
**THE POLITICS OF VEILING
(A STUDY OF HIJAB AND FEMALE MUSLIM IDENTITY
REPRESENTATION IN INDONESIA)**

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Abstract

The increased number of hijabi women (women who wear hijab) in Indonesia presents changes in religious-socio-political lanscape of Muslim community in Indonesia. For hijabi, hijab is a technology for the self. It represents one's identity through performance. Beside religious identity, hijab does explain hijabi's social and economic status in the society. Especially with the growth of hijab industry, hijab becomes part of lifestyle. Tradition has now developed more into fashion. There emerge several hijab communities initiated by young hijabis to promote hijab trough popular culture. Looking through the phenomenon of hijab from this lense, it could be argued that hijab does not necessarily express hijabi's religiosity and spirituality. Given certain contexts and meanings, each hijab style explains hijabi's identity becoming instead of identity being. This paper discusses hijab focusing on two main concerns; first discussion relates to hijab and identity formation and the second relates to hijab and regulation of women's bodies.

Keywords: *Hijab, representation, identity, popular culture*

A. INTRODUCTION

I recollect my conversation with a friend of mine about donning hijab shortly before my departure to the United States. She suggested me to put on stylish dress along with modern style of hijab as a way to show Muslim's acceptance of modernity. I value her opinion to the level of realization of how people understand performance as identity. Despite less likely designating personality of a person, outer performance does tell people about an image one wants to present. Various styles of hijab offer alternatives to identity representation whose meanings are fluid and contextual.

Apart from that, rapid increase of hijabi numbers (a woman who dons hijab) signifies the rise of religious revival under globalization. In spite of its contested status in Islamic law, hijab has been perceived as one of Muslim's religious symbols. The fact that many Muslim women wear it makes hijab inherent to Muslim women identification regardless of what one's motivation in donning the hijab is. Hence, the increasing hijab phenomenon shows that religion is now gaining more acceptances in public sphere. In Muslim-predominant countries like Indonesia, for example, hijab has been part of Muslim's lifestyle that correlates to not only aspects of religion but also to social and economic status in society.

Examining the discourse on hijab in Indonesia by focusing on identity representation, this paper tries to discuss two main concerns; firstly, what relates to hijab as self-representation of Muslim women and secondly, how hijab regulates women and their bodies. To help readers understand arguments I propose in this paper, I start the discussion by introducing the concept of hijab in Islam; its history and its development as a religious symbol. After introducing the general concept of hijab, the discussion continues to talk about Hijab phenomenon in Indonesia mainly about the development of hijab before, during and after the New Order regime. The discussion will then be followed by an analysis on hijab and identity representation. Using Judith Butler's theory of performativity, I endeavor to present analytical discussion on how each style of hijab represents different identity. Besides examining the discourse on hijab development in Indonesia this section also attempts to understand the reality of current Indonesian Muslim society from a sociological point of view. The last but not least, I will talk about how hijab disciplines women bodies. In this section, I attempt to exhibit identity creation behind women veiling and how power relation influences it. Eventually to conclude the paper, I argue that hijab in its various styles represents multiplicity of identity that reflects not only one's 'religiosity' but also one's social, political and economic status. Hijab as identity representation describes reality in society at large where donning hijab has been depicted as a technology that endorses one's becoming in identity formation.

B. DISCUSSION

1. The Origin of Hijab

Historically speaking, the idea of veiling was not invented by Islamic tradition. Veil—which entails broader meaning than hijab has been practiced millennia ago and spread across the Persian, Mesopotamian, Hellenic, and Byzantine civilizations. It was

admitted as social practices by Achaemenid, Greek, Parthian, and Sassanid empires¹ (El-Guindi, 3). In Greek tradition, women veiled themselves when they appeared in public, covering their heads and faces, marking the separated areas of private and public life. In Jewish and Christian traditions, Biblical evidences allude to the importance of veiling for women. Genesis 24.65 mentions: “And Rebekah lifted up her eyes and when she saw Isaac . . . she took her veil and covered herself”. Isaiah 3. 23 also mentions, “in that day, The Lord will take away the finery of the anklets . . . the headdresses . . . and the veils”. The other compelling order of veiling mentioned in Corinthians I: 3-7:

“Any woman who pray with her head unveiled dishonors her head – it is the same as if her head was shaven. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair, but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil. For a man ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man”.

These biblical accounts clearly explain that Islam did not invent or introduce the tradition of veiling. When Islam came in the 610s, the veiling has been part of Arabian custom that was invented by earlier generations and cultures spread across the Arab peninsula.

