AL-SHAJARAH

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UNDERSTANDING THE MINORITY MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN SINGAPORE: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES[1]

Norhafezah Yusof

Abstract

Based upon interviews with experts in Singapore, this research aims to investigate the struggle of the Muslim minorities in Singapore in terms of Islamic religious sources, practices, and educational values. Competitive religious resources, undervalued Islamic education, and freedom from fatwa legitimation have shaped the Muslim Singaporean framework in adjusting Muslims' needs in search for authentic sources, practice Islamic values, and manage Islamic education in the community. Drawing from Turner's conception on the space of liminality, this study attempts to understand the challenges faced by the Muslim minority in Singapore.

Introduction

Islam in Singapore began in 1400 when Arab and Indian Muslim merchants came to trade with local merchants in Asian archipelago areas. Over the years Muslim community in Singapore increased largely due to the assimilation of Arab and Indian Muslim traders with locals. British colonialists also looked upon the Singaporean-based Islamic scholars *(ulama)* due to their independent stance on separation of religion and state[2]. Based upon their experience in the Middle East, the *ulama* considered the separation of religion and the state beneficial for the colonial master and the colonialized subjects.[3] The influence and power of the *ulama* gradually increased because the government was not monitoring religious activities. In 1960, there were positive moves in Islamic development in Singapore with the introduction of the Muslim Ordinance Act by the People Action's Party (PAP).[4] After separation from Malaysia in 1965, though the Muslim community formed a minority, their rights as Muslims were verified with the establishment of the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA).[5]

Singapore is the only developed country in Southeast Asia. It has a population of 5 million in which Muslims make up about 14 percent of the population.[6] Malays, who are mostly Muslims, are considered natives in Singapore. Living in a country with diverse ethnicities, the Muslim community faces more challenges than their Muslim brothers and sisters in Malaysia and Indonesia, the two closest neighboring countries with Muslim majorities.
Muslims in Singapore are not merely a a minority, their economic and social standing are also weak compared to the majority Chinese.[7]

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[2] Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, "The Religio-Political Activism of Ulama in Singapore," *Indonesia and Malay World* 40, (2012).

[3] Ibid.. 2–3.

[4] Ibid.. 3

[5] Ibid.. 4.

[6] Department of Statistics Singapore, at http://www.singstat.gov.sg (Accessed May 14, 2015).

[7] Angelia Poon, "Writing Home: Alfian Sa'at and the Politics of Muslim Belonging in Global Multiracial Singapore," *Interventions,* Vol. 18, No. 4 (2016): 2.

Additionally, they suffer from the distrust prevalent in Singapore.[8] The issue of Malay Muslim loyalty was raised by the first Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, who voiced an obvious distrust toward the community: "It would be a very tricky business for PAP to put a Malay, who was very religious and who had family ties in Malaysia, in charge of a machine-gun unit."[9] Thus, the Muslim minority in a transitory space, caught between their loyalty to Singapore secular government policy and their adherence to Islamic practices. Liminality is appropriate to be used as a framework in interpreting the Singapore Muslim dilemma (i.e., struggling in their own country).

The Framework

Derived from the Latin word *limen*. The concept of liminal space indicates a stated boundary and can be associated with a state of uncertainty in which individuals are caught in a dilemma of having to make a decision between the two points.[10] The concept was derived from Arnold van Gennep's anthropological study on rites of passage and how a community made transitions through three stages; separation (old status), liminality (no clear-cut status), and incorporation (new status).[11] These stages are likened to the three phases in the life of an individual: birth, marriage, and death.

Victor Turner developed Van Gennep's original work and introduced the concept of *communitas* in which, although the individuals are bound by the ritual transitions, they are free from social conformity.[12] Turner also believed that liminality was a state

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[8] Lily Zubaidah Rahim, "Governing Muslims in Singapore's Secular Authoritarian State," *Australian Journal of International Affairs,* Vol. 66, No. 2 (2012): 169–185.

[9] Lily Zubaidah Rahim, *Singapore in the Malay World: Building and Breaching Regional Bridges* (London: Routledge, 2009), 92.

[10] W. Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theater: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982).

[11] Arnold Van Gennep, translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1908 [1960]), 189–194.

[12] W. Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 274.

of uncertainty experienced by individuals due to stated boundaries or norms outlined by the rules of the society.

