has merits, it seems not to take sufficiently into account the difficult conditions in which – as described in the case studies – local actors in several countries operate. The ways in which these conditions could be overcome would be worth reflecting upon but unfortunately, such reflection is largely missing from the book. There is, thus, a mismatch between the detailed analysis of the challenges, which are mostly found to lie at the national level, and the rather cursory suggestions for the responses, which mainly target international actors.

Despite this mismatch, the book under review generally makes an interesting and enriching read. Benefiting from the plurality of authors and solid editorial work, it provides one of the first relatively coherent and comprehensive accounts of the relationship between populism and human rights. And while it might raise more questions than it answers, the book certainly leaves readers with a great deal of new information and new ideas to think about.

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What is Religious Authority?: Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia

By Ismail Fajrie Alatas. Princeton University Press, 2021. 256 pages. Hardback, US$95.00, ISBN: 9780691204307. Paperback, $24.95, ISBN: 9780691204314.

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When Islam spread from its origins on the Arabian Peninsula, it encountered contextualization in the traditions and teachings of the communities it encountered. This resulted in the formation of a new cultural entity distinct from its origin. There were also manifestations of Islam's universality and

particularity. When early Muslims arrived in Indonesia, the indigenous Indonesians' reaction to Islam will almost certainly be very different from that of the Arab community. Furthermore, because many of these early arrivals were Sufis, the Islamic teachings were more mystical and inclusive than the mainstream in Arabia (Nugroho 2021, p. 111). *What is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia* is adapted from Ismail Fajrie Alatas' doctoral dissertation. He successfully argues that what is known as "Islam the universal religion" does not reside in the consistency of its teachings. However, one aspect of Islam that is universal is the work of congregational building.

This book is divided into two parts, each with three to four chapters. The first part depicts the highly influential articulatory paradigm that arose between Ḥaḍramaut and Java. Abdallāh b. Alawī al-Ḥaddād (d. 1720), a Bā Alawī Sufi scholar, pioneered this paradigm in which he sought the articulation of the sunnah for the tribal community in Ḥaḍramaut. The first chapter investigates the workings of pre- Ḥaddādian articulation, which enabled various forms of Islamic community to be cultivated on varying scales in Java and Ḥaḍramaut.

Each community revolves around a specific authority figure, usually either a saint or a sultan, and their successors, who are acknowledged as links to the Prophet's past and living embodiments of the Prophet's teachings (p. 51). So far, historical narratives have frequently used religion to unite historical plurality. As the chapter concludes, Alatas proposes a historical description that emphasizes religion's polyphonic reality and positions Islam as a historically contingent sociological achievement, located locally and culturally embedded (p. 58).

The focus of Chapter 2 is al-Ḥaddād's efforts to formulate a new articulation mode that shifts the emphasis of Islam away from the spectacular achievements of living figures and toward text-based teachings of the Prophet that are accessible to the common people (*awāmm*). This chapter then follows the early nineteenth-century spread of this paradigm in Java (p. 72). Furthermore, Alatas concludes that the Ḥaddādian paradigm aided in the emergence of a universal, text-based vision of Islam free of cultural entanglements, an imagination that modernist Muslims vigorously reinforced at the turn of the twentieth century.

Despite its universality claim, such a vision is created and maintained within a specific sociocultural context (p. 83). This conclusion supports the notion that Ulama from Hadhrami, South Yemen plays an important role in the Islamization and intensification of Islam in Indonesia and Southeast Asia in general (Azra 2002, p. 135).

Chapter 3 examines the Islamic communities established in Java by Ḥaddādian scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These communities gradually developed into sacred dynasties while converging according to the Ḥaddādian articulatory paradigm (p. 85). This chapter focuses on the sacred Bā Alawī dynasty in Pekalongan, Central Java, and demonstrates how a change in the way articulation worked was behind the transformation of the Ḥaddādian community into a sacred dynasty, which adapted the way the sunnah was imagined and resulted in a new form of authority that remains influential today.

Alatas concludes that *manṣabates* (holy dynasty) and *jamiyya* are best understood as two distinct but overlapping social formations of Islam that emerge from different modes of articulation, both of which have continued to grow and remain significant for Indonesian Muslim society to the present day (p. 106)

The second section of this book continues the story by tracing the emergence of a growing Islamic community in modern Java. This community was founded by Habib[1] Luthfi Bin Yahya (b. 1947), a Bā Alawī cleric who has become a leading Sufi teacher in Indonesia. Habib Luthfi, considered by his followers to be a living saint, is a leading Islamic authority whose advice is sought not only by his followers, but also by prominent politicians, generals, scholars, and business leaders. While influenced by the Ḥaddādian paradigm, Habib Luthfi has attempted to transcend the dominant Bā Alawī articulatory paradigm by utilizing and synthesizing various articulatory modes that existed historically in Indonesia.

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[1]The honorific "Habib" denotes a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

The biography of Habib Luthfi is continued in Chapter 4. Habib Luthfi, unlike the descendants of the sacred Bā Alawī dynasty, did not come from a well-established scientific or religious family (p. 109). As a result, in order to be recognized as a credible link to the Prophet's past, he had to make new connections and embed himself in an established lineage. The chapter then recounts the Luthfi's rise to prominence and his rivalry with rival religious leaders, including descendants of the sacred Pekalongan dynasty.

Alatas concludes the importance of both genealogy and mobility in establishing and maintaining religious authority. Genealogy identifies diachronic channels that connect the present to the Prophet's past and serve as the conceptual infrastructure that allows the Prophet's teachings to be transmitted. Genealogy also performs the ideological function of allowing its bearers to be regarded as the authoritative articulators of the sunnah by others. Relatedly, mobility enables aspiring scholars to leverage their genealogy to transmit knowledge, spreading their own sunnah articulations, and expanding their communities. In the case of Habib Luthfi, the travel experience enabled him to imagine embedded ideas about the sunnah that are sensitive to, and dialogically entangled with, local sociocultural peculiarities (p. 134).

