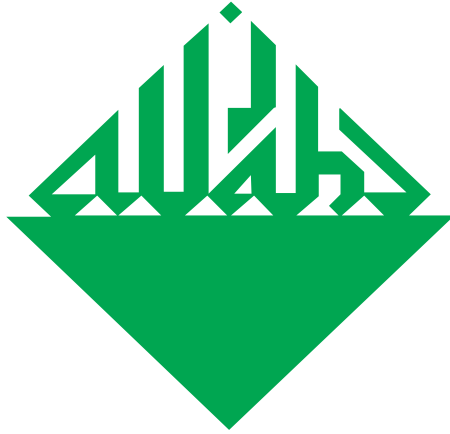


# STUDIA ISLAMIKA

INDONESIAN JOURNAL FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Volume 29, Number 2, 2022



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A STRONG AND RESILIENT STATE

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# **STUDIA ISLAMIKA**



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Ciputat 15419, Jakarta, Indonesia.  
Phone: (62-21) 7423543, 7499272, Fax: (62-21) 7408633;  
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Traditions and Challenges in Southeast Asia

Norshahril Saat

## Managing Islam in Singapore: A Strong and Resilient State

**Abstract:** *The Malay-Muslim community makes up about 13.4 per cent of the 5.6 million Singapore population. The relationship between the community and the state has been amicable, although there were instances of tension. Since the 1970s, it has undergone what observers portray as an Islamic resurgence. Drawing from Fukuyama's state capacity paradigm, the Singapore state, led by the People's Action Party (PAP) government, can be considered a strong state. The notion of 'strong' here does not necessarily mean illiberal or authoritarian state—as political observers represent it to be—but can also mean 'effective'. This article examines Singapore's effectiveness in managing state-Malay community relations particularly on issues of security and religiosity. It argues that the state's strength does not derive from the use of hard power or legislations, but from its flexibility and deep knowledge of when, what and how to intervene. It concludes with a discourse on how the state deals with challenges to its strength in more recent political science framework about weakening the state or the end of power.*

**Keywords:** Malays of Singapore, State Capacity, Terrorism Threat, Middle East Impact in Singapore.



**Abstrak:** *Komunitas Melayu-Muslim mencakup sekitar 13,4 persen dari 5,6 juta penduduk Singapura. Hubungan antara masyarakatnya dan negara cenderung bersahabat, meskipun terdapat sedikit ketegangan. Komunitas muslim telah berkembang selama bertahun-tahun. Sejak tahun 1970-an, ia mengalami hal yang disebut oleh pengamat sebagai kebangkitan Islam. Meminjam paradigma kapasitas negaranya Fukuyama, Pemerintahan Singapura yang dipimpin oleh People's Action Party (PAP) dapat dianggap kuat. Kuat di sini tidak selalu berarti tidak liberal atau otoriter—seperti yang digambarkan para pengamat politik Singapura—tetapi juga bisa disebut efektif. Artikel ini mengkaji efektivitas negara dalam mengelola hubungan negara-masyarakat Melayu khususnya dalam hal keamanan dan religiositas. Artikel ini berpandangan bahwa negara yang kuat tidak hanya persoalan menggunakan hard power atau undang-undang, tetapi fleksibilitas dan pengetahuannya yang mendalam mengenai kapan, apa, dan bagaimana melakukan intervensi. Hal ini kemudian bermuara pada penilaian tentang bagaimana negara mengatasi tantangan terhadap kekuatannya dengan menggunakan kerangka ilmu politik yang lebih baru tentang melemahnya negara atau berakhirnya kekuasaan.*

**Kata kunci:** Melayu Singapura, Kapasitas Negara, Tantangan Terorisme, Dampak Timur Tengah di Singapura.

**ملخص:** يشكل المجتمع الملايوي المسلم حوالي ١٣,٤ في المئة من سكان سنغافورة البالغ عددهم ٥,٦ مليون نسمة. وتقبل العلاقات بين الشعب والدولة إلى أن تكون ودية، على الرغم من وجود حالات التوتر. وتطور المجتمع المسلم على مر السنين. وقد شهد منذ سبعينيات القرن الماضي ما يسميه المراقبون النهضة الإسلامية. وبالاعتماد على نموذج قدرات الدولة لفوكوياما، يمكن اعتبار دولة سنغافورة، بقيادة حكومة حزب العمل الشعبي (PAP) على أنها دولة قوية. ولا تعني دولة سنغافورة القوية هنا بالضرورة أنها دولة غير ليبرالية أو استبدادية - كما يصفها المراقبون السياسيون في سنغافورة - ولكنها قد تعني أيضًا أنها فعالة. ويتناول هذا المقال فعالية الدولة في إدارة العلاقات بين الدولة والمجتمع الملايوي، لا سيما فيما يتعلق بقضايا الأمن والتدين، ويجادل بأن الدولة القوية لا تتبع من استخدام القوة الصارمة أو التشريعات، وإنما تأتي من مرونتها ومعرفتها العميقة حول متى وماذا وكيف تتدخل، وتحتتم بتقييم كيفية تغلب الدولة على التحديات التي تواجه سلطتها باستخدام أحدث أطر العلوم السياسية حول إضعاف الدولة أو نهاية السلطة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** ملايو سنغافورة، قدرة الدولة، تحديات الإرهاب، تأثير الشرق الأوسط في سنغافورة.

Singapore presents a unique case study for maritime Southeast Asia on state and Muslim relations. 15 per cent of the total population of 5.6 million people (including permanent residents, and foreign workers) profess to be Muslims (Department of Statistics Singapore 2019). The Malays make up more than 90 per cent of all Muslims, or 13.4 per cent of the total Singapore population (Noor Aisha and Azhar, Malays 2017). Even though the Muslims are the minority in Singapore, the country is located between two Muslim-majority countries Indonesia and Malaysia. Developments of Islam and Muslims in the two countries affect the Singapore Muslim community, especially the Malay-speaking ones, and the impact can be felt in discourse and behavior.<sup>1</sup> Before the colonial period between the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, boundaries dividing the three states were fluid and many kingdoms intersected. Today's boundaries separating the three countries resulted from the Dutch rule in Indonesia (from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century to 1945) and the British government in Malaya (today's Malaysia and Singapore) from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to 1950s. European colonialism divided and ruled these states according to their empire-building ideology and capitalistic interests (Alatas 1977). In fact, differences between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore regarding boundaries continue to happen until today, though most of these contestations are settled amicably under international law.<sup>2</sup>

