

Brigitta Hauser-Schaublein, ed. *Adat and Indigeneity in Indonesia: Culture and Entitlements between Heteronomy and Self-Ascription*. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen (Studies in Cultural Property, Vol. 7), 2013. 240 pp.

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Marginalized population groups in Indonesia have gained attention through the efforts of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and an Indonesian society known as the Indigenous People's Alliance of the Archipelago (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara, AMAN). These marginalized entities center on their differences from mainstream population groups, particularly on land claims, customary usage, and access to policy making; they have complaints in all three areas. But do these marginalized population groups, in the late twentieth to early twenty-first centuries, have a right to remain unintegrated into the national mainstream culture when the loyalties demanded by nation-states encourage that common cultural standards are necessary? UNDP and AMAN regard historically marginalized groups as having a right to exist separately as protected minority groups. The authors in this collection of essays accept the UNDP-AMAN viewpoint and do not question whether it is good public policy, although many people in the Indonesian mainstream would disagree. Consequently, the research and writing of these essays center on the "struggle" of dedicated activists in these marginalized areas to garner governmental recognition of these groups' special identity and gain a hearing for their demands.

Adat and Indigeneity in Indonesia is the product of scholarship on Indonesia at the University of Göttingen under the direction of Brigitta Hauser-Schaublein. Hauser-Schaublein's introduction is a clear statement of the problem and the work that was undertaken to examine "indigenization" in Indonesia. Her associates in the project come from German and Indonesian institutions and draw largely on the fieldwork of the participants themselves. The research in anthropological studies is uniformly good: the application of methodology is appropriate and the analysis and writing is expressive and explanatory. The work has been edited by a native English speaker who gives the entire set of essays a commonality that makes reading fairly easy, despite the sometimes heavy use of social science vocabulary. Each chapter stands on its own, but the combined publication gives a broad, comprehensive view. Great attention is given to editing, to proper scholarly citation, and to defining terms and titles. The volume is marked by a high level of professionalism.

There are three themes in this set of essays. The first is "indigenization." Its meaning and its manifestations are addressed by all the writers, and they arrive at common conclusions, described well in Francesca Merlan's Epilogue, which forms an executive summary of sorts. The second theme is the persistence of custom (*adat*) in the life practices and outlooks of the subject groups and how *adat* has continually reasserted itself in Indonesian history to define societal organization. *Adat* is the life blood of the marginal groups, as in each case it is *adat* that provides the essence of difference for the group from other identities and its rationale for special status. Interestingly, such interpretation of *adat*, both historically and in a reconstructed sense, is explained differently among various proponents of each and every *adat* system.

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Some users want historical authenticity and others “modernized” versions, which produces tension among the various proponents. The third theme, much less defined, structured, or discussed, involves political change and its impact on the entire Indonesian nation and on these “indigenous” groups in particular.

Three articles set the stage for the case studies. Yance Arizona and Erasmus Cahyadi outline the nature of AMAN, and its success in bringing diverse local movements under a general political umbrella. Miriam Harjati Samukri explains the role of Indonesian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and how they often act as catalysts in helping marginal groups attain identity and formulate appropriate programs. Katja Göcke provides an explanatory article on the formation of new international law dealing with indigenous status as including marginalized population groups that have no claim to aboriginal status. She explains that such Indonesian groups then use that interpretation in their own arguments with Indonesian authorities as they seek to have their status as special groups recognized and their grievances redressed.

