

VEILING: Between Social Imaginary and the Politic of Multiculturalism In Indonesia and Malaysia

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Abstrak

Jilbab menjadi imajinasi sosial tentang kesalehan bagi banyak perempuan muslim. Di banyak daerah di Indonesia, berjilbab bahkan menjadi salah satu kewajiban yang masuk dalam peraturan daerah. Artikel ini membahas tentang imajinasi sosial (*social imaginary*) tentang jilbab bagi perempuan muslim di Indonesia dan Malaysia yang selanjutnya bertransformasi menjadi kewajiban sosial (*social obligation*) yang didukung oleh negara. Fakta bahwa kedua negara ini menjalankan politik multikulturalisme yang dituntut untuk mengakomodasi perbedaan agama, ras, dan budaya menjadi tantangan tersendiri ketika upaya-upaya homogenisasi identitas terus diperjuangkan oleh kelompok-kelompok tertentu.

Kata Kunci: *Veiling, politic of multiculturalism, identity homogenization, social imaginary, social obligation*

Abstract

Hijab (veiling) becomes a social imagination of piety for many muslim women. In Many areas in Indonesia, veiling even becomes one of the points of obligation in local regulations. This article discusses the social imaginary about the hijab for muslim women in Indonesia and Malaysia which then transforms into a social obligation supported by the state. The fact that these two countries run the multicultural politics that is required for accommodating religious, racial, and cultural differences is a challenge when the efforts of homogenizing identity continue to be fought by certain groups.

Keywords: jilbab, politik multikulturalisme, homogenisasi identitas, imajinasi sosial, kewajiban sosial

Introduction

Veiling has been massively practiced and seen in muslim countries in the world including Indonesia and Malaysia currently. Worn commonly by muslim women, veiling has become a social imaginary of a kind of ideal type of muslim-pious women to differentiate them with non-veiling which is claimed as less or un-Islamic. Although veiling in Indonesia had experienced ideological repression under the New Order era, the reformation era has been the time when that social imaginary has grown back and attracted various responses from various level of society. An example of this has been the growth of *sharia*

by law (perda Syariah)¹ and also the establishment of 'kawasan berbusana muslimah' (the special areas of veiling) issued by many areas around Indonesia. In similar sense, this social imaginary has been long embedded in Malaysian muslims. A survey conducted by Merdeka Center for Opinion Research (MOR) research revealed that about 70% Malaysian women agree that veiling is an obligation² meaning that veiling has been massively

¹ Perda is a result of public policy issuing by regional government which is claimed useful to maintain stability of their regions and fulfil their people's needs. Therefore, Perda has claimed to be most understand to their regional problems and able to interact closely with the people.

² Republika Online, "Soal Jilbab, Malaysia Wajib, Sementara Indonesia Tergantung...", June 11, 2012, accessed November 21, 2014, <<http://www.republika.co.id/berita/>

believed in Malaysian muslim women to be an ideal type of muslim women's appearance based on Islamic value.

However, the social imaginary of veiling has been also challenged by the idea of pluralism and multiculturalism in both countries. Consisting of various religious, ethnic, and cultural background of citizenship, both countries have agreed to treat equally their minority and majority groups based on their constitution. In fact, problems appeared in some countries has been often regarding the efforts from certain groups to enforce their values to the other such as the practice of veiling which has been followed by some debates and controversy as well as various justification among muslims in both countries.

This paper focuses on the politic of multiculturalism in Indonesia and Malaysia relating to identity homogenization efforts and its impacts toward women and minority-majority issues. I argue that the identity homogenization through the social imagination into social obligation of veiling in Indonesia and Malaysia has threatened the multicultural atmosphere of both countries. This is because the efforts of identity homogenization promoted by various parties through the obligation or the strong suggestion of veiling has challenged the multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious society which has been established since many decades ago. The questions raised are to what extent politic of multiculturalism has been implemented in Indonesia and Malaysia, especially in the case of woman's body (veiling)? and what is the implication for muslim women and for the minority-majority issue?

dunia-islam/islam-mancanegara/11/06/14/lms2uv-soal-jilbab-malaysia-wajib- sementara-indonesia-tergantung>.

