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The *Hijab* Transformed: A Shifting Social Identity in Bauman's Liquid Modernity

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Abstract
The *hijab*, traditionally seen as a religious symbol in Islam, has undergone significant transformations in modern society, shifting its role from a marker of religious modesty to a dynamic symbol of social identity. Global cultural shifts, media representations, and the tension between traditional values and contemporary aspirations influence this transformation. The study explores the evolving meanings and functions of the *hijab* as a social identity in the context of Bauman's theory of liquid modernity. This research employs a qualitative literature review methodology to examine 40 peer-reviewed articles from both international and national journals. A content analysis approach is utilized to identify recurring themes and patterns in the *hijab's* depiction as a social symbol across diverse cultural and social landscapes. The findings indicate that in the era of liquid modernity, the *hijab* symbolizes a fragmentation of its traditional meanings, shaped by forces like globalization, consumerism, and individualization. Although it continues to signify religious identity, the *hijab* also represents modernity, resistance, and commodification. Social media plays a crucial role in this transformation, offering a platform for Muslim women to reinterpret the *hijab* as both a personal and communal statement. This study highlights the *hijab's* transformation into a fluid and multifaceted symbol of identity in a rapidly evolving global context.

Keywords: *Hijab*; Social Identity; Liquid Modernity

Jilbab, yang secara tradisional dipandang sebagai simbol religius dalam Islam, telah mengalami transformasi yang signifikan dalam masyarakat modern, bergeser dari peran sebagai penanda religius menjadi simbol identitas sosial yang dinamis. Transformasi ini dipengaruhi oleh pergeseran budaya global, representasi media, serta ketegangan antara nilai-nilai tradisional dan aspirasi kontemporer. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi evolusi perubahan makna dan fungsi jilbab sebagai identitas sosial dalam konteks teori modernitas cair Bauman. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif berupa studi literatur, penelitian ini menganalisis 40 artikel jurnal bereputasi internasional dan nasional. Analisis konten digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi tema dan pola yang berulang terkait representasi jilbab sebagai identitas sosial di berbagai konteks budaya dan sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jilbab dalam era modernitas cair mencerminkan fragmentasi makna, yang dipengaruhi oleh globalisasi, konsumerisme, dan individualisasi. Meskipun tetap menjadi penanda identitas religius, jilbab kini juga berfungsi sebagai pernyataan modernitas, resistensi, dan komodifikasi. Media sosial memainkan peran penting dalam transformasi ini, menjadi platform bagi perempuan Muslim untuk mereformulasi jilbab sebagai ekspresi pribadi dan komunal. Studi ini menegaskan bahwa jilbab tidak lagi menjadi simbol yang statis, melainkan representasi identitas yang cair dan multifaset dalam dunia yang terus berubah.

A. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to reassess the *hijab*, not just as a religious mandate but also as a social identity in modern society, through the lens of Zygmunt Bauman's perspective. The challenges at the heart of this include social, cultural, and interpretative dynamics in contemporary society, where the *hijab* is frequently debated within secularism, identity politics, and feminism.

The historical roots of the *hijab*, tracing back to pre-Islamic times in regions such as Greece and Persia, offer significant context. For instance, in Persia, the *hijab* was used to signify the social status of women, distinguishing between noblewomen, commoners, and married women. In Greece, the *hijab* was linked to menstruation mythology, with menstruating women socially isolated to prevent "spiritual impurity". This historical context reveals that the practice of wearing the *hijab* has long held complex social and discriminatory meanings (Kamaluddin, Diana, and Wahhab 2021:126-127).

In Islam, the *hijab* has traditionally been understood as a religious obligation rooted in the teachings of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. However, in modern society, the *hijab* has evolved into a symbol of complex social identity. Previous research indicates that the *hijab* influences how Muslim women define and project their identities. In Indonesia, for example, the *hijab* is seen not only as a religious duty but also as a marker of social identity influenced by popular culture and the mass media (Simorangkir and Pamungkas 2018). Additionally, the *hijab* is often used as a tool to negotiate women's roles in society, presenting narratives that challenge the stereotype of Muslim women being oppressed in the West (Stannard and Islam 2020).

