The Quest for Indonesian Islam: Contestation and Consensus Concerning Veiling

By
Deny Hamdani

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Australian National University

April 2007
I CERTIFY THAT THIS DISSERTATION IS ENTIRELY
MY OWN ORIGINAL WORK

(SIGNED)
DENY HAMDANI
The Quest for Indonesian Islam:
Contestation and Consensus Concerning Veiling

THESIS ABSTRACT

This study examines various transformations in the practice of veiling which
have involved changes in its meaning for Indonesian Muslims. It concentrates on a
forty-year period from the New Order to the Reform Era. In particular, it focuses on the
interplay between the practice of wearing the veil and the changing social and political
constellation in Indonesia, and relates these to the presence of both contestation and
consensus regarding veiling among Indonesian Muslims.

After conducting one year’s fieldwork in some regions of Indonesia, I found
significant changes in how Muslims negotiate their daily lives in connection with the
idea of veiling. While a ‘relaxed’ form of veiling has long been practiced by santri
(devout) Muslims, veiling has assumed an absolute meaning for other Muslims,
especially since the increasing Islamisation of various social classes. The practice of
veiling has become pervasive among Muslims: at the same time, it is intertwined with
fashion trends, commercialisation and the expression of personal and religious identity.

Although some Modernist Muslims continue to contest the Islamist discourse
regarding veiling, there is a growing trend to make veiling mandatory in certain parts of
Indonesia. Veiling became oppressive rather than liberating in the areas where it has
been imposed in the public domain. The appearance of the veil also changed: from a
modest and traditional practice (kerudung), it was turned into the mandatory jilbab,
which covers the head, neck and chest much more strictly. The veil transformed again
in some parts of Indonesia, to become a fashion item: this made it a promising product
for industry and marketing, due to the growing number of Muslim consumers. At the
same time, in some places it has continued to be imposed by local Islam-oriented
regimes which tend to want to control public behaviour according to their interpretation.

In the light of these changes, I argue that the changing social and political conditions in
contemporary Indonesia have impelled Muslims to search for an “Indonesian Islam”:
what form that indigenous version of Islam will take is still being negotiated.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the day I started this academic work until the date of submission, this project has involved many people and institutions which have supported and assisted me in certain phases of the whole process of this achievement. For this reason, I cannot claim that this work is purely the result of my own labor over the last few years, although I am the one who should be responsible for every single word that I wrote in this dissertation. I would like to express my gratitude to all the people who displayed their generosity, hospitality and sense of humanity in the final phases of completing this work.

I owe my deepest debt of gratitude to my supervisors and lecturers at the Faculty of Asian Studies, and the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) of the Australian National University (ANU). I am also grateful to ANU scholars in the Social Sciences, who generously provided an academic atmosphere and intellectual exercise. My thanks to the ANU Library and the National Library of Australia in Canberra. Their tremendous collections of texts about Indonesia enriched my collection of written sources and my knowledge.

This thesis would not have been finished without the support and help of other people. That is why I want to thank several people who contributed to this work. Dr. Kathryn Robinson has patiently directed me to make a good argument in my thesis. In the Faculty of Asian Studies, I want to thank Professor Virginia Hooker, and the various lecturers who guided me: Greg Fealy, Aat Vervoorn, Kirill Nourzhanov, David White, Michael Flood, Patty Smith.

For editing help, I wish to thank Mandy Scott, who helped with my English grammar and structure during the drafting process. Without her intervention, I am sure that my writings would not have been easily understood. My informal editor was Neroli Vivian who passionately helped me and has been a good friend in many difficult situations. Her generosity was the greatest contribution to this thesis completion and I owe very much for her sincere support. I am also extremely grateful for the generosity of Putu Davies, who struggled to edit, format, and print my entire thesis. I realize that this process could not have run smoothly without the warmth and generosity of all these people.

The funding for this project was provided by an AusAID scholarship which supported me during my study, and provided technical and operational equipment. My home institution, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, allowed me time off to pursue my study. I thank Diana Glazebrook for her assistance, as well as Carol Laslett (ANU Liaison Officer) and Stephanie Black of AusAID.

During the entire process of designing the thesis concept, going to the field, and writing, there was another aspect of life in Canberra that made my experience more alive. This was based on my many friends, including those who gathered in the Minaret community: Yudi Latif, Edwin, Lukman, Agus Muktamar, Rahmatina, Emma Soraya,
Also Bima, Taufiq Tanasaldi, Teguh, Kang Tommy, Kang Dayat, Mas Kacung, Hamdan and Daryono, Eva Amrullah, Farid Sanoeng, Ismet, Evi Fitriani, Rosa Safira and Taufik Prabowo, Teddy Mantoro, Media Ayu, Melati, Retno, Akhmad Muzakki, Arif Zamhari, Yon, Umar and Mpok Ijah, and Zaeni Dahlan.