The Politic of Multiculturalism in Indonesia and Malaysia

Hefner implies that politic of multiculturalism can be understood as a policy of multiculturalism implemented by authorities for their plural society.³ Tracking the analysis from the pre and postcolonial Southeast Asia, he found that plural society has been found as the characterization of many countries due to more globalized world. He also points out that this plural society has become a challenge toward the development of a modern democratic citizenship nowadays.⁴ Policy of multiculturalism applied in Canada can be an example. In their federal multicultural policy announced in 1971, they describe this policy as "an enlightened policy to allow individuals to pursue a cultural life of their free choice."⁵ Through this policy, the Multiculturalism Directorate promoted many programs aimed at helping ethnic groups to preserve their traditions, customs, folklore and languages to reinforce the multicultural image of Canadian society.⁶ This idea of multicultural policy can be also found in Indonesia and Malaysia.

In Indonesia, plural society has been the primary consideration in which the state has implemented *Pancasila* (Five Principles) as their

³ Robert W. Hefner, "Introduction: Multiculturalism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia," in Robert W. Hefner (Ed.), *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001) 1-49.

⁴ Robert W. Hefner, "Introduction: Multiculturalism and..."

⁵ Peter S. Li, "Cultural Diversity In Canada: The Social Construction of Racial Differences", *Strategic Social Issues series*, 2000, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:1T6xrunTpPQJ:www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/jsp-sjp/rp02_8-dr02_8/rp02_8.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=id> 5.

⁶ Peter S. Li, "Cultural Diversity...."

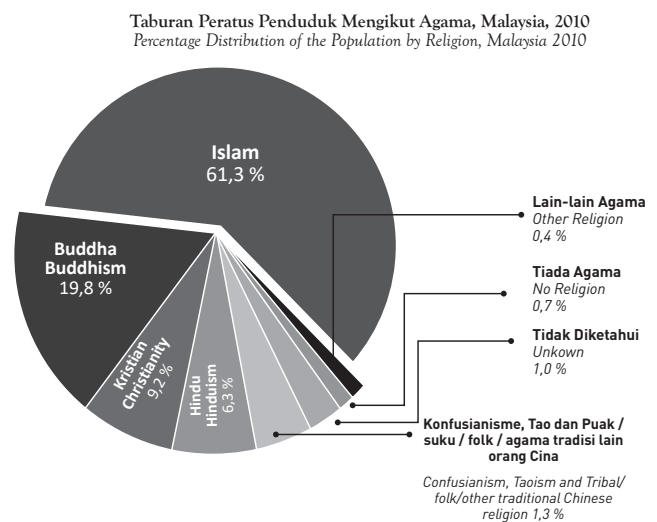
ideology. It guarantees the citizen to be treated equally with no privileged to a particular religion. However, with 87 percent of Muslim population, the demand to establish Islamic state has been long recorded. Porter highlights that under Sukarno and Suharto era, Islam had been seen as a threat—although in the final years of his leadership, Suharto had tried to close to Islam.⁷ Because of this negative view, muslims were repressed and were not be able to express freely their identities. Differently, after the fall of Suharto, the democratic system has given any parties including Islam to have a chance to express their identities as well as their imaginaries on their belief. As majority, Islam has been tried to expand their influence in the government through many Islamic parties. Another effort is the implementation of Sharia by law spread over Indonesia recently with the obligation for the people in those areas to live and behave based on sharia rules. Although Porter argues that this Islamization mobilization has failed to be widespread in Indonesia⁸, it has had serious influences toward multicultural relation in many areas.

Similarly, Islam has also had majority power in Malaysia. The power has been not only because of the population of the muslims which is also majority, but also Islam has become the ideology of the state. Based on Population Distribution And Basic Demographic Characteristic Report 2010 published by Departement of Statistics Malaysia, of 28.3 million of Malaysian population, Islam had 61.3% of the population followed by Buddha with 19.8%, Christianity (9.2%) and Hindu (6.3%).

⁷ Donald J. Porter, *Managing Politics and Islam in Indonesia*, (London & New York: Routledge Curzon, 2002 vii-viii).

⁸ Donald J. Porter, *Managing Politics....* vii.

This more than half of population, the existence of Muslims has been also strengthened by the Article 3 (1) of the Malaysia constitution saying that “Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation”.⁹ This followed by Article 3 (2) stating that the ruler or The King of Malaysia by law as the Head of the religion of Islam.