Modern fashion has further influenced the use of the *hijab*, transforming it into an element that reflects Muslim women's identities in

a global society, while also serving as a means to express both modern and religious identities (Dewi et al. 2022). Even in the digital sphere, the *hijab* has become a performative medium for Muslim influencers to redefine modesty and the concept of Muslim womanhood in the technological era (Bernier 2023).

However, a research gap persists in understanding the shift in the *hijab*'s role, from a religious obligation to a broader social identity symbol. Most studies still focus on its religious aspects. At the same time, research examining how the *hijab* represents social identity in modern society—serving as a medium for cultural values, social status, and the agency of Muslim women—remains limited. This understanding is crucial in an increasingly plural and global society, where the *hijab* can symbolize dialogue between religious and social identities. Further research is needed to explore the role of the *hijab* in constructing a complex social identity in modern society, extending beyond its religious function (Almila and Inglis 2018). This study, therefore, aims to develop a deeper understanding of the *hijab* as a dynamic symbol of social identity in modern society, shaped by the long transition from solid modernity to liquid modernity.

B. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative literature review approach using secondary data to explore the role of the *hijab* as a symbol of social identity in various cultural and social contexts. This approach aligns with the qualitative research methodology guidelines, emphasizing an in-depth exploration of rich and diverse data to understand a phenomenon in its contextual setting (Creswell 2013; Patton 2015). The data for this study includes a literature analysis of 40 journal articles, both international and national, focused on the use of the *hijab* and its implications for social identity. These articles were selected based on thematic relevance and their significant contribution to understanding of the *hijab* in social and religious

discourse. The article selection process involved a systematic search in leading academic databases such as JSTOR, PubMed, and Google Scholar, using keywords like "*hijab*," "*social identity*," and "*Islamic fashion*." The inclusion criteria for articles were publications from the last ten years and the presence of peer review to ensure scientific quality and accuracy (Silverman 2016).

The method employed in this study is qualitative content analysis, which is aimed at identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the data (Krippendorff 2018). The analysis focuses on how the *hijab* is articulated as a symbol of social identity and an agent of change in academic literature. This analysis involves systematic coding of the data to identify sinificant themes, recurring narratives, and diverse perspectives on the *hijab* that emerge from previous studies (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014). The study will integrate these findings to build a more comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural dynamics of the *hijab* as a social identity in the modern era. Thus, this research not only provides an in-depth analysis of the representations and practices surrounding the *hijab* but also offers new insights that can support further dialogue in social and cultural studies of Islam.

Theoretical Framework

As understood by Zygmunt Bauman, modernity can be conceptualized through two main phases: solid modernity and liquid modernity, which describe how social structures and human relationships have evolved with the progression of time. In solid modernity, societies were organized through stable, standardized structures. This system was based on rigid social norms, a collective belief in progress, and confidence in technology and science to improve life. During this phase, individuals often adhered to collective rules that provided security but limited their freedom (Bauman 2000).

In contrast, liquid modernity marks a significant shift in the social order. In this era, once stable structures began to weaken, replaced by more flexible but often uncertain social relationships. Liquid modernity is characterized by high mobility, individualization, and a focus on consumption as a marker of identity. For Bauman, liquid modernity erodes clear social boundaries, creating ambiguity in moral values and social norms. Fixed structures no longer bind individuals but must constantly adapt to a rapidly changing environment (Bauman 2012).

In liquid modernity, consumerism plays a central role in shaping individual identity. Unlike solid modernity, where identity is shaped by traditional institutions such as family or religion, liquid modernity encourages individuals to construct their identities through consumption choices and lifestyle. This creates new pressures for individuals to conform to constantly changing social standards, which often exacerbates feelings of insecurity and alienation (Bauman 2007).

Bauman also notes that liquid modernity affects individuals and social institutions. Norms and values once considered fixed become fluid, leading to ambiguity in human relationships. In social relationships, liquid modernity allows for greater flexibility but also creates more transient connections. This can be observed in various contexts, such as the world of work, which increasingly relies on flexible labor, and in interpersonal relationships that are becoming more individualistic and transactional (Bauman 2013).

