

## Research article

# Consumption and Piety: Raising the Curtain on the Islamization of Taste and Fashion in Kendari's Muslim Middle Class

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**Abstract.**

The social phenomenon that was born from the expression of piety of the Muslim middle class in Southeast Sulawesi is no longer only concerned with Ansich's faith. This is interesting to explore because it involves specific actors and capital (industry), and furthermore it also involves a religious dimension in which the Muslim community struggles with a space that continues to experience globalization and economic contestation in the midst of becoming devout Muslims. In this paper, Bayat's post-Islamic approach was used to portray the atmosphere of the trend of Islamization of tastes and fashion of the Muslim middle class in Kendari City. The results of this research found that the relationship between consumption and piety in the Muslim middle class community in Southeast Sulawesi has occurred in the space of Islamization through three popular Islamic da'wah institutions: Wahdah Islam, Muaz bin Jabal and and the congregation of the recitation of Abdullah Taslim. The resulting segmentation can be seen in the Muslim middle class in the city of Kendari who like to use Islamic symbols in fashion and halal food. They are scattered in government institutions, bahtera mas hospital, and other government offices, as well as public campuses in the region. The resulting impact can be seen in the development of sharia-labeled industries and stalls related to fashion and halal food. The owner of the sharia industry in Kendari City is related ideologically and fiqh with the three groups of da'wah. This indicates that the trend of Islamization of Muslim societies does not only concern politics and the state. There is a preference for the soft (non-political) Islamic path where the satisfaction of Islamization is achieved through the inclusion of a sharia identity in daily life.

**Keywords:** piety, Islamization, taste and fashion

## 1. Introduction

Today Muslim consumers have integrated the daily needs of their bodies with a piety identity.[1] The public sphere has clearly displayed the screen to recognize the faces of the Muslim community by affixing consumption symbols labeled sharia.[2] The Muslim middle class is both the object and the potential actor of this phenomenon.[3] They express piety through taste and fashion; sharia culinary (halal mart), robe clothes, sharia

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hijab '(sharia fashion) and other symbols of sharia. Food (culinary) is rapidly forming the Halal Mart industry and offering what is known as sharia culinary. Likewise, the fashion industry offers a variety of Islamic clothing that is syar'i but trendy and contemporary.[4] Gamis clothing in this case, for example, is no longer or uncertain to be identical with santri or radical Muslim women who have the ideology of political Islam or state Islam. There are many young mothers, young women, celebrities, actors, officials (middle Muslim groups), in this country just use it as an expression of piety. This phenomenon is called by Oliver Roy[5] and Bayat in terms of post-Islamism[6], a situation in which for a while political Islam seems dwarfed, marginalized or even weakened.

The Muslim medium is a prototype of Islamic "post-Islamism" which combines worldly "profanism" and ukrawi "sacredness". Consciously their lifestyle has declared the Islamization of the economy in its own style and way. The Muslim middle group's Islamic expression in taste and fashion has triggered a market industry that is growing and developing fast in all medium-sized cities in Indonesia.[7] We can easily find food and clothing galleries with sharia nuances (halal mart) in all corners of the city. Social media space; Facebook, WA is filled with such offers. Various online stalls provide a set of sharia needs through the shop; Bukalapak, Lazada, Shoopie, Tokopedia, Ali express and similar services. This kind of Islamic popularism has also become a reality of Muslim life in Southeast Sulawesi and this phenomenon is very demonstrative on campuses, in offices and even in shopping centers.

The strengthening of the consumptive piety of Muslim middle groups in Southeast Sulawesi is getting more intense along with the presence of institutions, communities and preaching groups that have been very active and massive in the last few years offering kaffah Islamic piety.[8] Returning to early Islam has also become a kind of propaganda and even agitation that can easily be accessed through online media. There are many websites that produce campaigns on the importance of the Islamization of "tastes" and how Muslim fashion is applied in their daily lives. This situation becomes a luxury for middle Muslim groups who are scattered in various places and institutions; government / private offices, on campuses and other Muslim middle class community groups in Southeast Sulawesi. The religious space that is injected with the appeal of religion meets material capabilities has given birth to a model of Muslim society that is pious but consumerism, shari'a at the same time contemporary, Muslim but modern, pious but still uptade.

The social event that was born from the piety expression of the Muslim middle class in Southeast Sulawesi is no longer a single problem of Ansich's faith. This kind of social phenomenon is interesting to explore because there are actors forming events, there

is capital (industry) and furthermore it also involves a religious dimension in which the Muslim community struggles with a space that continues to experience globalization and economic contestation in the midst of having to become devout Muslims. .