Source: The Official Website of Departement of Statistics Malaysia¹⁰

Different with Indonesia which has no priviledges for certain cultural ethnic background facilitated by the state, Malaysia has Article 153 of the constitution saying that the Bangsa Melayu or the ‘Malay race’ is constitutionally guaranteed

⁹ Constitution of Malaysia: Part I - The States, Religion and Law of The Federation, <<http://www.google.co.id/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCEQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww1.umn.edu%2Fhumanrts%2Fresearch%2Fmalaysia-constitution.pdf&ei=fIX-VPPAD4qMuASz7YHwBg&usq=AFQjCNFJ0cIcnTHdrwhEgth7SWHRPU2Uqg&sig2=ZqCOk6KQ0Bbx095DDJlifQ>>.

¹⁰ Departement of Statistics Malaysia, “Population Distribution And Basic Demographic Characteristic Report 2010”, accessed December 1, 2014, <http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com_content&id=1215>.

as the 'tuans' or 'Masters of the Land'.¹¹ Crouch points out that the Malays are not only the largest community in Malaysia, but also the most homogeneous.¹² He stresses that "all Malays are Muslim and speak Malay, which, despite differences among spoken dialects, is a common language in its standard written form."¹³ Viewing from the Article 153 and Crouch statement, the linkage between being Malays and Islam has become a strong capital for Muslims in Malaysia given by the state to express their identity under the law protection.

Veiling: Social Imaginaries of muslim women in Indonesia and Malaysia

Social imaginary refers to a "perception of reality in a society, which includes common feelings, thoughts and senses of what is real".¹⁴ Social imaginary can be also called as a moral ordering of reality.¹⁵ Originating from Taylor's concept of modern social imaginaries, social imaginary is a practice of a society rather than a set of ideas and can shape different modernities which is often fundamentally grounded in religious faith.¹⁶ For this, Risakotta emphasised that social imaginary comes from the imagination of society's moral order based on the meanings of society on their normative conception of social imaginaries

are "always in tension with other contrasting and competing social imaginaries."¹⁷ This is because in a society with plurality of social, religious, ethnic and cultural background of people, the way they imagine a value on the world around them would be typically influenced by their different background. In veiling issues, the debates and controversy have emerged in Indonesia and Malaysia confirm this different society's imagination.

Historically speaking, veiling has been practiced by muslim women in the prophet Muhammad's era to differentiate muslim women and non-muslim women. At that time, the social imaginary of veiling laid on the muslim society's understanding which they believed coming from Al-Qur'an that veils should be worn to protect women from insults and harassment.¹⁸ Since then, veiling has been practiced by many more muslim women with various social imaginaries in different periods and places. In Indonesia, it has been argued that, the significant growth of veiling phenomenon began after the Reformation era where the Indonesians see the more freedom for muslim to express their identity after the repression under Suharto's era. Comparing the practice of veiling under the New Order regime as a kind of muslims' imaginaries of the protest against Suharto's authoritarian regime, in the Reformation era, the Indonesian's social imaginaries of veiling has been more various and even competing and contrasting.

The recent massive implementation of Sharia by law which obligating women in many areas to

¹¹ Dicky Sofjan and Ewa Trojna, "The Challenge of Building a Multi-Ethnic State in Malaysia", *Hemispheres* No. 26°, 2011 5.

¹² Harold Crouch, *Government and Society in Malaysia*, (Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1996) 14.

¹³ Harold Crouch, *Government and...*

¹⁴ Bernard Adeney Risakotta, *Visions of A Good Society in Southeast Asia*, Lecture handbook of ICRS 5.

¹⁵ Bernard Adeney Risakotta, *Visions of A Good...*

¹⁶ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), cited in Bernard Adeney Risakotta, *Visions of A Good Society* 6.

¹⁷ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social.....*, 5.