Bauman's theoretical framework helps explain how changes in social structures influence cultural, political, and economic dynamics. In the context of symbols like the *hijab*, the theory of liquid modernity provides a relevant perspective to explain how traditional symbols can transform into tools for individual expression amid the pressures of consumerism and globalization. The *hijab*, once a part of collective norms in solid modernity, has become a fluid symbol of identity, adapting to the evolving values of

individuality in liquid modernity. This phenomenon highlights the relevance of Bauman's theory in understanding social transformation in the contemporary era (Bauman 2000; Bauman 2007).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. *Historical Roots of the Hijab*

The *hijab* is defined in the Indonesian dictionary as a large veil worn by Muslim women to cover the head, neck, and chest. In Indonesia, the term *kerudung* (headscarf) was initially used to refer to a cloth covering the head, exposing the neck and some of the hair. It was only in the early 1980s that the term hijab started being used, signifying a head covering that also conceals the neck and all the hair. (Al Asymawi in Yulikhah).

The word *hijab* originates from the Arabic term *jalaba*, meaning "to pull" or "to draw," and refers to a loose garment, typically with a head covering, that covers the head, neck, and chest. The *hijab* is a long garment that covers the entire body, except the face, hands, and feet, and is typically worn by Muslim women. This form of clothing follows Islamic teachings regarding modesty and the covering of the *aurat* (Dahlan in Katni,??).

In the *Qur'an,* the term *al-jilbab* is synonymous with *al-qamish* (a long garment) and *al-khimar* (headscarf), referring to garments that cover the entire body. It is interpreted as any garment worn above the clothing, like a blanket or cloth, covering the woman's entire body (Wijayanati).

Historical records show that the hijab has been recognized since ancient times, well before the advent of Islam, in regions such as Greece and Persia. In Persia, for example, the *hijab* was used to differentiate between noblewomen, ordinary women, and those who were married (whether still married or widowed). Thus, the hijab became a symbol denoting class or social status among women in Persian society. Over time, it was also used as an alternative "exile" for women during menstruation in noble circles. Instead of being exiled, they only needed to wear a headscarf. In ancient

Greece, the *hijab* was closely associated with menstruation mythology, where menstruating women were considered "impure" and socially isolated to prevent spiritual contamination. A long, wide veil protected the woman from "evil spirits" entering her body. This context highlights how women were subjected to significant discrimination in these regions (Kamaluddin et al. 2021:126-127).

Throughout history, the *hijab* has symbolized a range of social dynamics, from expressions of piety to tools of political and cultural resistance. This reflects the complex evolution of the *hijab* as it faces global challenges such as political repression, media stereotyping, and cultural commodification (Yazdi and Musavi 2021).

The history of the *hijab* can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as Persia and Greece. In these contexts, head coverings were often used as markers of social status (Sulaeman 2020). In Persia, for instance, noblewomen were required to wear a head covering to symbolize their dignity (Prayogi, Riandita, and Setiawan 2022). In contrast, in Greece, head coverings were more closely associated with rigid moral and spiritual norms (Katouzian 2020). Islam, emerged later, and incorporated this tradition, giving the *hijab* religious significance as a symbol of modesty and female protection (Ridgeon 2021).

In Islamic tradition, the *hijab* is introduced through the Qur'an as a religious duty. Verses such as those in Surah *Al-Ahzab* 59 emphasize that the hijab is a means to protect women's honor and shield them from social threats (Tafsir Ibn Kathir,??). However, cultural interpretations of the *hijab* have led to variations in its practice. In some societies, the hijab is seen as a symbol of spiritual freedom, : in others, it is considered a non-negotiable normative obligation (Yazdi and Musavi 2021).

The religious function of the hijab has expanded in meaning, especially as it has become a tool of political resistance. In Palestine, the *hijab* has been used as a symbol of cultural identity in defiance of Israeli

colonialism (Nuñez Basante 2019). In contexts of colonization, women who wear the hijab often become icons of political resistance, showing solidarity with national struggles. This phenomenon reveals that the *hijab* functions not only as a religious symbol and a powerful political tool (Almila and Inglis 2018).

