

Reviews

Hans Antlöv and Sven Cederroth eds., *Leadership on Java: Gentle Hints, Authoritarian Rules*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Studies in Asian Topics, No. 16), 1994, i-viii, 197 pp.

This is one of those comparatively rare collections of essays that are cohesive both thematically and empirically. Readers interested in the evolution and contemporary states of rural, local leadership in "New Order" Java under Suharto will be rewarded. They will find a great many illuminating case-studies of sufficient variety and geographical distribution to inspire confidence in the generalizations that are ventured. At the same time the analytical tastes and conceptual schemes deployed in the various analyses are sufficiently diverse to satisfy readers from many different disciplines.

After an insightful introduction by Antlöv and Cederroth, pulling together some major themes, the volume begins with an article by Sartono Kartodirdjo on the historical evolutions of the office-holding aristocracy, particularly the *bupati*. He notes how the loss of property and clients has meant that such officials increasingly have become transmission belts for the central authorities. Ina Slamet-Velsink follows with a very insightful discussion of the less institutionalized roles of Islamic leaders (*kyai*) and local strongmen (*jago*). She shows, for the *kyai* as well as for the *jago* that the maintenance of a loyal following through mundane services is typically more important than ideology *per se*. Niels Mulder offers a suggestive textual analysis of the "Pancasila Moral Education Course" as a privileged glimpse into the official mind of the Suharto regime. Rather like the neo-Confucian fantasies of the Lee Kwan Yew regime in Singapore, the course relies heavily on the metaphor of "familyness" (*kekeluargaan*) with, of course, the patriarchal, paternalistic authority commanding unquestioning loyalty from subordinates. Mulder ends with some very astute observations about the need in such a regime for the *appearance* of order, which goes some way towards explaining the overreaction to even the mildest expression of public dissent.

Antlöv's essay "Village Leaders and the New Order", together with Jean Luc Maurer's piece, "Pamong Desa or Rafa Desa", are among the strongest analytically, especially since they are packed with empirical

detail and material transactions. Antlöv chronicles the "domestication" of the *pamong desa* so that the post now increasingly resembles a local clerical emanation of the state apparatus. Both he and Maurer have illuminating things to say about the various letters of "good conduct" which are necessary to almost any business outside the village and which not only form an important security check against dissent, but also a welcome private income-earning opportunity for the official who writes them. In one of the leitmotifs of the volume, Antlöv emphasizes the many resemblances between the New Order Regime and the colonial regime in the organization of local power. As if to underline this parallelism, Maurer shows in meticulous detail how "service land" (*tanah bengkok*) for local officials still forms a substantial part of their wealth and compensation.

Frans Hüsken offers a very perceptive account of local elections. He emphasizes the elaborate rules which ensure that only loyalists run for office and which minimize the campaign temporarily (often only one day) to maintain an apolitical atmosphere. Hüsken and others show, as well, how even local elections have become a capitalist investment, one which the victor expects to recoup while in office. Shades of the auctioning of colonial posts under the Dutch are brought forcibly to mind. Sven Cederroth's detailed examination of different Islamic leadership styles through case-studies is especially rewarding. The great value of such close observation, however, is marred by a too binary conception of "material" and "moral" leadership styles. We would learn more from his case if he had elaborated on the kinds of circumstances and structures, which favour the different techniques of leadership. The last essay, by François Raillon, is the only piece that sits awkwardly in the volume: a survey of capitalist bureaucrat/entrepreneurs by ethnic affiliation.

The only thing missing from this otherwise fine volume is a spirit of comparison that might have further illuminated many issues. One looks in vain for a comparison of the Javanese material with studies of local leadership in other authoritarian/developmental regimes. Comparisons with Malaysia, Korea, Singapore, Burma, or, for that matter, comparisons with Western history might have provided a point of reference for structural and political similarities and differences. In addition, a reader would like to know a bit more about the contradictions and tensions in the system, how it might change. What would be the consequences of a regime change? There is a little too

much "billiard-ball smoothness" to the descriptions of local leadership patterns: How fragile are they? How linked to underlying culture? How dependent on existing political structures? How dependent on a continuing flow of resources? What happened during fiscal crises since 1965?

For all the many achievements of this collection, one wishes the authors had run back another 100 metres from their fascinating material to view it through a wider angle lens.

James C. Scott
Yale University