

BOOK REVIEWS

Social Organisation and Planned Development in Rural Java. By Sediono M.P. Tjondronegoro. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984. Pp. 326.

Basic research into aspects of Indonesian society and economy have barely kept pace with rapid changes that have been taking place in that country in the course of economic development. Tjondronegoro's book is therefore doubly welcome not only because it meets this pressing need for more relevant information, but also because it focuses attention on rural society which accounts for the overwhelming majority of the Indonesian population. The genre of the present work follows the dominant pattern in many of the recent publications on Indonesia, in that it is largely based on a recent Ph.D. dissertation, and minimal changes have been made to content or format. Like most such products it has its rough patches, particularly those relating to the obligatory theoretical statements and how the candidate resolved questions of methodology. One learns to recognize the unavoidable narrowing of focus in many such publications as being due to its specific academic requirements, but need not necessarily cherish the overblown titles that publishers insist on foisting on them. Despite the title, the present work does not attempt even remotely to address problems in organizational theory nor how they arise in development planning.

In Indonesia, the Dutch colonial administrators had largely failed to delineate rural communities into any hierarchical or functional groups for the purpose of achieving significant social or economic improvements. For administrative purposes such organization as was necessary was conceived of in the broadest terms, but in any case required no mass participation at any level. It was only after independence that the *desa* or village came to be recognized as the focal point for government-sponsored rural development; and hence, as an object of social scientific study. The author has made a significant attempt to contribute to the growing literature in this area by choosing to look specifically at structural aspects of village communities and the evolution of organizational leadership, both formal and informal.

Altogether 14 villages, from *kecamatan* Cibadak and *kecamatan* Kendal, were purposively chosen for carrying out the field-work which forms the basis for this study. It is, however, difficult to establish how "representative" the two *kecamatan* are of rural Indonesia, especially as the selection was largely a matter of convenience. Accordingly, ". . . the only major consideration was that both Sukabumi and Kendal have been 'research *kabupaten*' for at least the last seven years". Apparently, Sukabumi had been a regular training ground for students in agronomy and agricultural extension work from the Bogor Agricultural University. Similarly, Kendal, in Central Java, had been the traditional research site for the Agro-Economic Survey of Indonesia, in which the University at Bogor had a significant participation. This is not unique to Indonesia, of course, as many such social scientific studies undertaken in the Third World have shown a strong tendency to follow the convenient beaten track, even in regard to the choice of the research site. However, the two *kabupaten* have, apart from their geographical location, in West and Central Java

respectively, other characteristics which distinguish them from each other. The population of Sukabumi in West Java is largely Sundanese, whereas the majority of the Kendal population are ethnic Javanese. The selection of the *kecamatan* from each of the two *kecamatan* was made so that, both in population size and area of territory, the mid-range *kecamatan* was preferred.

Both colonial administrators and Western scholars had been struck by the lack of form of the Javanese village, and the magnitude of the problems posed by such a condition for achieving socio-economic development has been often emphasized. Clifford Geertz, in particular, had become rather pessimistic about the ability of the peasantry "to cooperate or organize anything very effectively". As the author argues, since independence, the Indonesian Government has had to resolve the question of what is the most viable unit of social organization in rural areas so as to achieve an effective and speedy implementation of rural development programmes. The Ministry of the Interior had, in the 1960s, raised the possibility of creating an effective third-level autonomous administration under the name of *desapraja*, based on popular participation at the village level. However, lack of consensus among the major political parties had blocked its implementation. The PKI (Communist Party of Indonesia) had strongly supported the idea, with an obvious interest in strengthening its mass organization of peasants, the *Barisan Tani*; but other political groups had opposed it on the grounds that this would make for ineffective implementation of central government policies by lengthening the lines of communication between *kabupaten* and *desa*. Although Law No. 19 of 1965 was introduced with the intent of legitimizing the concept of *desapraja*, the law (like many others in the Soekarno period) never became effective because of the demise of Guided Democracy and the implementation of *Orde Baru* (New Order) by the Suharto government. Subsequently, the new government repealed the *desapraja* law with Law No. 6 of 1969, which defends the status quo.