However, the use of the *hijab* has also sparked conflict in societies that have strongly adopted secularism. In post-Soviet Azerbaijan, the *hijab* is often viewed as a threat to the modern values introduced by Russian colonialism (Bashirov 2020). The ban on the *hijab* in schools and public spaces has created intense debates between local traditions and the global push for secularization. This phenomenon illustrates how the hijab becomes a site of conflict between tradition and modernity (Koo and Han 2018).

Western media often plays a role in creating stereotypes about the *hijab*. Representations of the *hijab* as a symbol of the oppression of Muslim women have become dominant in the discourse of Islamophobia. These stereotypes not only limit Muslim women's freedom to express their identities but also reinforce discrimination against them in public spaces (Nuñez Basante 2019). The media often fails to capture the complexity of the hijab as a multidimensional symbol of identity.

However, in Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia, the *hijab* hastransformed, becoming a symbol of modernity and social status. The younger Muslim generation, especially in urban areas, views the *hijab* as an inseparable part of their modern lifestyle. It symbolizes not only piety but also serves as an aesthetic statement that reflects both local and global cultural dynamics (Sulaeman 2020).

The commodification of the *hijab* within the global fashion industry has also added a new dimension to the symbol. The *hijab* is now promoted as part of fashion trends, attracting the attention of the global Muslim market (Antunes 2022). Social media plays a significant role in this process, with influencers using the *hijab* to articulate their identities while promoting

specific products. This transformation demonstrates how the *hijab* has become an instrument of capitalism that often obscures its religious value (Ridgeon 2021).

However, the commodification of the *hijab* also creates social pressures for Muslim women. Beauty standards and lifestyle expectations promoted through the *hijab* often create unrealistic expectations. Muslim women face the challenge of meeting these standards while maintaining the spiritual meaning of the *hijab*. This highlights the dilemma between modern aesthetics and traditional values faced by the younger Muslim generation (Prayogi, Riandita, and Setiawan 2022).

Furthermore, national policies also affect how the *hijab* is perceived in society. In Iran, the hijab was made mandatory as part of social norms after the Islamic Revolution (Yazdi and Musavi 2021). However, younger generations often see this rule as restricting individual freedom. Protests against mandatory hijab laws reflect tensions between religious tradition and the demands of modern freedom (Bashirov 2020).

In Muslim diaspora countries, the *hijab* is often used to negotiate identity within a multicultural environment. Muslim women use the *hijab* to assert their identities while adapting to local cultural norms. In this context, the hijab becomes a symbol of identity flexibility, allowing Muslim women to confront stereotypes and discrimination (Almila and Inglis 2018).

Muslim women also use social media to challenge stereotypes about the *hijab*. Through digital platforms, they create alternative narratives that present the *hijab* as a symbol of freedom and agency. This narrative space enables Muslim women to reclaim the hijab as a positive tool for self-expression (Antunes 2022).

Nevertheless, the *hijab* remains a complex site of debate in global society. While some view it as a sacred religious symbol, others see it as a tool of cultural repression. This tension reflects broader social dynamics

where identity and culture often clash with globalization and modernity (Nuñez Basante 2019).

The historical trajectory of the *hijab* shows that this symbol is never static. Its role continues to evolve with social, political, and culturalchanges. From its initial function as a religious protective tool, the *hijab* has transformed into a tool for political resistance, a symbol of modernity, and a global commodity (Koo and Han 2018). This phenomenon demonstrates how the *hijab* has endured and adapted in various social and historical contexts (Ridgeon 2021).

Thus, the *hijab* is a symbol rich in meaning and dynamic in nature. Its historical journey reflects its ability to transcend the boundaries of religious function and become a powerful tool in confronting global challenges. From a symbol of piety to a tool of resistance, the *hijab* continues to reflect the complexity of Muslim women's identities in an ever-changing world (Sulaeman 2020).

