For these comparativists, however, this book might disappoint in one regard. Besides digging for data on Indonesia, they might be attracted by the name of its editor, the author of a celebrated book on Hindu-Muslim riots in India (Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life, Yale University Press, 2002). But here they will not find a similar neat, deductive-like theory that explains the spatial variation of collective violence in Indonesia as Varshney delivered in his work on India. Perhaps this is because Indonesia does not contain a single master cleavage as found in India (Hindu versus Muslim). Perhaps it is because this condition forces Varshney to account for a greater variety of forms of collective violence than he did in India. Very likely it is also due to the fact that Varshney’s attempt to replicate his comparative study of paired cities that he used to such effect in India is still ongoing. In other words, his results on causal mechanisms are not reported here. We eagerly anticipate his findings.

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No doubt this book is one of the most outstanding—and ambitious—scholarly works on Indonesian Islam written by a Western scholar. The book, analyzing the history and the current development of Indonesian Islam with a quite balanced perspective covering both extremism and pluralism, offers a significant contribution for understanding the diversity of Muslim politics, cultures and societies.

The book is divided into three main clusters. The first four chapters sketch the history of the advent and the development of Islam in Indonesia from pre-colonial periods to the Suharto-led New Order which influenced the Muslim role in the country today. In these chapters, the author deftly summarizes the diversity of Indonesia’s Islamic organizations, Muslim groupings and social actors who played a crucial role in the growth and the creation of the characteristics of Indonesian Islam. In addition, the author is fair in describing the dynamics of Indonesia’s Islamic history, as well as the conflict among Muslims from different religious streams and schools.

The second cluster (chapter 5) discusses the country’s Islamic institutions including but not limited to Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama—the two organizational giants unique to the country, which represent what the author calls “mainstream Islam” (115) of Indonesia—and the Muslim educational institutions (i.e., madrasah and pesantren), which “underlie Islamic society and politics in modern Indonesia” (114). After the discussion of the complexity and the plurality of madrasah (which is about 38,000) and
pesantren (numbering 14,000), the author carefully, and truthfully, states, “[f]oreigners who see Islamic education in Indonesia as a nurturing ground for terrorism are seriously misinformed” (196). The third and final cluster (chapters 6-8) examines two current issues that preoccupy many foreign observers: causes of post-New Order ethno-religious communal conflicts and Islamic terrorism as well as the possibility that the country might be drifting toward Islamic authoritarianism due to political intimidation exercised by a radical Muslim minority.

Despite the book’s great contribution to the study of Indonesian Muslim politics and cultures, its analyses call for further examination. The book relies heavily on (1) the pre-existing literature on Indonesian Islam, particularly that authored by Western scholars; (2) the assessments and analyses of the International Crisis Group; (3) interviews with “experts”; and (4) the author’s experience during his service as a US diplomat in Jakarta from 1970 to 1974.

Since the book is mainly based on secondary resources, it lacks analytical depth and misses the discussion of the variety of Muslim branches within Indonesia’s Islamic trees. On the discussion of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), for instance, the book doesn’t highlight issues facing the competing parties of the “cultural NU” and the “political NU.” As well, it doesn’t discuss the emerging “post-traditionalist” and progressive NU as well as “extremist variants” of NU, linked to the Wahabi and Salafi movements. The author thus fails to grasp the plurality of NU members and social actors (jama’ah nahdliyin).

It is true that, in contrast to a radical Muslim minority, NU and Muhammadiyah are quite tolerant, but it is more related to “inter-religious tolerance” and not “intra-religious pluralism.” This is why these Islamic organizations have condemned Ahmadiyah, Salamullah, Al-Qiyadah, al-Islamiyah, etc., as deviated sects and deviating religious groups. Some elites of the organizations have also routinely attacked liberal, progressive Muslims, some of whom are members of NU and Muhammadiyah.

The book furthermore fails to notice that it is actually some elite members of NU and Muhammadiyah who have contributed to the issuance of fatwas (Islamic edicts) by the Council of Indonesian Ulama (the MUI), edicts which condemned a number of local religious sects and Muslim groupings as deviated, and pluralism as a deviating school of thought. Such fatwas have indeed provoked some extremist Muslim groups to commit mass violence.

Moreover the book’s discussion on variants of Indonesian Islam is too general and has mostly been influenced by the “common existing scholarships” emphasizing (1) the classical dichotomy of santri-abangan and (2) the development of “Islam in [hinterland] Java.” As a result, the book misses the varieties of Islam outside Java (e.g., Islam Sasak, Islam Tua, Islam Gayo, etc.), the assessment of post-Suharto pluralist Islamic movements, and the portrayal of the “Islam Pesisiran” scattered across the northern coastal areas of Java.

The author’s assessment of the Maluku conflict from 1999 to 2004, furthermore, is mainly based on the analyses of the International Crisis Group
and secondary literature on the region’s communal violence highlighting the central role of the Laskar Jihad (Java-based Muslim militias) and Muslim migrants in exacerbating the Christian-Muslim wars. The book does not discuss the role played by the Ambonese Christian fighters (e.g., the Coker, Kudahitam, Agas, etc.) and the local Muslims of Maluku (e.g., the Pelau Muslims, Ambonese Arab Muslims, etc.) who greatly contributed to the rise and the escalation of the wars.

Notwithstanding this lacuna, the book is a welcoming edition for the study of Indonesian Islam, and the author’s concluding remark stating that the future of Indonesian Islam will be determined by the competition of fundamentalism and pluralism is absolutely apt.

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Indonesia, with a population of over 230 million making it the fourth-largest country in the world, has been experiencing rapid urbanization in the last two decades. This in turn has led to problems in various aspects of urban life in Indonesia, exacerbated by the economic crisis in 1997. The resignation of President Suharto in May 1998, following his failure to address the impact of the economic crisis, marked the end of his New Order regime and the beginning of profound social and political transformation in Indonesia, including its cities. The changes in the cities cannot be separated from the history of the country, which underwent a period of colonialism, a period of revolutionary struggle for independence, a period of authoritarian rule under Sukarno’s Guided Democracy and a thirty-two-year authoritarian period under Suharto’s New Order Regime.

The Appearances of Memory: Mnemonic Practices of Architecture and Urban Form in Indonesia offers new perspectives and interesting analysis of political cultures and the experience of urbanism in Indonesia, providing the reader with a better understanding of the complexity of urban problems in the country. Kusno’s main thesis posits that there have been connections between the built environment and political consciousness in Indonesian cities in the colonial and national periods. The book is organized into four thematic sections: governmentality, remembering and forgetting, reminiscences and mental nebulae. The chapters in the book are organized from the everyday present in the 2000s to the events of the colonial period. Those who are familiar with Kusno’s work will not find much new material in this book. Six