As can be expected, anthropological and political scientific perspectives dominate the chapters. Several authors pay tribute to Clifford Geertz and follow his ethnographic method of “thick description.” What is minimal in these anthropological and politically oriented chapters is heavy theorization. This is perhaps wise, given the subject matter. Too much theorization (in search for some higher truth, intellectual gratification or academic credentials) of the human tragedies in Indonesia in very recent time could risk the inadvertent effects of trivializing the plight of the displaced and other seriously traumatized people. Most of these people continued to endure the sufferings discussed in this book as it went to press.

Human rights reports feature prominently as the source of reference in several chapters. Fortunately, the chapters manage to distinguish themselves from such reports by avoiding any strong statements of advocacy or condemnation. Notwithstanding, more than a few chapters are overcrowded with numerical data, dates and names of places and persons. Although they are arguably important, in some of the chapters they require more analysis and reflective discussion than what is presented to make them adequately meaningful. Against such chapters, reading the concluding chapter by Bubandt is a great relief and intellectually refreshing. This is the only chapter that does not focus on “displacement.” Problematizing the concept of “trauma” in both its global and local contexts, Bubandt presents an admirable combination of narrative, interpretation and ethnographic reporting in good balance and proportion. Significantly more than other chapters in the book, Bubandt demonstrates a critical self-reflexivity, both deploying and critiquing selected contemporary Western-derived theories in analysis of post-colonial practice. This is probably the best work by Bubandt that I have read to date.

The editor’s introductory chapter is helpful in providing the broader historical context of the complex issues that the subsequent chapters address. Despite this, the book reads like an issue of the journal Indonesia from the same publisher. The citations across the chapters are strongly oriented towards previously published articles from that journal. Like the journal, the book has no index, the reference sources are available only per chapter, with little cross-referencing between chapters.
is a third party in the negotiation and that the broker receives a fee or commission. The title, however, is less applicable to the primary actors of the revolution than it is to those who have left the revolution and to the authors of the book.

The book’s editor chooses to focus on “the ‘relational work’ of cadres who seek to forge networks of support and alliance, defense and opposition” (3). Differences in framework, approach and research methods among the contributors, however, produced an uneven collection of essays.

Three essays stand out for their careful research, in-depth analysis and the attempt to strike a balance between impossible neutrality and the demands of scholarship for objectivity. Boudreau’s essay enables us to understand how the “underground” responds to shifts in state policies, as it compares the Philippine experience with that of Indonesia and Burma. Lynn Kwiatkowski’s article focuses on non-activist civilians and, through her interviews, we recognize the crucial role of these civilians in the success or failure of any revolutionary movement. Hilhorst’s study on gender and the politics of non-government organizations succeeds both in explaining the challenges of the women’s movement within the national democratic movement and in considering jokes as texts. By showing how jokes among activists both affirmed their participation in the rectification movement and their continuing negotiations over gender attitudes, Hilhorst underlines the importance of observing “everyday interactions” in understanding the people who comprise the movement.

Hilhorst’s well-written essay magnifies the shortcomings of the other articles. First, most of the essays privilege the accounts of cadres who have either left or been expelled from the “party.” Those in the reaffirmist movement are rendered silent in many of the articles because the essays did not touch on the developments of the past decade (2000-2009)—Mckenna, Abinales, Boudreau, Kwiatkowski, and Rutten—or their voices were marginalized by non-inclusion, true for all of the articles except Hilhorst’s. Limiting research to a particular time frame is not in itself problematic. However, to write about a particular movement without recognizing its most recent developments reveals an agenda to highlight its failures.

Second, some of the research methods employed are questionable. Abinales’s essay re-narrates “Kahos,” the 1985-86 campaign to weed out the party of infiltrators, but focuses only on his analysis of a single document. He fails to interview a single party member, and neglects to mention the rectification campaign of the party. Also, with the exception of Hilhorst, many of the authors ignored or dismissed voluminous primary materials available at the University of the Philippines Library. They also failed to consider narratives such as Tatang’s *Sa Tungki ng Ilong ng Kaaway* (At the Tip of the Enemy’s Nose) (1988) and oral accounts of the party’s recent developments.

Third, there is the lack of transparency of some of the authors. In
particular, Nathan Quimpo, in his essay on international work in Europe, neglects to note two facts: the role he played in rejectionist efforts to discredit the party and the renewed strength of international work as evidenced by massive organizing among migrant workers. Both Abinales and Quimpo also fail to acknowledge that the latter played a significant part in Kahos as established in party internal assessment documents. Even McKenna’s article “Mindanao People Unite!” identifies Quimpo as the former chair of the United Front Secretariat in Mindanao.

The book thus fails to give us an understanding of the Philippine revolution because the reaffirmist faction is rendered silent, and recent party strengths are undermined. The authors cannot, however, deny recent developments that some of them have noted. Data on splinter armed groups that were integrated into the armed forces of the Philippines or transformed into pro-military groups or private armies prove the the viability of the rectification movement.

Rutten aptly gives the book its title, “Brokering a Revolution.” It is a book authored by “outsiders,” third parties whose academic work serves as fodder for the state. It is the state and not the party that seeks to “discipline” the activist body, through torture, rape and summary execution.

What fee or commission does a broker receive? While it is doubtful that these scholars are on the payroll of the state or that academic glory lies in the writing of articles that demonize the Philippine revolution, it would do well for these academics to ask themselves “Whose interests do I serve? How am I complicit in the systematic annihilation of activists in the Philippines?”

*University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, USA*  
*Maria Josephine Barrios-Leblanc*