2. *From Religious Symbol to Social Identity: The Transformation of the Hijab*

The *hijab*, originally known as a religious symbol in Islam, has undergone a significant transformation in its function and meaning within modern society. This change is closely tied to the role of pop culture and mass media, which have visually represented the *hijab* as part of social identity and lifestyle. In recent decades, the *hijab* has become a symbol of hybridity, blending tradition and modernity, especially among young Muslim women who find themselves at the intersection of globalization and local values (Baulch & Pramiyanti 2018).

Social media platforms, like Instagram, have become crucial in popularizing the *hijab* as a fashion icon. In Indonesia, the *hijabers* community uses social media to promote the aesthetic of *Muslimah* fashion, which not only aligns with religious values but also meets the standards of

global consumerism. This representation allows Muslim women to express their identities in a more personal and modern way, while also positioning the *hijab* as a widely marketed commodity (Karakavak & Özbölük 2022).

The transformation of the *hijab*'s meaning on social media has created a sense of ambivalence among Muslim women. On one hand, the *hijab* has become a tool for women's empowerment, allowing them to articulate a strong identity. On the other hand, the commodification of the *hijab* has diminished some of its spiritual value, as it is increasingly associated with social status and modern lifestyle (Tengku Mohd Azzman & Manaf 2019).

In Malaysia, the interaction between Muslim celebrities on Instagram and their followers has strengthened the perception that the *hijab* is a trendy lifestyle symbol. Research shows that Muslim celebrities not only influence purchasing decisions for specific *hijab* brands but also shape the view that the *hijab* is part of the global identity of modern Muslim women. This creates a connection between the *hijab* and lifestyle elements that are both inclusive and commercial (Arab 2022).

However, in Western countries, the representation of the *hijab* through mass media often carries negative stereotypes. In many cases, the *hijab* is seen as a symbol of oppression and conservatism, particularly within media discourses dominated by Islamophobia. Nonetheless, Muslim women in the diaspora often use social media to counter these stereotypes by presenting alternative narratives of the *hijab* as a symbol of strength and individual agency (Nuñez Basante 2019).

Social media also allows Muslim women to express their identities dynamically. In Australia, for example, social media has played a crucial role in shaping the perception of the *hijab* as an element of inclusion within mainstream fashion. However, this representation is often considered tokenistic and inauthentic by Muslim women, as it frequently prioritizes aesthetics over their spiritual experiences (Arab 2022).

In the context of the Muslim diaspora, the *hijab* is often worn to balance cultural and religious expectations. Many Muslim women in Western countries articulate the *hijab* as a complex symbol of identity that goes beyond its religious function. Social media enables them to convey that the *hijab* symbolizes flexibility and resistance to stereotypes (Holshoe 2020).

Furthermore, the phenomenon of *hijab syar'i* has drawn attention as a new form of commodification in Muslim culture. *Hijab syar'i* products are frequently marketed through social media, using narratives of piety while also placing the *hijab* within the realm of global capitalism. This creates social pressure for Muslim women to adopt certain brands that are perceived as symbols of social status (Rahim 2022).

The influence of pop culture and mass media on the perception and adoption of the *hijab* is highly significant. The media not only represents the *hijab* as a religious symbol but also articulates it as a symbol of lifestyle and social status. However, this transformation is not without criticism, as the *hijab* often loses its spiritual meaning amidst cultural commodification. Muslim women across various countries have used social media to counter stereotypes and articulate the *hijab* as a symbol of a strong and flexible identity. This phenomenon, therefore, further demonstrates the dynamics between tradition and modernity, where the *hijab* can become a medium for cultural dialogue in the global society.

3. *The Hijab and Social Identity in the Modern Era: Between Religiosity and Modernity*

The *hijab*, previously recognized solely as a traditional garment signifying modesty in Islam, has evolved into a rich and complex social identity symbol in the modern era. This transformation reflects an ongoing dialogue between tradition and innovation, religious values and modern aspirations. In today's global society, the *hijab* functions not only as a marker

of religious identity but also as an expression of individuality and autonomy. This shift allows Muslim women to explore and assert themselves within a broader social context.

