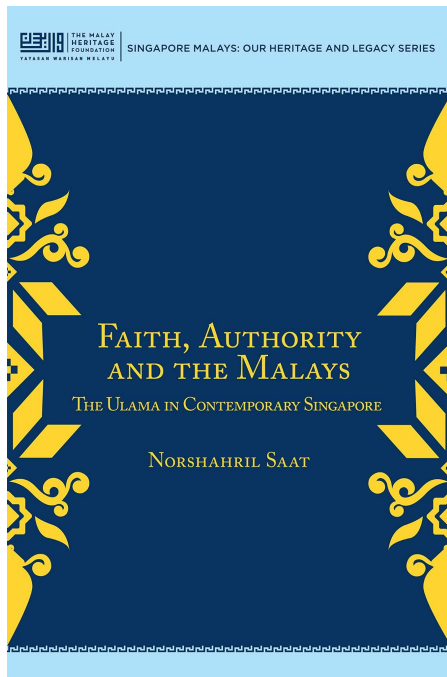


# FAITH, AUTHORITY AND THE MALAYS: THE ULAMA IN CONTEMPORARY SINGAPORE



## Synopsis

This book seeks to examine the various roles played by the Ulama in contemporary Singapore in the religious public sphere. It also accounts the ways the group shapes the religious life of the Malay/Muslim community here. By setting the context to be post-1965 Singapore, this study mainly locates their influence in the various domains of public life, understands the social bases of their authority and power, and examines the contributions towards the various challenges in the context of modernization and social change. Nevertheless, understanding these issues cannot be undertaken without also highlighting the mode of learning they received, their religious education and upbringing, as well as a brief biography of the more prominent religious personalities.

Rather than adopting the biographical approach, this book will mainly highlight the contributions of a sample of Ulama and how they are influential in their fields through the application of sociological methodology and theory. Such an approach is undertaken so as not to parallel other ongoing projects on the Ulama in Singapore. Both the Ulama from the state institutions and the non-government organizations shall be discussed. Some of the figures highlighted include Syed Isa Semait, Syed Abdillah Aljufri, Ahmad Sonhadji Muhammad, Hasbi Hassan, Habib Hassan Alatas, Ali Muhammad, Pasuni Maulan, and Osman Jantan. These personalities are selected mainly because (1) they have been acknowledged by the society to be regarded as an Alim, (2) they wield significant influence in Malay society, and (3) they have made numerous contributions towards Islamic scholarship.

## **About the writer**

Norshahril Saat is a fellow at the ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. He graduated with a PhD at the Department of Political and Social Change, School of International Political and Strategic Studies, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University (ANU). He is a recipient of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) Post-graduate Scholarship 2011. A graduate of National University of Singapore (NUS) in Malay Studies and Political Science, he was also the recipient of the prestigious Tun Dato Sir Cheng Long Tan MA Scholarship from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) and also the National University of Singapore MA Scholarship in 2008.

His research interest is mainly on Southeast Asian politics and contemporary Islamic thought. His articles have recently been published in the journals *Contemporary Islam: Dynamics of Muslim Life*, *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* and *Studia Islamika*. He has also published numerous opinions and think pieces including those in the local newspaper *The Straits Times*, *Berita Harian* and *Today*, and international newspapers such as *The Canberra Times*, *Bangkok Post* and *The Jakarta Post*.