## 2. Discussion

### 2.1. Consumerism and new devotional constructs

After the twentieth century economic studies again gave religion a broad role in economic action; materialism is juxtaposed with spiritualism, markets and democratic life.[9] In general, religion has been taken into account as a consumer factor in the consumption decisions of individuals, families and communities. Catholic and Jewish household spending preferences are influenced by religious understanding, where the husband has a more role in decision making due to traditional doctrines of Catholicism and Judaism.[10] In Muslim society, values and norms have been long remembered in muamalah narratives as traditions as well as limitations in meeting the material needs of its adherents. Religion or religiosity as a determinant of consumption has been reviewed by many researchers. The results show that there is a new correlation between religion and consumption in societies based on religiosity, especially Muslim communities. Muslim societies all over the world are turning religions in their preferences, attitudes and buying a product,[11] from banking, insurance, halal cosmetics, tourism[12], food and clothing. Anti-usury was earlier associated with Islamic religiosity where a Muslim felt secure in finances[13] and insurance[14]. Concern for a Muslim woman for her body requires them to limit themselves to halal cosmetics.[15] Even though their attitudes in the choice of mode are not the same because of the influence of different levels of religious understanding.[16] The influence of religiosity makes a balance between materialism in one's life satisfaction where the role of religion dominates and controls.[17]

This phenomenon gave birth to a new construction of Islamic religious life which Asef Bayat and Roy called post-Islamism. The term post-Islamism identifies a new pattern of piety in Muslim societies that no longer merely think about political Islam but immerse themselves in an atmosphere of Islamization in the form of their daily lives. Islamic economics is the most appropriate choice to image piety where this feeling can be easily obtained without significant structural obstacles. Enjoying sharia in consumption and fashion is the safest self-identification compared to their hopes for an Islamic state which has tough political obstacles.

How can we identify this condition in Kendari city? The construction of new piety in fashion and culinary is a symbol of consumerism that fosters new capitals in the Kendari city area. This phenomenon is lively with the discovery of many new industries which make halinization a locus of markers "that shopping in these places offers both the world and the hereafter". Such propaganda is taken very seriously, especially for those who live in an atmosphere of weakening political Islam. There is a sense of mysticism that is vented by the availability of various kinds of culinary delights that offer contemporary nuances without neglecting sharia instruments from names to guaranteed halal labels. One of the places that prepares food with halal assurance in Kendari city is Chinese Food Depot 555 which is on Jl. This restaurant offers Chinese food with halal guarantees as a guaranteed practice for Muslim people who want to enjoy oriental culinary without hesitation with the issue of halal fiqh. The halal label has become a new industry in culinary, which has transformed itself into a separate capital for those with capital only by adjusting to the atmosphere of Islamization in the Muslim community in this city. There are many outlets that provide halal labeling for those who want kaffah piety in all instruments of their daily life.

Likewise with Islamic fashion, if Islamic culinary delights appear like mushrooms in the rainy season, Islamic fashion has become popular beforehand because of its striking shape as a marker of a Muslim identity. Even the Islamic fashion industry is estimated to grow together with the charcoal and halal sharia services industry in Indonesia in 2017 of around US \$ 218.8 billion. This number is estimated to continue to grow by an average of 5.3 percent and reach US \$ 330.5 billion in 2025.[18] This proves that this industry has been transformed into a capital octopus which will be utilized by all parties.

El-Hijab is an outlet that provides Muslim clothing that is owned by the local Muslim community in this city. This figure has become one of the alternatives where Muslim women can look for clothes that are in accordance with fashion developments while still paying attention to sharia instruments as an important attribute in maintaining their products. There are many stalls providing Muslim clothing in this city but, unlike culinary delights, Islamic fashion is a standard that Muslim women sometimes dispute. Gamis clothes, for example, have a level where there is what is called the afdal and ordinary level. In fact, sometimes there is a term Muslim clothing that is not shari'a'. El-hijab seems to have chosen the sharia standard fashion segment so that this outlet does not find "alakadarnya" Muslim clothing.

