RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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“Money had come to the tropical land of forest and river and villages; and money created new frenzies and frustrations.”

V.S. Naipaul, *Among the Believers* (2001)

**Introduction**

Southeast Asia comprises a mosaic of religions operating within a highly variegated development landscape. These characteristics define Southeast Asia and distinguish it from anywhere else in the world. It is a region of religious heterogeneity, with dominant encampments of nearly all major world religions – Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism and pockets of Protestantism and Hinduism – plus a range of minority groups as well. It is also a region of great socio-economic and political disparity. At the national level, the Human Development Index\(^1\) for 2013 ranked Singapore ninth in the world, and Myanmar 150th (UNDP 2014); whilst throughout the region’s modern history, both communism and capitalism have at various times been a scourge for some countries, but an apparent boon for others. At the sub-national level there remain stark divisions between the region’s urban/industrial centers and rural/agricultural peripheries, and between ruling elites and the working classes. Throughout the region, practices of development serve to bridge, divide and corrupt individuals and communities, and often exacerbate the tensions between traditional and modern ways of life as well.

This chapter suggests that in Southeast Asia religion can both enable and stifle development, whilst development can influence processes of religious continuity and change. Development seeks to disrupt past practices in order to make way for new ways of being. Religious change is similar to development insomuch as it seeks a departure from old mind-sets and practices; religious continuity often resists such disruptions. There is, therefore, a fundamental tension between the modernizing impulses of development processes (especially when imparted by foreign religious groups) and more traditional ways of life. Such tensions constitute the fault lines that emerge from the coalescence of Western ideas of ‘progress’ and non-Western traditional (often religious) values. These tensions have evolved in line with the region’s developmental and religious changes over time, and embody the ‘frenzies and frustrations’ of which Naipaul speaks.
Complicating the dialectic of tradition and modernity is the fact that some religions are better aligned with the modernizing impulses of development than others (see Woods 2012, 2013). This complication is felt particularly strongly in Southeast Asia, as all of the region’s dominant religious groups – Islam in Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei; Catholicism and (to a lesser extent) Protestantism in the Philippines; and Theravada Buddhism in Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos – are imports from Arabia, Europe and South Asia respectively. They are imported ideas and traditions that have overlain, distorted and merged with what came before; they are religions into which people have converted over time. This has created layers of religious modernization and change, which overlay deep-rooted traditions of animism, folk religion and shamanism. Given that such layers also coincide with periods of socio-economic advancement – from Arab mercantilism to European colonialism – it becomes clear that religion in Southeast Asia is intimately, but often uncomfortably, entwined with the practices and processes of development. Indeed, because religion and development so often exist in tandem, it is necessary for each term to be defined from the outset.

The terms ‘religion’ and ‘development’ are both nebulous and multi-faceted (or “vague yet predictive” according to Haynes 2007, 3), and are therefore imbued with a sense of definitional complexity. The purpose of this chapter is not to explore such complexity in detail (see Asad 1983; So 1990; and Fountain 2013), and both shall be treated in a broad sense. That said, the problem with religious discourse is that “when people around the world use the same category of religion, they actually mean very different things. . . [meaning] can only be elucidated in the context of their particular discursive practices” (Casanova 2009, 9). This has particular relevance in Southeast Asia, where layers of religious tradition and modernity intertwine and create complex and often syncretic religious assemblages. Thus whilst any discussion of ‘religion’ is undermined by its definitional opacity, I take it to mean a framework of belief that unites a community of believers, and which is regulated and controlled by figures of religious authority. Throughout this chapter, references to religious groups will encompass a range of actors, including religious organizations, religious NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and FBOs (faith-based organizations).

‘Development,’ on the other hand, is taken to mean a series of processes that attempt to bring about some sort of social and/or economic advancement (although not in unison; often the advancement of one is at the expense of the other). The focus on advancement is important, as development is often associated with (assumedly positive) socio-economic change and modernization. Such modernization implicitly refers to the ‘Western developmental model’ (Haynes 2007, 6), which draws on capitalist ideals to bring about an improvement in material well-being. The communist model provides an alternative development pathway (focused on reducing inequality through the equitable distribution of the means of production) and gained considerable traction in parts of Southeast Asia throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Both models fundamentally contrast with more traditional ways of life, and both are based on the assumption that the social, political and economic standing of religion must be reduced or eliminated in order to make way for development and modernization (see Glahe and Vorhies 1989). Importantly, I take the socio-economic advancement associated with development to also represent a departure from previous mind-sets, behaviors and other ways of being.