Scholars in recent years have examined various modes of transition in the religious context by using the concept of liminality in conducting qualitative liturgical research in local communities in South Africa[13], in studying the position of the Ahmadiyya in the context of religious pluralism in Indonesia[14], and in examining the stability of religious preference among people who claim no religious preference in the United States.[15]

Although liminality has been used to refer to the positions and identities of individuals and communities with religious leanings, this research demonstrates that a more holistic and contextualised understanding and analysis of liminality is possible when historical and contemporary context of the community is considered. Building on Turner's conception of liminality as a place that is "ambiguous, neither here or there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification,"[16] this study attempts to use this framework in understanding the challenges faced by the Muslim Singaporeans in their everyday life. In this study, *liminality* is defined as a state of adjusting to the stated rules of the given community by the Muslim community in Singapore. In other words, how does Muslim society fit in into the secular state society?

The positioning of Islam in Singapore has been contested with the issue of wearing a headscarf *(tudung)* at the workplace and at national schools.[17] Muslims schoolgirls are not allowed to practice their religious undertaking by wearing a headscarf at the national

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[13] Cas Wepener, "Burning Incense for a Focus Group Discussion: Acquiring a Spirituality of Liminality for Doing Liturgical Research in an African Context from an Emic Perspective," *International Journal of Practical Theology,* Vol. 19, No. 2 (2015): 271–291

[14] Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Hating the Ahmadiyya: The Place of Heretics in Contemporary Indonesian Muslim society," *Contemporary Islam*, Vo. 8, No. 2 (2014): 133–152.

[15] Chaeyoon Lim, Carol Ann MacGregor and Robert D. Putnam, "Secular and Liminal: Discovering Heterogeneity among Religious Nones," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* Vol. 49, No. 4 (2010): 596–618.

[16] Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, 232.

[17] Rahim, "Governing Muslims in Singapore's Secular Authoritarian State," 179.

schools whereas Sikh boys are allowed to wear their turbans.[18] Muslims are eyed with suspicious minds, especially nowadays with the issue of Islamic terrorism; there have been cases in which Singaporean Muslims are suspected of participating in illegitimate Islamic associations such as Al-Qaeda.[19] Having been pressured from almost all sides, it is important to understand the challenges of the Singapore Muslim community in managing their everyday life.

Islamic Religious Sources

Islamic religious sources in Singapore can be classified as traditional and modern. The term *traditional* is defined here as the documented sources that are written, distributed through non-online channels, and practiced in the Islamic-based institutions in Singapore that may include government or non-governmental organizations. On the other hand, *modern* refers to online documented resources that include regional and international independent Islamic associations, preachers, and scholars.

Traditional Islamic religious sources have been used in Singapore since the establishment of Islamic-based institutions or associations such as The Muslim Scholars and Religious Teachers Association (PERGAS)[20], Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, MUIS), Association of Muslims Professionals (AMP), and madrasah. These sources have been enhanced with the rigorous support from the *ulama,* be it international (India, Malaysia, Indonesia) or local. While others stay independent and autonomous in terms of administration, MUIS is the only centralized Islamic religious body that is governed and supported by the Singapore government. Through various activities such as the MUIS Academy, Halal support center, international religious forum, Zakat and Waqaf one-stop center, and Friday sermons, MUIS has been active as a government agency in managing Islamic issues among the Muslim community in Singapore.

In addition, MUIS, PERGAS, and madrasah have played significant roles in educating and managing Islamic resources for

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[18] Ibid., 180.

[19] Poon, "Writing Home…," 6.

[20] Interview with Dr. NorShahril Saat, August 12, 2015.

Muslim communities in Singapore. Through written and face-to-face interaction, these institutions have put forward their best efforts to be part of the Muslim community lifestyle. The backbone of the human resources that supports and facilitates Islamic religious teaching consists of *ulama, ustaz* (male religious teacher or preacher) and *ustazah* (female religious teacher or preacher) who may be locally or internationally schooled in religious education. Although these local scholars remain active in managing their teachings, the impact on the Muslim community is not heavily felt.[21]

It has been argued that local scholars need to enhance their teaching styles when it comes to public speaking and persuasive speeches.[22] This is due to the fact that they are being compared closely to regional and international preachers and scholars such as Kazim Elias, Azhar Idrus, Ustad Badlishah from Malaysia, Mufti Menk from Zimbabwe, and Nouman Ali Khan from the United States.