¹⁸ Riaz Hassan, *Faithlines: Muslim Concepti* the people's meaning of the sharia implementation has no monolithic meaning. There are muslims who believe that Sharia should be implemented in the sense of traditionaons of *Islam and Society*, (Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 2003) 188.

wear veiling can be an example of certain muslim's imagination on what should women wear and behave. This perda which was firstly implemented in Aceh for their regional autonomy rights and then widespread to many areas in Indonesia has attracted debates and counter arguments. Based on the research in six regencies implementing Perda Sharia in Indonesia, Center for the Study of Religion and Culture (CSRC) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta found that the people's meaning of the sharia implementation has no monolithic meaning. There are muslims who believe that Sharia should be implemented in the sense of traditional meaning as the text says which has been then applying in the perda, yet the other muslims tend to see Sharia in the substantial and universal meaning such as honesty and justice without necessarily be translated in the form of perda.¹⁹

The social imaginary of veiling has also occurred in Malaysia. The statement of Norhayati Kaprawi, a feminist of Sister in Islam Malaysia saying "it's full of fear, if you don't follow the mainstream you will be lynched,"²⁰ describes social imaginaries of Malaysians based on the mainstream views in the society. In the issue of veiling, through her movie "Aku Siapa", Kaprawi wants to reveal the fact that the views on veiling circulating in the Malaysian society has not been single interpretation and standard which should

be suggested and obligated to all muslim women in Malaysia.²¹

Thus, although attracting long debates and showing its plurality of meaning, the scholarly works on veiling confirms that there have been a common social imaginary of veiling both in Malaysia and Indonesia viewing veiling as a pious practice of muslim women based on Islamic teaching. Based on her research in Javanese muslim society in 1997, Brenner argues that veils are worn as a kind of women conversion from bad past to a better future in religious sense.²² Similarly, in the next ten years, Smith-Hefner also found that the choice of veiling in Java was a very serious women choices showing their commitment to religious life.²³ A survey conducted by CSRC UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in six areas implementing perda syariah in Indonesia also reveal that almost all the respondent (96.2%) agreed for the obligation of wearing veiling for women and even 24.5% agreed that women should wear *cadar* (face covering).²⁴

This social imagination of veiling has been also discovered in Malaysia. Frisk reports that women who were interviewed confessed that they feel the 'transformative effects' of veiling in term of religious experience.²⁵ Veiling, according to them, is their efforts to become pious person and closer

¹⁹ Sukron Kamil, et. al., *Syariah Islam dan HAM; Dampak Perda Syariah terhadap Kebebasan Sipil, Hak-Hak Perempuan dan Non-Muslim*, (Jakarta: CSRC, 2007)..

²⁰ Norhayati Kaprawi, in Jennifer Pak, Rise of strict Islam exposes tensions in Malaysia", *BBC News Kuala Lumpur*, accessed November 27, 2014, <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-radio-and-tv-14649841>>.

²¹ Norhayati Kaprawi, in Jennifer Pak, Rise of strict Islam....

²² Suzanne Brenner, "Reconstructing self and society: Javanese Muslim women and "the veil", *American Ethnologist* 23 (24) 1996 673-697.

²³ Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, "Javanese women and the veil in post-Soeharto Indonesia", *Journal of Asian Studies*, 66 (31), 2007 397.

²⁴ Sukron Kamil, et. al., *Syariah Islam dan HAM* 180-181.

²⁵ Sylva Frisk, *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*, (USA: University of Washington Press, 2009) 96.

to God. This social religious imaginary comes from their belief that veiling is required by God so that the practice of veiling is a kind of obedience to God's will.²⁶ Frisk makes a point that for some muslim women in Malaysia, veiling is both "a symbol of faith and at the same time as it generates an awareness of God and strengthens faith."²⁷

Bringing back to the history of veiling in Malaysia, the emergence of veiling can be tracked from the growth of *Dakwah* groups consisting of many religious and political organizations in about 1960s and 1970s imagining that people in Malaysia should return to basic sources of Islam, Quran and Hadith, and leave the immoral and materialistic Western ways of life.²⁸ One of their social imagination of the ideal life based on Islam was to persuade women to wear 'Islamic' dress which is long, loose dresses and head coverings.²⁹ From about forty years, this imagination of veiling has been also still becoming Malaysian muslim social imaginary as a research conducted by Merdeka Center for Opinion Research (MCOR) research saying that 70% Malaysian women agree that veiling is obligation.³⁰

From Social Imaginary into Social Obligation

Taylor's social imaginary in the sense of a moral order of reality has been challenged within multicultural society in which the plural members of society have also plural social imaginaries. In the multicultural society, the problem of majority and

minority has also emerged and likely influenced the construction of this social imaginaries. What Kymlicka and He said that multiculturalism as a kind of negotiation process between minority and majority³¹, in fact it has been commonly found that the majority have more power in this process of negotiation as well as in constructing and disseminating their social imaginaries toward the minority. In the issue of veiling, what is becoming majority's imagination of pious women which is women with veiling or 'appropriate' veiling has been enforced through many ways such as in the form of social institutional obligation as well as society's social pressure and controlling.

