

The Rise in Popularity of Online Islamic Fashion In Indonesia: An Economic, Political, and Socio-Anthropological Perspective

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Abstract : The rise in popularity of Indonesian Islamic fashion displayed and sold through social networking sites, especially Instagram, might seem at first glance like a commonplace and localized phenomenon. However, when analyzed critically, it actually reveals the relations between the global and local Indonesian economy, as well as a deep socio-anthropological dimension relating to religion, culture, class, work, identity. Conducted using a qualitative methodology, data collection technique of literature review, and observation of various social networking sites, this research finds four things that lead to the aforementioned conclusion. First, the rise of online Islamic fashion retailers was triggered by the shift in the structure of global and national Indonesian economy as well as the free access of information made possible by democratization in Indonesia and worldwide advances in terms of technology. All of those factors combined together gave birth to a large amount of middle-class Indonesians with high consumer culture and entrepreneurial flair. Second, online Islamic fashion retailers are the new cultural trendsetters in society. All these show how Indonesians are becoming increasingly pious, no longer only adhere to Western conception of luxury and that many are increasingly exploiting Islam commercial and status-acquiring purposes. Third, the online Islamic fashion retailers actually reveal a shift in the conception of 'work' - social media has made work no longer only confined to the toiling activities inside factories, but instead something that can be done from any location only through posting online words or pictures that can increase a fashion product's capital value. Without realizing it, many celebrities and online retailers who promote Islamic fashion through social media on a daily basis are now also 'semi-free immaterial labors' - a slight reconceptualization to Tiziana Terranova's concept of 'free labor' and Maurizio Lazzarato's 'immaterial labor', which basically refer to people who create economic value and thus help out capitals from producing immaterial things with only little compensation in return. Fourth, this research also shows that the diversity of Islamic fashion styles being sold on Instagram reflects the polarized identity of Islam in Indonesia. In stark contrast with the theory which states that globalization always leads to the strengthening and unification of identity, this research shows how polarized the Islamic identity in Indonesia really is - even in the face of globalization.

Keywords : global economy, Indonesian online Islamic fashion, political relations, socio-anthropology

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