Taste and fashion are patterns of changing the relationship between capitalism and Islam. The study of Banu Gökarıksel and Ellen McLarney has seen a change in substance and scale between Islam and capitalism where the Islamic movement

and capitalism (neoliberal consumer) have emerged simultaneously in many Islamic countries.[19] Fisher observed that the growth of the modern Malaysian middle class has strengthened the Islamization of the economy and nationalism in which the state plays a role in determining halal products, just like in Indonesia by the MUI.[20] The major shift written by Fischer is about what is consumed by the middle class in Malaysia with the label Islam (halanisasi) which was originally a propaganda of the Darul Arqam group, proving that this condition occurs in the global Islamic world.[21] Meanwhile, the record regarding the Muslim middle class, lifestyle and market opportunities in Indonesia has made economic Islamization flourish in Indonesia.[22]

## 2.2. Significance of the Muslim Middle Class Effect

*The rise of a modern consumerist middle-class in affluent Muslim societies is increasingly marked by Halalisation and an 'ontology of consumption' - namely, the way the world and Islam are viewed and treated for consumption[23]*

[The emergence of a modern consumptive middle class, in a Muslim society that is economically at a prosperous level, is marked by the birth of "Halalisation" as a 'consumption ontology', this is a way of looking at the world globally and Islam specifically on people's consumption behavior].

Kendari city community is pluralistic with various ethnic groups, the majority of whom are Muslims. Apart from the Tolaki tribe, they are migrants from South Sulawesi, West Java and East Java. These newcomers slowly transformed into a middle group with a background of businessmen, and private employees and state employees. The middle group or urban Muslim city of Kendari in the last 10 years has experienced religious transformation as a result of global Islamization that has hit medium-sized cities in Indonesia, including the province of Southeast Sulawesi. In everyday view, Muslim identity can be found in this group, through the symbols of clothing as an image that is most easily seen as self-identity; the depth of their religious understanding. For example, a large headscarf or short pants and beard are symbols that are widely used as self-identity for this group. They can be found in government institutions, such as the Bahtera Mas hospital and others. The existence of the middle class has become a significant correlation with the sharia, culinary and fashion industries where they are an important part of this industry. Their role is not only because they are Muslims, but more because they have the ability to fulfill their life needs properly, as well as affirming piety in building the image of a Muslim who is sharia but still modern. How can this group form and experience self-segmentation in Islamic symbols such as halal culinary and

sharia fashion? This can be seen from the forming actors to which Muslim middle-class groups connect themselves.

### 2.3. Alluring actor

There are always groups that are the driving force for the formation of new social and religious transformations in every society. This is what Bayat calls activism calling for Islam after the weakening of Islamism. Islamic da'wah groups experienced a transformation from the spirit of political Islam to social Islam. Especially in Indonesia after the collapse of the New Order where Islamic political parties gave less hope about Islamism and their defeats in parliament were continuous. This gave birth to boredom in the Muslim community, so that they looked for alternative Islam in their daily life, one of which was the revival of the sharia industry.

The Islamic spirituality of middle-class Muslims is greeted like a dipper with water to the preaching groups that offer the luxury of Islamic exclusivism that can be enjoyed as an identity that feels luxurious but still sharia. This can be seen from the proliferation of Umrah travel agencies before Covid 19, where they happily and happily undertake spiritual trips as well as travelers. This group is usually a dakwah group that has business networks with Muslim countries in the Middle East.

There are three well-known da'wah groups in Kendari city: Muaz bin Jabal, Asunnah and Wahda Islam. The most prominent among the three groups of da'wah was Muaz bin Jabal who was scented by Ustas easily named Zezen. This group succeeded in penetrating preaching to urbanites in the city of Kendari. This can be seen for example from the participants of this group recitation which was attended by lecturers, Muslim businessmen and doctors in this city.

The revival of Islamization in Kendari City cannot be explained from the role of the da'wah group which is the link for the growth of the halal mart industry in the city of Kendari. The tastes and fashion of the Muslim middle groups in Kendari City did not just form and this has triggered the growth of food and clothing outlets where the actors and connoisseurs are connected to one of the preaching groups in this city, especially the influence of the Muaz bin Jabal foundation.

## 3. Conclusion

The Islamization of the economy is a phenomenon of what is known as postislamism in which Muslim societies build a piety identity in their daily lives. The piety of Islam,

underwent a new pattern construction on what is called the Islamization of taste and fashion. This embodies the emergence of a new capital pattern between piety and industry. The involvement of the middle class in this new atmosphere of piety is desirable because of the existence of sufficient resources and religious insistence that connects them with Islamic da'wah groups that offer kaffah Islam without having to escape modernity.

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