This article examines how the Singapore state manages the Malay/Muslim minority community. It focuses on its strategies over various issues and tensions since independence in 1965. Without going into the details of these issues, since several academics and scholars have tackled them, the overriding objective is to appraise the state's strength vis-à-vis the Malay/Muslim community (See Hussin 2012, Lily Zubaidah 1998, Ismail 1974). This article contends that the Singapore state remains strong on several indicators pointed out by political scientist Francis Fukuyama. Its strength does not depend on hard power, legislation, and tough enforcement on the rule of law sole, but its flexibility: its profound ability to know what, when and how to intervene. The state does not hesitate to apply hard power on issues that harm national security, but it prefers community leaders to solve problems independently. Nonetheless, the more recent political science literature that questions the global trend of declining state's strength is

helpful to re-evaluate the Singapore case. To be sure, the Singapore state also struggles to maintain its strength in achieving its goals in the age of social media and Internet of Things.

### **Singapore Society and Politics: An Overview**

In Singapore, race is a key identifier of how society and politics are organized. Citizens are classified into four racial categories Chinese, Malays, Indians and Others, commonly referred to as CMIO (each alphabet stands for the ethnic category mentioned). Since almost all Malays profess the Islamic faith, the religion is closely identified with the community's culture, way of life, and *weltanschauung*. A Malay is loosely defined in Singapore, unlike in the Malaysian Constitution, which unequivocally spells out a Malay is a Muslim, habitually practices the Malay culture, and speaks the Malay language. Although these are not spelt out in the Singapore constitution, Malay culture, language and Islam are the main identifiers of Singapore Malays.<sup>3</sup> CMIO is also reflected in the way politics is organized in the country. In 1988, the government introduced the Group Representation Constituency (GRC) scheme to ensure that all racial groups are proportionally represented in parliament. In any election, some candidates must run in teams for constituencies marked as GRCs. In any team, at least one of the candidates must come from a minority community (either a Malay, Indian or Others). From the state's perspective, the scheme ensures minority representation in parliament in every election. In 2017, the Singapore parliament passed another amendment to the Constitution for the Elected Presidency (EP) scheme. Since the 1990s, the president, the country's head of state, is elected every six years. With the latest amendment, an election can be reserved for candidates from a particular race; the election will be declared a "reserved" one whenever no candidates from that race are elected after five consecutive elections. The 2017 presidential election is reserved for Malay candidates, since the country had not had a Malay president after the late Yusof Ishak, who was president from 1965 to 1970.

State-Muslim relations in Singapore have been widely discussed in scholarly works (Lily Zubaidah 1998, Hussin 2012, Ismail 1974). Scholars generally contend that the Singapore state is strong, or one that accomplish its objectives with minimal difficulties. This characterization is not at all negative, though it is often equated with

authoritarianism or illiberalism (Hussin 2000). By contrast, it can also mean that the state: is progressive, whenever it counters conservative groups; efficient, whenever it challenges utopian thinking or populism; and clean, fair and task-oriented, whenever it tackles corruption or any other abuses of power. Some scholars would describe the Singapore state as a dominant-one party system since it has not witnessed any change of government since the country's independence in 1965 (Hussin 2004:8). The People's Action Party (PAP) has been in power since 1959 (before Singapore's independence) and won no less than two-thirds majority in parliament since 1965. The PAP governs Singapore through meritocracy, multiculturalism, and secularism, and it also stands for the notion of community "self-help", which at the risk of overgeneralizing, means the community leaders should take charge or shoulder some responsibility of solving their respective community's problems (Norshahril 2022:241-254). The government provides grants and subsidies to race-based or religious-based organizations to solve social issues, although the PAP does not believe in a welfare state. In this vein, Malay-Muslim leaders are held accountable in shouldering and solving their community's problems.

Since independence, at least one position in the cabinet is reserved for a Malay-Muslim politician. So far, the cabinet positions accorded to the Malays are environment and water resources, communications and information, and community, culture and youth, and social and family. The minister will concurrently take charge of the Muslim affairs portfolio. There is however progress on this front. Since 2015, Malay-Muslim leaders are given positions as second minister for education and foreign affairs, on top of the fact that the Malays/Muslims have all along been appointed in junior ministerial posts, defined as senior minister of state (similar to deputy minister in other countries) for foreign affairs, defense, and education. The Malay-Muslim ministers and MPs (Members of Parliament) are also in charge of state-formed/supported institutions that oversee Islamic affairs, education, culture, arts, and heritage. These institutions include the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) and Council for the Development of Singapore Malay/Muslim Community (Mendaki), and People's Association Malay Activity Executives Committee Council (Mesra). The minister in charge of Muslim affairs is the de facto Malay leader in cabinet and the leader of all the Malay MPs elected via the GRC electoral system.

Since 9/11 (September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, 2001), the spotlight has been cast on the Malay-Muslims in Singapore after members from the community were arrested or detained for their involvement in radical groups. Some participated in regional terrorist networks Jemaah Islamiah (JI) in the 2000s, and this raised further doubt about the community's loyalty to the state. Lately, several Singaporeans were also detained having been influenced by global terrorist groups ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). However, based on the government's CMIO ideology and modus operandi, issues concerning Islamic extremism is both considered a national security problem and Malay/Muslim community one. Therefore, the Malay/Muslim politicians and community leaders have fronted the issue and taken the lead whilst working hand in hand with the state.

### **State-Malay/Muslim Relations: A Strong State**

Over the years, the PAP government has delivered political stability, remarkable economic growth, and brought the country from third world to first. In the 1990s, Singapore is classified as a "Tiger Southeast Asian" economy alongside South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. This resulted from massive industrialization of the economy. Singapore leaders, under the leadership of founding prime minister Lee Kuan Yew, were also quick to embark on new opportunities and riding on the wave of trends, so that Singapore remains competitive. When its neighbors in ASEAN were also moving rapidly towards industrialization, Singapore quickly moved into the service sector, and took advantage of its geographical location and deep harbor. It banked on its efficient port and airport and refashioned itself as a global and cosmopolitan city. Now, it envisions itself as a smart city riding on the wave of digitization. Today, it is being lauded for its efficiency: in 2020, Singapore has placed the Covid-19 spread under control. In March 2020, World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom praised the Singapore government for its efforts to control the pandemic (Teo 2020). By December 2020, the country has moved into Phase 3, or more relaxation of restrictions from a typical economic and movement lockdown experienced in other countries. With the emergence of the Delta and Omicron variants of the Covid-19, the number of cases rose exponentially. Yet the government was able to adjust accordingly its policies to meet people's needs. The high number of vaccinations has

also ensured that the number of deaths remain low. The way the state handed the pandemic elicited praise from the international community. By March 2022, the country is on course to resume business and travel to pre-Covid-19 levels.

