

schools run by various Islamic organisations or foundations (e.g. Sekolah Islam Terpadu) would have been interesting, as they are also increasingly providing religious education in Indonesia. Furthermore, the links between the Indonesian experience and global trends in Islamic education are not always apparent throughout the book. Overall, the edited volume is a timely and insightful contribution, making it essential reading for students, researchers, academics, policy-makers and anyone seeking to understand the complexities of religious radicalisation in contemporary Indonesian society.

Dissa Paputungan-Engelhardt

RÜDIGER LOHLKER / KATHARINA IVANYI (eds), *Humanitarian Islam: Reflecting on an Islamic Concept*. Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2023. 188 pages, €118.00. ISBN 9-783-5067-9026-2

Why is Islam important from a humanitarian standpoint? Does humanitarian Islam represent a distinct idea from “other” humanitarian concepts? Although Muslim societies have long engaged in various humanitarian endeavours within the Muslim World and in “the West”, observers and policymakers have been discussing the meaning and reason behind Muslim humanitarian activism only in the last twenty to thirty years. This discussion has been sparked by the emergence of new models of Muslim nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) that are geared toward working on humanitarian issues, such as interreligious dialogue, interfaith cooperation, disaster relief and development projects. The book is one of many books published in recent years that attempt to observe and understand the meaning of humanitarianism within Muslim societies.¹ It mainly analyses Muslims’ interpretations of and efforts to institutionalise the Islamic concepts of humanity and humanitarianism. The book adopts a broad thematic approach while focusing on Indonesia. What makes this book special is that the contributors utilise diverse perspectives, including Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), spirituality (*tasawwuf*), comparative religions (*muqaranatul adyan*), interfaith dialogue (*al-hiwar*), literary tradition (*turath*) and the liberal democratic state in analysing the meaning attached to the concept of humanitarian Islam.² Throughout the book, readers encounter core concepts and critical terms

1 See for example, Jon B. Alterman / Karin van Hippel (eds): *Islamic Charities*. Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007; Jonathan Benthall: *Islamic Charities and Islamic Humanism in Troubled Times*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016; Marie Juul Petersen: *For Humanity or For the Umma? Aid and Islam in Transnational Muslim NGOs*. London: Hurst Publishers, 2014.

2 There are abundant publications (monographs and edited volumes) on the contemporary development of Indonesian Islam written and edited by renowned American, European, and Australian scholars, including f. ex. Jajat Burhanudin / Kees van Dijk (eds): *Islam in Indonesia: Contrasting Images and Interpretations*. Amsterdam University Press, 2013; Martin van Bruinessen (ed.): *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the “Conservative Turn”*. ISEAS - Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013; Greg Fealy / Sally White (eds): *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. ISEAS - Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008). Books on Islamic humanitarianism or humanitarian Islam in the Indonesian context remain rare.

related to humanitarian Islam, such as *ummah* (the Islamic community), *rahmah* (“universal love and compassion/mercy”), *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), *tawassuṭ* (moderation), *tawāzun* (equality), *i’tidāl* (moderation), *wihdah* (unity), *hubb/ mahabba* (love) and *maslahah* (welfare).

This book engages authors from different disciplinary fields, primarily scholars familiar with Islamic Studies or Muslim societies in the modern world. In the Introduction (Chapter 1), Katharina Ivanyi and Rüdiger Lohlker begin with a discussion of the main concepts utilised, defined and debated in the book by highlighting the experience of Indonesian Islam. In particular, they address the recent development of the “traditionalist” Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and its autonomous youth body, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor, in formulating the Islamic concepts of humanity and identity. By doing so, the editors want to shed light on how Muslim cultures have defined Islam throughout history, particularly in Indonesia, the largest Muslim nation in the world, where people’s “Islamic identity” is sometimes very different from that of their Middle Eastern counterparts. Since 2015, the concept of “Nusantara Islam”, for example, has been promulgated in Indonesia by the NU as a means of promoting certain types of Islamic expression that differ from those in the Middle Eastern countries, where conflict and violence are more prevalent. The current engagement of Nahdlatul Ulama in promoting humanism cannot be detached from Nahdlatul Ulama’s former chairman, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) who devoted himself to fostering humanity, Islamic values, and local wisdom for decades. Abdurrahman Wahid is known as an advocate of the (religious and ethnic) minority groups in Indonesia. His grave’s inscription is penned in four languages: Indonesian, English, Arabic, and Chinese, mentioning that “Here rest a humanist.”

In Chapter 2, Alina Isac Alak provides a conceptual framework and methodological dimension of the humanist interpretation of the Qur’an. As the primary source of Islamic theology, spirituality and law, Qur’anic texts have been interpreted in different ways by Islamic scholars, who range from those who propose “authoritarian” and “textualist” hermeneutics to humanist and dynamic hermeneutics. The pattern of humanitarian Islam represents the product of the latter, dynamic interpretation of Islamic principles. Alak argues that “the proponents of Humanitarian Islam are trying to find a common language that is supported by the Text but extends from a textual truth to a practical, humanist universal attitude” (p. 32). Hüseyin I. Çiçek, in Chapter 3, analyses the notion of humanitarian Islam from the lens of the “Western” liberal democratic state and provides a theoretical framework and historical overview of how the secular, liberal and democratic state remains open to religion, either in Europe (non-Muslim societies) or, for example, Turkey (Muslim societies). The neutrality of the secular and democratic state allows religious groups to express the intrinsic and universal dimensions of religion, such as humanitarian Islam, which can deal with pluralism and equal citizenship, or conversely, to foster such ideas as the Caliphate or Islamic State.

