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Intellectual Discourse
Vol. 28, No. 2, 2020

Contents

<i>Note from the Editor</i>	357
Research Articles	
The Link between Coronavirus and Darwin according to Pervez Hoodbhoy: A Critical Response <i>Osman Bakar</i>	365
The Politics of Manipulation: Malaysia 2018-2020 <i>Abdul Rashid Moten</i>	387
The Theoretical Framework for Measuring Key Intangible Performance (KIP) in Research and Publication Using Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (MS) <i>Luqman Zakariyah, Mohammed Farid Ali al-Fijawi, Rahmah Binti Ahmad H. Osman, Shukran Abd Rahman & Suhaimi Mhd. Sarif</i>	409
The Concept of Ghulūw in Islam: An Analysis on Its Manifestations and Causes in The Modern World <i>Mohammad Yusri Yubhi Bin Md Yusoff, Thameem Ushama & Adibah Abdul Rahim</i>	433
Transgressing the Terms of Covenant in the Islamic Jurisprudence of International Relations: The Cases of Socotra and Cyprus in Comparison <i>Anke Iman Bouzenita</i>	459
Preventive Measures for a Healthy Life: Towards an Islamic Perspective with Reference to COVID-19 <i>M. Hedayatul Islam, Md Saidul Islam & Fadzli Adam</i>	487

The Effects of Japanese Occupation in Sabah: During and After World War II (1941-1963) <i>Rosdianah Binti Yacho & Arshad Islam</i>	511
Non-Parental Child Custody Rights: A Comparative Perspective <i>Daleleer Kaur Randawar & Akbar Kamarudin @ Abdul Shukor</i>	529
Political Communication and Election Campaigning on Instagram During the 14th Malaysian General Election <i>Kamaruzzaman Abdul Manan, Shafizan Mohamad & Muhamad Mat Yakim</i>	555
ASEAN, China and the South China Sea Territorial Disputes: Analysis of Conflict Management Strategies <i>Siti Noralia Mustaza & Mohd Irwan Syazli Saidin</i>	577
Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the Maldives: Are We Listening to the Students? <i>Mariyam Shahuneeza Naseer & Dawood Abdulmalek Yahya Al-Hidabi</i>	599
Going to Hell or Heaven? An Analysis of Malaysian Muslims' Perspectives on Extremism in Religion <i>Rabi'ah Aminudin, Izzuddin M. Jaafar & Elmira Akhmetova</i>	623
Challenges of the Multinational Federation: The Case of Malaysia, 2008-2020 <i>Abdul Aqmar Ahmad Tajudin & Mohammad Agus Yusoff</i>	649
Ongoing Persecution of the Rohingya: A History of Periodic Ethnic Cleansings and Genocides <i>Arifa Sarmin</i>	675
Managing Women's Matter: A Cross-Cultural Study of Doctor-Patient Relationship in Pakistan and Malaysia <i>Adeela Rehman & Nurazzura Mohamad Diah</i>	697

Can U.S. Aid and Assistance Continue Playing
a Soft Power Role in the Muslim World?
*Abdullahi Ayoade Ahmad, Mohd Afandi Bin Salleh &
Abdul Majid Hafiz Bin Mohamed* 715

Leadership Characteristic Features: An Ethical Review from the
Perspective of the Qur'an and the Sunnah
Hamda Binti Khalifah Almuheiri & Mohammed Abdullais 737

The Bureaucratic Corruption Leading to the Fall of Bengal
(1700-1757)
Md. Abul Bashar 757

Research Notes

The Threat of Terrorism in the Malang Region, Indonesia
*Gonda Yumitro, Elfatih Abdullahi Abdelsalam, Ishtiaq Hossain
& Syaza Farhana Mohamad Shukri* 779

COVID-19 and Rohingya Refugee Camps in Bangladesh
AKM Ahsan Ullah, Mallik Akram Hossain & Diotima Chatteraj 793

Conference Report

The 9th International Conference on Business, Relations, and
Diplomacy (ICOBIRD 2020)
Lili Yuyadi Arnakim 807

Conference Reports

The 9th International Conference on Business, Relations, and Diplomacy (ICOBIRD 2020)

The world is grappling with the impact of COVID-19, which first emerged in Wuhan, a city in Hubei province in China in November 2019. It spread to the rest of the world quickly. It was declared as global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). COVID-19 has changed the world's social, political and economic relations. In order to contain this dreaded virus, most countries were put under lock-downs restricting the movements of the people both within the countries and across national borders. The national economies have been hit hard by COVID-19.