Singapore is certainly facing challenges like those of other developed countries: such as low fertility rates, slow population growth, reliance on migrant workers, high cost of living, and social inequality. The subject of social inequality has also elicited interests among some academic, that seeks to reflect on the everyday lives of the underprivileged (Teo 2018). With the growth of the middle-class and upper-class, it is facing a crisis of success, with growing expectations for democracy and openness. Still, the PAP has consolidated its power and performed well in the 2015 general election obtaining 69 per cent of popular vote. Even in years its popularity waned, such as in the 2020 general election where its popular votes dropped to 61 percent, it retains two-thirds majority in parliament.

Based on Fukuyama's criteria for strong states (Fukuyama 2005), the Singapore government ticks all boxes. But measuring a state's strength must also be accompanied by measuring its scope, in other words, the goals and objectives the Singapore state tries to set out. To recap, Fukuyama distinguishes scope and capacity as follows:

It therefore makes sense to distinguish between the scope of state activities, which refers to the different functions and goals taken by governments, and the strength of state power, or the ability of states to plan and execute policies and to enforce laws cleanly and transparently—what is now commonly referred to as state or institutional capacity (Fukuyama, 2005, 9).

In terms of priorities, the Singapore government maintains survival to be its goal. International relations scholars will easily define it a realist or neo-realist state. The reasons for this outlook are understandable: it is a small state surrounded by dominant Muslim countries that in the past, had occasionally been hostile to it. In the 1960s, Indonesia launched the *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation) against Singapore and Malaysia, which resulted in terrorist attacks. Since 1967, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have been at peace in the spirit of good neighborliness and multilateralism in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). In the 1980s and 1990s, when Dr Mahathir Mohamad was Malaysia's prime minister, Singapore-Malaysia relations experienced ebb and flows (Nathan 2002, 385-410). Tensions arose

resulting from, among others water agreements, which Malaysia argues Singapore is paying very low price for its water supplies. Its smallness does not mean that the country function as by-standers in international affairs. It does retain an autonomous foreign policy and has in the past stood its ground against big powers including the US and China. Leifer (2000, 10) argues that Singapore economic prowess allows it to attain “disproportionate influence” relative to its size.

Its second priority is economic growth and stability. The PAP government can be considered to have excelled on this front. Its track record of a clean government has also become the envy of many nations. It has developed strong *technical capacity* through sound economic policies to weather global economic uncertainties, such as the 1998 Asian monetary crisis, and the 2008 global financial meltdown. The government also has enough resources to allow the country to weather the massive impact Covid-19 pandemic has on the global economy, which has led to closure of borders and economic activities. In addition, the PAP government also has strong *institutional capacity*, and has been able to introduce clear rules and regulations for businesses and investors.

The Singapore government also has strong *administrative capacity*, necessary to meet its goal of maintaining social cohesion. Singapore is a multiracial (the sociological term is multicultural), and secular country. It has zero-tolerance for any attempts at weakening the country’s social cohesion. Religion is strictly left out of politics. The Singapore government also expects its citizens to abide by rules to not incite hatred or be communal. It has laws to ensure these values are upheld, in line with Fukuyama’s definition of strong institutional capacity, such as the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act (MRHA). On the other hand, the state also engages and partners with the civil society to promote racial harmony through inter-faith dialogue. The government does not tolerate non-violent extremism which sow discord among races, and it adopts an even hard-hand approach toward violent extremism, which includes radicalism and terrorism.

This article makes two arguments. First, measured through the state capacity framework, the Singapore state can be considered resilient in managing extremist threats to the country’s scope and ideology. Second, its resilience is not only demonstrated through administrative and institutional capacities in applying rules and regulations and laws on security matters, but also use *soft power*. The government works in

tandem with the various race and religious self-help groups to foster a strong culture of dialogue. This article will demonstrate the state's strengths through various episodes, which can be divided into two broad categories of issues: governance-related, such as terrorism and political representation; and society's demand for alternative "Islamic" institutions and lifestyle, which also refers to anti-secularist stance. Issues discussed will only examine Islamic-related case studies, even though similar and consistent state responses can be seen towards other religions and race as well. In addition, as discussed, reference to Muslims in Singapore will automatically refer to the Malays (hence Malay-Muslims). The article will then examine more recent concerns of Middle East influence in Southeast Asia, particularly the notion of Singapore Malays' declining interest in their own culture but expressing greater interest in mimicking the Arabs, a process known as Arabization. Before delving into the specific issues and the responses these generated from the government, the article will discuss an important historical episode that shapes the way Malays think: Islamic resurgence movement which began in the 1970s.

### **Islamic Resurgence in Southeast Asia**

Majority of the Malays are Muslims, to the extent that the two are inseparable categories. The Malays are considered the indigenous people of the land, and neighbouring Malaysia is also made up of majority Malays. Nevertheless, the Malays and Muslims are not homogeneous groups, and this is not unique to them. The difference can be seen between time and space. The Malays are generally Sunnis and following the Shafie school of jurisprudence (note there are four schools of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam). The dominance of this school of thought is due to the groups that bring Islam to the Malay world, namely Hadramis and Sufis who came from what is known today as Yemen.

The Malays have also experienced Islamic resurgence in the 1970s (Chandra 1987). According to Chandra (1987, 2), Islamic resurgence refers to "the endeavor to establish Islamic values, Islamic practices, Islamic institutions, Islamic laws, indeed Islam in its entirety, in the lives of Muslims everywhere. It is an attempt to re-create an Islamic ethos, an Islamic social order, at the vortex of which is the Islamic human being, guided by the Quran and Sunnah." During this period, the



Southeast Asian region was hit by the geopolitical rivalry in the Middle East, particularly between Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iran.<sup>4</sup> In 1979, the Iranian revolution overthrew the Shah of Iran, who the Western World favored. With his overthrow, Ayatollah Khomeini, a 77-year-old cleric and the leader of the revolution, became the country's supreme leader. The revolution invited huge interest among southeast Asian students, including those from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. Some of these undergraduates travelled to Iran to witness the revolution, considered a manifestation of the triumphed of Islam over the West. The fact that a cleric led the revolution showed that Islam—in the eyes of the resurgence supporters—has all the ingredients to be a successful nation. Authorities in Southeast Asia feared that these students might be influenced by revolutionary Shiism, the state ideology of Iran.