Tracing back to the original usage of the word hijab, the word does not signify the concept of veil as a piece of material worn by woman, as we understand it in today’s context. Instead, the word was used to designate a curtain that stops people from either looking at or going behind the curtain. The concept of hijab in Islam dates back to Qur’an 33: 5 that was revealed around 5 Hejira or AD 627:

“O ye who believe! Enter not the dwellings of the prophet for a meal without waiting for the proper time, unless permission be granted to you. But if ye are invited, enter, and when your meal is ended, then disperse. Linger not for conversation. Lo! That would cause annoyance to the prophet, and he would be shy of (asking) you (to go): but Allah is not shy of the truth. And when ye ask of them (the wives of the prophet) anything, ask it of them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts.”

The prophet had just married Zaynab bint Jahsh when that verse was revealed². It serves as an ethical guide for the Prophet’s companions concerning manners of visiting someone’s house. Anas ibn Malik narrated that three guests came to celebrate Prophet’s wedding. While everybody left the house, the three guests were disrespectfully spending time chatting in the prophet’s house, failing to respect the business of the house owner. The verse was revealed to remind every guest to be aware of the house owner’s privacy.

In this context, the term hijab was used to signify a material object; a curtain that separates two different spaces, public and private. And a guest should not go

¹ Fadwa El-Guindi. *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*. NY: Oxford, 1999. p: 18.

² Fatimah Mernissi. *The Veil and Female Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women’s Right in Islam*. Translated by: Mary Joe Lakeland. NY: Basic Books, 1991. p: 86.

beyond the curtain that has been set as a border between the two spaces. Referring to S. Ardener, Fadwa el-Guindi said that in the context of Arabia, public and private space was determined by the existence of “stranger”. It is public when “the entry of stranger may change a private life”³. The architecture of Arab houses during the time did not provide enough rooms. There were no separable rooms to welcome guests and to sit with family members. Therefore, to respect the privacy of the house owner, the verse was revealed as an ethical guide for a visit. Also, the verse was revealed to protect women’s privacy. A woman living alone at home was commonplace during the prophet’s era. Regulating the flow of men visitors who came to women’s quarters, including Zaynab’s, was then a huge need in order to help women feel secure with the visit⁴. With this respect, there is no indication that hijab could mean women’s veil.

Other Qur’anic texts on hijab also emphasize its meanings and functions as separating partition. In Qur’an 42:51, hijab is mentioned to separate two different realms of divinity and humanity. In other verses, it is used to distinguish wrong doers from righteous (7: 46, 41: 5) and believers from unbelievers (17: 45) and to differentiate two different times, day and night (38: 32). Scrutinizing meanings and functions of the word in those verses, none of them signifies women’s clothing. Instead, the understanding of hijab as women’s clothing is referenced to sura 24: 31 and 33: 59 stressing women to cover some parts of their bodies. Sura 24: 31 reads:

“And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils (*khimar*) over their bosoms . . .”

While sura 33: 59 mentions:

O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments (*jilbab*) over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft- Forgiving, Most Merciful.

The two verses do not use the term hijab to stress women’s clothing. Instead, they use “khimar” (head cover) and “jilbab” (loose garment or cloak) to draw concept of women’s clothing in Islam. According to Gertrude Stern as quoted by Fadwa el-Guindi, the meaning of hijab as head cover was only defined by the ninth century AD⁵. That was presumably during the emergence of *ulum al tafsir* (exegesis), around two centuries after Muhammad migrated to Medina. During the development of Qur’anic exegesis and the codification of hadith, many concepts started to emerge including the concept of veiling that was institutionalized as an integral part of Muslim women’s religious identity. In fact, Qur’an does not elaborate detailed requirements of a hijab that one needs to wear. It is through the development of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) that Muslim jurists set rules for women’s clothing and its behavioral consequences.

Hijab is used as a tool to discipline the life of men and women in Muslim society concerning not only religious aspect, but also social, political and economic

³ Fadwa El-Guindi, p. 77.

⁴ Fadwa El-Guindi, p. 154.

⁵ Fadwa El-Guindi, p. 152.

aspects of life. In social life, hijab was enforced to eliminate evil acts that allegedly originated from women's beauty. Politically, hijab was used as a means to accentuate Muslim's identity and to mark distinction with other cultures and resistance to secularism. While in terms of economy, hijab was meant for women to dress modestly, setting them apart from hedonism and consumerism condemned by religion for their dissipating nature. Hijab is a product of culture that develops within the frame of religio-socio-economic and political context that continuously changes within certain period of time.

