



East Timor, Australia and Regional Order: Intervention and Its Aftermath in Southeast Asia
by James Cotton

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Pacific Affairs, Vol. 78, No. 4 (Winter, 2005/2006), pp. 687-689

Published by: [Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40023004>

Accessed: 13/10/2014 21:16

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Book Reviews

never rose above junior status; Fontijne the scholar never published anything. He was forgotten by all except his immediate family. Even after considerable spade work, Forth does not know everything about Fontijne's fieldwork in Nage: why he chose that particular district, what motivated his interest in traditional authority, and what hand the Dutch administration had in sponsoring or authorizing this research. Nonetheless, Forth, himself an anthropologist of Flores and the Nage region, makes a persuasive case for the dissemination of Fontijne's report in English. In the introduction, he thoroughly contextualizes the colonial history of central Flores, as well as outlining Fontijne's career. His lengthy afterword weighs the value of Fontijne's report in light of modern developments in anthropological science. Nor surprisingly, Forth argues that Fontijne anticipated many future developments in the anthropology of Eastern Indonesia and Flores, in particular his insights into the importance of precedence within some Indonesian social orders. Furthermore, his conclusion that religious and political authority were not separate, now a largely accepted fact about Flores society, went against the grain of most administrative and scholarly thinking at the time. He was clearly a man ahead of his time.

This is a compelling story, although perhaps not one best appreciated in isolation. Notwithstanding Forth's excellent editing, this is a difficult introduction to Flores anthropology; to fully understand and evaluate both Fontijne's text and Forth's afterword would require following many of the references and footnotes. There is also little about Nage political culture today, and its relationship to the Indonesian state. My own sense is that this would be an intriguing place to start a history of anthropology and the Netherlands East Indies state, one not overburdened by deference to the influence of Leiden anthropology. Were idealistic, sympathetic and talented ethnographers common in the colonial service, and did this kind of critical anthropology, separate from the high-minded theorizing in Leiden, lead to changes in administration? If this kind of internal criticism was commonplace, this would be a little-understood component of the Dutch colonial administration. Publication at an affordable price puts this report, and the questions it raises, within easy reach.

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ANDREW GOSS

EAST TIMOR, AUSTRALIA AND REGIONAL ORDER: Intervention and its Aftermath in Southeast Asia. By *James Cotton*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon. 2004. xii, 193 pp. (Map, table.) £60.00, cloth. ISBN 0-415-33580-9.

This volume is a collection of essays on the theme of Australian policy towards East Timor, with specific reference to the "turnaround" of 1999. In this

context it also considers Australian-Indonesian relations, the collapse of Indonesia's colonization of East Timor and the United Nations' intervention. As the title suggests, the author has a particular focus on matters of regional security and intervention.

The book is strong on the detail of Australian policy. The author charts Australian complicity in Indonesia's 1975 invasion, its support for Indonesia's recolonization venture and the combined effort to seize East Timor's oil and gas resources. Australian governments of all stripes, but particularly Labor leaders Gough Whitlam and Paul Keating, do not emerge well from such scrutiny. Support by John Howard's conservative government for Indonesian rule, including apologies in 1999 for atrocities organized by the Indonesian military, is well documented. From this point of view, the book forms a valuable resource. One chapter is devoted to a critique of the Australian government's official history of the period.

The author does not claim to present an explanation of why and how East Timor secured its independence, though this larger question looms over the narrative, and is briefly touched on, by way of context. The book focuses on an interpretation of Australia's "extraordinary change of policy" in 1999. This is certainly an important question. However, there are problems with the approach used here. The emphasis is on "official" policy documentation and a confined scope of analysis. Yet Australian policy was always substantially out of touch with public opinion, and this gap was sustained by the tactics of the East Timorese resistance and their outside friends. This movement educated a generation of journalists, who in turn played a role in raising the pressure on a reluctant government in the heat of the 1999 conflict. Cotton neglects to address this theme. Democratization in Indonesia and the unusual role of the Clinton administration and the IMF are touched on, but not developed into a fuller explanation of Australian motives. Yet as most Asians know very well, US approval has been critical for all postwar Australian interventions.

In general, this is a critical story of administrators in Australia, their actions and rationales. The Indonesian relationship and the emerging East Timorese state are discussed in the language of "humanitarian intervention" and "global governance." Tensions over the independent economic policy charted by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri are hinted at, but sidestepped. The author notes that East Timor's "embrace of globalization ... is far from resolved." But for discussions of East Timor's "debt-free" approach, the conflicts with Australia and the World Bank over agriculture and infrastructure policy, we have to look elsewhere. One section does summarize the post-independence oil dispute. Principles of self-determination are discussed, but Cotton provides no accounts of the East Timorese peoples' own struggle for *Ukun Rasikan* (self-governance).

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While this book focuses on the “exceptional” Australian intervention of 1999 to 2002, its value may lie as much in documenting some of the history and continuities of Australian interventionism.

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Tim Anderson

THE UNSEEN CITY: Anthropological Perspectives on Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. By *Michael Goddard*. *Australia: Pandanus Books and the Australian National University*. 2005. 225 pp. US\$34.95, paper. ISBN 1-74076-134-0.

Reputed to be one of the world’s most dangerous cities, Port Moresby is a place that many expatriate residents love to hate. Once a sleepy colonial town, “Moresby” has evolved into a dynamic and ever-changing Melanesian city with serious growing pains. Michael Goddard gives us a glimpse into its dark side, describing areas and activities that Westerners rarely see or even know about.

Based on substantial fieldwork conducted in the 1990s in Port Moresby’s village courts, prison and much-maligned squatter settlements, the book is compiled from papers that Goddard has published elsewhere. The work suffers from many of the weaknesses of volumes thus cobbled together: an absence of coherence, many redundancies, and the lack of an overarching theme. But each chapter is well written, each makes a clear point, and an introduction provides a good overview to the collection.

Chapter 1 takes up the “problem” of the city’s squatter settlements, which, like shantytowns everywhere, are commonly assumed to be “the habitats of the unemployed, the penurious, and the criminal.” Goddard presents a much more nuanced and complex picture of their types, which range from planned self-help estates to illegal occupations with dwellings varying from substantial structures to lean-tos. He finds that most settlers are employed and law-abiding, and traces the derogatory stereotypes to colonial representations. The politics of being a settlement dweller are revealed in Chapter 2, in which the apparent absence of sorcery cases in a village court serving one of Moresby’s oldest and most law-abiding settlements is attributed to avoiding any mention of sorcery in court documents, for fear of being targeted by a censorious officialdom.

Chapters 3 and 4 describe the social organization and activities of gangs, whose victims are as likely to be settlement dwellers as the residents of more affluent suburbs. Based on interviews with self-identified gang members (called *raskols*) in Bomana Jail, Goddard finds these offenders, usually assumed to be the shanty-town poor, to be from all walks of life, suggesting that “rascalism” is not rooted solely in conditions of poverty and