Coincidentally, Saudi Arabia, Iran's rival, witnessed oil boom in the country. With its petro-dollars, it hoped to counter Iran's influence in the global scene. Saudi Arabia champions Wahhabi-Salafism, a puritan brand of Islam. Salafism refers to a movement that considers the three generations after the Prophet Muhammad to be the best examples. Salafism in itself can be progressive or conservative, depending on how one approaches it. However, the Wahhabi variant is puritanical. Founded by Muhammad Abdul Wahab in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Arabia, it sought to purify what he considered to be innovations. His call to return to the time of the Prophet Muhammad also means banning religious practices such as the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (*mawlid nabī*), visitation of graves of pious Muslims (*ziarah kubur*) and congregational prayers for the dead (*tahlilan*). All these practices are commonly found in Southeast Asia. Saudi Arabia began sponsoring mosque building projects as well as offering lucrative scholarships for students who want to study in Medina where students will be introduced to Salafi-Wahhabi doctrine. While not all students returning from Saudi Arabia promoted the ideology in their home countries, many of them become deeply influenced by it. Evidently, Salafi-Wahhabism's influence overtook Shiism. There were fatwas or advisories issued by religious authorities in the regions which spoke about Shia as deviant sect (Norshahril 2014).

The impact of Iran's Shiism and Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi-Salafism notwithstanding, there is third influence that shape the thinking of Malays in Southeast Asia: The Ikhwanul Muslimin or Muslim

Brotherhood. This organization has its roots in Egypt and was founded by Hassan Al-Banna in the 1930s. The organization was later banned in Egypt for being too radical. But Muslim Brotherhood's thinking of creating an Islamic alternative to challenge Western domination found its place in Southeast Asia too. Students in campus began to attend *usrah* (study circles) sessions. Youth movements flourished in Southeast Asia's urban centres, including Singapore, and there were numerous exchanges between student leaders from Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. Muslim Brotherhood ideas made its way to Southeast Asia through campus *usrah* sessions, where readings and publications by its ideologues Hassan Al-Banna (1906-1949), Syed Qutb (1906-1966) and Yusuf al-Qaradhawi (1926-2022) were all circulated, read, and discussed. The essence of their discussion is not only about returning to Islamic principles, but to challenge the West and seeking an alternative through faith. This was the period in which Islamic banking and finance, halal certification, and Islamic fashion became widely discussed. Moreover, the Malays also witnessed a change in their dietary habits and consumption patterns; the veil (or *tudung*) became widely worn by Muslim women in Singapore. For the men, the beard became the symbol of religiosity, in line with the Prophet's Sunnah.

The Islamic resurgence clearly altered the behavior of the Malays. There are signs in which the Malays were becoming conservative. This also means that the Singapore government had to constantly assess the best policies to ensure that the community are in-sync with progress.

### **Governance Related Issues**

This section examines issues surrounding the Singapore state's existence vis-à-vis the Malay/Muslim community. It is called "governance related" because it centers around policies legislation and laws. The state has the upper hand for it is a supra body that makes laws and enforces them. But in line with the argument of this article, laws alone do not make the state effective or strong, it needs to win over the hearts-and minds, as obtain support from the people. This section shall cover two aspects, through different, somewhat related. The first is how the government tackles terrorism and radicalism. This is followed by a discussion of how the state delicately manages political representation of the Malays.

The Singapore state does not tolerate any attempts to cause discord or disharmony through violence. The 9/11 attacks in New York have

cast the spotlight on Islam and Muslims globally, and the Malay-Muslim community in Singapore is not excluded. Yet, regional terrorist groups also posed direct challenges to the Singapore government. For example, in the 2000s, several Singaporeans were influenced by the Jemaah Islamiah (JI) terrorist network. The Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) arrested a number of JI sympathizers and militants planning to attack key installations such as the Singapore Changi Airport and Mass-Rapid Transit (MRT) stations. The government was swift in countering radicalism, and evidently, there had not been any successful attacks on the country.

While the government clamped down on radicalism, it also works together with independent, civil society to promote inter-faith dialogue. For instance, government statutory institution that oversees Islamic affairs, Muis (Islamic Religious Council of Singapore) ran a campaign Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI) underlining 10 values of what a moderate Muslim community stands for. Islamic civil society organizations such as Pergas (Singapore Islamic Scholars & Religious Teachers Association) also run their own campaign promoting moderation in Islam and published books on the matter. These campaigns were intended to soften the ground in case there are any tensions between Muslims and non-Muslim. In other countries, there were instances of Islamophobia sparked after any terrorist attacks conducted by fellow Muslims; nevertheless, the strong inter-faith dialoging culture allows religious leaders to speak to one another comfortably so as not to escalate into violence and tit-for-tat approaches. In the event when any member of the community is arrested for being involved in radical activity, Muslim leaders were quick to publicly denounce the perpetrators of violence or extremism.

There have been instances in which some Singaporeans and non-Singaporeans but residing in Singapore (foreign workers) were influenced by the ISIS, a global movement to establish an Islamic caliphate in the Middle East. Some had already made plans to travel to the Middle East to fight alongside the radicals. The foreign workers who showed sympathy to the terrorist group were detained under the ISA, while some had been issued with restriction orders. The foreign workers who showed sympathy to ISIS were repatriated back to their country of origin. The age group of those arrested and their social background differs: the youngest to be detained was 18 years of age,

while the oldest, 62 years old; some were professionals and others were low-skilled workers. The Singapore state clearly expresses zero tolerance when dealing with terrorists, and its application of the internal security law has been effective. So far, no radical groups have been successful in their plans to cause destruction, as the authorities have been able to nip them in the bud. By and large, Singaporeans have expressed their appreciation towards the government's stance in combating radicalism. Even though radical groups had been weakened, the government and community continue to remain vigilant in combating any terror threats. On this front, the government can be considered as strong and effective when managing radicalism.