Although in both countries veiling has not been regulated by the state through law or legal rules, the mainstream social imaginaries of veiling has been covering the practices of veiling and the people's view on the veiling. Due to this pious imagination of veiling, the primary rule in the implementation of sharia has been the obligation of veiling for muslim women. In Aceh for example, veiling is an obligatory for all muslim women. For controlling this practice, the local government created the sharia police to sweep many areas to make sure that all women wear veiling. Through their Shariah *qanun* (perda) number Nomor 11/2002 about the implementation of Islamic Sharia in the field of akidah (faith), *ibadah* (worship) and Islamic *dakwa* (preaching), women who do not wear veiling or wearing inappropriate one can be caught and brought to the court after the warning given by the sharia police.³² Not only from sharia police, the

²⁶ Sylva Frisk, *Submitting to God:....* 97.

²⁷ Sylva Frisk, *Submitting to God:.....*

²⁸ Sandra Hochel, "To Veil or Not to Veil: Voices of Malaysian Muslim Women", *Intercultural Communication Studies XXII: 2*, 2013 43-44.

²⁹ Sandra Hochel, "To Veil or Not to Veil:....."

³⁰ Republika Online, "Soal Jilbab, Malaysia Wajib."

³¹ Will Kymlicka and Baogang He (Eds), *Multiculturalism in Asia*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³² Republika Banda Aceh, "Puluhan Wanita Terjaring Razia di Aceh", February 5, 2014, accessed Dec 3, 2014, <<http://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/>

practice of veiling in Aceh has been also controlled by society such as ulama (religious leaders) in the areas. A media report show that disappointing with the work of Sharia Police in disciplining women with 'inappropriate' veiling, many ulamas in Aceh have taken an initiative to spray paint to the clothes of those women as a social punishment as well as to make the clothes cannot be used anymore.³³

This controlling and regulating women's body as Acehnese Islamic social imaginary has been also adapted by many districts dan provinces in Indonesia in the form of perda sharia. It has been reported that in 2006 there were 22 areas in Indonesia implementing Perda Sharia³⁴ and in 2012 this increased significantly in which SETARA, a Non Government Organization in Tasikmalaya East Java, reported there were 154 Perda which were widespread in 76 regions in Indonesia.³⁵ Of 22 areas implementing perda syariah in 2002, there are 8 areas where explicitly obligating veil for Muslim women while the other areas also obligate it though not explicitly written in Perda.³⁶

Although the implementation of perda in those areas outside of Aceh has been relatively new, the effects of the perda to the parctices of veiling

in society has been significantly increased. CRSC reported that in six areas they were researching, 64% women wearing veiling not because of perda, while 36% wearing veiling due to the perda.³⁷ in this survey also found that about 18% of the respondents confessed that they have been forced to wear veiling and 11.7% admitted that they heard that there was a woman who her hair was cut because of not wearing veiling.³⁸

Although Islam is the ideology of the state, there is no national requirement to wear veiling for muslim women in Malaysia although there is one state which is Terengganu State government who require it.³⁹ This requirement was also called by PAS party in Kelantan.⁴⁰ However, even though there is only one state requiring veiling for muslim women, Mouser emphasized that veiling is a "social expectation for Malay women" with much social pressure.⁴¹ This is why Hochel argues that majority of Malaysian women wearing veils and who are not are just minority.⁴² This social pressure was also found in a comment from *Mursyidul Am* from PAS party, Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat saying that women who are not wearing veils are deserved to be raped.⁴³

daerah/14/02/05/n0iqbu-puluhan-wanita-terjaring-razia-di-aceh>

³³ BBC Indonesia, "Semprotan cat untuk warga Aceh bercelana ketat", December 4, 2014, accessed December 5, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2014/12/141204_indonesia_aceh_semprot>.

³⁴ Pudjo Suharso, "Pro Kontra Implementasi Perda Syariah (Tinjauan Elemen Masyarakat)", *Al-Mawarid*, Edisi XVI Tahun 2006

³⁵ BBC Indonesia, "Setara Prihatin Perda Syariah Tasikmalaya", June 6, 2012, accessed December 3, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2012/06/120606_tasiksyariah.shtml>.