2. The Development of Hijab in Indonesia

The development of hijab in Indonesia has been rapid, especially since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998. Since then, the number of hijabi increases dramatically because Indonesia is becoming more open to globalization. Freedom of speech and press that was suppressed before is now actively mediating story telling from other parts of the world; making the exchange of knowledge and information run fast and making changes in whole aspects of human life happen very quick. The rapid increase of hijab is a consequence of globalization that brings together aspects of religion, politics, economy, social and culture as intersecting subjects contributing to the development of hijab in Indonesia.

Nancy Smith-Hefner wrote a chapter entitled *Javanese Women and the Veil*, expressing her amazement of how transformation of women's veiling in Indonesia happened quite fast. During her first stay in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 1970s, she noticed fewer than 3% of student population in Yogyakarta wore the veil. When she returned in the late 1990s, she observed that the percentage of women students wearing veil has increased to 60%. Veiling style has also changed; while *kerudung* is favored by old traditionalist generation, *jilbab* is preferred by the young one⁶. Describing the differences between *kerudung* and *jilbab*, Hefner correctly says:

“The *kerudung* is typically made of a soft, translucent fabric and is draped over the hair or over a close fitting hat. Parts of a woman's neck and hair may remain visible. By contrast—the new veil or *jilbab* is a large square piece of nontransparent fabric folded so as to be drawn closely around the face and pinned securely under the chin so that the hair, ears and neck are completely covered. The fabric reaches to the shoulder, with some styles covering the chest. The *jilbab* is typically worn with a loose-fitting, long-sleeved blouse where tunic and a long, ankle-length skirt or loose, wide-legged pants”⁷

Smith-Hefner's research on veiling shows a relevant interpretation of hijab culture in Indonesia in the 1990s. By that time, both *kerudung* and *jilbab* were seen as technologies for the self to build on personal security and to express commitment to religion. The *kerudung* is the earliest form of hijab that symbolized Muslim women's religious piety. In 1980s, it was worn along with a transparent *kebaya* (a traditional Javanese women's top) and *jarik* (a long fabric to wrap woman's body, usually worn as

⁶ Nancy Smith-Hefner. “Javanese Women and The Veil”, in *Everyday Life in Southeast Asia*. Kathleen M. Adams and Kathleen A. Gillogly (eds.). IN: Indiana University Press, 2011. p. 154.

⁷ *Ibid.*

skirt). But women who wore such outfits were countable. Until 1991, the Indonesian government prohibited Muslim women to wear *kerudung* in both in public non-religious schools and government offices⁸. But resistance towards the regulation arose. Some women preferred to wear *kerudung* to oppose secularism enforced by the Indonesian government. Starting from 1993 onwards, *jilbab* started to be worn, especially in Islamic schools and universities. In 1998, Smith-Hefner wrote, female activists in *jilbab* became familiar sight in demonstration to bring down Soeharto from his position as president. According to her investigation, *jilbab* became the symbol of protection from violence during the pro-democracy rallies. It also offered a moral image of the protest—signaling the public that the demonstration was not for the sake of power, but for the common good⁹.

Now, years after Smith-Hefner's book chapter was published, she must be amazed that university students no longer favor *jilbab* because the style of veiling changes. Indeed, *kerudung* and *jilbab* are still worn in today's context. Yet, their meaning and function changed reversely. With the development of *jilbab*, wearing *kerudung* was no longer considered religious. With the presence of arabization in Indonesia, a cultural shift occurred gradually. New standardization of religion is set by some prominent religious leaders to bring Islam in Indonesia closer to Arab Islam that is mistakenly argued as the authentic one. Today, even though *kerudung* still symbolizes Muslim culture, its meaning and function have been transformed. The older generation wears it daily as part of tradition, while non-hijabi wears it occasionally as fashion. The two female activists who are the wife and daughter of the late president Abdurrahman Wahid, wear *kerudung* as resistance to arabization of Indonesia.

In the next development, *jilbab* replaced *kerudung*, representing identity of humility and piety. Because of its modest style in comparison to the new style of hijab that I will discuss later in this paper, *jilbab* represents high religiosity of a woman. *Jilbab* is worn by majority of hijabi. Its style encompasses both the pinned and the unpinned ones. The unpinned ones are favored to use in everyday life because they are simple. One can wear it without pin as it is stitched together. The only thing to do is to put it on head and adjust it to face. But, the unpinned *jilbab* is considered less formal. Therefore, some schools require their students to not wear unpinned *jilbab* during formal school activities.