Modern sources are not new in Singapore. There are two main advantages of modern sources: their speed and availability. It is reported that Singapore Internet penetration is 80 percent.[23] This fast-speed Internet network offers the Muslim community vast resources to Islamic references, either local or international. For example, MUIS and PERGAS have been working hard to reach Muslim audiences through online resources such as websites, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Other online resources are regional (Malaysia) and international (U.S., Zimbabwe, and Egypt). These resources offer the Muslim communities other references that could benefit their Islamic practices due to their ability to offer advice, fatwa, and thoughts on Islamic issues facing Muslim communities. In fact, these resources also are being referred to by local scholars in dealing with issues related to Muslim communities.[24] Most importantly,these resources offer the Muslim community flexibility in acquiring religious references.

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Internet World Stats Website Directory at http://www.internetworldstats.com /stats3.htm . (accessed 2015).

[24] Interview with Dr. Nora, July 9, 2015.

Modern Islamic references at this juncture can be categorized as a public sharing platform of issues that are faced by the community. Even if the sources are from MUIS and the other institutions could have been monitored by the state government, the other online platforms offer the possibilities of openness, flexibility, and interactivity for the Muslim community to acquire Islamic resources that may answer and suit their needs. El-Nawawy and Khamis have voiced concerns that discussions on three popular Arab Muslim-based websites are overtaking at a faster rate the traditional discussion on Islamic teaching. [25] Nonetheless, they have been careful to argue that online religious websites offer sufficient open discussion between the receivers and the providers. Moreover, given the nature of Muslim community as a minority in the country and the fact of Islamic laws being monitored by the government, space of liminality can be used as a frame in analyzing challenges of minority Muslim community in Singapore.

Expert Opinion on Muslim Community

To better understand the situation of Muslims in Singapore, information were collected using in-depth interviews with five (three males and two females) Singapore-based scholars from disciplines that are related to Islam, Malay, and the community. These scholars have been active in research, consultation, and administration on Islamic issues in Singapore.

Information regarding the study was reiterated at the beginning of the interviews, and all questions were answered. The participants agreed to recording the interviews. As with all ethically sound research, ground rules were set at the beginning of each interview. Issues such as freedom of speech, mutual respect, and confidentiality were discussed and agreed to. The names of participants, as requested, were deleted from the transcript. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim to maximize the accuracy of the data and potentially enhance the validity of data analysis.[26]Interviews

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[25] Mohammed el-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis, *Islam dot.com: Contemporary Islamic Discourses in Cyberspace* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 209.

[26] Thomas R. Lindlof and Bryan C. Taylor, *Qualitative Communication Research Method*s (2nd ed.) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 241. Kathy Charmaz,

lasted between 60 and 180 minutes. The researcher sought to clarify any discrepancy regarding the interviews by contacting the respondents via email or phone. This helped in establishing the credibility of the study. Data were analyzed using Charmaz's framework[27]consisting of a system of coding and categorization that underpinned the analytical approach. Interviews revolved around three issues.

Competitive religious resources

Islamic religious sources are open for competition in Singapore. As previously mentioned, competition is inevitable due to high Internet penetration, the religious savvy international preachers and scholars, and monitored Islamic religious sources in Singapore.

> …that day I was at PERGAS, I saw in their notice board, I mean the question by the member of the public, asking whether a female can travel on her own beyond 60 kilometers or something like that, posted by the member of Muslim community here and the answer was given by the PERGAS committee that passes the fatwa, they refer to basically the American Council of Muslim Affairs, they actually cite the source they refer to. Why is that? I think because in this age, people look for fatwa from all over the world and why European or American council, they probably think they have some identification.[28]

> …actually looking at this other sources is not new as such, last time without the Internet and all this, it is harder to access to thes views as print and publication came late and people came back with recent ideas as they studied for years in the institutions, but now

"Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods" in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.)*,* edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 509–536.
[27] Kathy Charmaz, "Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist…," 509–536.
[28] SR01.

because of ease and rapid flow of information, it is easier for this thing to take place.[29]

But what our academy does is that we want our Asatizah to apply their classical understanding of religion or traditional understanding of religion but to understand the context and the need of Singapore. So what you have pointed just now the answers from Imam in America might not be applicable to what is needed in Singapore, we want our leadership, our Asatizah and our Imam to understand and participate in the space here.[30]

Of course there are competition from other religious institutions as well as educational institutions, and in the World Wide Web. We also have competition from Malaysia, I mean, I refer to JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia) websites in terms of getting information, getting sermons, getting fatwas, some of them are more savvy, they refer to opinions by more global kind of preachers, like Zakir Naik, you often hear these people, who is that. Salafi, Mufti Menk, you hear about all these people. So people tend to get information and fatwa from these globalized personalities.[31]

I'm not sure but maybe it is the nature of the official website to provide information and it is important in terms of governance and in terms of transparency for example, be an annual report…other than that, I do not see how it (the website) can improve in terms of engagement, may be in terms of community engagement.[32]

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[29] Ibid.
[30] SR03.
[31] SR04.
[32] SR05.