I also thank the PPIA, KBRI, and the Fenner Hall management, which showed me how to live in a multicultural atmosphere. I thank my friends Aki Achdiat K. Mihardja and Nini, Imam Asari, Bu Isti, Wahdi Yudhi, Ani Ngeriawati, Dara and Faisol, Ariane and Iwu Utomo, Kang Dody, Boy Pradana, Diah Arimbi, and May Munir, for conducive discussions and exchanges of books.

During fieldwork, I benefited much from the help of my informants in the field: Yasnul Huda, Romi, Yudhi, Yeni, Zaiyardam, Zikry and Etty, Bu Hasna Wirda, Trias Setiawati.

I would also like to thank the administrative staff of the Faculty of Asian Studies, the Department of Anthropology at RSPAS and the International Education Office of the ANU. I am especially grateful to Ludmila Mangos, Greg Young, Gordon Hill, Fay Castles, Fritha Jones, Penelope Judd, Chris Thomson, Louis Jackson, Lynn Toohey, and Amrih Widodo. I thank my colleagues: Mersija Maglajlic, Amelia Fyfield Ceridwen, Angela Cincotta, Joy Bai, Nicki Saroka, Wahidah Siregar, Murni Mahmud, Lintje Pellu, Traci Smith.

Last but not least, deepest gratitude to my parents: Bapak and Mimi; my brothers and sisters: Amedy, Sri, Iyus and Muhib; and my sweet nieces and nephew. Their passion and care have been my strength to survive in the middle of difficulties. Without their support and their pray, I will unable to pass through all of this phase of my life.

Deny Hamdani
April, 2007
Glossary

Abangan Muslims nominal or less strict muslims, usually refers to Javanese Muslims
adat Customary or traditional law
Aisyiyah women’s wing of the reformist organisation muhammadiyah
akhwat Literally means sister (Arabic)
al-khimar head veil
Asbab al-nuzul Circumstances and context for the revelation (of the Qur’an)
aurat Nakedness, pudenda
baju koko a long-sleeved plain coloured shirt without a collar that is usually worn by men to go to prayers
baju kurung loose long-sleeved tunic
bundo kanduang Minangkabau honorific title for elder women
Bupati Head of kabupaten (regency, district)
busana muslim An Islamic clothing ensemble: long loose clothing worn with a headscarf
ciput a simple, snug-fitting scarf to be worn over the head, under the headscarf to cover the hair. It looks like a snail shell – ciput – and is also called the jilbab topi, or jilbab hat; it is a stylish one-piece design
dakwah ‘the call’; preaching, proselysation, Islamic outreach
dzalim Tyranny
fatwa non-binding religious decisions in Islamic law
fiqh Islamic jurisprudence
fitnah chaos or discord, turmoil
hadith Report or account of the words and deeds of the Prophet
hajj Pilgrimage
haram Forbidden, unlawful
hijab Literally means ‘curtain, separation’. It segregates individuals or groups from society
IAIN Institut Agama Islam Negeri, State Institute for Islamic Studies
ibadah Worship, religious rituals and duties
ITB Institut Teknologi Bandung, Bandung Institute of Technology
jihad to strive or struggle
JIL Jaringan Islam Liberal, Liberal Islamic Network
jilbab Women’s head-covering that leaves only the face exposed
jilbabisasi the growing prevalence of the jilbab among indonesian women
jubah long loose Arabic robe
kaffah Totality in practicing Islam
kain A tightly-wrapped batik sarong
kebaya Close-fitting traditional blouse
kẹrpus
kerudung
khilafiyah
khittah
kiai
kopiah
kudung
kyai
Libasut taqwa
Majelis Tarjih
maksiyat
muallimat
mufassir
Muhammadiyah
muhrim
MUI
Muslimat NU
nagari
Nahdatul Ulama (NU)
Nasyiatul Aisyiyah
ninik mamak
nyai
pengajian
perda
perna
pesantren
pitji
qath‘i
rajam
ramadhan
santri
seragam
shahabat
shalat
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shalawat</td>
<td>praises or odes for the Prophet Muhammed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharia</td>
<td>Islamic law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tabir</td>
<td>curtain used to segregate the sexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talakuang/telekung</td>
<td>headdress in the form of a veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tangkuluak/tengkuluk</td>
<td>folded or tied headdress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taqwa</td>
<td>God-fearing; observing God’s commands; piety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIN</td>
<td>Universitas Islam Negeri, State Islamic University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ulama</td>
<td>religious leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umat</td>
<td>the ruled; the religious community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ushul fiqh</td>
<td>The roots of jurisprudence; the principle and methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wali</td>
<td>chief, elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zakat</td>
<td>‘purification’; the ‘wealth tax’, payment of which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Quest for Indonesian Islam: Contestation and Consensus Concerning Veiling

