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Book Review

AL-KAWAKIBI, Abdul Rahman. *The Nature of Tyranny and The Devastating Results of Oppression*. Foreword by Leon T. Goldsmith. Translated by Amer Chaikhouni. London: Hurst, 2021, 152 pp. Hardback.
ISBN: 9781787385481
Reviewer: *Carimo Mohomed*

Note from the Editor

This issue of *Intellectual Discourse* (Vol. 30, No. 1) presents ten articles on various topics, ranging from the social media to homeless elder persons, and from the politics of authoritarianism to Qur’anic guidance on health crisis. These articles are the outcomes of research carried out by academics not only from Malaysia, but also from Thailand, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates. All but two of the research articles are the results of collaborative efforts among researchers. In addition to the research articles, this issue also includes a book review. The topics covered in this issue reflects the diverse research interests in Islamic revealed knowledge and the human sciences.

The first article (Understanding Malaysian Youth’s Social Media Practices and Their Attitude towards Violent Extremism)—written by Nurzali Ismail, Jasmine Mohamed Jawhar, Danial Mohd Yusuf, Anis Izzati Ismail and Raja Muhammad Khairul Akhtar Raja Mohd Naguib—examines Malaysian youth’s social media practices and those factors that influence their attitude towards violent extremism in the social media. Using online survey, their study finds that youth prefer video content to written content, infographic and images. It also finds that information or argument quality, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are factors that could influence attitude. This research suggests that counter-violent extremism efforts should further inspect youth’s social media usage in order to understand different social media platforms, types of content and message design.

In the second article (Should Heterogeneity Matter? The Case of Malaysia: Evaluating Public Service Motivation in a Non-Homogenous Society), Nadia Hezlin Yashaiya and Abdillah Noh suggest that ethnic heterogeneity matters in assessing an individual’s public service motivation and the chances of joining the public service. Their study is based on interviews with officers from Malaysia’s Pegawai Tadbir dan Diplomatik (PTD – Administrative and Diplomatic Officers) of different ethnicities. They argue that ethnic heterogeneity matters

because personal attributes are important in determining one's public service motivation, while an ethnically heterogeneous environment with the potential of producing numerous types of exclusive institutions can influence one's perception of the public service or even determine one's chances of joining the civil service. They further find that ethnic heterogeneity influences an individual's perception, motivation and decision to join the public service.

Zulkhairul Shukri, Nik Norliati Fitri Md. Nor and Nurul Norzehan explore the various reasons that lead the elderly to live a homeless life in Kuala Lumpur in the third article in this edition (The Issue of the Elderly Homeless in Kuala Lumpur: Family Neglect and Its Contributing Factors). They conducted in-depth interviews to determine the reasons these elderly persons live as homeless. Their findings suggest that while almost everyone had family and drug- or health-related issues, there was also a case where an elderly person simply decide to live as a part-time homeless. The findings help raise awareness toward the plight of the elderly homeless, and could help policy-makers to address the needs and grievances of this often-neglected segment of the society.

The fourth article (Muslim Inventors of Reading and Writing Methods for the Blind: Predecessors of Braille) authored by Awad Al-Khalaf, Kassen Saad, Adam Abdullah, Mona Shehade and Najla Aljarwan, highlight the contributions of three Muslim inventors—as early as the 11th century—who created methods for the visually-impaired to read and write. These inventors were Muhammad bin Abdul Warith (d. 1106 CE), Zein-Eddine Al-Amidy (d. 1312 CE) and Wazir al-Sarraj (d. 1736 CE). Like Louis Braille, these Muslim inventors used the sense of touch to help the visually-impaired to read and write. Their methods differed: Abdul Warith used embossed figures from pitch analogous to the Arabic letters, Al-Amidy used fashioned paper-made letters, while al-Sarraj created waxed letters as the reading and writing method. While Braille alphabets are the standard system used by the visually-impaired now, the contributions of Muslim inventors should also be appreciated.

