



Seminar by Norman Joshua

MILITARIZATION OVERLOOKED

Rethinking the Origins of Indonesia's New Order, 1950–1965

28 June
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Seminar Room (No.213), 2nd Floor, Inamori Foundation Memorial Building

Abstract

In the conventional narrative, the genesis of Indonesia's authoritarian military regime known as the "New Order" is often depicted as a sudden event catalyzed by the kidnapping and killing of six Army generals on September 30th–October 1, 1965. General Suharto, who avoided capture, seized the opportunity to establish a military autocracy that would endure for over three decades (1966–1998). On the other hand, scholars have portrayed the 1950s favorably as a time when Indonesia experimented with liberal and constitutional democracy. By implication, the New Order was an unforeseen anomaly. However, Joshua's research challenges this view, arguing that the 1950s in Indonesia were beset by underdevelopment, insecurity, disorder, and conflict, which promoted militarization that ultimately paved the way for the New Order's ascendancy. This militarizing process, he will show, offers fresh insight into an understudied period in Indonesian history and helps us better understand the origins of authoritarian military regimes worldwide.

Speaker

Dr. Norman Joshua

Norman Joshua is the Shorenstein Postdoctoral Fellow on Contemporary Asia at Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford University. A historian working on civil-military relations and authoritarianism in Southeast Asia, other topics covered in his publications include revolutionary politics, counterinsurgency, intelligence, and labor history in Indonesia. He obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Northwestern University in 2023, where he was also an Arryman Scholar at the Northwestern Buffett Institute for Global Affairs.

Discussant

Prof. Jun Honna

Jun Honna is a professor of Southeast Asian Studies at College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University. He received PhD from the Australian National University in 1999. His research focuses on politics in Indonesia, and non-traditional security issues in Southeast Asia.