However, the approach to tackling conservatism is more complex. Although the state maintains secularism to be an important tenet, some groups have openly continued to denounce the concept. Secularism has many variants: Turkey's brand of secularism is different from France and Indonesia. Undeniably, majority of Singapore Muslims abide by the government's position on secular principle. They also value the government's readiness to allow Islamic institutions such as Muis to exist and function, amid a secular government. Moreover, Muslims are free to practice their faith: prayers in mosque, payment of tithes, fasting during Ramadhan, and performing of the haj pilgrimage to Mecca. The reasons for allowing the Muslims this special institution is manifold, and most of it is historical legacy of British colonial rule. Very broadly, the Singapore government's version of secularism is that it disapproves any use of religious symbols and slogans in the political arena. For instance, there is no Islamic political party in the country, unlike in neighboring Malaysia and Indonesia. The Malays can channel their concerns through the Malay Members of Parliament whose positions are guaranteed with the GRC scheme (to be discussed shortly).

Yet, there are groups in the community that question whether secularism is fully consistent with Islam. They interpret the Quranic verse Islam is a way of life to mean that the religion posits values that can be implanted in society. This group of Malays, nevertheless, are more pragmatic than their radicalized counterparts, abiding by the state's rules and regulations in a multiracial and multireligious society, and they do not condone violence. To them, forming an Islamic state and implementing shariah punishments is not a priority. The quote on a book published by *Moderation in Islam* sums up this way of thinking:

The two quotes from the book below provide an essence into the writers' mode of thinking about Islamic state and secularism:

...Islam is for us, a way of life which is *syumul* and comprehensive. As a way of life, it certainly includes politics because politics is part of the reality of life. It is the responsibility of every Muslim to implement Islam in politics or to participate in politics in accordance with the principles of Islam. Hence a Muslim cannot separate Islam from politics and politics from Islam (PERGAS 2004, 115)

While we believe in the comprehensiveness of Islam, the socio-political realities of the Muslim community here indicate that the possibility of practicing the comprehensive Islam in the Singapore context, is remote. Due to the remoteness of this possibility, we need to choose more appropriate and beneficial priorities...we accept Singapore being a secular State. We are willing to co-exist and accept this situation, so long as the freedom of religion is guaranteed, in line with the Constitution of Singapore and international conventions. (PERGAS, 2004, p.111-112)

The quotes demonstrate that the writers suspended their theological viewpoints in their embrace of Singapore's secularism. By contrast, in the Islamic tradition, there are different viewpoints or definition of secularism. Secularism is a modern-day principle in governing modern multicultural societies throughout the world, which is a norm in a highly connected and globalized world. An-Naim (2008) in his book *Islam and the Secular State* makes a convincing argument why Muslims need a secular state. He suggests that secularism ensure neutrality in managing religious doctrines, and that Islamic values cannot be forced into people through government institutions and machinery, for this is against the essence of religion.

To reiterate, the state has demonstrated resilience when managing violent extremism—especially when it undermines the state's authority and security—but it adopts a more calibrated approach when dealing with sensitive issues. The Malay/Muslim community leaders have been able to fulfill the role of softening the stance of the non-violent extremists through counselling and courses. The state's softer approach here is by no means it endorses non-violent extremism, especially when it weakens the country's multi-cultural fabric. One example was the Imam Nalla case in 2017. Imam Nalla Mohamed Abdul Jameel, who originated from India, recited a prayer that called for the destruction of the Jews and Christians. The video was uploaded on social media by a whistle blower. The matter created some unhappiness in the community

saying that the whistle blower was harassed more rather than the imam. The authorities took serious action and fined the imam and warned the whistle blower too for not channeling the issue to the proper authority but instead raised in on social media. The Imam was sent back to India, fined, and repatriated back to India.<sup>5</sup>

The Malays' doubt about secularism is often regarded as an intra-faith issue rather than an inter-faith one, and a matter to be managed by the community leaders. As will be discussed shortly, conservatism, if unmitigated, can fan further doubt towards state institutions, including casting doubts on banking system, education, and political ideologies.

Beyond countering Islamic radicalism, the state's strength is also manifested in the way it manages political representation for the Malay-Muslims. The GRC scheme, introduced in 1988, has allowed at least 10 Malay/Muslim leaders to be elected to parliament in every election. On the other hand, the opposition face difficulties winning these GRCs because each constituency has an anchor minister or a "star" politician. By electing the opposition, residents in the constituency risk losing the minister to represent them. In 2011, an opposition party Workers' Party (WP) managed to win a GRC, and in 2020, it won two GRCs. What binds the legitimacy of the GRC is the CMIO ideology. If there are any issues concerning the Malay/Muslim community that needs to be raised in parliament, or any legislations need to be made with regards to their interests, it is normally channeled through the PAP Malay/Muslim MPs. With the Worker's Party (WP) victory in a GRC in 2011, one Malay opposition parliamentarian was elected into parliament. It remains an arduous task to challenge and debate with the other 12 PAP Malay-Muslim MPs in parliament.

Yet, challenges towards the PAP Malay MPs' legitimacy have existed for decades. In 1991, a group of professionals sought to rival the PAP politicians' powers and set up the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP). It was a grounds-up movement of those who felt there was a leadership vacuum in the community after the leadership failed to respond effectively to a series of controversies such as the visit by Israeli Prime Minister to Singapore, the questioning of loyalty of the Malays and the question of free education for the Malays which had always been the case since the country's independence (Yang Razali 2016, 143). The organization wanted to be recognized as the community's spokesperson other than the PAP. Nevertheless, the PAP government

urged the group to participate in formal politics if they are serious. The signal given to the organization is that in order to challenge the PAP MPs in election, it had to abide by the GRC scheme. Thus, the PAP government has managed to keep the AMP challenge out of formal political arena, which is to keep it out of elections, but this does not remove the political challenge toward the Malay MPs. In the 2000s, the AMP came back again and urged the community to support its request for a collective leadership plan to challenge the Malay PAP members. The PAP again disapproved the plan and urged the leaders to continue working with the PAP Malay MPs. For the record, some of AMP leaders were co-opted into the PAP, ran and won elections. Others were appointed in government bodies. The AMP behavior today is unlike in the past, and now it preferred to function as a Malay/Muslim self-help group working alongside the PAP government.

The PAP government was not hesitant in using a hard hand approach in tackling extreme opposition to its regime (such as radicalism), but it also applies a soft approach in applying political challenges. It prefers such challenges not to displace its existence politically, but to collaborate with it hand in hand in realizing the multicultural and multireligious ideology.

