

Tamil-language newspaper on the living conditions of Indian labourers in Malaya comes close to representing the views of the colonised.

Overall, this sourcebook is well organised and presented. Its thematic breadth and depth mean that all economic and social historians of British imperialism in Southeast Asia should find something of interest within, though it will be most useful for those who focus on Malaysia and Singapore.

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Indonesia

Islam, politics, and change: The Indonesian experience after the fall of Suharto

Edited by KEES VAN DIJK and NICO J.G. KAPTEIN

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This edited volume contains the results of the Islam Research Programme–Jakarta, a Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) research project (2010–2012). Both the editors, well-known scholars of modern Indonesian Islam themselves, do not contribute chapters, but rather curate the contributions by many younger scholars (and a few well-established Indonesian authors) into three themed sections.

The first section treats ‘Islamic political parties and socio-religious organisations’. Ahmad-Norma Permata’s chapter, by far the longest in the book, is a detailed examination of the co-evolution of the Tarbiyah movement (Jamaah Tarbiyah, JT) and the party it spawned: the conservative Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS). Focusing on the decade following 1999, Permata is able to articulate clearly the relationship of JT-PKS with the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood — something other authors tap-dance around — and the shifting positions of JT and PKS on questions of practical politics. In the second chapter, Syaifudin Zuhri gives a more concrete examination of the PKS by looking at its takeover of a local mosque following the Yogyakarta earthquake of 2006. The process by which PKS made its move, and the strong reaction by the Muhammadiyah organisation that had previously run the mosque, show not only the contested dynamics between these religious movements but also the continuing centrality of local mosques in Indonesian life. Bastiaan Scherpen turns back to the national in his look at responses to the 2011 attack on an Ahmadiyah community in West Java. By contrasting the public responses of Islamic political parties, who universally emphasised law-and-order and sought to limit the Ahmadis, and Islamic mass organisations, who were more concerned about theological questions and promoted compromise to protect the group’s rights, Scherpen exposes a paradox in public Islam where parties are often at odds with their backing organisations.

The second section of the book turns to the realm of law. Euis Nurlaelawati (chap. 4) and Stijn van Huis (chap. 5) both build up their studies from close observations of regional Islamic courts, the former in Banten and West Java and the latter in South Sulawesi. Where Nurlaelawati is rather pessimistic about the state of gender awareness and women's rights in Islamic courts, focusing on ways in which judges look outside state law to uphold men's rights in areas like polygyny and deny women freedom in areas like dress, van Huis is mildly more positive about the level of agency and awareness held by women seeking divorce and post-divorce rights. Muhammad Latif Fauzi contributes a different perspective by looking at the social consequences of a local bylaw targeting prostitution on Yogyakarta's southern coast; although promoted as a morality law, the legislation has actually victimised the already vulnerable sex workers (rather than their pimps) and gutted the community economy.

The final section of the book gathers three studies focused on Aceh, the region where religious and Islamic legal developments have received the most attention over the last decade. Moch Nur Ichwan writes a fascinating examination of the idea of 'deviance' through the politics surrounding a Sufi leader who has been accused of promoting a heterodox idea of monism. This case demonstrates not only how ideas of deviancy and orthodoxy are contested — in this case through the propagation of Sufi theology versus the promotion of sharia by different ulama — but also how organisational and political machinations colour these contestations. Reza Idria's chapter looks at different kinds of resistance to the growing sharia regulation of all aspects of life in Aceh, pulling examples from a local film festival and from youths following the punk lifestyle. David Kloos closes the book with a study of violence and piety as tropes in Aceh. This pulls not only from his observations of local villagers' reactions to a terrorist man-hunt in 2010, but also from a century of literary and cultural representations of Aceh, finding that piety and violence are meaningful as cultural tropes for Acehnese themselves, not just outsiders seeking to explain them.

For each section, Kaptein and van Dijk have written useful overviews, as well as an introduction to the volume. Sparing pictures but a very thorough glossary and bibliography fill out the book.

As a whole, the book advances our knowledge in a few key areas, but does not seek to make an overall intervention in the way that Islam in Indonesia is understood or studied (besides the usual cautions to think beyond 'Islam with a smiling face'). The collection is at its best (e.g., Permata, Ichwan, Kloos) when the targeted cases that the authors clearly know so well are placed into a useful national or international context. Although no chapters are undeserving of inclusion, there are places where one wishes that the authors had been pushed to broader conclusions.

The project on which this book is based should be considered a success. This edited volume is a model for bringing together well-established with up-and-coming scholars from across Indonesia and Europe. Individual chapters have the potential to impact various conversations moving forward.

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