at times when making claims regarding the middle class as a whole, the chapter illustrates how prevalent such mode of thinking seems to be among the members of the social class in question.

All in all, the variety of the writings – both in terms of their content and context – is impressive. However, precisely because of this commendable variety, the editors' notion of "supra-constitution" as presented in the book may not be the most suitable overarching framework to conceptualize Thai conservative thought as a whole. Perhaps a typology of conservatives (or "isms"), based on the different concepts or forms of articulations employed, could be overlaid on the shared motif of the "supra-constitution" identified in this book to make the spectre more tangible. Nevertheless, the book is a valuable collection of texts that can function both as standalone analysis of Thai politics and primary references for further study on Thai conservatism.

References

Connors, Michael K. (2021). "Towards a History of Conservative Liberalism in Thailand after the 1932 Siamese Revolution: An Ideological Analysis." *Asian Studies Review*, pp. 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2021.1973366.

Mérieau, Eugénie (2016). "Thailand's Deep State, Royal Power and the Constitutional Court (1997–2015)." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* **46**:3, pp. 445–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2016.1151917.

Winichakul, Thongchai (2008). "Nationalism and the Radical Intelligentsia in Thailand." *Third World Quarterly* **29**:3, pp. 575–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590801931520.

doi:10.1017/S1479591422000547

Face-veiled Women in Contemporary Indonesia

By Eva F. Nisa. Routledge, 2023, p. 254. Hardback, US$170.00, ISBN: 9781032159461. eBook US$47.65, ISBN: 9781003246442.

Aan Diana, Desi Nuralim and Aulia Geger Jagat

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia
Corresponding author: Aan Diana; Email: aandiana2021@gmail.com

(Received 7 July 2023; accepted 8 July 2023)

The niqab, or *cadar* in Indonesian, remains a center of controversy in some parts of the world, particularly in Western countries (Fattali and Smith, 2023; Piela, 2021; Zempi, 2016; Zempi, 2019).[1] The niqab was even banned in several European countries, such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, and France, because of its association with religious extremism, gender oppression, and self-segregation (Zempi, 2016). What is even more surprising is that the *cadar* is not always acceptable even in Muslim majority countries such as Indonesia.

Adapted from her ethnographic doctoral dissertation, Nisa's monograph addresses the practice of face-veiling in the Indonesian context. Studying Indonesian Muslim face-veiled women that belonged to the Islamic revivalist movements, namely various Salafi groups and the Tablīghī Jamāʿat, Nisa's study reveals the context in which increasing numbers of women are wearing *cadar* in Indonesia. Drawing on an extended period of fieldwork from 2008 to 2010 in urban Jakarta, Makassar (South Sulawesi), and Yogyakarta, and additional visits to the field from 2011 to 2019, Nisa's key findings shed light on why these women decided to wear the *cadar*, embodying strict religious disciplinary practices, and the consequences of their decisions. As the meanings and practices of Islam in

[1]The authors are grateful to Fikri Yanda for insightful comments on an earlier draft of this review.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479591423000281 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Indonesia have undergone change, she argues that the key actors in this transformation are women. While face veiling is frequently portrayed as evidence of radicalism or extremism, the increasing Arabization of Indonesian Muslims, or the lack of female agency, Nisa's study suggests alternative interpretations – that their agency can be manifested in their decision to be docile and submissive. This argument is also supported by other scholars like Nonaka (2021) that Indonesian Muslim women wear the *cadar* in order to practice the *Sunnah* for the reward of heaven in the afterlife.

In the introductory chapter, Nisa highlights the fact that Indonesian Islam has long been seen as a "friendly" Islam with a "smiling face" characterized by its moderation, tolerance, accommodation, and ability to maintain harmony with non-Muslim minorities; and its refusal to build an Islamic state (Azra, 2006; van Bruinessen, 2011). However, this friendly label or image has been questioned in light of terrorist attacks and violence by some Muslim groups who acted under the name of Islam or to defend the religion. As Indonesia is still battling against terrorism, radicalism, and conservatism, many Indonesians, including Muslims as well as the government, have been unfriendly to *cadari* (face-veiled) women. These women, as noted by Nisa, were both seen as those who adhere to strong literalist interpretations of Islam and are portrayed as weak and oppressed. This book intends "to understand how *cadari* experience the practice of covering their bodies, especially their faces, in the light of the dominant view in popular discourse that deems them to be subservient to and oppressed by their male relatives and Muslim community leaders" (p. 1).