Whilst recent decades have yielded a great variety of ideas and discourses surrounding each of these terms, it is only relatively recently that each has been explored in conjunction with the other. Thus despite the latent religious aspect of many development initiatives, religion remains ‘a taboo subject’ (McGregor 2010, 729; after Ver Beek 2000) that has proven to be of little interest to the economists and political scientists that have long claimed development studies

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as their own.Whilst “development has long been haunted by the spectre of religion,” the fact remains that “one of the most important ways in which religion has left its mark has been in the repeated and sustained attempts by mainstream actors to expunge it from the work of development” (Fountain 2012, 144). Things are, however, changing. Religion is starting to be heralded as an inextricable aspect of development processes (see Tiongco and White 1997), which is coupled with the realization that there is no secular-religious dichotomy in development studies (Fountain 2013; Fountain forthcoming). Indeed, the marginalization of religion is squarely at odds with the on-the-ground realities of development interventions, not least in regions like Southeast Asia, where most societies remain profoundly numinous in spite of socio-economic advancement.

This chapter sketches a broad overview of the dynamics and tensions that exist at the nexus of religion and development in Southeast Asia. It is not an exhaustive survey of each country or religion within the region, but an overview of some of the discourses and debates at play. The chapter is split into three sections. Sections one and two reflect Haynes’s (2007) dialectic of religion and development: the first explores how development shapes religion, whilst the second explores how religion shapes development. The third explores outcomes at the intersection of religion and development, how the coalescence of socio-economic need and religious provision can bring about a number of questionable outcomes.

**Development shaping religion in Southeast Asia**

Some parts of Southeast Asia have developed to such an extent that they have experienced a number of social shifts, which in turn have contributed to processes of religious transformation. Bornstein (2002, 9) observes that “as economic development combines with the religious transformation of cultures, it is a process that entails, and enables, spiritual conversion,” with one of the most widespread side effects of development processes being a “change in belief systems and practices.” Such changes are a necessary corollary to development, but can also be a source of tension within and between religions, and between religious and secular agencies. This section focuses on two ways in which socio-economic shifts in Southeast Asia have impacted religion. The first examines how they have encouraged a transition from traditional folk religions to more ‘rational’ patterns of belief in Singapore. The second explores how modernization has been a source of religious change and upheaval in Malaysia and Cambodia.

In the first instance, it has long been noted that socio-economic modernization correlates with conversion out of superstition-based traditional religions (such as animism, ancestral worship and other folk religions) and into more ‘rational’ world religions (such as Christianity, Buddhism and Islam). Two inter-related factors drive such conversions. One pertains to the reorientation of societies toward more rational thought, with world religions being better able to address the ethical, emotional and intellectual challenges of modern life through the proclamation of “the existence of a transcendent realm vastly superior to that of everyday reality” (Hefner 1993, 3; see also Haynes 1993). The second pertains to the reality that one of the most pervasive outcomes of development is greater access to material wealth, which is often at the expense of widespread social alienation and anomie. The relative deprivation thesis, for example, posits that the contemporary growth of world religions (especially Christianity) is due to the fact that they are better able to meet the social needs of a modernizing society (see Woods 2012, 442–443 for a review). Thus the modernization of Southeast Asia – and associated processes of urbanization, industrialization and technological transformation – has facilitated a shift toward world religions. These processes have been ongoing for centuries, but their contemporary forms are clearly evinced in Singapore.
Over the past few decades, Singapore – the region’s economic frontrunner – has witnessed a religious shift amongst its Chinese population, from Taoism to Christianity. According to Tong (2007), Singapore’s education system has developed in a way that encourages systematic and rational thought processes, which in turn has contributed to the intellectualization of Singapore society. This has facilitated a widespread questioning of inherited beliefs and a search for more intellectually engaging religious alternatives. Increasingly, religion is no longer accepted as something to be passively followed based on family tradition and superstition, but something to be actively sought out based on its relevance to individual needs and circumstances (see Sng and You 1982; Clammer 1985). Compounding this is the fact that traditional religions like Taoism are increasingly regarded as low-status. World religions, on the other hand, are associated with higher levels of education, the English language and the burgeoning professional classes (Tong 2007). These factors have caused a transition from religions like Taoism – popularly perceived in Singapore to be a Chinese folk religion – to religions like Christianity, which tend to be associated with ‘rational’ thought and a broader idea of progress (see Woods 2012).