The interpretation of the *hijab* in the modern era is more dynamic, adapting to shifts in values and global cultural influences. This is evident from the diverse *hijab* styles that have emerged, displaying piety fashion sense and personal preferences. Social media has become a canvas for Muslim women to showcase their interpretations of the *hijab*, pushing style boundaries while maintaining religious integrity. In the process, the *hijab* has been elevated from a symbol of simplicity to an international fashion icon.

However, the symbolic transformation of the *hijab* also creates challenges and controversies. In many traditional communities, modern adaptations of the *hijab* are sometimes seen as threats to long-standing norms. Questions about what is considered 'too modern' or 'not religious enough' often arise, indicating that the integration of traditional and modern values is not always harmonious. These criticisms highlight internal struggles within communities regarding how religiosity should be represented and practiced.

In the West, the *hijab* is often viewed through political and identity lenses. In societies that may view Islam with skepticism or even hostility, the *hijab* becomes more than just clothing; it is a political statement. Women wearing the *hijab* in Western countries may face unique challenges, including discrimination and social exclusion, but also gain opportunities to assert their identity and educate others about their culture.

Social media has reinforced the *hijab*'s presence in the public arena, allowing more positive narratives and images to circulate. Muslim women use these platforms to reclaim their agency, challenge stereotypes, and build supportive online communities. Social media has facilitated the

emergence of 'hijab influencers' who promote both styles and stories of diversity, inclusivity, and tolerance.

The fashion market has also responded to the increasing demand for *hijab* and Muslim attire. Major brands are now designing clothing lines that cater to women who wish to combine their religious values with contemporary fashion sensibilities. This marks a significant shift in the fashion industry, from ignoring these needs to actively incorporating and promoting them as part of broader diversity.

Yet, this commercialization also raises questions about cultural exploitation and the dilution of religious symbols into consumer products. Some critics argue that turning the *hijab* into a commodity could diminish its more profound meaning and weaken its integrity as a religious symbol. This debate highlights the ongoing conflict between commercial profit and the preservation of authentic traditions.

At an individual level, wearing the *hijab* often reflects a negotiation between personal identity and community expectations. Women who choose to wear the *hijab* may find themselves at a crossroads of internal and external criticism, each choice regarding style or level of adherence becoming a statement about their values and beliefs. This indicates that the *hijab* is not just clothing but also a medium through which Muslim women express themselves and assert their societal position.

The *hijab*'s impact on social identity is also evident in education and the workplace. In many countries, debates over whether *hijab* should be allowed in schools and workplaces reflect a broader struggle over religious freedom and self-expression. For many Muslim women, the decision to wear the *hijab* in these settings is not just about religious adherence but also about the right to express their identity in environments that may not be supportive.

Globally, the *hijab* has become a symbol of resistance and solidarity. For example, in various protests and social movements, Muslim women

wear the *hijab* not just as part of their religious identity but also as a statement of strength and unity. This demonstrates that the *hijab* can inspire women to take a more active role in political and social advocacy.

Furthermore, the portrayal of the *hijab* in arts and media plays a role in reinforcing or challenging public perceptions of the *hijab*. Films, literature, and visual arts featuring women in *hijab* often strive to provide deeper insights into their experiences, aiming to overcome stereotypes and introduce complex narratives about identity, empowerment, and resistance.

The role of the *hijab* in literature and cinema often serves as a tool to critique social and political issues, offering insights into the lives of Muslim women and exploring conflicts between personal freedom and social pressure. These stories entertaining and educational, helping build bridges of understanding across cultures and facilitating more inclusive and empathetic dialogue.

However, it is important to remember that in some places, the *hijab* remains controversial. In some countries, laws have been introduced that restrict or ban the use of the *hijab* in public spaces, sparking international debates about civil rights, personal freedom, and national identity. These conflicts demonstrate that the *hijab* is not just a religious issue but also at the center of political and ideological struggles.

The effects of these restrictions often have profound impacts on Muslim women, affecting everything from access to education to employment opportunities. In many cases, these bans also exacerbate social isolation and stigma, deepening divisions between Muslim communities and the broader society.