### **Seeking Alternative Institutions**

This section focuses on the societal attitudes towards the government, and how the state manages it. As discussed, the Islamic resurgence left an indelible mark on the Malays attitude towards their religion and their culture. They tend to emphasize the former and forgo the latter, even though Islam is neutral towards culture. Islamic resurgence has also propelled the demand for Islamic education, through the madrasahs. The demand for the limited madrasah places is growing year by year. The following paragraphs demonstrate how the state carefully calibrates its strength in relation to society. While the state gives in to some of the community's requests, it does not support others.

The madrasah education debate in the early 2003 is an example of the Malay/Muslim community's ability to mobilize the ground and elicit the government's response. In the early 2000s, the government raised concerns about the high number of dropouts from the madrasahs, and that its dual objective—to equip students with religious and secular knowledge—was affecting the students' ability to cope. In the national

schools, students take four to five subjects such as English language, Mother Tongue (Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil languages), Mathematics and Sciences. Madrasah students must take these subjects as well, plus four to five more religious subjects. In December 1999, a Committee on Compulsory Education was set up and recommended that madrasahs can be granted the exception from sitting for the PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination). By 2003, the government decided to introduce compulsory education, and the madrasahs needed to fulfill certain minimum standards for PSLE by 2007, failing to do so means they have to stop admitting students at elementary level, and not granted the exception to accept primary school students. Some of the religious elites in the community initially thought this was an attempt by the state to close the madrasahs, although this was never the state's intent (Noor Aisha and Lai 2006).

A compromise was reached after the PAP leaders endorsed the Joint-Madrasah Scheme (JMS) to synchronize the madrasah education system to make it more effective. Three madrasahs opted to join the scheme but the remaining three opted out. The three which joined the JMS received funding from Muis.<sup>6</sup> Out of the three madrasahs who opted into the scheme, one will provide elementary education while the other two secondary and pre-university levels, one has high religious context and the other secular content. The madrasah controversy is an example where the state seeks to reach a compromise with the community after the latter demonstrated its ability to rally and mobilize resources which could be politically costly for the government.

While Singapore's madrasah education has undergone some streamlining, the same cannot be said about tertiary level Islamic education institutions. Generally, about 30 percent of the madrasah graduates enroll into an Islamic university upon graduation: some will go to the Middle East (such as Al-Azhar University in Cairo or University of Al-Madinah in Medina), and some to universities in neighboring Southeast Asian countries (especially in Malaysian International Islamic University of Malaysia, IIUM). There are private universities in Singapore that have established ties with universities in Malaysia and Indonesia (Norshahril, Azhar & Noor Aisha 2020). The impact on the religious discourse has not been discussed, yet this matter is again considered an internal community matter. Some of the concerns regarding Islamic studies graduates include employment



opportunities upon returning from their studies, their ability to find jobs that match their skills, their ability to contextualize what they learn overseas with the Singapore context, and how they can overcome the competitiveness in the religious public sphere. So far, community institutions have channeled vast number of resources to aid the Islamic studies graduates through courses and programs.

Islamic banking and finance have made some headway in Singapore, even though these are products of Islamic resurgence discourse of the 1970s. The capitalistic premise of the Singapore state needs to be considered here why these are allowed to be established. Islamic economics and finance is deemed to bring in wealth into the country particularly from big players in the Middle East. Still, these systems must abide by the rules and regulations consistent with the business environment in the country and was not allowed to cause any divisions. So far, Malay/Muslims continue to deposit their savings in conventional banks, and there are no attempts by the official religious elites to compel Muslims to patronize Islamic banking and finance. However, by not tackling the root of the matter—which is to create an alternative system based on Quran and Sunnah—the move is consistent with the ideology of the resurgence, that have problems with modern institutions that they consider to be secular in outlook. The promotion of alternative “Islamic” or shariah aligned banks has resulted in doubts among some Muslims, particularly among the middle class, whether patronizing conventional banks will make them less Muslim. What is not indicated is that Islamic banking works on the same capitalistic principles and applies Islamic terminologies to justify the system. This has not been debated.

Attaching the Islamic label to modern institutions or products to signify piety and religiosity is now a common feature in Singapore. In the past, such move is restricted to education and laws (thus the label Islamic education and shariah law). Islamic education is under the purview of madrasahs, referring to the full-time schools which were referred to earlier, and those part-time ones which were privately run. The later exist in the form of personal laws such as divorce, marriage, and inheritance managed by the Syariah court and Islamic Appeal Court; but politics (or political Islam) has never been accepted into Singapore’s political system and culture. Since the 1980s, there is a growing number of Muslims patronizing halal products such as Islamic

banking and finance, Islamic insurance, apart from the ordinary halal food. Now, halal fashion businesses are also flourishing in numbers. While consumption is a personal choice, it becomes complicated when religion is part of the equation, calling for the need to distinguish between halal and haram (allowed in Islam versus forbidden in Islam) from the Islamic perspective. The danger is that the community becomes exclusive by distinguishing themselves from other communities. At this point, there has been no demand that the state accedes to their products.

### **International Dimension**

While what has been discussed so far pertains to the domestic issues, between the PAP government of Singapore and the Malay/Muslim community, this relationship must not ignore the international dimension. On issues related to terrorism and radicalism, there was, and will continue to have, international dimension or external influence. For example, several Singaporeans are influenced by terrorist propaganda, in the past through educational platforms, but lately through the social media. So strong was the external influence that some Singaporeans were willing to travel to the Middle East to fight alongside ISIS militants.

But external influence has all long shaped local Malay/Muslims because of constant travelling and exchange of ideas between Southeast Asia with other parts of the Muslim world, such as the Middle East and South Asia. Some points need to be corrected when discussing external influence: first, not all external influence leads to conservatism or are negative. For instance, the reformist movement in the Middle East, led by Sheikh Muhammad Abduh in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century trickled down to Southeast Asia, brought by students studying in the Al-Azhar University. In fact, Singapore became the centre of printing and Islamic education during that period, and madrasahs were promoting progressive ideas. In neighboring Indonesia, the works of progressive Muslim thinkers have been translated and discussed in institutions of higher learning (Azhar 2018). Second, external influence does not only originate from the Middle East but can be also from other countries within the Southeast Asian region. There is a lot of discussion about Singapore Muslims becoming Arabized (turning to become Arabs), to mean they are conservative, puritan or anti-cultural, signaling that

negative influence come from Arab societies. In fact, half of madrasah graduates go to Malaysian universities to pursue Islamic studies degree. And local Malays have better access to Malaysian Islamic discourse and not Arab sources because of language similarities.