The State has re-emerged as more stronger than ever before as the protector of its territory and people. The State has to go to extraordinary extent to manage the socio-economic and political impacts of Covid-19. Among many other steps, the states closed their borders to stop people from travelling and spreading the disease. One of the immediate impacts on COVID-19 on international relations is the way diplomacy is conducted. Face-to-face diplomatic communications have been replaced with more reliance on such on-line platforms as Google Meet, Zoom etc. States are now prefer to conduct their normal day-to-day communications through digital means and artificial intelligence. Therefore, a thorough discussion on the role of the State during the period of the pandemic is most relevant.

Keeping all these recent developments in view, the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Humanities, Bina Nusantara University successfully organized a two-day International Conference on Business, International Relations, and Diplomacy (known as ICOBIRD) with the theme “Business, International relations, and Diplomacy during COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges, Responses, and Consequences” from September 24 to September 25, 2020. It may

be pointed out that the Department has been successfully organizing ICOBIRD for the last nine years. However, ICOBIRD 2020 was successfully held on-line. ICOBIRD 2020 which was hosted by the Department of International University in collaboration with the Indonesian Association for International Relations (AIHI) took the form of webinar, which is part of BINUS International Joint Conference (BIJC). ICOBIRD has always been a platform for scholars, students, and researchers to share their research outputs. This year's conference was based on an interdisciplinary approach in understanding COVID-19 pandemic and evaluate its impacts on business, international relations, and diplomacy.

As it was reported that the ICOBIRD 2020 committee received 53 submissions. However, following blind reviews 35 of these were accepted for presentations. These papers were presented in eight parallel sessions after the opening and key note sessions in the morning of the first day of ICOBIRD 2020 on September 24, 2020. On the opening day of ECOBIRD 2020, the Chair of ICOBIRD 2020, Dr. Lili Yulyadi Arnakim welcomed the presenters and participants, which was followed by welcoming remarks by Head of International Relations Department, Dr. Rangga Aditya. Finally, ICOBIRD 2020 was officially launched by Professor. Dr. Tirta N. Mursitama, Vice Rector, Research and Technology Transfer, and General Chair of BJIC. In his speech he announced that ICOBIRD 2020 is the third conference to be held following ICOBAR, and ICIMTech. After opening ceremony, three distinguish keynote speakers from different countries namely, Malaysia, South Korea, and Australia presented their keynote speeches.

First keynote speaker Dr. Ishtiaq Hussain, who is Associate Professor of Political Science at International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur and editor of *Intellectual Discourse*, discussed the response of developing countries toward COVID-19. Dr. Ishtiaq Hossain argues that the responses can be classified into three categories, namely, good, muddled, and the ugly, by referring respectively to Senegal, Bangladesh, and Brazil. This session which was moderated by Dr. Moch. Faisal Karim received enthusiastic response from the audience. Second keynote speaker Dr. Kim Hyung Jong from Department of International Relations, Yonsei University, South Korea. His topic for discussion was "ASEAN Community and Human Security". He argued that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

poses great challenges not only for health security in the region but also for the establishment of the ASEAN Community. The ASEAN member states (AMS) are facing double challenges: they have to curb the pandemic while mitigating its economic and social impacts. AMS has to deal with COVID-19 by taking assertive measures to protect public health in the region. The session which was moderated by Dr. Lili Yulyadi Arnakim, received many questions from members of the audience. Finally, the third keynote speaker Prof. Dr. Mark Beeson from Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Western Australia discussed the politics of Covid-19. Prof. Mark Beeson's session which was moderated by Dr. Ella S. Prihatini, argued that the response of the United States has been strikingly bad, and this has undermined confidence in its ability to play an effective leadership role in an international order it did so much to create. The prospects for cooperation between China and the US on health policy and other vital issues such as climate change have been further eroded as a result. This presentation considered the political consequences of the pandemic on the current international order and our collective ability to deal with major transnational problems. This keynote session was open to public via Zoom and live through YouTube streaming that could allow participants to join the session. As a result, the audience for the keynote session reached up to 600 participants from all over the world.