In the fifth article, (In the Name of Covid-19: Democratic Reversal and the Return of Authoritarian Malasia under Muhyiddin's *Perikatan Nasional*), Muhamad M. N. Nadzri argues that the fall of *Pakatan Harapan's* democratically elected government in February 2020 was self-inflicted when one of its components, *Bersatu*—together with disgruntled members of *Parti Keadilan Rakyat*—withdrew from the

ruling coalition. The succeeding government—*Perikatan Nasional*—did not have the people's mandate and therefore, relied simply on the royal mandate that lent it legitimacy through constitutional provisions, according to Nadzri. While that government resorted to authoritarianism, in the name of Covid-19 no less, it lacked regime sustainability due to its failure to establish any semblance of performance legitimacy.

Still on politics, but this time in Thailand, Norachit Jirasatthumb, Phumsith Mahasuweerachai and Atchara Sorasing study confirmation bias in the sixth article (Confirmation Bias among Adherents of Red and yellow Politics in Thailand). They study red and yellow shirts' confirmation bias through experiments and Principal Component Analysis (PCA). They find that despite ideological orientations, their research participants from the red and yellow shirts are not strictly driven by such ideologies. Their political convictions may change after some experimental treatments, suggesting that exposure to positive and negative information about red and yellow politics can help the participants to make more informed choices despite their confirmation bias.

The seventh article (Secularisation of Muslim Students: A Freirean Perspective on Biological Evolution Teaching in Islamic Schools) written by Ahmad Naharuddin Ramadhan, Marzuki, Heru Nurchayo and Bustami Subhan examine Paulo Freire's critical education paradigm and its significance and relevance for criticising the teaching of evolution in Indonesian Islamic schools. Materials for the teaching of evolution in these schools are centralised from the national curriculum, and include contestable concepts and ideas from the evolutionary theory. Using six key ideas from Paulo Freire—the inseparability of education from political content, the displacement of the values and culture of the oppressed through education, the neutrality of science, three categories of human consciousness, the concept of alienation, and critical literacy programmes—this study argues for decolonisation of education and challenges the neutrality of such scientific ideas.

In the eighth article (The Role of Mass Media as a Channel to Learn about Islam among Muslims in Gombak), the authors—Kamaruzzaman bin Abdul Manan, Mohd. Noh bin Abdul Jalil, Muhammad Ayman al-Akiti, Lihana binti Borhan, Majdan bin Alias, Shukran Abdul Rahman and Khamsiah binti Mohd. Ismail—examine the mass media use for learning about Islam among Muslims in Gombak. Through their survey,

they find that Muslims use various media as a means to learn Islam and there are differences in media platform preferred by Muslims of different gender, age group, educational background, occupational background, and frequency of praying in the mosque. They conclude that the role of the media—conventional and new—should not be underestimated as a vehicle of *da'wah*.

The ninth article (The Best Solution for Pandemic Prevention of Covid-19: Important Notes in Light of the Quranic Perspective), written by Abur Hamdi Usman, Muhd Najib Abdul Kadir and Mohd Farid Ravi Abdullah, explores guidance and commands from the Qur'an in the face of a pandemic such as the Covid-19. In addition, the study also includes the prophetic traditions of Prophet Muhammad and lessons from Muslim history as practical guidance in addressing and preventing the spread of any pandemic. The article suggests that there are many lessons from the Qur'an, prophetic traditions and Muslim history that are useful for humanity in facing health crises. Such lessons can be the basis for sustainable health policies in the Muslim World.

Finally, the tenth article (Propagating an Alternative Solution for Indonesia's Problems: A Framing Analysis on Hizb ut-Tahrir's Narratives) by Hasbi Aswar analyses the propagation of Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia's (HTI) political ideology through the use of framing theory. He shows that HTI rejects practically all man-made ideologies and institutions, and calls for the re-institutionalisation of the caliphate. In propagating these ideas, HTI used methods not dissimilar from the framing approach. Due to HTI's radical ideology, the Indonesian government banned HTI in 2017 to protect the nation's unity.

On a personal note, this is the first issue of Intellectual Discourse that I helped manage as an editor. I would like to express my utmost appreciation to Danial Mohd. Yusof, Editor-in-Chief of Intellectual Discourse, for his generous tips and guidance in managing the publication of this journal. I would also like to thank all the contributors for their thought-provoking articles. Finally, I could not thank the anonymous reviewers enough for their immense contributions in improving the quality of the articles in this issue. Thank you very much.

Tunku Mohar Mokhtar
Editor

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Book Reviews

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