Education plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of the *hijab*. Educational initiatives that teach cultural and religious diversity can help reduce prejudice and enhance understanding. Such programs are beneficial not just for non-Muslims but also provide Muslim women with a platform to speak about their experiences and counter misconceptions.

These struggles have also spawned various community initiatives to support Muslim women's rights and promote social inclusion. Advocacy groups, workshops, and seminars continue to raise awareness and support women who choose to wear the *hijab*, strengthening support networks and enhancing community resilience.

In the context of education and employment, the *hijab* often becomes a starting point for discussions about diversity and inclusion policies. Many institutions now strive to adapt dress code guidelines that respect religious needs while ensuring all employees and students feel welcomed and valued.

Another aspect of the *hijab*'s evolution is its role in the digital economy. With the rise of e-commerce, the *hijab* has become a widely marketed and sold product online, reaching a global audience and driving economic growth within Muslim communities. This not only increases the visibility of the *hijab* but also creates new economic opportunities.

Ultimately, the dialogue about the *hijab* and social identity reflects a broader struggle for autonomy, freedom of expression, and minority rights. In the modern era, the *hijab* is not just a religious symbol but also a symbol of resistance, adaptation, and dynamic identity.

Looking forward, the *hijab* is likely to continue being a significant symbol in debates about identity, freedom, and women's rights. As a crucial element in global social and cultural interactions, the *hijab* teaches us about the power of symbols in shaping societies and the importance of respecting diversity as the foundation for a just and inclusive society.

4. *Transition to Zygmunt Bauman's Liquid Modernity: Fragmentation of the Hijab's Meaning*

Zygmunt Bauman, a prominent sociologist, developed the concepts of solid modernity and liquid modernity to describe the social transformations occurring in the modern world. Solid modernity refers to the early era of modernity characterized by stable social structures, established institutions, and clear rules. In this phase, societies were more likely to uphold social hierarchies, bureaucracies, and relatively rigid norms. Stability and predictability were hallmarks of solid modernity, where individuals had identities more closely tied to traditions and existing social structures (Bauman 2000).

Conversely, liquid modernity represents a transitional phase reflecting an ever-changing world, where social structures become more flexible and individual identities more fluid. In liquid modernity, uncertainty dominates as traditional institutions lose relevance, and individuals must navigate their identities amid rapid changes. Bauman argues that in liquid modernity, human relationships become more temporary, and the focus of individuals shifts towards consumerism and personal flexibility. In this context, individuals often feel alienated due to the loss of grip on stable social structures (Bauman 2000).

Bauman also highlights how liquid modernity creates a "risk society", where uncertainty and change become integral parts of everyday life. This makes individuals more susceptible to anxiety and stress, as they must continuously adjust to a dynamic and unpredictable social environment (Bauman 2007).

Then, how do we use Bauman's theory to analyze the *hijab* phenomenon in the era of liquid modernity? The *hijab* has become a significant cultural and religious symbol, reflecting the dynamic dialogue between tradition and modernity in Muslim societies. As part of solid modernity, the *hijab* was initially understood to embody stable collective values. This meaning referred to social norms that established women's positions within societal structures, where robust traditions and explicit

religious rules regulated the use of the *hijab*. In this context, the *hijab* represented an effort to create social harmony through definite and orderly rules. However, the emergence of liquid modernity has shifted the role and meaning of the *hijab*, creating a more flexible and multifunctional symbol (Stannard & Islam, 2020).

In solid modernity, the *hijab* symbolized piety with a single and homogeneous meaning. At this stage, Muslim women who wore the *hijab* did so as part of a clear religious obligation, based on textual interpretations of the Qur'an. Rigid social norms ensured that the *hijab* was not just an individual decision but part of a social structure that regulated collective behavior. This created a sense of security for individuals, as standardized social norms helped reduce ambiguity in social relations. However, this stability often came with pressures to conform to rules, which could limit women's freedom to make their own choices (Bashirov, 2020).