The case studies are diverse. Brigitta Hauser-Schaublein diagnoses the special place of the Balinese in Indonesia’s hierarchy of “national” groups, showing that even members of a major population can have feelings of isolation and marginalization in a country of great diversity. Anna Teresa Grumbles notes that the Wana people of central Sulawesi did not originally seek special identification, but were convinced by outsiders that there were considerable social and economic advantages to such a concession. Consequently, the Wana became enthusiastic converts to the new classification. Serena Müller notes that in Tobelo, north Halmehara, the local population is divided by region, and by contending views about the shape and form of *adat* in the present age and how it can be used to foster a more dynamic image of the people using it than has traditionally been the case. However, in all of these case studies, personalities and their political positions have much to do with outlooks and outcomes. Stefanie Stinebach presents the case of the Batin Sembilan of Jambi, who regard themselves as victimized, first by Dutch colonial collectivization policy to take their land for plantations and then again by successor Indonesian national governments for never rectifying the colonial takeover. An unusual analysis comes from Fajar I. Thufail, who follows the group representing the interests of descendants of rulers, a group that wants a place at the political table based on the argument that traditional princes and sultans were carriers of important cultural symbols from the independent states of the precolonial era (ca 1000–1600) and the “native states” of the colonial era (1600–1950).

In general, this collection is a strong contribution to understanding Indonesian society and its development as it relates to unrecognized communities. The volume fleshes out studies of mainstream Indonesian culture dominated particularly by the Javanese, but also by other strong regional groups such as the Acehnese, Minangkabau, Sundanese, and others whose communities number in the millions, rather than in the hundreds and thousands, as these marginalized groups do. However, the question remains: just how important are these small marginalized populations in the overall scheme of Indonesian national life? Given the heavy infighting and suspiciousness of dominant population groups towards one another—historical Javanese ascendancy, land competition on Kalimantan between Bataks and Madurese, Papuan feelings of alienation from all other groups—just how much attention do these small, marginalized groups merit? Is it a matter of “national consciousness,” where they are of limited importance? Or does it involve a sense of justice regarding historic land claims, where the issue is confined to law courts and perhaps some limited legislative action with almost no public attention? Or is the issue

a matter of great importance demanding full national attention, as in the case of Muslim militancy? The authors hint at all three possibilities at different places in their writing, but no one meets the issue head on. It would have helped if the editor or the writer of the Epilogue had placed the research themes in the contemporary political context of Indonesian nationhood.

The volume relates closely to Maribeth Erb's study on regionalism in Indonesia, which also is an anthology of case studies, covering many of the same ethnic groups, albeit from a slightly different perspective.² The heavy use of technical vocabulary and focus on contemporary events is apparent in both cases. The strength of this volume lies in its wide-angle view of a common problem, so it is somewhat different than Hauser-Schaublein's recent study of Balinese society, which goes into much more depth on a single population group,³ but otherwise the two studies are parallel in construction, in presentation, and in general findings. Johan Lindquist's study on identity among the mixed community on Batam in Indonesia's profitable development zone opposite Singapore uses similar research techniques and heavy use of cultural symbols as tools for analysis.⁴ As a one-author project, however, Lindquist's findings are more pointed and conclusive, but the study is a narrow one in comparison to this volume, which, of course, applies more broadly to conditions found in many parts of the archipelago. Finally, Elizabeth Pisani's recent study on general Indonesian development offers a wide societal view that stands in contrast to this work, as the intended audience favors a more general readership.⁵ In comparison to Pisani, this volume comes across as more authoritative and scholarly, even though there are good insights in both books.

In conclusion, this is a good collection of readable articles that explain much about contemporary Indonesia and its long concern with building a nation involving very diverse people. It infers that the societal model used by government policy makers since 1945 needs some redefinition to include population groups long considered peripheral. Therein lies the challenge.

² Maribeth Erb, Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, and Carole Faucher, eds., *Regionalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia* (London and New York, NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

³ Brigitta Hauser-Schaublein, ed., *Between Harmony and Discrimination: Negotiating Religious Identities within Majority–Minority Relationships in Bali and Lombok* (Leiden, Brill, 2014).

⁴ Johan R. Lindquist, *The Anxieties of Mobility. Migration, and Tourism in the Indonesian Border-lands* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2014).

⁵ Elizabeth Pisani, *Indonesia Etc.: Exploring the Improbable Nation* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2014).