As discussed, the Muslim resurgence movement of the 1970s demonstrated that external influence can come from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia. During this period, there was a significant shift in terms of the Islamic orientation of the Muslim masses, globally with Southeast Asian Muslims included (Chandra 1987). The movement calls for greater Islamization of state and society grew out of the global trends in the Islamic worlds, such as the global powers colonizing Muslim nations, the Iranian revolution in 1979, and the impact of Saudi petro-dollars which led to the exportation of puritan ideology globally, such as Salafi-Wahhabism. This was the moment in which there was a significant shift in the identity markers of the Malays; while wearing the veil was not common in the past, it became more so after the 1970s. Malays also began to ask questions whether their cultural practices are in line with Islamic teachings, and began to ask whether their dressing, food, dances, or festivals conform to Islam, even though Islam respects local cultures for as long as they do not contradict the monotheistic and ethical principles of the faith. However, some began to consider Arabic culture as Islam and vice-versa, thus donning Arabic dressing is considered as symbol of piety. However, Singapore organizations, and campus movements sought guidance from their counterparts in Malaysia and Indonesia too, more than the Middle East.

Currently, the “Internet of things” is the common language of interaction. Religious communications are no longer conveyed via face-to-face interactions in class (*talaqi*), Friday sermons in mosques, or television and radio channels but social media and WhatsApp. The impact of the digital world is not only limited to the younger people, but the elderly ones too relate to the internet. The Singapore Malays is not only exposed to religious content carried by local preachers, but from neighboring Malaysia and Indonesia (for the Malay speaking audience) and from Europe and the US (for English speaking ones). There is very little that can be done to filter the content and whether they are suitable in the Singapore context. The state at times do intervene sharply if the content is against the principles of religious harmony and unity. One

example is the banning of Mufti Ismail Menk, a Zimbabwe cleric with Salafi-Wahhabi inclination, from coming to Singapore for disallowing Muslims to wish a merry Christmas.<sup>7</sup>

The use of the Internet as medium of religious communication also means that being popular is key to be ahead of the other preachers. This also means religious leaders must simplify their context, and fix them into bite size content. Undeniably this has the potential of brushing aside complex social issues, which savants of the past have argued and differed and accommodated into dichotomous conclusions of yes/no, permissible/non-permissible, black/white. Furthermore, contents that touches on spirituality is more popular compared to complex legal debates. Charismatic personalities too would be able to gain more attention from the masses, regardless of the standard of their religious training. Singaporeans would likely know more about preachers in Malaysia and Indonesia than those in their own country.

Overreliance on social media and the Internet also means societies are more susceptible to online harm, misinformation, and fake news. It also means some debates on religion, which used to be between scholars (ulama) can now be between ulama and masses, or among the masses. At time Singaporeans were delivered with fake news of deaths of clerics. There was once news spread that a popular Ustaz has passed on even though the news is not true.<sup>8</sup> Debates on religious matters also got out of control when the masses ignored the guidance of religious authority. Some within the community assumes that the ulama in the religious establishment are pro-PAP or co-opted by the state. This perception equates the ulama who serve in Muis as having no independent thinking.

While the state does not intervene in what is seen as community's internal problems, it does so if it harms national interest and image. In 2021, there was a revelation of an online polling targeting Muslim women (female religious teachers). Participants were asked to vote for which of the ladies deserved to be "gang raped". The authorities took no chance and police investigations were conducted immediately. Even the President of Singapore Madam Halimah Yacob chimed in to condemn the act. Not only does the polling contravene the guidelines posed by the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) in Singapore, it is also offensive and constitute violence.<sup>9</sup>

## **Conclusion-Weakening State?**

Measured in Fukuyama's state capacity and scope, the Singapore state resembles a strong state. This is particularly exemplified in its ability to tackle radicalism. Moreover, the state is able to introduce strong economic and social policies, clear rules and regulations, and most importantly, enforce them. But Singapore's state strength is not measured by its hard hand approaches to society, but its savviness in applying carrots and sticks depending on circumstances. The PAP government adopts soft approaches too in ensuring all citizens is in-sync with Singapore nation building efforts, as well as multi-religious and multicultural ideology. While the ISA is applied in many instances to rein in extremist groups that threatened the country's security, it also encourages dialogue. There were times when the state did not intervene and gave the space for the community leaders to solve problems at their end. For example, the Malay/Muslim community leaders are the ones expected to front intra-community tensions: such as Sunni-Shia, Ahmadiyah, and harassment of the so-called liberal Muslims. Still, the state will not let off perpetrators of hate speeches towards religious minorities. It has been hard-handed in its dealings with those who hurl insulting words towards LGBTQ groups, of Shias, or Christian or Jews. Singapore's brand of secularism allows religious diversity to prosper as long as religion is not used as political ammunition.

While the Singapore state remains strong and resilient, has its strength weakened over the years? Like many dominant one parties in the world, the PAP too had suffered some setbacks lately, and can no longer take the citizens support for granted. Between the 1960s and 1990s, PAP's dominance was unmatched. It had full control in parliament until the 1980s when it lost one seat to the opposition in a by-election. Apart from that, it has remained dominant by winning more than 90 percent of parliament seats. But dominant parties in other democracies have weakened: such as the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) in Japan, KMT (China Nationals Party) in Taiwan, BN (National Front) in Malaysia, and Golkar (Party of Functional Groups) in Indonesia. The initial stages of PAP decline were in the 2011 election when it lost its first GRC to the opposition. While it did not manage to regain that GRC in the 2015 election, the signs are that the PAP will remain resilient in the near future. The PAP managed to achieve a resounding comeback in the 2015 achieving 69 percent

of popular votes, compared to the 66 percent in the 2011 election. There are many reasons for this remarkable comeback, among them Singapore celebrated its 50 years of independence, its founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew passed on, and weak opposition. But the PAP must be credited for being a responsive government, reaching out to the masses, hearing their plight, and tackling socio-economic problems. In 2020, it suffered another setback by losing another GRC and obtained 61 percent of the popular votes.

