



Muslims in Singapore: Piety, politics and policies (Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia Series)

Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, Alexius A. Pereira, Bryan S. Turner

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This book examines Muslims in Singapore, analysing their habits, practices and dispositions towards everyday life, and also their role within the broader framework of the secularist Singapore state and the cultural dominance of its Chinese elite, who are predominantly Buddhist and Christian. Singapore has a highly unusual approach to issues of religious diversity and multiculturalism, adopting a policy of deliberately 'managing religions' - including Islam - in an attempt to achieve orderly and harmonious relations between different racial and religious groups. This has encompassed implicit and explicit policies of containment and 'enclavement' of Muslims, and also the more positive policy of 'upgrading' Muslims through paternalist strategies of education, training and improvement, including the modernisation of madrassah education in both content and orientation. This book examines how this system has operated in practice, and evaluates its successes and failures. In particular, it explores the attitudes and reactions of Muslims themselves across all spheres of everyday life, including dining and maintaining halal-vigilance; education and dress code; and practices of courtship, sex and marriage. It also considers the impact of wider international developments, including 9/11, fear of terrorism and the associated stigmatization of Muslims; and developments within Southeast Asia such as the Jemaah Islamiah terrorist attacks and the Islamization of Malaysia and Indonesia. This study has more general implications for political strategies and public policies in multicultural societies that are deeply divided along ethno-religious lines.

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