On the other hand, liquid modernity brings the *hijab* into a realm of more flexible meanings. In this era, stable social norms weaken, replaced by new dynamics driven by globalization, individualization, and consumerism. In liquid modernity, the *hijab* is no longer understood solely as a religious obligation but also as a statement of unique individual identity. For example, in Indonesia, the *hijab* has become a symbol of an urban lifestyle that combines religious values with modern aesthetics. Muslim women use the *hijab* to navigate their identities in an increasingly global and multicultural world, rejecting the single narrative inherited from solid modernity (Leiliyanti et al., 2020).

Liquid modernity also introduces new complexities in the meaning of the *hijab*. A significant aspect is the increasing role of social media in redefining how the *hijab* is understood and used. Influencers on platforms like Instagram play a crucial role in making the *hijab* a symbol of identity flexibility, reflecting the cultural dialogue between traditional values and modern aesthetics. This allows Muslim women to express their identities

more personally while still rooted in Islamic traditions. However, this transformation also carries risks of commodification, where the *hijab* loses its spiritual meaning as it becomes part of the global consumer market (Antunes, 2022).

In Muslim diaspora societies, liquid modernity creates additional challenges. The *hijab* is often seen as a symbol of resistance against Western stereotypes that view Muslim women as oppressed. On the one hand, the *hijab* serves as a tool to combat Islamophobic narratives, but on the other hand, Muslim women face pressures to conform to local cultural norms that often conflict with Islamic values. This phenomenon reflects the nature of liquid modernity, which urges individuals to continually adjust to a changing social environment without a stable foothold (Nuñez Basante, 2019).

In political contexts, liquid modernity allows the *hijab* to be interpreted differently across various power regimes. In Iran, the state mandates the *hijab* as a symbol of national identity following the Islamic Revolution. However, the younger generation often sees this rule as an irrelevant social control effort to their modern needs. This tension reflects the dynamics of liquid modernity, where tradition and authority lose their power in the face of increasing demands for individualization (Yazdi & Musavi, 2021).

Nonetheless, liquid modernity also offers new spaces for Muslim women to reclaim the meaning of the *hijab*. Recent research shows many Muslim women view the *hijab* as a tool for empowerment, not oppression. They wear it consciously to demonstrate that traditional values can endure and even adapt in a modern context. This phenomenon reflects the potential of liquid modernity to create spaces where traditional identities can survive despite rapid changes (Stannard & Islam, 2020).

The transition from solid to liquid modernity has transformed the *hijab* from a stable religious symbol to a flexible identity symbol. In the

liquid modernity, Muslim women are no longer bound by rigid collective norms but can create new meanings that reflect their individual needs and preferences. However, this dynamic also brings challenges of moral uncertainty and consumerism pressures, creating contradictions in the meaning of the *hijab* as both a religious and cultural symbol.

Thus, Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid modernity provides a useful framework for understanding the transformation of the *hijab* in contemporary Muslim societies. In the dialogue between tradition and modernity, the *hijab* becomes a medium that allows Muslim women to navigate their identities in an increasingly complex world. This phenomenon shows that traditional values are not always in opposition to modernity but can complement each other through dynamic and creative adaptations.

D. CONCLUSION

The *hijab* has evolved from a traditional religious symbol in solid modernity to a flexible and dynamic identity symbol in liquid modernity. In solid modernity, the *hijab* was a tool for maintaining social stability through rigid and structured collective norms. However, liquid modernity brings significant changes, breaking down the *hijab*'s meaning into more diverse aspects, allowing Muslim women to adjust this symbol to their identities while still rooted in traditional values. In a global context, the *hijab* also becomes a medium for cultural dialogue, reflecting shifts in values amidst pressures of globalization, consumerism, and stereotypes.

Although the *hijab* reflects the adaptability of tradition to the times, challenges such as politicization, commodification, and moral uncertainty remain significant concerns. Liquid modernity offers opportunities for Muslim women to reclaim the meaning of the *hijab* as a tool for empowerment and self-expression, but it also creates new pressures

through commodification and consumerism. Thus, the *hijab* reflects the dialogue between tradition and modernity and a symbol of the continuously changing social dynamics, demanding further research to understand its complexities in various cultural and geographical contexts.

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