Nevertheless, following recent paradigms in political science, the true strong and all-omnipotent state no longer exists in theory. Strong states are challenged by intra-elite rivalry and polarized society. Naim posits that there are new powers or micro powers, “of a new kind: not the massive, overwhelming, and often coercive power of large and expert organizations but the counterpower that comes from being able to oppose and constrain what those big powers can do” (Naim 2012, 17). Singapore is currently facing a more middle-class society that has its own peculiarities, needs and wants. It also has a sizeable group of underclasses whose plight have now become subjects of study by academics in universities, who then championed their cause. Inter-class rivalry poses a challenge for the state, and this coincides with religious extremist views too. Marginalization from the mainstream could lead to being attracted to extreme ideas. Here, marginalization can occur across socio-economic classes. As workers and professionals feel being displaced, some may turn to religion for solace, blaming Western capitalism and globalization, and wanting to replace these with Islamic alternatives. This may create uncertainties within the Muslim community, and they may feel displaced that they want to replace the existing order.

The state now faces the challenge of catering to diverse groups in society, and a hard-handed approach may no longer fulfill the purpose of conformity. Currently, the state attempts to persuade the younger generation to support its cause to gain legitimacy and support, failing which it will suffer the same fate of other dominant one-parties in the world. For now, it seems that the PAP has been able to manage the economy successfully, as well as health crisis such as Covid-19. Nevertheless, the challenge for its sustainability is not only to ensure economic indicators remain positive. The government also needs to ensure that religious groups conform to its multiracial and multi

religious character. The signs are that the government has been able to tackle both inter religious and intra religious issues successfully with measured hard and soft powers, but it is likely that it will have to face a growing complex society, and this will prove to be a test for its character in future.

## Endnotes

- This research was supported by the Policy Research Network of Contemporary Southeast Asia (PRN-SEA) with a grant from National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan
- 1. Singapore Malays speaks the same language as Malaysian Malays in Bahasa Melayu. While the Indonesians speak Bahasa Indonesia, Singapore Malays can understand what is articulated.
- 2. One example is the settlement of the status of Pedra Branca between Malaysia and Singapore.
- 3. Globalization has resulted in the extensive use of English language, as well as practicing other cultural practices such as Korean, Arabic, and Western, is seen as eroding Malay cultural values.
- 4. There are several reasons why Islamic resurgence became popular. The Iranian revolution is the first visible victory of the Muslim world over the West. The Muslim world felt down after a series of events, such as the Fall of the Ottoman Empire, the division of Palestine, Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan.
- 5. Toh Yong Chuan, "Imam who made offensive remarks about Jews and Christians will be asked to leave Singapore," *The Straits Times*, 3 April 2017.
- 6. The three madrasahs which joined the initiative were: Madrasah Al-Junied Al-Islamiah, Madrasah Al-Arabiah, and Madrasah Al-Irsyad.
- 7. Faris Mokhtar, "Two foreign preachers barred from entering S'pore to preach on religious-themed cruise," *Today*, 30 October 2017.
- 8. There were rumours circulating that a prominent religious teacher Ustaz Pasuni Maulan passed away. The teacher went public to deny the fake news. See Berita Harian, "Ustaz Pasuni nafi berita palsu pemergiannya," 9 June 2019.
- 9. See Channelnews Asia, "Online Poll sexualizing female religious teachers in breach of Internet regulations: IMDA" 28 May 2021

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Norshahril Saat, *ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore*. Email: [norshahril\\_saat@iseas.edu.sg](mailto:norshahril_saat@iseas.edu.sg).



## *Guidelines*

### Submission of Articles

**S***tudia Islamika*, published three times a year since 1994, is a bilingual (English and Arabic), peer-reviewed journal, and specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies in particular and Southeast Asian Islamic studies in general. The aim is to provide readers with a better understanding of Indonesia and Southeast Asia's Muslim history and present developments through the publication of articles, research reports, and book reviews.

The journal invites scholars and experts working in all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences pertaining to Islam or Muslim societies. Articles should be original, research-based, unpublished and not under review for possible publication in other journals. All submitted papers are subject to review of the editors, editorial board, and blind reviewers. Submissions that violate our guidelines on formatting or length will be rejected without review.

Articles should be written in American English between approximately 10,000-15,000 words including text, all tables and figures, notes, references, and appendices intended for publication. All submission must include 150 words abstract and 5 keywords. Quotations, passages, and words in local or foreign languages should

be translated into English. *Studia Islamika* accepts only electronic submissions. All manuscripts should be sent in Ms. Word to: <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika>.

All notes must appear in the text as citations. A citation usually requires only the last name of the author(s), year of publication, and (sometimes) page numbers. For example: (Hefner 2009a, 45; Geertz 1966, 114). Explanatory footnotes may be included but should not be used for simple citations. All works cited must appear in the reference list at the end of the article. In matter of bibliographical style, *Studia Islamika* follows the American Political Science Association (APSA) manual style, such as below:

1. Hefner, Robert. 2009a. "Introduction: The Political Cultures of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia," in *Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia*, ed. Robert Hefner, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
2. Booth, Anne. 1988. "Living Standards and the Distribution of Income in Colonial Indonesia: A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19(2): 310–34.
3. Feener, Michael R., and Mark E. Cammack, eds. 2007. *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia: Ideas and Institutions*. Cambridge: Islamic Legal Studies Program.
4. Wahid, Din. 2014. *Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia*. PhD dissertation. Utrecht University.
5. Utriza, Ayang. 2008. "Mencari Model Kerukunan Antaragama." *Kompas*. March 19: 59.
6. Ms. *Undhang-Undhang Banten*, L.Or.5598, Leiden University.
7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

Arabic romanization should be written as follows:

Letters: ' , b, t, th, j, ḥ, kh, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ḏ, ḡ, f, q, l, m, n, h, w, y. Short vowels: a, i, u. long vowels: ā, ī, ū. Diphthongs: aw, ay. *Tā marbūṭā*: t. Article: al-. For detail information on Arabic Romanization, please refer the transliteration system of the Library of Congress (LC) Guidelines.

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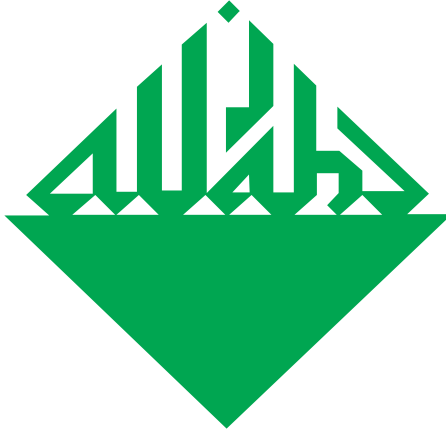


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