³⁶ Pudjo Suharso, "Pro Kontra Implementasi Perda Syariah."

³⁷ Sukron Kamil, et. al., *Syariah Islam dan HAM* 180-183.

³⁸ Sukron Kamil, et. al., *Syariah Islam...*

³⁹ Sister in Islam, "Terengganu Dress Code", March 10, 2000, accessed Dec 4, 2014, <<http://www.sistersinislam.org.my/news.php?item.235.120>>. See also Sandra Hochel, "To Veil or Not to Veil" 44.

⁴⁰ Sister in Islam, "Terengganu Dress Code.

⁴¹ Audrey Mouser, "Defining 'modern' Malay womanhood and the coexistent message of the veil", *Religion*, 37, 2007 169.

⁴² Sandra Hochel, "To Veil or Not to Veil" 44.

⁴³ Sheridan Mahavera, "Filem Aku Siapa: Tafsiran pemakaian tudung dan hijab", *The Malaysianinsider*, May 16, 2011, accessed Nov 25, 2014, <<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/bahasa/article/filem-aku-siapa>>.

In Indonesia, one of the social pressures on the veiling coming from MUI, but not for women who are not wearing veils but for women who are wearing veils in 'un-Islamic way' which is often called as *jilboob*.⁴⁴ Responding to this *jilboob* phenomenon in Indonesia, MUI issued a fatwa to proscribe *jilboob* and pushed women to wear Islamic clothes.⁴⁵ As a consequence of this, a negative stigmatization has appeared toward muslim women who wear this 'un-Islamic clothes'. The stigmatization has been also achieved by muslim women where the *perda* of obligating veiling is implemented, such a report from Kapal Perempuan in Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) where muslim women with no veiling are labelled as having no good morality, being alienated and stigmatized and even could not access public services in government offices due to a rule of obligating for women to wear veils in government offices.⁴⁶ This also happened in many areas where *perda* of veiling is implemented such as in Bulukumba.

tafsiran-pemakaian-tudung-dan-hijab#sthash.cMe7DL7R.dpuf>.

⁴⁴ *Jilboob* is "a contraction of *jilbab* (Muslim headscarf) and *boobs* (breasts), a term Indonesians use to refer to Muslim women who wear the headscarf but at the same wear clothes that accentuate their curves – in particular their bust." In Julia Suryakusuma, "'Jilboobs': A storm in a D-cup!", *The Malaysianinsider*, Agustus 21, 2014, accessed November 20, 2014, <<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/jilboobs-a-storm-in-a-d-cup-julia-suryakusuma#sthash.ig9Ox9NW.dpuf>>.

⁴⁵ Sugeng Triono, "MUI haramkan *Jilboobs*", *Liputan 6.com*, August 12, 2014, accessed December 4, 2014, <<http://news.liputan6.com/read/2087827/mui-haramkan-jilboobs>>.

⁴⁶ Kapal Perempuan, "Kebijakan Berbasis Syariah di NTB: Keadilan Gender dan Pluralisme di Persimpangan", *Laporan Kapal Perempuan Seri Penelitian 2010*, Jakarta: Kapal Perempuan, 2010 85.

As social obligation, veiling has also threatened the multiculturalism atmosphere of Indonesia and Malaysia's plural society, especially in the relation between muslim and

non muslim communities. Many reports have emerged due to this social obligation of veiling. Due to *perda* requiring veiling, CRSC survey found that 10,5 % (out of 100 non-muslims) admitted that they have been ever forced to wear veiling especially in Bulukumba, Indramayu & Tangerang.⁴⁷ In Mataram NTB where the *perda* of veiling also encouraged the implementation of *Perda* of the educational system no. 4/2009 which requires female students, muslims and non muslims, to wear veils led to many non-muslim students moved to other schools.⁴⁸ This obligation for non-muslim was also implemented in Aceh.⁴⁹

Similarly, the social pressures on veiling has occurred in Malaysia also led to the obligation of veiling in university such as in the International Islamic University (IIUM).⁵⁰ Although Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), Datuk Maximus Ongkili, said, "It is agreed that wearing of *tudung* be made optional for students in all universities and higher learning institutions in the country," the statement given by The Higher Education Minister, Datuk Dr Shafie Mohd. Salleh, saying that although non-Muslim students

⁴⁷ Sukron Kamil, et. al., *Syariah Islam dan HAM* 188-189.