Jakob Helmut Deibl (Chapter 4) specifically discusses the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor's (Ansor Youth Movement's) Declaration on Humanitarian Islam, presented in Jombang, East Java, in 2017. Using a Christian Catholic theological perspective, he provides an inclusive comparative analysis, showing how the Catholic Church – reflected in the sayings of popes and views of Christian theologians – shares a similar concern about humanitarianism with their Muslim counterparts. Ansor's declaration, in his view, “explicitly opens a door to people from other religions and other parts of the world” for dialogue and cooperation while also motivating other religions to listen to different voices, learn from other pearls of wisdom and revelation, and contribute to the creation of the new world's humanitarian order. Gazaleh Faridzadeh (Chapter 5) sheds light on spiritual and Sufi approaches towards humanitarianism by examining Ibn ‘Arabi's concept of *wihdatul wujud* (“Oneness of Being”). The spiritual teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi have been taken up, interpreted and re-actualised by Sufi orders worldwide, including in Indonesia. According to Faridzadeh, while the Nahdlatul Ulama and Pemuda Ansor cannot be considered Sufi orders, several of their traditions and outlooks as well as their concept of humanitarian Islam may have been influenced by, or at least connected to, certain spiritual ideas of Sufi origin.

In Chapter 6, Yunus Hentschel examines Nahdlatul Ulama's 2018 *Nusantara Manifesto* from a *tasawwuf* (Sufi) perspective, focusing on its reconciliation with a more moderate version of shari'a (divine law) in the Indonesian context. This approach can contribute to the universalisation of humanitarian Islam. What is interesting, as Ahmed T. Kuru lays out in Chapter 7, is that Nahdlatul Ulama's formulation of Islam's universalisation does not support concepts like the Caliphate promoted by Islamist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda. Rather than establishing a state based on Islamic law, Nahdlatul Ulama seeks to advance interreligious tolerance, co-exist peacefully with religious pluralism and emphasise the legitimacy of contemporary states' secular constitutional and legal systems (p. 133). This softer interpretation of shari'a upheld in Indonesia and the demand for an explicitly humanitarian Islam cannot be understood as instant results of Muslim discourse. Rather, they are a continuum of Indonesian Muslims' long-standing practice and understanding of Islamic literature and tradition. Studies on the compilation of Islamic texts by Rüdiger Lohlker (Chapter 8) reveal that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some treatises on *tafsir*, *fiqh*, *tasawwuf* and Arabic literature authored by renowned Islamic scholars greatly influenced the current *ijtihad* (new interpretation of Islamic law) among former students of the *pesantren* (traditional Islamic schools).

In addition to attempting to distil the essence and goal of Islam, humanitarian Islam – which includes the idea of indigenising Islam – also serves a political purpose by opposing and drawing attention to other intolerant and extremist religious movements, such as Salafi movements and Wahabism, whose influ-

ences are widely felt in Indonesia (p. 156). Rüdiger Lohlker maintains that the humanitarian Islam of Nahdlatul Ulama and its autonomous youth body represent the evolution of Islamic law (*fiqh*) as a consequence of the intense discussions among Indonesian Islamic scholars regarding the goals of Islamic law and the contextualisation of shari'a in contemporary plural societies.

Above all, this book enlightens readers on how an astonishing concept like "humanitarian Islam" has emerged in Muslim cultures, particularly in Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority nation in the world. In order to examine Nahdlatul Ulama's and Gerakan Pemuda Ansor's concepts of "Islam Nusantara" and "humanitarian Islam", the editors have assembled articles with vibrant viewpoints. Nevertheless, the editors examine only "traditionalist" Muslims in their analysis of Muslim dynamics in the formulation, interpretation and expression of humanitarian Islam in the Indonesian context. They don't give enough room to discuss how "modernist" Muslims have articulated and understood humanitarian Islam in public domains. Despite this limitation, the book provides a crucial insight into the evolving landscape of Islamic thought in Indonesia.

Hilman Latief

SABINE FRÜHSTÜCK, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan*. (New Approaches to Asian History). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 280 pages, £ 22.99. ISBN 9-781-1084-3072-2

It is now common knowledge that sex, gender and sexuality are constantly (re)configured and should be understood as being locally specific while still connected to global developments. Yet, in looking at Japan, the English-language literature and media have commonly and constantly characterised these notions as marked by strangeness and otherness. Such a Western gaze not only homogenises sexuality and gender in Japan but also undermines the complex developments and changes that these categories have undergone over the last centuries. In order to challenge the simplistic depictions of gender and sexuality in Japan as being different due to unique cultural values, comprehensive insights drawing from multiple sources and local, regional and global perspectives are needed. Sabine Frühstück's *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan* is a book that provides precisely such insights. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach that combines history, anthropology, sociology and visual studies, Frühstück's latest monograph vividly elucidates how sex, gender and sexuality in Japan have been socially, scientifically, culturally and politically constructed, negotiated and transformed over time.