The afternoon session consisted of eight parallel sessions focusing on different issues. One of the key issues, which was discussed was the response of the state, market and politics to COVID-19. Another parallel session focused on the role of China in international politics. Issues related to socio-economic implication, and development and inequality in the Southeast Asian region were discussed in two parallel sessions. On the second day, a "Meet the Editor", in which the editor of the *Intellectual Discourse* took part. He led a lively discussion on ways to publish the conference paper in targeted reputable international journals such as *Intellectual Discourse*.

Dr. Lili Yuyadi Arnakim
Chair of ICOBIRD 2020

In This Issue

Note from the Editor

Research Articles

Osman Bakar

The Link between Coronavirus and Darwin according to Pervez Hoodbhoy: A Critical Response

Abdul Rashid Moten

The Politics of Manipulation: Malaysia 2018-2020

Luqman Zakariyah, Mohammed Farid Ali al-Fijawi, Rahmah Binti Ahmad H. Osman, Shukran Abd Rahman & Suhaimi Mhd. Sarif

The Theoretical Framework for Measuring Key Intangible Performance (KIP) in Research and Publication Using Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (MS)

Mohammad Yusri Yubhi Bin Md Yusoff, Thameem Ushama & Adibah Abdul Rahim

The Concept of Ghulūw in Islam: An Analysis on Its Manifestations and Causes in The Modern World

Anke Iman Bouzenita

Transgressing the Terms of Covenant in the Islamic Jurisprudence of International Relations: The Cases of Socotra and Cyprus in Comparison

M. Hedayatul Islam, Md Saidul Islam & Fadzli Adam

Preventive Measures for a Healthy Life: Towards an Islamic Perspective with Reference to COVID-19

Rosdianah Binti Yacho & Arshad Islam

The Effects of Japanese Occupation in Sabah: During and After World War II (1941-1963)

Daleeer Kaur Randawar & Akbar Kamarudin @ Abdul Shukor

Non-Parental Child Custody Rights: A Comparative Perspective

Kamaruzzaman Abdul Manan, Shafizan Mohamad & Muhamad Mat Yakim

Political Communication and Election Campaigning on Instagram During the 14th Malaysian General Election

Siti Noralia Mustaza & Mohd Irwan Syazli Saidin

ASEAN, China and the South China Sea Territorial Disputes: Analysis of Conflict Management Strategies

Mariyam Shahuneeza Naseer & Dawood Abdulmalek Yahya Al-Hidabi

Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the Maldives: Are We Listening to the Students?

Rabi'ah Aminudin, Izzuddin M. Jaafar & Elmira Akhmetova

Going to Hell or Heaven? An Analysis of Malaysian Muslims' Perspectives on Extremism in Religion

Abdul Aqmar Ahmad Tajudin & Mohammad Agus Yusoff

Challenges of the Multinational Federation: The Case of Malaysia, 2008-2020

Arifa Sarmin

Ongoing Persecution of the Rohingya: A History of Periodic Ethnic Cleansings and Genocides

Adeela Rehman & Nurazzura Mohamad Diah

Managing Women's Matter: A Cross-Cultural Study of Doctor-Patient Relationship in Pakistan and Malaysia

Abdullahi Ayoade Ahmad, Mohd Afandi Bin Salleh & Abdul Majid Hafiz Bin Mohamed

Can U.S. Aid and Assistance Continue Playing a Soft Power Role in the Muslim World?

Hamda Binti Khalifah Almuheiri & Mohammed Abdullais

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