Chapter 1 discusses the origins of the face veiling practices by women in Indonesia. It is believed that these practices were adopted from the Middle East since the time of the Islamic sultanates. Because of migration, the use of the veil is also introduced from neighboring countries in which there are Islamic movements such as Darul Arqam from Malaysia and Tablighÿ Jamÿÿat from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Globalization and acculturation between nations impact on religious teachings and practice from time to time.

In chapter 2, Nisa examines authoritative sources originating from the Qur'an and the Hadith (narratives of the words, deeds, and agreements of the Prophet Muhammad, pbuh) which often form the bases for women and Islamic movements wearing and regulating the *cadar*. From these sources, they build their arguments and wore *cadar* based on their understandings. Nisa suggests that their *cadar* practices were based on Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:53, 59 and Q.S. An-Nūr [24]:31 and some prophetic traditions. The participants who were Salafi and Tablīghī religious teachers argued that the *cadar* is the proper Muslim women dress that the Prophet's wives and companions wore. Considering these religious teachings, the women in the study then argued that wearing a *cadar* is a form of obedience to God's and the Prophet's teachings. For these women, implementing a strict lifestyle of wearing the *cadar* is an effort to become better Muslims. Their answers challenge the common belief that the conservative movement, as it is demonstrated by *cadar* practices, is based on patriarchal thoughts. Nisa's study showcases independence in determining their habits of religion and obedience to God's teachings rather than to men.

Chapter 3 discusses the media's point of view in describing the *cadari* and how the *cadari* take advantage of the media to promote their existence and ideologies. The film *Ayat Ayat Cinta* [Love Verses], in which there is a *cadari* female character, became the material for discourse on how *cadari* interact with politics. In addition, Nisa also highlights how the *cadari* interact with the social media, their version of a strict lifestyle, and how they use it for preaching. This challenges the view that women with the *cadar* practice confinement. The chapter explains that *cadari* are progressive in carrying out Islamic law on the one hand and at the same time being active in social activities and pursuing careers following the current trend of modern women. These social and professional activities make them able to rectify the common view that *cadari* women are confined to the domestic sphere far from modernity.

Chapter 4 addresses the practice of face veiling in Islamic schools, particularly *pesantren* (Indonesian Islamic boarding schools). It provides an insight into the daily life of the *cadari* in these informal Islamic educational institutions. Since the *cadar* is mainly imposed on students, their tale differs from the majority of the *cadari* (the passionate *cadari*) with whom Nisa worked.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479591423000281 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The chapter depicts the disciplinary practices used in the *pesantren* to create "decent" Muslim women. To the *pesantren* administrators, as Nisa observed, the decency of Muslim women should begin by veiling the face. The chapter also deals with the key concepts of the body, total institutions, and subjectivity. Nisa agrees that these *cadari* students' condition might be easily seen as an indication of their passivity and their lack of agency. Nisa argues that the students have little agency on the face veiling practice because they wear the *cadar* mainly to follow the male administrators' orders (disciplinary purposes). This chapter, therefore, provides a crucial counterbalance to the chapter that follows, which discusses the "choices" of passionate *cadari*, by highlighting how face veiling is perceived when "choice" is little or constrained.

Chapter 5 follows the previous chapter on institutions for children by turning attention to *cadari* women in the tertiary education context. She examines the struggle of face-veiled university students and graduates to defend their practice of face veiling and to fulfill their desire to be authentic *Muslimah*. The chapter evaluates their motivations for participating in the movements that favor the wearing of *cadar* as well as for donning the *cadar* and taking on the broader responsibilities that go along with it. In daily life, their decision is constantly negotiated. It examines women's search for community and the pursuit of reliable religious knowledge and practices.

Chapter 6 focuses on the *daʿwa* (Islamic preaching or promotion) activities of the *cadari* as part of the manifestation of being true *Muslimah*. It reveals that the experiences of the *cadari* who are involved in the revivalist groups do not fit the notion that they are passive targets of male domination. In this chapter, Nisa argues against common perceptions on the passivity of women as religious followers. She contends that women are devoted religious actors. By analyzing public piety, subjectivity, and expanding the concept of religious habitus into the public arena, the chapter advances and expands the claim on the *cadari*'s religious agency within a Foucault (1997) theoretical framework on self. The last chapter ties together the book's discussions to comment on the Indonesian *cadari*'s lives, addressing the implications of the growing presence of the *cadari* in Indonesia's Islam landscape. In this chapter, Nisa recommends greater understandings of *cadari* women, whose lives and existence are frequently constrained with bias and prejudice.

