candidate and the donor.

The heart of the book is a detailed analysis of how candidates navigate the tension between anticorruptionism and money politics during their campaigns. Kramer notes that the correlation between vote-buying in elections and the ambiguity of anticorruptionism ideals was quite clear. The term “dilemma” in the book refers to the difficult choice that candidates face between the competing imperatives of presenting themselves as clean candidates committed to fighting corruption and the need to raise sufficient funds to run successful election campaigns.

This dilemma is particularly acute in the Indonesian political context, where money politics is endemic and deeply entrenched in the political system. Candidates are under immense pressure to raise funds from a variety of sources, including wealthy donors, business interests and even the networks of illegal actors. At the same time, candidates are expected to present themselves as being committed to fighting corruption and promoting transparency in the political system.

The dilemma often forces candidates to compromise their anti-corruption principles and become more “transactionalist” so as to gain better chances of winning. Such compromises suggest that anticorruptionism in the Indonesian political landscape is less of an ideological commitment and more of a political gimmick.

Moreover, this understanding of “dilemma” could also be used to describe the political elites’ anticorruptionism ideals in Indonesia’s wider national political landscape. Their shifting positions are exceptionally pronounced. When in opposition, politicians tend to

push for a strengthening of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in order to expose corrupt senior officials and undermine the government's credibility and legitimacy. However, when these politicians subsequently assume power, they seek to paralyse the KPK by systematically diluting its powers and capacities. Moreover, President Joko Widodo, who had previously supported anti-corruption efforts, seemed to endorse the weakening of the KPK during his tenure in office.

As recognized by Kramer, corruption is not simply a problem of individual moral failing but rather a systemic issue that is deeply embedded in the political culture of the country and one that is also an institutional problem. Hence, efforts to promote anticorruptionism must focus not only on changing the behaviour of individual leaders and politicians but also on undertaking legal and institutional reforms and changing the broader political culture of Indonesia through a shift in societal values and norms.

Such changes are critical as corruption in election campaigns systematically undermines the legitimacy of the electoral process and erodes public trust in government institutions. Kramer in fact notes that many Indonesian voters are cynical about the electoral process, viewing it as a rigged game that is controlled by a small group of elites. This cynicism, in turn, fuels apathy and disengagement among the broader public, which further limits the ability of elected officials to implement effective policies and undermines the legitimacy of democratic governance in the country.

Overall, *The Candidate's Dilemma* is a well-researched and insightful analysis of the challenges of corruption and money politics in Indonesian election campaigns. The book provides a wealth of detailed information about the strategies that candidates use and the challenges they face, making it a valuable resource for scholars and practitioners alike. Another strength of the book is Kramer's ability to convey complex ideas and arguments in a concise, clear and engaging manner, making the book accessible to a wide audience.

Even though the book is focused on Indonesian election campaigns, it provides some broader points about corruption and money politics

that may be applicable to other developing countries. It will also be a good guide for researchers of politics and governance seeking to examine political behaviour and campaign strategies in the 2024 Indonesian elections and beyond.

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DOI: 10.1355/sj39-2k

Of Gods, Gifts and Ghosts: Spiritual Places in Urban Spaces. By Terence Heng. Routledge: London, 2021. 236pp.

The oft-unspoken reality for any scholar working on religion is that the subject of our study is something that is often difficult, if not impossible, to accurately capture in words. No matter how lyrical the writer, or how lucid the prose, the accurate presentation of the numinous often evades scholars. Perhaps this is the point. Notwithstanding this, it is difficult to escape the feeling that something is lacking from discourses of religion. This is the void that Terence Heng's contribution fills. Emanating from his expertise in visual sociology, but speaking to cognate disciplines, the book is unique in that it is an image-led academic text.

Spanning nine chapters—of which seven are substantive, and using the same structure of an introduction that frames the chapter theoretically, followed by two dozen or so pages of photographs with detailed annotations—Heng develops the idea of “sacred flowscapes” to capture how the sacred moulds itself to the built environment through “paths of social action and material interaction, often etching rhythmic trails that linger on and in physical infrastructure” (p.187). The twinned tropes of flexibility and fluidity are appropriate heuristics to explore and understand the empirical focus of Heng's study; that is, Chinese religion (a catch-all term that includes Buddhism, Taoism and ancestor worship) in Singapore. Singapore is a unique