Beginning in 2010 onwards, *jilbab* is considered to be old fashioned with the emergence of new hijab style. Interestingly enough, this new hijab style is called "hijab", an international term for veil. Readers should not be confused with several terms I use here. In international world, hijab is used to designate both what I call *jilbab* and hijab. But in Indonesia, the word hijab means the new style of *jilbab* which is worn in various styles, not only that the fabric is folded and pinned securely under chin, but also pulled in several directions to create more styles.

The hijab is a recent phenomenon in Indonesia. In 2010, the hijabers community—a community of Muslim young women who wear new style of hijab—

⁸ Arimbi, Diah Arini. *Reading Contemporary Indonesian Muslim Women Writers: Representation, Identity and Religion of Muslim Women in Indonesian Fiction*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009. p. 71.

⁹ Nancy Smith Hefner, p. 158.

launched its organization publicly to help create awareness for Muslim women to don hijab. Offering various styles of hijab, the community attempts to promote new image of hijab that is not at all traditional or conservative, but is modern and stylish. This movement presumably emerges as a response to general assumption of hijab that depicts it as backward and conservative. Challenging general assumption on hijab, these young ladies invite Muslim girls to participate in their movement. They establish communities in several big cities in Indonesia and continuously reconstruct identity of hijabers by promoting three main notions; brains, beauties and beliefs. The movement of hijabers community and their identity construction will be analyzed carefully in the following discussion.

3. Hijabers and Identity Formation

Hijabers—Indonesian Muslim young ladies who wear new hijab style—understand well the identity they want to present through their performance. Being motivated by the general assumption about hijab that is frequently associated with traditionalism, this urban middle class community of hijabers is moved to represent Islam and hijab in a more modern way, reconciling tradition and modernity, refusing the general assumption often raised by Western culture, that Islam rejects modernity. Arguments about being modern Muslims are clearly accentuated by hijabers in their programs. For them, one can still be fashionable with a hijab.

The emergence of hijabers answers the doubt of many young ladies who were hesitant to don hijab because of worrying about their performances. By promoting various alternatives of hijab styles, hijabers are able to assure the young generation that hijab can also be fun. The success of this movement in persuading young women to veiling was seen after two years of its first establishment. The new hijab styles color the face of Indonesian society, marking the rise of urban culture in both rural and urban areas.

Looking at this phenomenon from wider lens, this phenomenon emerges as a consequence of globalization. Indeed, globalization has opened up chances for women to actualize themselves in public space. As women became involved in public life, self-identity becomes a reflexively organized endeavor for women¹⁰ because identity plays as promising factor that contributes to the success of social interaction. Due to this need, women of the modern era religiously revise their identities along with the development taking place in society. Mediated story telling from distant happenings influences the way women look at themselves. And when they do not see themselves in the story being narrated, they start to hate their bodies and endeavor to emulate identity being presented.

Many young people assume that to be modern means to imitate foreign culture. Hijabers, in spite of maintaining veiling tradition, do subscribe to foreign fashions. The closest example for that is the use of the word hijab, which was never used before, is now used to designate a more stylish way of donning hijab. Apparently the word was invented to give international and modern sense of hijab styles being

¹⁰ Anthony Giddens. *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. California: Stanford University Press, 1991. p. 5.

promoted. In addition to the word being used, various styles of hijab develop in other countries are adopted to equalize the level of modernity and stylishness of the hijabers. One might be recognized as modern if she successfully resembled or even looked better than the one being imitated.

In this regard, media is the major player in bridging global network and in exhibiting the multiple choices of identity one wants to present. In this respect, Anthony Giddens says:

“In high modernity, the influence of distant happenings on proximate events, and on intimacies of the self, becomes more and more commonplace. The media, printed and electronic, obviously play a central role in this respect. Mediated experience, since the first experience of writing, has long influenced both self identity and the basic organization of social relation”¹¹

Today, hijab is not only a tradition, but also a fashion. It becomes a lifestyle of the post-modern life. The modest nature of hijab no longer holds. Jilbab is no longer preferred. Although its meaning as part of Muslim’s tradition remains inherent in the new hijab style, its sacred character slowly evaporates. The more tradition loses its holds, the stronger globalization imposes on daily life. Under such circumstances, individuals are forced to negotiate their local tradition to global culture. Reconstitution of everyday life is more pronounced with the increasing needs to negotiate lifestyle choices with diversity of options¹².