In the second instance, modernization can be a source of tension amongst existing, often dominant religious groups. This tension finds meaning and application in the dialectic of economic modernization and religious traditionalism. Most notably, amongst Southeast Asia’s Muslim communities there have been concerted efforts – on behalf of both the state and society – to forge a new form of Islam that is relevant and compatible with a modernizing society. In Malaysia, for example, the Bumiputera policies of the 1970s were designed to counteract the advancement of non-Malay (and non-Muslim) communities by creating a new Malay middle class through affirmative action in education, housing, company ownership and employment (see Shamsul 1986; Alatas 1996). Such policies have helped to advance the socio-economic status of Malays and to modernize Islam through the development of new types of Islamic institutions and lifestyles. These include new practices (such as conducting religious discussions, seminars and ceremonies in non-mosque settings, such as hotels), new fashions (such as the jilbab for women and baju koko for men) and new Islamic educational institutions. In particular, the Malaysian government has worked closely with private foundations to establish various Islamic higher educational institutions (notably, the International Islamic University Malaysia and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia), which offer both broad-based education and more specific Islamic instruction. Such institutions have contributed to the modernization of Malaysia’s Muslim society and have helped it keep pace with broader processes of socio-economic change.

Finally, in Southeast Asia’s modern history, communism has played as much of a role in shaping religion in some countries as more pervasive, capitalist systems of economic modernization. In Cambodia, for example, over a period of five years in the 1970s, the Khmer Rouge attempted to eradicate Buddhism; the religion of more than 90 percent of the population (see Kamm 1998; Poethig 2002; Haynes 2009). This involved the systematic execution of religious leaders and adherents, and the destruction of religious buildings and other artifacts. Doing so was part of a broader program of destroying traditional systems of power and control, which typically claim legitimacy from various aspects of Cambodian culture. Buddhism was identified as playing a prominent – and unifying – cultural role, whilst Buddhist monks and nuns claimed considerable social authority and were, amongst other things, responsible for education and social welfare at the village level (Haynes 2007). In this instance, therefore, fear that religion did not fit with the state’s communist ideology of progress resulted in attempts to eradicate Buddhism altogether.

The Cambodia example highlights the role of religious institutions in traditional practices of socio-economic advancement (in this case, education and social welfare). Whilst such practices may be traditional, they remain a prominent part of Southeast Asia’s development landscape.
Thus not only does development shape religion in Southeast Asia, but religion plays a role in shaping development pathways and outcomes as well.

Religion shaping development in Southeast Asia

Across the multiple religious traditions that define Southeast Asia, the one thing that unites them is their ameliorative role in addressing development-related needs. Such a role has become more pronounced as the drivers of development have shifted toward private sector agencies and NGOs, itself a function of the widespread corruption in the region’s public sectors (Haynes 2007). In many instances, religion is not just a channel through which the tangible drivers of development (such as money, aid and food) can flow, but also an initiator of developmental processes, a source of advocacy and influence, and the glue that binds communities together during processes of development-related upheaval and change (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011). More often than not, religious groups act as bridges and mediators, connecting state agencies with communities, donors with beneficiaries and elites with the impoverished. In some cases, religious groups have even helped to shape the political landscape of development. In the Philippines, for example, Protestant churches played an influential role in the reformist movement to oust President Ferdinand Marcos in the mid-1980s (Youngblood 1990; Hunt 1992). In this instance, Marcos’s authoritarian and corrupt regime was believed to be hindering economic development and miring the country in debt; his overthrow was a move to establish a more equitable (re)distribution of power and wealth throughout the country.

Throughout the region, therefore, religion is recognized as being ‘indexed’ to development (Aragon 2000). This means that religious groups – whether advertently or not – are development actors, and have the power to effect both socio-economic and religious changes in society. This relationship is clearly shown in a report by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC – a US-based Anabaptist group that provides relief, development and peace-building services) on their activities in West Kalimantan, Indonesia in 1977. In the report, it was stated that:

The Dayak7 people in our focus area are still quite primitive compared to other areas, for this reason the nature of our ministry in this area is very different from our ministry in Java and Sumatra. It is comprehensive. The aspects of ministry which we want to carry on together are spiritual, educational, agricultural, health and others with spiritual being first and foremost.