The fifth chapter examines Habib Luthfi's articulation. It examines how the Sufi order's infrastructure enabled him to build a long-lasting community centered on the hierarchical relationship between a Sufi master and his students (p. 146). In turn, such a relationship enabled Habib Luthfi to adapt and add to the sunnah by introducing new teachings and practices that suited the changing tendencies of his students without being perceived as deviating from the Prophet's teachings. The Sufi teacher–student relationship is frequently understood through the power paradigm. In this regard, Alatas follows Hannah Arendt's approach to authority, according to which authority "rests not on common grounds or on the power of the one who governs," but on the recognition of a hierarchy that is perceived as right and legitimate by all parties involved. He came to the conclusion that an Islamic religious leader's authority is dependent on hierarchical relationships that allow him to articulate the Prophet's teachings to others (pp. 158–60).

The central theme of Chapter 6 is Habib Luthfi's relationships with various Indonesian state actors and institutions. It investigates how various articulations have enabled Luthfi to form alliances with the state and, in turn, to use the state as an infrastructure of religious authority (p. 167). This relationship enabled him to organize religious events in which he articulated the sunnah to a wider audience, often at the expense of other Muslim leaders. Habib Luthfi's alliance with the state also allowed him to intervene consequentially on behalf of others.

This study concludes that Habib Luthfi's success in gathering and expanding his community with the assistance of state actors has increased his recognition as one of Indonesia's leading Islamic authorities. This sociocultural capital enabled him to begin a hagiographic project about his own little-known and undocumented ancestors. This hagiographic composition enabled Habib Luthfi to position himself at the summit of the various authoritative Islamic transmission lines that have linked contemporary Java to the Prophet's past (p. 183). The interaction of religious and political elites is part of a larger intellectual story of Islamic governance (Kingsley 2018).

The final chapter looks at Habib's efforts to restore Indonesia's sacred past. Much of this work has been devoted to his own little-known and unrecorded ancestors' hagiographic compositions. In such hagiographic composition, Habib Luthfi is presented as the lineal successor of the ancient but forgotten sacred Bā Alawī dynasty, closely related to Ḥaddādian clerics on the one hand and the Javanese royal dynasty on the other. Habib Luthfi used hagiography to articulate competing genealogies and Islamic transmission lines throughout history (p. 187).

The convergence of several Islamic transmission genealogies in Habib Luthfi enabled him to position himself as the living end of a diverse historical journey that connects contemporary Java with the Prophet's past. Being the embodiment of several genealogies of authority, in turn, provided habib with the opportunity to reside authoritatively in the various Islamic communities in Java and articulate the sunnah for them, though this did not necessarily determine its success. As Alatas concludes, Habib Luthfi attempted to sew himself into a Bā Alawī – Ḥaddādian lineage through his hagiographic compositions.

Unfortunately, the majority of Bā Alawī continue to be skeptical of Habib Luthfi's hagiographic compositions. As a result, Bā Alawī has not fully recognized him as an authoritative liaison with the Prophet's past and articulator of the Prophet's teachings. This reaffirms that, while Islamic religious authority is founded on a connection to the Prophet's past, the specificity of that connection – whether form or lineage – is crucial. Some connections may be regarded as authoritative by one community while being rejected by another. In theory, strengthening the more familiar forms of connection with the prophetic past could lead to increased authority (p. 206).

The book concludes with a brief epilogue discussing the implications of the analytic approach proposed in this book for our understanding of Islam's universality. This book criticizes the general tendency to equate Islam with a consistent package of supracultural teachings, values, and practices that differ from local particularities when discussing the articulation work that produced Islam as a social reality. Scholars have consistently misrepresented Islam as a preconceived universal project by asserting the existence of a "pure" Islamic tradition.

This book was successful in treating up the issue of the purity of the Islamic tradition in the form of harmony between orthodox values and social realities that emerge in the community. In describing the figure of Habib Luthfi as part of the Bā Alawī – Ḥaddādian genealogy, Alatas, who is a habib (generation direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad), develops a very positive narrative about the position of habib. This book, on the other hand, has proposed a way of thinking about Islam's universality as a concrete universality. This means that what makes Islam universal is not a shared set of ideas, but the actual work of articulating the sunnah and community, which has resulted in doctrinal and practical diversity.

This book continues the investigation of religious authority begun by Azyumardi Azra et al. (2010). Religious authority was centered on ulama who were in Islamic educational institutions such as dayah, pesantren, surau, and so on during the sultanate. During the Dutch colonial period, religious authority was divided between ulama in Islamic institutions outside of colonial rule and ulama within the colonial government structure. With the emergence of a number of Islamic organizations such as Jamiātul Khair, Muhammadiyah, Nahḍatul Ulama, and others in the early decades of the twentieth century, the dispersal of religious authority increased. While the study approaches religious authority through the lens of political structure and power, Alatas' book focuses on the personal and anthropological dimensions.

Religious authority is established through the consolidation of intellectual abilities and congregational work. This is something started by the Prophet Muhammad that was then continued by his successors and descendants in a variety of locations. Geographical differences enable each community to grow with nuances of local particularity in realizing the sunnah that they understand. This book is appropriate for students studying Islamic studies through ethnographic, anthropological, and historical lenses. Furthermore, the combination of the sultan and the Sufi is appropriate for those interested in Islamic politics.

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