Undervalued Islamic education

Islamic education in Singapore has weaker standing for those seeking good employment.[33] It has been argued that the government is concerned with those madrasah students who are not inspired to be Islamic religious leaders and lack the job skills to enter the job market. They eventually will be jobless in the Singapore market.[34] In addition, the government fears that these individuals will be involved in extremist activities in the future.[35] Perhaps due to this lack of job opportunity, these graduates lack appropriate avenues to sharpen their presentation skills when it comes to open forums in Singapore. Thus, this phenomenon has had an impact on the development of local charismatic Islamic leaders who would be good sources for Islamic references. They are sought out less compared to their counterparts who are both famous in their own country and in the international arena.

> Of course this is a formal procedure that you have to learn history of religion. Later on, you cannot expect the masses to subscribe to this view. It is dynamic. The information is so fluid and it is so easy to get information anywhere. So, to me, the madrasah has not conducted the discourse on the new changing landscape and the demands of the young people. Madrasah in general, not only in Singapore, but in India, Pakistan, Malaysia. Basically, a madrasah is traditionalist in terms of its outlook. They must disseminate information, about our authorities. But then, you cannot stop you must go beyond that to train students to review, to analyze even the tradition we regard as sacred or authoritative.[36]

> Some of them (the graduates with Islamic degrees) work with government-based religious institution, some with other private religious institutions, some are

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[33] Charlene Tan, "The Reform Agenda for Madrasah Education in Singapore," *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (2009): 77.
[34] Ibid., 71.
[35] Ibid., 77.
[36] SR01.

independent. Is there any career development? Actually the career development prospect here for those with religious education is very limited. Because the community is small and then the degrees are not recognized by the civil service.[37]

They are not fixated to become ustaz, Kalsum is a classic example, so we have to find ways to lure them back to our institutions. Of course now, the situation is corrected, people think that working in the mosque is no longer boring as there are so many things that is happening in the mosque. So, some of them decided that I do not want to be the religious person, I want to work as a Public Relations person, and you know hospital and they end up working in hospitals, to market the hospital medical services to the Middle East. Minister Masagos, said companies going to Middle East should tap on these young graduates because they have Arabic competencies but they also understand the culture of Middle East people, so there is a cultural bridge, so tap on them. So increasingly companies are looking at our ustaz and ustazah for that kind of work. The worry is that the brighter ones will not stay and work here. Because they are so bright, they just want to venture and do all other interesting things. So that's the worry, but Alhamdulillah, for our institution, we are being able to attract the best and brightest, without being elitist, Alhamdulillah we are able to attract them, like you say the bright Asatizah, because we need the best and brightest to run the institution and to help shape the religious thought and thinking for the community level, fatwa and all those.[38]

In fact, we are trying to understand the need of our graduates, whether there are enough employment opportunities. Some who even graduate from Al-Azhar,

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[37] SR01.
[38] SR02.

they might want to do other things afterwards, so those are the kind of issues that we do face.[39]

Our Asatizah here are OK. I would not say we are producing the best quality. Most of them would go to Al Azhar, most of them would end up at International Islamic University Malaysia, there are competition from Malaysian preachers where I think they are losing. I tell you this, look at our mosque. If let us say, a sermon is given by the locals, ceramah for instance, by the local, you can't fill the whole mosque. You get Azhar Idrus to come, and you can fill the whole mosque, even on the roads. That's the popularity of the Malaysian preachers here. Ustad Idrus, Kazim Elias, I know them more than our own preachers. I don't think we can compete with Malaysian kind of preachers, they are really good. But I think in terms of ideas, they have to be more scholarly. So I think we should not be playing that game to produce popular preachers. What I think we should do is to create more serious scholarly kind of religious preachers in Islam in Singapore for that matter. But if there are really good people from abroad, we can invite them, serious scholarly ones who understands the whole corpus of knowledge, who can cite hadith, can cite Quranic text and know the diversity of opinions. I think we should build on these people and learn.[40]

I can give you another example about our Asatizah here. We have a Darul Qur'an. Not many people are into this. Mainly their job is to memorize Al-Quran, so they have Pusat Tahfiz, somewhere in the Singlap Mosque. During Ramadhan, this is the time where the Tahfiz come because it is 30 rakaat you know that, and this is an opportunity for our tahfiz graduates. But we don't see them. You know why? We got Malaysians who could recite it better, memorize the Qur'an better. And we get

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[39] SR03.