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration of Originality i
Thesis Abstract ii
Acknowledgements iii
Glossary v
TABLE OF CONTENTS viii
List of Illustrations xi

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Research Questions 7
The Complexity of Veiling 7
A Review of Previous Studies of Veiling 11
Methodology and Fieldwork 19
Thesis Outline 21

CHAPTER II
THE CONSENSUS ON VEILING AMONG SANTRI MUSLIMS
A. The Kerudung among Muhammadiyah Women 26
   (1) Muhammadiyah Women 26
   (2) Discourse and Practice 29
   (3) The Socialisation of Veiling 33
B. The Kerudung among Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) Women 36
   (1) NU Women 36
   (2) Discourse and Practice 41
   (3) The Socialisation of Veiling 47
C. Conclusion 49

CHAPTER III
CONTESTED VEILING UNDER THE NEW ORDER
A. The Practice of “New Veiling” 53
   (1) The Islamic Movement and New Veiling 53
(2) Social Reactions to Veiling 53
(3) The Diffusion of New Veiling 61

B. Contested Veiling among Social Groups 66
(1) Islam vis-à-vis the State 66
(2) Polemics on Veiling 73
(3) Jilbab: A Symbol of Protest 77

C. Conclusion 80

CHAPTER IV
THE CHANGING APPEARANCE
OF INDONESIAN MUSLIM WOMEN
A. The Public Promotion of Islamic Attire 84
(1) A Conducive Atmosphere for Veiling 84
(2) Veiling among Celebrities 93

B. The Changing Meaning of Veiling 102
(1) Veiling among Middle Class Muslims 102
(2) Veiling in the Islamic Media 111
(3) Removing the Veil 116

C. Conclusion 125

CHAPTER V
THE FORMALISATION OF ISLAMIC ATTIRE
IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN
A. The Formalisation of Islamic Attire in Padang 129
(1) The Regulation of Islamic Attire 129
(2) Islamic Attire for Students 138
(3) A Contested Discourse 145

B. Islamic Clothing in Nagari Paninggahan 153
(1) The Regulation of Islamic Attire 156
(2) The Law Enforcement Mechanism 162
(3) The Formal Significance of Islamic Veiling 170

C. Conclusion 167

CHAPTER VI
CRITICISM OF VEILING
AFTER THE FALL OF THE NEW ORDER REGIME
A. Religious Criticism 177
(1) Arguments Based on Sacred Texts 177
(2) Conceptualising Indonesian Islam 183
B. Social Criticism

(1) The Current Practice of Islamic Dress 186
(2) The Imposition of Islamic Clothing 189

C. Conclusion 193

CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY 201

APPENDICES 216

Appendix 1 Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan No. 52/C/Kep/D/82

English Version: Decree of the Director General of Primary and Secondary Department of Education and Culture No. 052/C/Kep/D 82

Appendix 2 Pedoman Pakaian Seragam Sekolah Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan No. 100/C/Kep/D/1991

English Version: School Uniform Codes, Decree No. 100/C/Kep/D/1991

Appendix 3 Instruksi Walikota Padang Nomor: 451.422/Binsos-Iii/2005

English Version: The Padang Mayor’s Instruction No.451/422/Binsos-Iii/2005

Appendix 4 Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Solok Nomor 6 Tahun 2002

English Version: Regional Law of Kabupaten Solok Number 6 Year 2002

Appendix 5 Peraturan Nagari Paninggahan Yang Beragama dan Beradat

English Version: The Nagari law on Paninggahan that is inspired by religious teachings and traditional customs

***
LIST of ILLUSTRATIONS

Picture 2.1  
Aisyiyah Members in the 1970s

Picture 2.2  
The Younger Generation of Muhammadiyah

Picture 2.3  
Members of Muslimat NU in 1975

Picture 2.4  
Senior Muslimat NU Figures in 2003

Picture 3.1  
The *Dakwah* Movement on a Secular Campus

Picture 3.2  
Correct Veiling Style Based on Decree No. 052/1982 of the Department of Education and Culture

Picture 4.1  
The Veil is Included in School Uniforms

Picture 4.2  
Inneke's *Kerudung* in a Shampoo Advertisement

Picture 4.3  
A Popular Islamic Magazine for Teenagers

Picture 5.1  
Billboard Politics in the City of Padang

Picture 5.2  
Veiled Junior High-School Students in Padang

Picture 5.3  
Veiled Women at Market in Paninggahan