(cited in Fountain 2012, 150, emphasis added)

This excerpt highlights three relevant issues. The first relates to the fact that the MCC is a foreign religious group attempting to shape development outcomes in Southeast Asia. The second relates to the clear conflation of developmental and religious objectives – something that enables religious ministry (or ‘mission’) to be concealed behind the development imperative. And the third relates to the fact that much development work is religion-led (“spiritual being first and foremost”), which in turn can both help and hinder development outcomes. The rest of this section, and the next, shall explore these issues in more detail; first by examining how domestic religious groups shape development outcomes in Southeast Asia, and second by exploring how foreign religious groups shape – and have shaped – development outcomes since the colonial epoch.

In the first instance, throughout Southeast Asia religious organizations are deeply embedded within development processes; in many instances they are the origins of development. The region’s religious infrastructures – its temples, mosques and churches – have always been
important nodes in development processes. They are gathering points for communities, with the strength of a localities’ religious infrastructure often being synchronous with the strength of its community development programs (Weller 2001). More practically speaking, however, religious groups and buildings also serve as distribution and engagement channels through which alms and donations are collected, processed and redistributed amongst the community. Indeed, research by UBS and INSEAD (2011) demonstrates that wealthy philanthropists in Thailand prefer to channel their donations through the country’s Buddhist temples, as they are believed to be a more trustworthy and respectable source of community development than NGOs. As such, religious organizations play a vital role in shaping development processes and outcomes throughout the region.

Above all other development processes, religious organizations in Southeast Asia play a prominent role in education. The need to socialize children into faith traditions is best done within the classroom of the madrassah, mission or temple school, as is the impartation of a unified worldview amongst communities. The provision of education by religious organizations serves not just an ideological need, but a practical one as well. Education enables religious groups to grow and spread, and to help close the welfare gaps that cannot be met by government provision, especially in rural areas. Yet whilst religious groups go a long way to providing more equitable access to education, the outcomes of such development processes can have negligible benefit to the individual. Such outcomes are discussed in more detail in relation to Indonesia’s pesantren education system below.

In the second instance, the import of foreign religions into Southeast Asia has coincided with various waves of socio-economic modernization. The relationship between foreign religions and development was brought into sharp focus during the colonial epoch—the most recent wave of large-scale religious importation that coincided with a period of significant socio-economic change. Under colonial rule, most of Southeast Asia (the exception being Thailand) was annexed by European powers, which facilitated the large-scale introduction of Christianity and Catholicism to the region. Churches, FBOs and the contingents of missionaries that accompanied them played a formative role in advancing social welfare within the colonies. Western-style schools and healthcare facilities were established and, in many instances, served as catalysts for the promotion of Christianity. The conflation of religious and developmental goals did, however, give rise to the pejorative term ‘Rice Christians’ to describe individuals who converted to Christianity in order to align themselves more closely with colonial administrations in the expectation that doing so would yield social and material benefits. Whilst such a conflation of goals has since been the subject of widespread condemnation (see Heelas 1998), it does not detract from the fact that as much as converts were converting into Christianity, they were also converting into a more ‘modern’ way of life.

Converting individuals into more ‘modern’ ways of life has proven to be a key characteristic of foreign religious groups operating in Southeast Asia (see van der Veer 1995). It sets them apart from incumbent religious groups and can be a source of tension within and between communities. Indeed, tension is an inherent outcome of any development program in which “foreign religious values and beliefs come into contact with local religious landscapes” (McGregor 2010, 729) and is often exacerbated by the practices of foreign religious groups. Such groups tend to be deeply embedded within international aid chains—systems of linkages that connect beneficiaries with donors from around the world—and in many instances use socio-economic modernization as a pretext for religious modernization and change. In many instances, the problem lies in the fact that “the policies underlying transnational development networks reify a western approach, transferring secular principles and religious-political distinctions to nonsecular spaces where they are contested, debated, and sometimes reviled” (McGregor 2010, 743; see also De
Such a dynamic is pervasive and is most acutely felt in situations when immediate, short-term developmental assistance is required (such as in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, which devastated large parts of the coastal regions of Indonesia and Thailand). Such situations produce a number of outcomes, two of which will now be explored.