⁴⁸ Kapal Perempuan, "Kebijakan Berbasis Syariah di NTB."

⁴⁹ Merdeka.com, "Terjaring razia, wanita nonmuslim di Aceh diminta pakai *jilbab*", February 5, 2014, accessed November 28, 2014, <<http://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/terjaring-razia-wanita-nonmuslim-di-aceh-diminta-pakai-jilbab.html>>

⁵⁰ Sisters in Islam, "Don't Enforce Dress Code on Women Undergrads", November 11, 2005, accessed December 3, 2014, <<http://www.sistersinislam.org.my/news.php?item.985.120>>.

from the International Islamic University (IIUM) are not compelled to wear tudung to lectures, they must “respect Islam and adhere to the university’s dress code,” are explicitly states that non-Muslim women students have to wear headscarves.⁵¹

Between Social Imaginary and Multiculturalism negotiation: Toward Inclusive Veiling

The social imaginaries of veiling in multiculturalism society in Malaysia and Indonesia has challenged not only the pluralism of muslim women but also the pluralistic women in their different religions. The social imaginaries of veiling constructed by the idea of a ‘good muslim women’ based on Islamic teaching has been becoming an identity hegemonization effort by muslims as majority in both countries to coloring the mainstream’s social imaginary of good women leading to the social obligation and subordinating the minority. As a consequence of this, what Kymlicka states that the implications for the way that we look at ourselves and others and how we as individuals, and in groups and in society, relate to each other⁵² is relevant to look at the consequences of it.

The social imaginary of muslim as majority especially on veiling has been defining what muslim women should do with their bodies. This social imaginary then influences to how society see those who wear and not wear veiling—especially the views within muslims and also muslims to non-muslims. Brought by this views, the stigmatization,

discrimination as well as subordination come up in the social relation between them. In multicultural countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, the social obligation of veiling has potentially threaten the atmosphere of their multiculturalism established from many decades ago.

The reasons for this are firstly that the social imaginaries of an ideal of muslim women with veiling has been long debatable by muslims scholars, ulama and muslim feminists. There are not single agreement that veiling is a requirement for muslim women, moreover if it is obligated as well for non-muslim women.⁵³ The second reason is that when the majority’s social imaginary is transformed into social obligation, it would potentially bring the interest of the majority and beat over the need of the minority. Minority in many cases should follow what the rules of majority—as can be seen in this case of veiling obligation. The third one is that the ‘inclusive veiling’ should be taken meaning that veiling should be a free choice of women without any control of the state through their regulation or social stigmatization from *ulama* through their fatwa. Inclusive veiling also mean that veiling should be not the boundary of women to be a part of their multicultural society by building a good relation with people in other religions and left behind their exclusive dogmatic social imaginaries of the best women believers

⁵¹ Sisters in Islam, “Don’t Enforce Dress Code....”

⁵² Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁵³ Sisters in Islam, “What’s with the Hijab?”, February 12, 2014, accessed December 3, 2014, <<http://www.sistersinislam.org.my/news.php?item.987.120>>. This debate can be also found in many books such as Muhammad Said al-Asymawi, “Kritik atas Jilbab”, terj. (Jakarta: Jaringan Islam Liberal, 2003). See also the interpretation of M. Quraish Shihab in M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Quran* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2003), cet I, vol. 11, hal. 321.

through their choices of veiling. For this inclusive veiling encourages the primary social imaginary of Indonesian and Malaysian people based on the politic of multiculturalism based on their multicultural Constitutions.

Closing Remark

From the ideal conception of a good muslim woman based on dogmatic Islamic teaching, veiling has been transformed to be a part of a problem in the policy of multiculturalism in Indonesia and Malaysia. Veiling has ben moving from being social imaginary to social obligation in which it has to adapt and takes a place in the plural and multicultural society of Indonesia and Malaysia. As Kymlicka said that multiculturalism is always about the negotiation between majority and minority, then veiling has contributed in shaping the dynamics process of this negotiation. Through inclusive veiling meaning that veiling should be a free choice of women and be seen as a ultimately kind of expression of individual faiths, then veiling should be a form of integrating rather than disintegrating which uphold the multiculturalism principles.

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