Hijabers are among those who grow out of the rupture of the tradition that cannot withstand the massive pressure of globalization. Hijab is no longer understood as a means to protect female’s body from males’ gaze. It does not promote a modest identity as constructed before. Rather, it presents a consumerist and hedonistic character enforced by the market.

In relation to that, there are certain rituals that one needs to perform to be a hijaber. Crucial to it is willingness to spend energy, money and time to don a hijab. Because hijab is about fashion, it takes persistent efforts to create a beautiful style because good performance is not only about hijab, but also about the outfit a woman wears. Having said so, hijab loses its significance as beautifying tool when a hijaber fails to pair it with fashionable clothes. Having this reality, it is not surprising that hijabers often appear in colorful dresses, heels, attractive accessories and glossy make up. In fact, the need of hijab has disciplined women to religiously subscribe hijab outfits, to check for hijab tutorials on Youtube or magazines or to meet their fellow hijabers either in person or through virtual media. This chain of needs—in return, sustains the wheels of capitalistic webs that continuously make hijab a form of commodified consumption. Liz Frost in her book *Young Women and The Body: A Feminist Sociology* says:

“How people are able to be, and who they are able to be, then directly relates to the version of self available in commercial transaction. In purchasing goods,

¹¹ Anthony Giddens, p. 4

¹² Anthony Giddens, p. 5.

in the choice made and what meanings are attached to these, facets of an identity are bought”¹³

Capitalism has smartly twisted secondary and tertiary needs to be primary ones. A branded bag in blue color that was never needed before becomes an urgent thing to purchase, to match with turquoise hijab and stylish outfit. New arrival clothes that appear in the store are mostly hunted because everybody wants to have the privilege of being the first who has it. The ideology of consumerism convinces people that the good life and good selfhood depend on those products. Consumers are persuaded to believe that they have specific needs important to identity representation.

In Indonesian discourse, hijabers community forms a new class in society. Regardless of their religiosity, wealth, social status, and family background, hijabers are portrayed to be the new class of bourgeois whose identity is viewed in terms of its economic consumption, instead of its economic production. The styles of hijab, the dresses and the accessories they wear constitute their identity as urban middle class people. Normally, some labels such as consumerist and hedonist are inherently attached to this body culture. Society often characterizes them as *priyayi* in contrast to *santri*. Yet, the term *priyayi* and *santri* I use here does not refer to Geertz’s definition of the terms, as it is quite problematic. In this context, *priyayi* refers to middle and upper class elites who have less background in Islamic teachings. Unlike the *santri* whose Islamic background is rooted in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), most hijabers grow their Islamic understanding through fragmented sources such as media, both printed and electronic.

With respect to this phenomenon, Judith Butler says that identity is performatively constituted by a person’s expression in his/her everyday life¹⁴. Identity including gender is perceived not through what one is, but what one does. It is the performance of the hijabers that constitute their urban middle class identity. And as I said earlier, the identity construction of hijabers is not taken for granted, but constructed and reconstructed. Chances are, identity is constructed by the dialectical interplay between self and surrounding forces. Emily Zaslow said, “Clothing the body becomes a way to name oneself, mark oneself, disguise oneself, and engage in dialogue with multiple and conflicting social discourse”¹⁵. Indeed, hijabers are not independent in constructing their identity. Their way of becoming is much influenced by the market that not only offers them choices but also selects for them identity that the market wants them to be. In addition, hijabers’ identity is also influenced by power scattered in society, including family, friends, social norms and media. Identity then goes through some sort of negotiation between self and society that involves a process of depiction and presentation.

4. Hijab: Disciplining Women’s Bodies

Hijaber’s view of Islam and modernity creates a certain depiction of how a modern Muslim woman looks. For them, outer and inner beauty should walk hand in hand to construe a modern Muslim identity. In their website, they said:

¹³ Liz Frost. *Young Women and the Body: A Feminist Sociology*. NY: Palgrave, 2001. p. 83.

¹⁴ Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity*. NY: Routledge, 1990. p. 25

¹⁵ Emilie Zaslow. *Coming of Age in Girl Power: Media Culture*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. p. 85.