**Outcomes at the intersection of religion and development in Southeast Asia**

The involvement of religious groups in development processes is often a political act; it can either bind communities together or pull them apart. The widespread and systemic failure of postcolonial development agendas in most countries throughout the region – and the corresponding search for meaning and identity in nationalism – has caused religion to become politicized by the “crisis of modernity” (Thomas 2000, 49). Compounding this is the fact that the coalescence of religion and development often leads to the “conflation of practices and goals that muddies the water between what are legitimate or illegitimate grounds for proselytization” (Woods 2012, 449). Indeed, the most contentious questions surrounding any discussion of religion and development are those of religious influencing, propagation and conversion. These are the most divisive outcomes of religious involvement in development practices, outcomes that are brought into sharp focus in Southeast Asia given the chronic forms of inequality that persist, the vulnerability to natural disasters and the fact that Christianity – an aggressively proselytizing and well-funded religion – remains a minority player in most local contexts, and yet is often an influential catalyst of socio-economic modernization. In Malaysia, for example, Muslim agitators continue to see Chinese conversion to Christianity as a symbol of the foreign exploitation that has kept Malays in relative poverty (Jenkins 2007). As this example suggests, Christian-initiated development programs often pose a challenge to the dominance of incumbent religious groups and the state, and can be a source of deep-rooted tensions within and between communities (Bautista and Lim 2009; see also McGregor 2008b).

This final section briefly introduces two outcomes at the intersection of religion and development. The first involves religious proselytization under the pretext of development, with a specific focus on foreign Christian groups operating in Indonesia after the 2004 tsunami. The second examines the Islamic pesantren education system in Indonesia, showing how as much as religion can be an enabler of development, it can be a barrier to it as well.

In the first instance, there are many examples of Christian groups using the pretext of development to manipulate and impose their religious worldviews on their beneficiaries, the aim being to convert or to weaken previous religious ties. Such groups often operate as NGOs or FBOs, using such organizational structures as a strategy of concealment that can enable religious influencing to begin (see Woods 2013). For example, in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, Muslim communities became suspicious of Christian NGOs operating in Aceh, Indonesia, and ended up condemning their actions. Disaster relief was believed to be a pretext for the propagation of Christianity in Indonesia’s most conservative Islamic province. In the capital, Banda Aceh, the construction of an office building by one such organization – Aceh Relief – angered the community to such an extent that they chased away the construction workers, razed their makeshift huts and forced Aceh Relief to leave the area; only the half-finished shell of their building remains. Whilst the Aceh Relief example is an extreme case, it is also a symptom of the fact that “relationships between local communities and aid teams in Aceh are often strained” (McGregor 2010, 729), and the more wide-ranging reality that “the work of faith institutions, however effective, is primarily motivated by a desire to gain converts or to serve a limited segment of the community” (Marshall 2005, 7). To counteract this tension, many Christian NGOs
ended up partnering with Islamic organizations and working through Islamic networks, the aim being to generate acceptance and build close proximity to local communities, and in doing so to wield a softer form of power.

This example highlights two issues. The first is that religious presence — whether as a dedicated religious organization or as a faith-based developmental organization — is often viewed as an affront to incumbent religious groups and can stimulate inter-religious competition and conflict. The second is subtler and pertains to the fact that the conflation of religious and developmental goals is inherently coercive and can result in the exploitation of the most vulnerable segments of society (Flanigan 2010; see also Haynes 2007; Mahadev 2014). It was for this reason that in 2010, a family of American charity workers based in Aceh attracted the ire of the local community and was subsequently deported for attempting to convert Muslims to Christianity (Woods 2012). This situation is clearly exacerbated when religious development actors are a minority religious group (e.g., Christian) and when they rely on international sources of funding and support, thus enabling them to wield disproportionate economic influence over local communities. Given the vast differences in material wealth throughout Southeast Asia — and in Southeast Asia relative to other parts of the world — it is clear that foreign religious involvement in local development initiatives is often as rife with opportunities as it is challenges and politics.

