

*The Wheel of Fortune: The History of a Poor Community in Jakarta.* By Lea Jellinek. Asian Studies Association of Australia, Southeast Asia Publications Series no. 18. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991. Pp. xxviii, 214.

This is a history of people marginalized within a large and expanding city. Jellinek has gleaned their stories over fifteen years, and documented their situation in a number of earlier publications, but here for the first time we have an analysis of the context of neighbourhood relations, government policies and practices, and national economic growth and decline. The strength of this work, as of Jellinek's other writing about this community, is the sense of real people, their fortunes and misfortunes, that dominate the account.

The core of this book is the two chapters that deal with social relations and economic activities among the residents of Kampung Kachang. Residing on a former vegetable plot that became steadily more crowded after 1950, these *kampung* dwellers lived off the city. Jellinek's description of their cottage industries, petty trade, and *kampung*-based services is full of both successes and failures. The transience of their activities she links directly to the fluctuations of the national economy, and to the implementation of government policies. There is plenty of evidence here of the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of these people.

Jellinek is less complimentary about the quality of social relations within the *kampung* neighbourhood. Marital partnerships are fragile, households constantly change in membership, co-operative labour is rare, and leadership is lacking. The lack of unity among neighbours is a key factor in the *kampung*'s later demise. Jellinek compares these relations with the more cohesive and integrated *kampung* relationships identified by researchers in Yogyakarta (Norma and John Sullivan, Guinness). She suggests that the difference is due to the nature of development in the two cities. While Jakarta had boomed, Yogyakarta had stagnated. What she could have added is that the economic development of Jakarta was accompanied by heavy-handed interference by the government both in the economic activities of *kampung* people and then in their occupation of city land. The nature of government, rather than specifically economic

development, is a major factor in the different patterns of *kampung* relations in the two cities.

Jellinek's account does not allow us to look at other possible factors. The fluctuating population that Jellinek describes contributed to a lack of cohesion, although it is not clear what proportion of the population is moving. Much of the account is in terms of a stable residential population, extended kin networks, and inherited positions of leadership. The assertion of the lack of neighbourhood unity in the Kampung Kebun Kacang was despite numerous evidence in Jellinek's account of co-operation, assistance to neighbours, co-operation at funerals and weddings, *arisan*-rotating credit societies, and religious gatherings. What Jakarta *kampung* residents appear to lack is a strong cultural unity which in Yogyakarta provided an identification and supported a consensus on the norms of community co-operation and leadership. In the end the leaders of Kampung Kebun Kacang exploited their neighbours in an open fashion. Another factor that Jellinek barely alludes to is the ethnic mix in the *kampung*, which in Jakarta is likely to be more diverse than in central Java. She mentions Javanese, Sundanese, and Minangkabau, and suggests that their identification with "home" areas is still important, but gives no details of how ethnic diversity may also have patterned social relations in the *kampung*.

The shock of the book is the account of the demolition of the *kampung* and arrangements for compensation to residents. These chapters are filled with evidence of ignorance and insensitivity on the part of government departments, corruption of officials and *kampung* leaders, and helplessness and confusion on the part of *kampung* residents. It is a chilling account only tempered by the admission that some residents were able to improve their living conditions as a result of the demolition. But as a "model" for the improvement of poor and densely populated city areas this was an abject failure.

Jellinek asks whether it is a culture of poverty of the economic and political structures of society that leaves these people in poverty. However, there is little evidence that the cultural practices of the *kampung* people passed down from generation to generation are to be blamed for their conditions. Jellinek clearly demonstrates that money compensation

did not provide an automatic escape from a poverty that rested on their marginality from the city's political, economic, and informational networks.

The book is an important addition to the literature on the urban poor in Indonesia. It is complemented by some very good photographs and by clean editorial presentation.

PATRICK GUINNESS