

## BOOK REVIEWS

*No Money, No Honey: A Study of Street Traders and Prostitutes in Jakarta.* By Alison J. Murray. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991. Pp. xxi, 159.

Alison Murray's book describes two responses of Jakartan women to poverty: it compares the lives of street-sellers in the working-class area of Manggarai and of self-employed prostitutes in the middle-class suburb of Kebayoran Baru. Her research was conducted at various times during the period from 1984 to 1989.

Murray takes as her theme the "contradictions between everyday life and survival in the poor *kampung* (lower-class urban areas) and the 'metropolitan city' culture and imagery of the ruling elite" (p. xvii). She is especially concerned about the choices facing poor urban women, for whom the only employment options are small-scale trading, domestic service, factory work, and prostitution. Manggarai represents the site of the first, threatened, option, and Kebayoran Baru one variant of the last. From her detailed descriptions, Manggarai emerges as a closely knit community, exploited by the dominant capitalist society and consciously antagonistic to it. However, its values are doomed by policies of modernization, which undermine both the livelihood of petty traders and the social solidarity of *kampung*-dwellers generally. The likely next step for young women from this community is as workers in the new factories springing up around Jakarta. Although Murray has not researched this option, it appears to offer no viable alternative at present, to judge by the grossly sub-standard conditions and wages that have been reported in recent years. The alternative which Murray has examined is prostitution, which has become a major source of urban female employment in Southeast Asia. She argues that it is "an act of rational choice ... offering lower-class women economic gains and freedom from social restraints"

(p. 108). However, her description of self-employed prostitutes is far from encouraging: their lives appear precarious at best: they lack the social support of the *kampung* and are seduced by an elusive consumerism. Altogether, the outlook seems gloomy for poor working women battling a hostile dominant culture and a lack of remunerative employment.

Murray makes the telling point that none of these women fit the New Order propaganda about Indonesian womanhood, which promotes the ideology of domesticity. In the theoretical section of her work she argues that the Indonesian regime's attempt to create new gender roles is part of the development of capitalist relations of production in Indonesia, which involves the marginalization of women's paid work through their definition as secondary workers. Considering how essential women's paid work is for survival in urban areas, this is a most pernicious doctrine.

The strongest part of the book lies in its well-researched description of the highly structured daily life of the *kampung* and the work of women traders. Alison Murray is an enterprising young woman who adapted remarkably well to noisy, rat-infested inner *kampung* living. Unsentimental but sympathetic, her accounts of these women ring true. Striking contrasts are drawn between, on the one hand, the traders, working long hours for very little profit and more concerned about social networks than material rewards, and on the other the prostitutes who pride themselves on their "modernity", but who have fallen prey to drugs and the dream of finding rich clients. Neither seems to offer any real hope for change, and the women themselves are fatalistic.

*No Money, No Honey* adds to our growing literature about Indonesian *kampung* life and traders. The fact that Murray, like Lea Jellinek, John and Norma Sullivan, Jennifer Alexander and Patrick Guinness who have also published in this field, is an Australian, attests to the strength of Indonesian urban studies in Australia. However, her book adds little to what is already known about women street-sellers, and undoubtedly what the readers will anticipate is some solid research about prostitutes, who have so far received scarce attention in the literature. Considering the growing interest in prostitution in Southeast Asia and its lethal connection with AIDS, the lack of such research in Indonesia calls for urgent redress.

Unfortunately, Murray's contribution to this field is slight. Only one chapter deals with prostitution, and that is concerned with just one category, the self-employed prostitutes who frequent bars in Blok M. Compared with her careful research on Manggarai, Murray appears to have made only a half-hearted attempt to fathom this sub-culture. It takes a special kind of woman (and it does require a *woman*) to conduct research on prostitution: what a pity that Alison Murray, who seems to have what it takes, did not apply herself to this task more rigorously. A good book on prostitution in Indonesia still remains to be written.

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