While the practice of wearing the *cadar*, *niqab*, or face veils among Muslim women in Indonesia is still being debated (Nonaka, 2021), Nisa's book provides further support to the need to accept face-veiled women. Face veiling practices must be acknowledged as part of religious practices and identities. Although the book is mainly authored from the perspective of a non-*cadari* Muslim woman, Nisa succeeds in revealing the voices of the *cadari* women directly from the practitioners themselves.

The book, however, has several shortcomings. The context from which the study is conducted is limited to the Indonesian context. While there may be some similarities or connections, the face veiling practice and its backdrops in other contexts may be different and therefore more exploration is needed. The book would also be better and richer if it provided voices from non-*cadari* Muslim women practitioners, namely those who wear head veils only and those who do wear any form of Islamic veil. In particular, for example, it is easy to imagine women forced to wear *cadar* at *pesantren* yet deciding not to wear *cadar* at university. Their perspectives seem pertinent to the wider debate.

Despite of these shortcomings, the book is essential to scholars, researchers, and university students in the field of Islamic studies, particularly those whose focus are in the context of Indonesia or Southeast Asia. Those in anthropology may also find the book a useful reference in understanding the religious practices by some of the Indonesian Muslim community in the country with the largest Muslim population in the world.

References

Azra A. (2006). *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation*. Bandung: Mizan.

Fattali H. and Smith Å.W. (2023). Learning from the outsiders-within: wearing the Niqab in Swedish teacher profession and training. *Race Ethnicity and Education*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2023.2183515

Foucault M. (1997). *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*. New York: New Press.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479591423000281 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Nonaka Y. (2021). Practising Sunnah for reward of heaven in the afterlife. *Indonesia and the Malay World* **49**(145), 429–447. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2021.1952018

Piela A. (2021). *Wearing the Niqab: Muslim Women in the UK and the US*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.

van Bruinessen M. (2011). *What Happened to the Smiling Face of Indonesian Islam? Muslim Intellectualism and a Conservative Turn in Post-Suharto Indonesia*. RSIS Working Paper, Singapore, No. 222.

Zempi I. (2016). "It's a part of me, I feel naked without it": choice, agency and identity for MUSLIM women who wear the Niqab. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* **39**(10), 1738–1754. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1159710

Zempi I. (2019). Veiled Muslim women's views on law banning the wearing of the Niqab (Face Veil) in public. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* **42**(15), 2585–2602. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1588985

doi:10.1017/S1479591423000281

The Filipino migration experience: global agents of change

By Mina Roces. Cornell University Press, 2021. 264 pages. Hardback, $49.95, ISBN: 9781501760402. Ebook, $32.99, ISBN: 9781501760419.

Naomi Hosoda

School of Global Humanities and Social Sciences, Nagasaki University, Nagasaki, Japan

(Received 11 January 2023; accepted 11 January 2023)

Overseas migration by Filipinos in contemporary times is widely studied in social sciences owing to the phenomenon's magnitude and impact on multiple aspects of Philippine society. In this context, historian Mina Roces brings our attention to how the public image of Filipino migrants has remained unchanged from that of suffering martyrs and marginal workers in a foreign land for their families, despite the half-century-long history of state-sponsored labor migration. She thus addresses the need to update the image by focusing on migrants' personal stories. This book is an outcome of her endeavor to investigate the phenomenon by placing migrants at the center of the analysis and redefining who Filipino migrants are and what they experience, with a special emphasis on migrant agencies.

What distinguishes this book from other studies that focus on migrant agencies is its "very big picture approach," which means it includes all types of Filipino migrants regardless of legal status (i.e., temporary migrants, permanent residents abroad, and undocumented migrants), geographical location, profession, and gender (p. 8). This stance became possible partly because of the wide range of materials utilized. Roces' argument is based on her curation of "migrant archives" – materials that migrants collected, published, and disseminated, such as migrant newspapers, NGO journals, self-published books containing voices of migrants' children, cultural performances of second- and third-generation migrants in colleges abroad, various objects collected and displayed in museums founded by Filipino migrants, and so forth (p. 8). These materials have been largely overlooked in the existing literature, yet they reveal "how migrants have enacted change in both the host countries and the homeland in making a plea for a reconsideration of migrants as revolutionary actors outside the sphere of labor" (p. 9).

Furthermore, Roces' data included her own participant observations while attending migration-related seminars and events, and interviews in many major destination countries, such as the United States, Australia, Italy, Singapore, and Hong Kong. It must be noted that Roces is a 1.5 Filipino Australian and has been a "mobile person" herself, which made her empathize with "the way the migrant archives interpret the past" and "appreciate the difference between the migration experience of the diaspora and the viewpoint of the nation left behind" (pp. 13–14).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479591423000281 Published online by Cambridge University Press