



REVIEW OF FISCHER, JOHAN AND JAMMES, JÉRÉMY (EDS.). MUSLIM PIETY AS ECONOMY: MARKETS, MEANING AND MORALITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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ABSTRACT

This book review provides an overview and analysis of a comprehensive examination of Muslim piety and its intersection with the economy in Southeast Asia, specifically focusing on Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. In eleven chapters, contributors from various disciplines including anthropology, politics, history, religious studies, economy, and business offer diverse perspectives on the construction of Muslim piety between Islam and the economy, arguing that Southeast Asian Muslim identities are deeply intertwined with both nationality and religion. Key themes explored include the role of Islamic discourses in addressing corruption, the evolution of Islamic economy during colonial times, the significance of halal certification in Brunei's economy, advancements in science contributing to the halal industry, and the exploration of modesty in Islamic fashion. Through extensive fieldwork and analysis, the book sheds light on the complexities of navigating the halal industry within Southeast Asian societies. Overall, it offers valuable insights for scholars and students across various disciplines, including politics, anthropology, sociology, and religious studies, while presenting its findings in a clear and accessible manner.

Book Review

Fischer, Johan and Jammes, Jérémy (Eds.). Muslim Piety As Economy: Markets, Meaning and Morality in Southeast Asia. (Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2020). 256 pages., £135 hardcover. ISBN: 978-0-367-33668-4.

In eleven chapters, this book attempts to provide different perspectives and a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, politics, history, religious studies, economy, and business, on how the concept of Muslim piety has been systematically constructed with an Islamic flavor across the Muslim communities in Southeast Asia, including Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. This book emphasizes that Islam and economy cannot be separated in the intellectual discourse of Muslims in Southeast Asia. As a result, the book focuses on how the economy should be viewed through an Islamic lens. The contributors of this book argue that the identities of Southeast Asian Muslims are solidly linked with both nationality and religion. They address the question of how state regulations and policies interact with Islam and the economy, while also attempting to answer the central question: "What is Islam, or what should Islam be?". Therefore, the book underscores that the concept of a pious economy emerges both in behavior and the economic frameworks. This implies that piety in the economy is not solely spiritual or religious but also clearly manifests on the surface in individuals, discourses, and everyday practices. Each chapter has dealt with the

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interchangeability of piety and economy by employing various methods of data collection, including participant-observation, in-depth interviews, as well as the representation of Islam and the economy in the media.

Chapter 2 focuses on the theme of social trust in relation to corruption and anti-corruption efforts in Indonesia. This chapter delves into the theological and ethical debates surrounding how Islamic discourses intersect with the concept and practice of corruption. It highlights three fundamental actions: subscribing to a materialistic perspective, rejecting the notion of God's guiding and sovereign plan, and eroding the spirit of communal connection (30).

Chapter 3 revolves around the concept of '*Muhammadiyah*.' However, this chapter investigates the role of Islamic economy during the colonial age, tracing its development from a village level to a significant community within Indonesia. This chapter sheds light on the struggles faced by Muhammadiyah as it transitioned from a traditional framework to a modern one under the umbrella of Islamic economy.

Chapter 4 delves into the concept of halal within Bruneian society. This concept of halal is framed in this chapter as a certification that Muslim stores worldwide have adopted, signifying the acceptability of products according to *Sharia* law. *Why focus on Brunei?* This choice is driven by two crucial factors: the society's adherence to Islamic principles and laws in their lifestyle, as well as diversification of its economy (76). Brunei's efforts extend not only to major corporations but also to small and medium-sized businesses. Despite its small size, Brunei strives to exemplify the concept of halal, positioning itself as a significant supplier of halal food and services. This is achieved through the implementation of policies and strategies aimed at fostering the halal industry. However, Brunei encounters several challenges, including a lack of consultation and limited export markets in the region.

Chapter 5 examines the consumption of goods within the halal industry and the role of science in this context. It explores how science has contributed to the halal industry by offering alternative ingredients such as gelatine, enzymes, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and packaging. Additionally, it delves into advancements like DNA amplification, DNA hybridisation, immunosensors, and more. A range of scientific disciplines in Southeast Asia are actively engaged in studying and applying these principles, aiming to elevate the halal industry to new heights. This collective effort aligns with the growth of the Muslim community in the region.

Chapter 6 focuses on the contamination of halal food products from the perspective of theological rulings. It highlights how Brunei's system, adopting an Islamic perspective, addresses issues related to halal food contamination. The chapter primarily deals with the concept of intangible contamination as indicated in Islamic texts.

Chapter 7 presents fieldwork conducted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, examining middle-class projects. These projects encompass various aspects, starting with how Malay responses to globalization and media liberalization in 1990s were explored. This initiative expanded into a second project, unveiling the relationship between Islam and contemporary cultural practices in the early 2000s. Subsequently, a third project centred on studying social and physical mobility by analyzing the mid-2000s Malay diaspora in London. The final project zooms in on Malay Muslims working in the late 2000s Islamic economy (150). This fieldwork extended over three years from the mid-1990s. It utilized participant observation, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, life biographies, and group discussions. Following these studies, the significant symbol of food consumption within these middle-class projects was found to be firmly associated

with religious, social, and cultural frameworks. Notable, some Malay middle-class consumers faced ambiguous perspective when it came to expanding the halal market.

In chapter 8, the book shifts from the preceding chapters to address an ambiguous concept, namely modesty in Islamic fashion. This concept pertains to a piece of clothing that adheres to Islamic principles, but its significance extends beyond Islam to encompass other religious practices. This chapter zeroes in on veiling practices among Muslims in ASEAN, which holds great importance within the Islamic industry (175). However, it's crucial to note that Islamic fashion or modest fashion isn't exclusively intended for women; it should also cater to men. The understanding of modesty might differ from one religion to another, yet all religions converge under the broad umbrella of modesty, which doesn't stand in opposition to society.

Interestingly in Chapter 9, the focus shifts to the exploration of Islamic identity in Anglophone Bruneian literature, specifically within the realm of fiction. This chapter delves into the framing of Islamic identity by examining two novels: "The Forlorn Adventure," and "Jewel." These novels, originating locally in Brunei, have garnered positive reception not only on a local scale but also globally.

In chapter 10, a spotlight is cast upon two major cities in Southeast Asia: Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta. This chapter examines two significant events - the aftermath of the late 1990s crisis in Malaysia and the growth of the middle class in Indonesia (212). These events underscore how diverse contexts encompassing politics, economy, and culture impact everyday practices related to housing policies. The issue of homeownership in both cities becomes especially pertinent for middle-class.

Towards the conclusion of this book, both editors provide a systematic overview of the emergent theme "*Halalization*" explored within its pages (232). Additionally, they share intriguing insights aimed at elevating the reader's intellectual engagement to a higher level. Each chapter has illuminated the significance of the concepts of halal and morality within Southeast markets through diverse perspectives. Remarkably, each perspective directly underscores both concepts.

The overall style of the book is straightforward and clear in its approach to handling these intricate concepts. However, in some chapters, the flow of the ideas led me into intricate territory. This book makes commendable efforts to engage with these concepts within Islamic societies, despite their intricate nature. Overall, this book provides an in-depth look into how South Asian systems are navigating the halal industry. It holds relevance for scholars interested in the fields of politics, anthropology, sociology, and religious studies. Furthermore, its clear language and well-structured presentation make it suitable for undergraduates, graduate students, and non-specialists alike.