[40] SR04.

the Indonesians, the Lombok kids who come here to fill our mosques. No opportunities for our locals. Why? Because you know the Singaporean system is slack. You want to compete with Lombok people who studied in Pasentran? Who wakes up at 4am and sleep at 12 memorizing the Quran? You cannot compete. So the easy way out is to get them here.

I think madrassa institutions can still be improved, many of which have been reformed throughout the years, in terms of the curriculum, in terms of support; many are done by the government based Islamic religious institution. Examples, the institution channels to Madrasa thousands of dollars for its development, because if left alone, it is difficult to sustain, because they are considered as private institution ya...and they have to pay the lease for the land which is based on the government agreement, and they have to pay for all the expenses of maintaining the place and maintaining the students, teachers' salary and so on. And the student population is very small, so it is not sustainable, especially we are talking about 6 full time madrasah. If left on their own it is difficult, so they should be assisted.   In terms of the quality, due to their inability to attract teachers from Ministry of Education (MOE) to work there, the quality of teaching does suffer.[41]

Freedom from Fatwa Legitimation

Fatwa is an opinion of a knowledgeable person and is not legally binding in Singapore. Thus, reality has positive and negative possibilities in interpreting references of Islam toward everyday practices. In other words, people in the Muslim community have a choice in managing their personal lifestyle.

Firstly you know fatwa is not binding in Singapore.Fatwa is not binding, it is just an opinion, it is just a guideline, of course it is a political game that's a

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[41] SR05.

certain group want to say it is fatwa and it is authoritative and it is not. The fact that we don't produce our own fatwa, and print our fatwa, we don't have a website and post our fatwa, it shows that it is not binding. If you don't follow the fatwa, nothing will happen, so fatwa is not binding here. Though sometimes it is published, because our general Muslims sometimes they keep on asking basic questions so MUIS will respond and publish in the newspapers. MUIS can give Irsyad, they can advise, but it is not binding.[42]

Yes, fatwa in Singapore is not legally binding.[43]

Discussion

Liminality, as documented by Turner, has a specific interpretation on how an issue is discussed. The context of the community and the freedom of choices are among the other key elements in relating the principles of liminality in conducting the research. From the interviews on competitive religious resources, undervalued Islamic education, and freedom from fatwa legitimation, the following findings are recorded.

One, contextualizing Islamic sources within Singapore laws on Islam opens up a new perspective on how Muslim minority issues are managed in the country. Islam in Singapore is considered to be a heritage from the Muslim archipelago that has been in the vicinity since 1400. Then colonization and the later independence processes left Singaporean Muslims as a minority in the country. Having said that, the Islamic laws were offered by the British (Mohammaden Law) and the present government have been managing Muslim communities through the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA).

Two, in terms of Islamic religious sources, however, Singaporean Muslims are deprived of authentic sources from religious authorities in the country. Instead, the community is bombarded with numerous Islamic religious sources, both regional

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[42] SR04.
[43] SR05.

(e.g., Malaysia) and international (the United States). The main concern here is how Muslims contextualize different religious sources to the Singapore situation. As for Malaysia, Muslims are the majority and there are established religious institutions at the state and federal levels to manage Islamic issues. In the United States, Muslims are considered a minority but there are no laws specifically for the Muslim community. The case in Singapore is rather unique because although Muslims are considered a minority, their rights are governed by the AMLA and there is a Minister in charge of Muslim affairs. Furthermore, there are Islamic religious institutions, be they public or private entities, which cater to Muslim needs. In this context, Muslims have a dilemma as they have vast resources to which to refer to but no specific authority that could verify the authenticity of the sources. This is not a positive phenomenon for the Muslim community especially when fatwa is not legally binding in Singapore.

Three, when a fatwa is not legally binding in a country, it gives the community a freedom of choice. It is a positive standpoint whereby the community is not bound by Islamic legal authority as the fatwa only serves as a guideline. On the other hand, the lack of enforcement could make the religion seem to be a guideline rather than a vital practice to be followed. Interestingly, these issues on competitive Islamic religious sources and non-binding fatwa could offer a space of liminality association.[44] Religious sources are widely accessible regardless of the sources, the community is free from enforcement of fatwa, there is no hierarchy in terms of participation in the religious forum, and people can commit to discussions whenever they feel the need to. Moreover, to take it a bit further, although Islamic issues are governed by the government, members of the community are rather free to practice their religious activities. There could be a trace of liminality, as argued by Turner,[45] where the community is offered freedom from the norms whereby they are not bounded by Islamic fatwa in Singapore.