In the second instance, the fact that religious groups can provide more equitable access to the processes of development does not mean that they also provide equitable access to the outcomes of development. To the extent that religion can shape development in Southeast Asia, it can also stand in the way of it. In Indonesia, for example, Islamic boarding schools called pesantren have long served to inculcate their pupils with an Islamic worldview that helps them to reimagine the environments and contexts within which they live. Originally the preserve of impoverished rural Javanese communities, they have since spread throughout the country and have expanded in scope to become not just places of religious instruction, but of social development (through vocational training) and empowerment as well. Nonetheless, the efficacy of the pesantren in achieving development outcomes should not be assumed, just because the means of creating such outcomes are provided. In his ethnography of Islam in Indonesia, Naipaul (2001, 378) provides one of the most scathing indictments of the pesantren system of education:

> It [the pesantren] was a breaking away from the Indonesian past; it was Islamization; it was stupefaction, greater than any that could have come with a western-style curriculum. And yet it was attractive to the people concerned, because, twisted up with it, was the old monkish idea of the celebration of poverty: an idea which, applied to a school in Java in 1979, came out as little more than the poor teaching the poor to be poor.

Naipaul’s view may be extreme, but it brings to light the tension between religious tradition and modernity (“It was Islamization; it was stupefaction, greater than any that could have come with a western-style curriculum”), and the effect of such tension on development processes and outcomes. In the pesantren case, religion is seen to hamper development outcomes (“the poor teaching the poor to be poor”), even if it enables the processes of development to reach more people. In this case, development is used to serve the religion more than it is the communities from which religious groups draw strength and support. It shows how religion can corrupt development, privileging social and economic stagnation over improvement. In doing so, it also reifies the fact that more often than not development is associated with improvements in material well-being, and is often based on the assumption of a Western idea of ‘progress.’ Whilst such an idea may have become normative, it does not accurately reflect the kaleidoscopic range of development goals, pathways and outcomes that are at play within Southeast Asia.
Conclusions

The promise of development is that it creates pathways and opportunities for socio-economic advancement; the problem is that such pathways can be politically driven and can result in the strengthening of one (religious) group at the expense of others. Such problems become pronounced when it is religious groups shaping the development agenda, and even more pronounced when such groups draw upon international sources of funding, support and ideas. Indeed, as outside investment continues to flow into the economies of Southeast Asia, issues of charitable governance and transparency become increasingly important and deserving of closer consideration. To the extent that religious groups play an integral role in addressing the region’s developmental needs, their involvement can easily create divisions within and between communities, and competition between religious and state agencies.

That said, scholarly understandings of the relationships between religion and development – especially in contexts as complex and multi-layered as those of Southeast Asia – remain embryonic. Religion is a prism through which social, economic and political realities are viewed, understood and often distorted. To fully and sensitively appreciate the types of development that are at play in Southeast Asia, more rigorously contextualized, interpretivist research is needed. Doing so will provide a departure from normative, positivist approaches to development studies (see Deneulin and Rakodi 2011), and will hopefully create new possibilities for community engagement and upliftment in time to come.

Notes

1 The Human Development Index takes into consideration life expectancy, education and income in order to assess the overall level of human development. The resulting index ranges from 0–1. The highest level of human development is 1; 0 is the lowest.
2 This reflects the expansion of the term to include more socially focused, ‘quality of life’ indicators that go beyond economic advancement only (see Haynes 2007). Increasingly, issues of environmental protection and sustainability have been included under the development remit, although these considerations are outside the focus of this chapter.
3 Despite this, Protestantism is often viewed as an avatar of economic globalization in the developing world.
4 The marginalization of religion in/and development has been attributed to the legacies of modernization theory in the 1950s, secularization theory in the 1960s, and the overarching reality that many postcolonial governments pursued development pathways defined – and funded – by Western donors (see Haynes 2007; Deneulin and Rakodi 2011).
5 Bumiputera is a term used to describe the Malay race and other indigenous peoples of Southeast Asia.
6 These refer to Muslim headscarves and Muslim-style shirts respectively.
7 The Dayaks are an indigenous tribe native to the island of Borneo, Indonesia.
8 In many instances the ‘foreign’ label is artificial, not least because many (if not all) religious groups operating in Southeast Asia were once considered ‘foreign.’ Nonetheless, the categorization brings to light a number of issues and legacies related to the perceived character of religions along either local (and therefore accepted) or foreign (and therefore different) lines.

References


