The overtly secular state of Singapore has unapologetically maintained an interventionist approach to governance in the realm of religion. Islam is particularly managed by the state. Muslim activists thus have to meticulously navigate these realities – in addition to being a minority community – in order to maximize their influence in the political system.

Significantly, Muslim activists are not a monolith: there exists a multitude of political and theological differences amongst them. Islam in a Secular State: Muslim Activism in Singapore analyses the following categories of Muslim activists: Islamic religious scholars (ulama), liberal Muslims, and the more conservative-minded individuals. Due to constricting political realities, many activists attempt to align themselves with the state, and call upon the state to be an arbiter in their disagreements with other factions. Though there are activists who challenge the state, these are by far in the minority, and are typically unable to assert their influence in a sustained manner.

BIOGRAPHY
Dr. Walid Jumblatt Abdullah is an Assistant Professor at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He works on state-Islam relations and has published in journals such as Democratization, International Political Science Review, Government and Opposition, Journal of Church and State, and Asian Survey, amongst others.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction: The State, Islam, and Muslim Activism in Singapore  
   1.1 Background of Project and Wider Relevance  
   1.2 Singapore’s Political Context  
   1.3 Islam in Singapore  
   1.4 Arguments in Brief  
   1.5 Case Selection and Methodology  
   1.6 Outline of Book  

2. Muslim Activism: A Survey across the World  
   2.1 Muslim Activism: Theological Positions  
   2.2 Brief Literature Review  
   2.3 Moving Forward: Understanding Activism in Singapore  

3. Argument: Political Opportunities and Muslim Strategies  
   3.1 Ulama, Liberals, and Conservatives  
   3.2 Agent VS Structure  
   3.3 Political Opportunities and Agency  
   3.4 Main Argument  

4. The Ulama: Pragmatism and Political Acquiescence  
   4.1 The Ulama: Roles and Responsibilities  
   4.2 Different Groups of Ulama in Singapore  
   4.3 Political Acquiescence of Ulama  
   4.4 Case Studies  
   4.5 Conclusion  

5. Liberal Activists: Playing by the System and Making Gains  
   5.1 ‘Liberal’ Muslims: Complexities of the Category  
   5.2 Liberal-Conservative Divide amongst Muslims  
   5.3 Choosing the Battles to Fight: Playing by the Rules  
   5.4 Gains Made in the Public Domain  
   5.5 Conclusion  

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6. The Conservative Dilemma: To Challenge or to Accept State Proclamations?
6.1 Conservative Muslims: Understanding the Category
6.2 (Potential) Areas of Clashes with the State
6.3 Strategic Advance and Retreat of Conservatives: Pragmatism in Practice
6.4 Ceding the Public Space to Liberals
6.5 Conclusion

7. Conclusion
7.1 Revisiting the Argument
7.2 Relevance of Study beyond Singapore
7.3 Implications for Civil Society
7.4 Future Areas for Research

Bibliography
Index