Finally, the issue of undervalued Islamic education is another perspective that leads us to reflect on the liminality position of the

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[44] Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, 232.
[45] Ibid., 274.

Singaporian Muslim community. Islamic education here stands as a second-class qualification compared to mainstream qualification (i.e., national with English-based qualification at the tertiary levels). Graduates with an Islamic education tend to have difficulty getting jobs in the country. Thus, there is a restriction in terms of career choices for the graduates. The graduates do not have equal footing compared to mainstream-educated graduates, and, therefore, they cannot participate equally in terms of commitment to the community. And, of course, the inability to participate will restrict their accessibility to the potential life opportunities in Singapore.

Within the context of this study, the concept of liminality needs to be interpreted cautiously. Competitive Islamic religious sources and non-binding fatwa offer freedom in terms of choices of sources and practices. However, at the same time, these phenomena position the Muslim community at a liminal condition in which they have a dilemma over choosing authentic sources and following best practices as there are no legitimate guidelines for religion. In addition, an undervalued Islamic education stands as a restriction as it offers less accessibility, and graduates are not on equal footing and cannot offer a common commitment to the community. As a result, fitting into the life style of the Singaporian community is a struggle for Muslims as they are trapped between following a religious obligation and embracing the demands of Singapore lifestyle in terms of economic and social stature.

Conclusion

This study explored the context of how Singaporean Muslims are affected by the historical, contemporary, and the future development of Islamic religious references from the viewpoints of experts in the country. This study takes into consideration the historical context of Singapore in interpreting Islamic religious context in the country. This view is in line with the argument by Hackett that a study of religion needs to contextualize in order to be understood explicitly by the readers.[46] Using Turner's liminality conception is an attempt to

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[46] Rosalind Hackett et al., "Interview: Rosalind Hackett Reflects on Religious Media in Africa," *Social Compass*, 61 (2014): 69–70.

understand the position and challenges of the Muslim minority in Singapore in terms of accessibility, participation, commitment, and freedom of choice.

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

CONSONANTS

Ar=Arabic, Pr=Persian, OT=Ottoman Turkish, Ur=Urdu

	Ar	Pr	OT	UR		Ar	Pr	OT	UR		Ar	Pr	OT	UR
ء	'	'	'	'	ز	z	z	z	z	گ	–	g	g	g
ب	b	b	b	b	ڑ	–	–	–	ŗ	ل	l	l	l	l
پ	–	p	p	p	ژ	–	zh	j	zh	م	m	m	m	m
ت	t	t	t	t	س	s	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n	n
ٹ	–	–	–	ṭ	ش	sh	sh	ş	sh	ه	h	h	hⁱ	hⁱ
ث	th	th	th	th	ص	ṣ	ṣ	ş	ṣ	و	w	v/u	v	v/u
ج	j	j	c	j	ض	ḍ	ż	ż	ż	ى	y	y	y	y
چ	–	ch	çh	ch	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ة	-ah			-a²
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ال	al³			
خ	kh	kh	kh	kh	ع	'	'	'	'					
د	d	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ğ	gh					
ڈ	–	–	–	d	ف	f	f	f	f					
ذ	dh	dh	dh	dh	ق	q	q	k	q					
ر	r	r	r	r	ك	k	k/g	k/ñ	k					

¹ – when not final
² – at in construct state
³ – (article) al - or 1-

VOWELS

		Arabic and Persian	Urdu	Ottoman Turkish
Long	ا	ā	ā	ā
	آ	Ā	Ā	–
	و ی	ū	ū	ū
	ي	ī	ī	ī
Doubled	يّ	iyy (final form ī)	iy (final form ī)	iyy (final form ī)
	وّ	uww (final form ū) uvv (for Persian)	uv	uvv
Diphthongs	و ی	au or aw	au	ev
	ى	ai or ay	ay	ey
Short	ـَ	a	a	a or e
	ـُ	u	u	u or ü o or ö
	ـِ	i	i	i

URDU ASPIRATED SOUNDS

For aspirated sounds not used in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish add h after the letter and underline both the letters e.g. ﺠﻬ jh   گه gh

For Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish orthography may be used.

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