Thus, the ascending hierarchical structure of rural administration is made up of the *Camat*, the *Bupati*, and the Provincial Governor, although, as the author suggests, the *Wedana* still retains an important role, so that "a *camat* does not normally bypass a *wedana* in conveying reports to his direct supervisor (*bupati*)". Throughout the study, the author has been at pains to emphasize the democratic character of small rural communities. Their autonomy has been largely eroded by the need for more complex organizations, often imposed from above, under the regime of rapid economic development and social change. Clearly, the government has in its attempt to speed up economic growth sacrificed participatory democracy at village grass-roots level for the sake of greater administrative efficiency and the certainty of economic growth. It is, however, doubtful if such top-down organizational structures and the rigidities of standardization are in the long-term interest of Javanese rural society, even if short-term spectacular results can be recorded as in crop production or family planning. As the author readily admits, "depoliticization without systematic restructuring of rural society, however, will maintain that looseness from which little popular participation can be expected". It is to be hoped that the recent attempts by the government to revive rural co-operatives will go some way to stimulate such popular participation. But such expectations may prove unrealistic without concomitant structural changes, especially in regard to the distribution of the most important means of production, land. This is because, as the author realistically observes, "cooperatives will have limited viability because they are more beneficial to a handful of better-off farmers in every village".

One looks forward to a re-survey of the 14 villages in the two *kecamatan* with a view to establishing in greater detail what has been the socio-economic impact of the

Green Revolution on rural Java, a subject to which the author has made only passing reference.

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Confrontation or Coexistence: The Future of ASEAN-Vietnam Relations. Edited by William S. Turley. Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1985. 187pp.

These days most conflicts seem to drag on and the one in Kampuchea is no exception. While it has certainly helped to produce a distinct political polarization within Southeast Asia between the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Indochinese states, it has also created a stalemate which seems oddly disturbing. The crisis in Kampuchea has several ramifications. Besides being a conflict which essentially involves the irreconcilable interests of Thailand and Vietnam it is also a conflict between Vietnam and China and, of course, in a larger sense, between China and the Soviet Union. Given this "wheels within wheels" situation, it is not surprising that the long drawn-out struggle has become intractable. Features such as Vietnam's annual forays in the Thai-Kampuchean border area, the increase in the number of Kampuchean refugees and ASEAN's efforts at various international fora to keep the issue alive have taken on a ritualistic character that has made any meaningful move towards resolution that much more distant and difficult.

This book, which grew out of a workshop on ASEAN-Vietnam relations organized by the Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, in 1983, takes this stalemate as its starting point and addresses itself to the question of the future beyond the Kampuchean issue. Despite the subtitle, it is essentially concerned with relations between Thailand and Vietnam, these two being the regional actors most directly involved in the Kampuchean problem.

The first chapter, by Dhavorn Sukhakanya, provides the historical background to this rivalry, while the second by Sarasin Viraphol delineates Thailand's perspective in this respect. The third chapter by Gareth Porter takes us a bit further by looking at the implications of Vietnam's policy towards Thailand as it operates now and is likely to operate in the future. Carlyle Thayer's concluding chapter in Part I deals with ideological issues confronting Vietnam and seeks to explore its effect on both domestic and foreign policy behaviour. The first two chapters in Part II trace the effect of this prolonged conflict on Thai politics and economy respectively. This is followed by Nayan Chanda's paper on the problems and prospects of Vietnam's economy. The next chapter by Jacques Bekaert deals with the future of ASEAN-Vietnam relations in the context of the prevailing insurgency problem in Southeast Asia. In the following paper, Alan Dawson talks about the implications of a long-term conflict for Thai-Vietnamese relations. The concluding chapter by Peter Polomka lucidly explains the effects of the expanding role of the Great Powers in the region. Part III of the book is a summary of the main strands of thoughts that run through this study. Some of the chapters are followed by discussions which are quite stimulating.

In a study such as this, it is often difficult to come up with a single policy recom-