“With a great inner beauty, we will automatically understand and aware that outer beauty is also important. But at this stage, we have understood that the outer beauty is only the **supporting** tool for characterizing our inner beauty but that is not the main thing in our lives. We have to always remember that Allah SWT, the One who creates us, does not see us from the look or the body of a person but from the quality of their heart. Then, how do we create our Inner Beauty? Inner beauty in Islam is based on Adab (manner) and Akhlak (character), which are exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW in his Hadith and Allah SWT in the Qur’an.”¹⁶

The notion of inner and outer beauty promoted by the community explains the intersection of the self, religion and society. According to Erving Goffman, one negotiates one’s identity through self-presentation that often involves depiction and presentation. Hijabers’ understanding of how it means to be a Muslim makes them compromise fashion for outer beauty with religious and social norms for the inner one.

Religious orthodoxy is very strict in setting regularities for veiling women. Among those regularities are related to the concept of hijab shar’i and non-shar’i. According to religious authorities, hijab shar’i should be big enough to cover woman’s body importantly the head, neck and bosom, and should not attract attentions. With this restriction, hijabs worn by hijabers are often considered non-shar’i because even if some of their hijabs were big enough, the attractive style of their hijab makes them “less religious.”

A controversial issue about the hijab is the rise of *jilboob*. Basically, *jilboob* is constituted from the words *jilbab* and boobs. This term emerges from a Facebook fan page that collects pictures of hijabi wearing tight attires, making their boobs fully exposed. Looking at the way this fan page organizes its account; I suspect that the account is created to bully hijabis who wear such outfits. In a picture that is posted, the administrator of the fan page writes a caption “cantik sih...tapi selamat ya anda masuk koleksi foto jilboobs!”, in English, it reads “ Beautiful . . . but congratulation! You are included in Jilboobs photo collections!”.

Religion disciplines women’s bodies through hijab. Hijabis should not wear tight clothes, should not don their hijab in a way that draws attention and should not use glossy make up. In contrast, they should cloth themselves modestly and behave in a manner that has been approved by religion, because women are expected to be gatekeepers of tradition. Failing to compromise with religious regulation will result in social punishment. The phenomenon of jilboobs is the best example to explain how disciplining women’s body uses penalties to docile women’s power. Girls who insist on wearing inappropriate hijab are subject to judgment and condemnation. This sustains Foucault’s argument that the body is often an object and target of power¹⁷. Further, he said:

¹⁶ Hijaber Community, “Enhancing Our Inner Beauty” <http://hijaberscommunity.blogspot.com/2010/12/enhancing-our-inner-beauty.html>. Retrieved: Sunday, November 30, 2017, at. 12: 30 pm.

¹⁷ Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*. Translated by Alan Seridan. NY: Vintage Books. p. 180.

“... In our societies, the systems of punishment are to be situated in a certain “political economy” of the body: even if they do not make use of violent or bloody punishment, even when they use “lenient” methods involving confinement or correction, it is always the body that is at issue—the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission”¹⁸.

In the case of jilboobs, women’s body is used politically to sustain the politics of Muslim puritans whose power is being challenged by a more moderate culture of Islam. It was this group that always expresses its objection to the hijabers and campaign for what they call “appropriate dress” of Muslim women. They are the ones who draw relevancy between dress and-morality and popularize the term jilboobs to condemn the allegedly non-shar’i style of hijab.

C. CONCLUSIONS

The increasing number of hijabi in Indonesia signals the revival of Muslim religious identity. Unlike Muslim identity expressions of which were banned under the New Regime, Muslim identity that developed in the post-reformation era shows a multiplicity of identity choices. One can perform one’s Muslim identities in any style they prefer. Muslim women take this opportunity to actualize themselves, presenting the identity they want to.

Hijab is then a *tekhne* or technology that is used to support the identity that is becoming. Hijabers—Indonesian term to call women who don stylish hijab—are aware of the identity they want to present. Indeed, the market has commodified this need to rotate its wheel. However, to consider hijabers as simply submissive to market choices will ignore the power of these young women. In fact, hijaber identity is a product of a conscious process of negotiation between the self and scattered power in society.

Self-representation is political and dress often symbolizes its movement. Hijabers community should not be seen as solely a group of innocent girls. Instead, it should be viewed as ideological movement that carries on modern culture and ideology. At the same rate, Muslim puritans want to preserve tradition in its “original” form. The debate around hijabers and the way they dress up is then a debate on the issue of tradition and modernity. Interestingly, this ideological battle is done using women’s bodies. Worrying about the massive movement of the new hijab movement, Muslim puritans ardently attack the identity brought by “modern” hijabis. Labeling them with negative image such as jilboobs, this community expects that their attempts to homogenize women’s experiences of hijab obtain more support, which in turn sustains the power of the puritan culture.

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¹⁸ Michel Foucault, p. 172.

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