and values. The editor notes in her conclusion that there is much more to be known about religious conversion, in all directions. Whether to lubricate understanding across religious lines, or better to probe the phenomenon of conversion, a number of public organizations exist in Singapore for “interfaith” purposes, all part of official policy, and presumably, of social control. What is well known is that evangelical forms of Protestant Christianity are increasing most rapidly, particularly among modern middle-class Chinese. A second trope of conversion is to the “reformed” varieties of Buddhism, among all races, although for some Chinese, Buddhism represents a more progressive version of their traditional, clan-based shenism. It is impossible to provide details of each chapter or author in this space, beyond the generalities described, but some of the material encourages the reader to explore further.

This collection covers much religious territory, offers a sample of Singapore’s rich religious diversity, while addressing ever-present pressures for conformity with national values and policies. Cases of non-conformity, if they exist, are not mentioned. The book serves as a useful general reference, with a helpful glossary of religious terms, for scholars or others concerned with contemporary Asian religious trends.

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Although once regarded as unswervingly secular nationalist, Indonesia actually has a long history of movements for the implementation of Islamic law. Since 1945, there have been four periods during which the idea of giving Islamic law (shari’a) constitutional status was hotly debated in political circles. There have also been repeated extra-state mobilizations in support of the law. Since the downfall of President Suharto’s “New Order” regime in May 1998, calls for the implementation of Islamic law have grown; in several regions, the efforts have made significant headway.

Based on a revision of a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Law at the University of Melbourne in 2006, Arskal Salim’s book provides a historical and analytic perspective on efforts to give Islamic law constitutional status in Indonesia. Salim is an instructor at the Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta, and the author of several highly regarded works in English and Indonesian on Islamic law and political ethics. The historical portions of the book describe the political and intellectual context of debates over the implementation of Islamic law during four key periods: at the time of Indonesian independence in 1945, during sessions of the Constituent
Assembly from 1957-1959, in the Provisional People’s Consultative Assembly in 1966-1968, and during the first eight years of the post-Suharto era (1998-2006). In addition to these largely historical chapters, the last two sections of the book provide in-depth case studies of two examples of shari‘a legislation. The first concerns efforts, partially successful, to have the Indonesian government institutionalize a centralized collection of religious alms (zakat). The second focuses on the history and politics of efforts to implement shari‘a in the now autonomous region of Aceh. These efforts were given a green light by the national government in the early 2000s, in an attempt to placate public opinion and undercut the drive for Acehnese independence.

The history of shari‘a controversies in Indonesia has been addressed in a partial manner in several recent books, but this is the first English-language study to provide a comprehensive overview of the major campaigns from 1945 to today. The chapters on parliamentary debates over Islamic law during 2000-2002 have the additional benefit of providing new and important information on the factions behind different proposals for or against implementation of Islamic law. From the vantage point of these chapters alone, this is an important work, one well-suited for classroom adoption in courses on Indonesian politics and religion.

However, the book has several other notable features, which give it an importance well beyond Indonesia. Salim draws on his impressive knowledge of Islamic history and scholarship to talk generally about the varied understandings of shari‘a in Muslim circles, the relationship between religion and state in Islamic history, and the impact of nationalism in the modern Muslim world. Whenever he turns to discuss Indonesia-specific matters, he begins by placing the Indonesian case in comparative perspective. For example, when examining proposals in Indonesia for state management of zakat, he looks first at the process in Pakistan, concluding “that the belief that Islamization would enhance Muslim religiosity was unfounded” (119); state coercion leads only to heightened hypocrisy and evasion. He reaches a similarly cautionary conclusion with regard to efforts to introduce elements of shari‘a into Indonesian law. Such legislation, he concludes, “undoubtedly engenders inequality between citizens” based on one’s religious affiliation (74). Equally serious, the legislation’s effect on the Muslim community is to heighten intolerance toward believers who stray from state-mandated norms.

Certainly, Muslims will reach different conclusions as to whether the deleterious impact of shari‘a legislation on citizen equality and confessional freedom outweighs the ethical benefits of attempting to implement God’s law. Notwithstanding his clear commitment to Islamic values, Salim makes his own views on this question clearer as he moves deeper into his study. He has a modernist’s confidence that our age has rightly witnessed “a movement away from discrimination and social segregation toward more universal values of equality and pluralism” (171).
Inevitably, some readers will question the universality of this generalization, insisting that modernity is multiple, or that there are, simply, other modes of moral flourishing than the liberal values of equality and freedom. However, it is a testimony to Salim’s intellectual versatility that he brings these ethical divisions into focus, while also providing an even-handed overview of shari’a debates. The achievement makes this book a welcome event in Indonesian studies, and an important work for anyone interested in the modern history of Islamic law.

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This book analyzes West Kalimantan’s sad history of collective violence, locating this in a wider discussion of the literature on ethnic violence. This engaging and in places compelling account begins with a schematic analysis of West Kalimantan’s ethnic polarities during the colonial period. The information serves as an entrée before the main course: an analysis of ethnic conflict in the later half of the twentieth century.

Davidson argues that the province’s collective violence materialized at the “specific confluence of contingent factors that emerged in the post-independence era.” This began with the anti-Chinese pogroms that were engineered by “Soeharto’s henchmen” as a tactic in the conflict against the locally specific PRGS/Paraku/PKI rebellions which followed konfrontasi and the military counter-coup of 1965. At this time, the military contrived “a destabilizing politicization of ethnicity” to trigger widespread massacres and ethnic cleansing of the Chinese as a means to separate the insurgency from its population base. This rupture in the region’s political development contributed to a further solidification of ethnic identity and an internalization of an antagonistic polarization between groups. More tragically, it led to a “routinization” of collective violence as a means of expressing grievances, settling scores and attempting to extend control over political positions and resources. Davidson argues that this laid the foundation for later violence, even where this involved different actors and political ends.

The author has accessed a surprisingly extensive trove of sources about a difficult, sensitive and presumably difficult to research topic. An especially interesting section is the account of the PRGS/Paraku/PKI insurgency and the anti-Chinese pogrom in West Kalimantan that prefigured the strategies employed in the military campaign in East Timor. The account of this neglected conflict points to how the criminality of military tactics in the