CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE PRACTICE OF “VEILING” BY INDONESIAN MUSLIM WOMEN and its relation to the concept of salvation

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The paper will explore alternative constructions of the practice of “veiling” by Indonesian Muslim women and its relation to the concept of salvation. It will focus on sources and concepts of religious authority used to justify alternative practices and the ways in which this mode of social practice has become an element of religious, political and cultural discourse. Analysis builds on theoretical insights of Bourdieu concerning doxa and habitus and of al-Fadl concerning agency and authority.

Referring to Miriam Cook categorization on feminism, For Islamist feminists veiling is linked to discourse and their habitus on sex, sexuality and morality and the concept of women as the guardian of social and theological values as well as the bearer of the safety of hereafter. The veil is theologically obligated and has significant theological role that determines the safety of both women an individual agency and the society. Islamic feminists, on the other hand, argue that the veil does not relate to sex and sexuality but rather to the norm to preserve one’s honor and modesty, which applies not only to women but also men. The habitus of veil is more sociological than theological. The most striking differences between Islamist and Islamic Feminists locate on the methods and approaches they employ and the habitus and doxa on religious authority and the ontological status of women and men. For Islamist feminist persuasive authority is part of the habitus and naturalization of habitus of religious practices, while women agency in the process of disposing habitus in Islamic feminist group remains strong.