

Jan-Paul Dirkse, Frans Hüsken and Mario Rutten (eds), *Development and social welfare; Indonesia's experiences under the New Order*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 1993, xi + 295 pp. ISBN 90.6718.056.4. Price: f 45.

ANKE NIEHOF

In a certain sense the present volume is a period piece. It is the outcome of a colloquium on poverty and development in Indonesia, held in The Hague in April 1991. The meeting was convened on the initiative of J.P. Pronk, then as now Minister for Development Co-operation of the Netherlands, at that time also Chairman of the IGGI, the Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia. The latter is no longer the case. In March 1992 President Suharto informed the Netherlands that Indonesia would renounce Dutch development assistance to Indonesia from then on. Thus, the book reflects a situation in which there still was a dialogue between Indonesia and the Netherlands, in which not only government representatives but also scholars and representatives from the IGGI's critical counterpart, the INGI (International NGO-Forum on Indonesia), participated. This situation came to an abrupt end in March 1992. In retrospect one could say that on the Indonesian side the terms on which the dialogue was pursued were felt to be unequal. The book also shows the involvement with Indonesia on the Dutch side, which in Dutch public opinion and foreign policy was felt as something special but – at the same time – controversial, which was typical of the period that started at the beginning of the seventies and ended in March 1992.

If its timing makes the book a historical document, this also applies to one of its central themes: poverty. For a long time poverty did not feature in the political vocabulary of the New Order. Referring to the poor, euphemisms such as 'low-income groups' or groups with a 'weak economic status' (*status ekonomi lemah*) were used, like using the phrase 'insufficient nutrition' (*kurang gizi*) when meaning malnutrition. 'In REPELITA V, the government recognized the magnitude of the poverty problem in Indonesia and the need to mount an intensified effort to reduce poverty,' say Cheetman and Kyle Peters in their contribution (p. 33). They omit to mention the role of the World Bank in putting the issue of poverty in the limelight at the beginning of the nineties. One might also regard it indicative of Indonesia's self-confidence about the success of its development efforts that in REPELITA V the problem of alleviating poverty was explicitly addressed for the first time.

The structure of the book betrays the proceedings of the meeting on which it is based. The topics – poverty, rural development, industrialization, population, women and development, participation and development policies – are dealt with in an interactive manner. A topic that I rather miss in the discussions is education, both in terms of achievement (literacy of the population) and problems (the low level of education of the Indonesian

work force). The discussants at the seminar and contributors to this volume include Russell Cheetham, R. Kyle Peters, Sjahrir, Sajogyo, Erik Thorbecke, Budhy Tjahjati Soegijoko, Chris Manning, Soetjipto Wirosardjono, Benjamin White, Ines Smyth, Els Postel-Coster, Sediono Tjondronegoro, Leontine Visser, Peter van Tuyl, Ben Witjes, Wardah Hafidz, Robert Cribb, and Peter Boomgaard. Pronk's concluding chapter at the end is aptly called 'Looking Backward, Looking Forward'.

The book indeed looks both backwards and forwards. The first applies not only to the historical contributions of Boomgaard and Cribb, but also that of, for example, Sajogyo, who traces agricultural and rural development policies and their effects throughout the New Order period. Sajogyo points to the top-down character of the institutions and programmes (for example KUD, LKMD and PKK) which were produced by these policies, and also to the inherent urban bias in top-down rural development. The theme of participation, which is more explicitly dealt with in the contributions of Van Tuyl, Witjes, and Wardah Hafidz, runs throughout the whole argument, as is the case in several other contributions.

Most contributions have an inherent diachronic perspective to a greater or lesser extent. In the section on women and development, Wolf's contribution is the most forward-looking one. She discusses the 'factory daughters', who are increasingly forming part of the industrial labour force. These women are young, single and come from poor, though not the poorest, rural households. They are cheap and docile labourers, but at the same time they work for their own emancipatory reasons. Soetjipto Wirosardjono's contribution on population and social welfare also looks ahead at Indonesia as it approaches the turn of the century, and identifies the problem of population ageing as a welfare issue to come.

The topic of population is interesting because of its immediate link with the controversy surrounding Indonesia's national family planning programme. Although I agree with White that 'we do not yet fully understand the relationship between population change and development' (p. 105), I do not want to deny Indonesia (or any other country for that matter) the right to have a population policy aimed at curbing population growth. However, the argument on Indonesia's family planning programme centred on its character at the level of implementation rather than that of policy. The keywords here are quality and (alleged) coercion. This is not the place to go into this matter in detail, but I would like to remind readers of the often polemic nature of the domestic (meaning Dutch) discussion on Indonesia's development and the New Order regime. White's plea for an open discussion on the issues of quality and coercion (p. 113), apart from the fact that the present tense is no longer applicable as far as the Dutch are concerned, even then came too late in the day. What in fact happened is that allegations of coercion and critical comments on quality were not properly discussed. The programme did not get a fair trial at all. The Australian parliament, confronted with the same domestic debate on Australia's

development assistance to Indonesia in the field of population and family planning, sent out a mission to investigate the allegations. It was headed by a well-known expert in the field (Terence Hull). It did a meticulous job and produced a balanced and perspicacious report. By contrast, in Holland there was a very unbalanced debate in a popular development magazine, in which the column writer (Breman) could fire away to his heart's content and the letters of those who did not agree were either not printed in full or not even printed at all. It surprises me that White feels compelled to refer to this exchange to bolster his view. I totally disagree with White when he says (in a footnote): 'Breman's account may indeed have been inaccurate in some details, but this does not necessarily deny the general accuracy of his characterization of the program' (p. 112). And I feel offended by White's all too short and biased summary of an argument I presented elsewhere when he quotes me as maintaining that 'there is no question of coercion' (p. 112). All this could be disposed of as academic bickering, were it not for the political effect it had. Breman's account contributed to establishing a distorted image of the Indonesian family planning programme, which in turn in February 1991 led to the Dutch policy decision to suspend all assistance to this programme. A decision taken without first having the 'open discussion' – so wanted by White in retrospect – with Indonesian policy-makers and without having heard the party most involved, the 'acceptors' or clients. This was much resented by the Indonesian side and it played a role in the Indonesian decision of March 1992 to renounce all Dutch development assistance. As it is now, Dutch experts on Indonesia and Dutch foreign policy-makers have ceased to participate in the international discussions with Indonesia on that country's development.

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Michael C. Howard, *Textiles of Southeast Asia; An annotated and illustrated bibliography*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1994, 212 pp. + 64 pp. of photographs in colour. ISBN 974.8496.11.2. Price US\$ 35.

HETTY NOOY-PALM

As is clear from the title, the textiles of South-East Asia are the subject of this annotated bibliography. A real *mer à boire*, and the author, a professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the Simon Frazer University, Toronto, must be highly devoted to his subject to undertake such a Sisyphean labour. The task is also frustrating because opportunities for developing an interesting theory are few and far between, and no suggestive point of view can be brought out. This is inherent in the character of a bibliography, which is first and foremost a work of reference.