Pradana Boy Zulian, *Fatwa in Indonesia: An Analysis of Dominant Legal Ideas and Modes of Thought of Fatwa-Making Agencies and their Implications in the Post-New Order Period*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018, 316 pp. ISBN 9789462981850, price: EUR 105.00 (hardback).

A *fatwa* is an opinion from the viewpoint of Islamic Law on a particular issue, given by a qualified Muslim scholar or organization. During the last three decades, the study of fatwas in Indonesia has resulted a number of books and many articles. The present book, which is based on a 2015 Ph.D thesis from the National University in Singapore, forms another contribution to this important topic.

Chapters 1 (pp. 21–37) and 2 (pp. 39–69) explain terminology and give background information, such as defining a fatwa. As far as I am concerned these chapters contain much too common knowledge and are much too long. Chapter 3 (pp. 71–128) deals with the notorious 2005 fatwa of the MUI (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*; Indonesian Council of Muslim Scholars) which condemns pluralism, liberalism and secularism, as well as goes into the responses to this fatwa from various groups and individuals in Indonesian society. This particular fatwa has already received ample scholarly attention, so the chapter has little new to offer to the informed student. Chapter 4 (pp. 129–82) also deals with the MUI and discusses its fatwas against the Ahmadiyah movement and Shi'ism and recaps the frequent conclusion that the MUI issued these conservative points of view in order to preserve its authority among Muslims who might feel attracted to more intolerant and radical understandings of Islam.

Chapter 5 (pp. 183–228) deals with a number of fatwas from the fatwa-making agency of the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), called the LBM (*Lajnah Bahth al-Masail*; Arabic for the 'Committee for the Investigation of Issues'). As in the previous chapters, this one starts by giving common background information, such as the establishment of the NU, its early history, and details of the organization, including its preferred legal methodology, before finally, after nearly 20 pages, addressing the LBM and its fatwas of 1999–2010 (pp. 212–27). Despite the delay in getting to the heart of the issue, when it comes, the coverage of the fatwas is valuable because it shows what ritual and social issues were regarded as important within the organization. However, the conclusion that the fatwas of the NU reflect the organization's mode of thought does not come as a surprise.

Chapter 6 (pp. 229–70) deals with the fatwas of the fatwa-making agency of the Muhammadiyah, which is called the *Majelis Tarjih*. The Arabic legal term

tarjih is not properly explained in the book; it means giving preference, in this context to a certain legal opinion in comparison with other legal opinions, and by extension it is used in the sense of *ijtihad* or independent legal reasoning. This chapter follows the same pattern as the one on the NU, first presenting common knowledge on the organization and its characteristics before coming to its fatwa agency (p. 246) and some of its fatwas (pp. 255–69; with a useful list of the subjects of all fatwas of the Majelis Tarjih from 1999–2010 in an Appendix on pp. 279–86). This fatwa part is one of the most interesting parts of the book. In concluding the chapter, the author states that the fatwas of the Muhammadiyah mainly follow a traditionalist mode of thought.

The brief conclusion of the book (pp. 271–7) mainly reiterates the intermediate conclusions of the preceding chapters. Unfortunately, the author does not use his observations to take the analysis to a higher level and does not try to make some broader remarks on development of Islam in Indonesia in the post-Soeharto period. For instance, with regard to the MUI's rejection of the Ahmadiyah movement, the question is not why the MUI rejected this movement (as they had in 1980, and which is completely understandable from a doctrinal perspective), but why in their 2005 fatwa they urged the government much more explicitly and vehemently to address the movement. As far as MUI's rejection of Shi'ism is concerned, an elaboration on the rise of an intolerant discourse inspired by the sectarian conflicts between Shi'ism and Sunnism in the Middle East would have been helpful. The author mentions briefly the rise of Salafism in Indonesia (p. 166) but, as far as I am concerned, on the basis of the fatwas he investigated, he should and could have gone more elaborately and deeply into the conservative changes within Islam in Indonesia.

The book suffers from sloppy editing. There are numerous grammatical mistakes, including missing plural forms of verbs and nouns, and occasionally words are not separated by a space. Most glaringly, throughout the entire book, the word *fatwa* is not only used for the singular, but also to indicate the plural (even in the title of the book!); this is obviously taken from Indonesian, but in English the plural should be *fatwas*. Equally irritating is that throughout the book, commonly used concepts are repeatedly explained; the concept 'legal opinion', for instance, is always followed by the explanation between brackets (*fatwa*). This occurs hundreds of times and sometimes even in successive sentences! As a final example of this careless editing, I note that the transliteration of Arabic is not done consistently.

Despite a few bright spots, overall this is a poorly edited and disappointing book which has little new to offer to the specialist. It provides too much com-

mon background information in every chapter, which might be acceptable in a thesis, but not in a published research monograph.

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