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**Abstract Only – Work in Progress**

“Muslim Women and Religious Authorities in Malaysia’s Mass Media”

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The issues of participation and contribution of Muslim women in public spheres have been widely discussed in academic circles. This is due to the fact that, up to the present day, many Muslim women in patriarchal Islamic societies are still struggling to have a role in public life. On the other hand, in some parts of the Muslim world, women enjoy a much better status. They are welcome to contribute to and actively engage in their communities. Some of these roles include having a religious authority and giving advice and opinions to the public on religious matters, as well as guidance about life in general. These women-preachers play important roles as their male counterparts. This study will focus on Muslim women-preachers in contemporary Malaysia, as they are also invited to give occasional lectures at local and international mosques. The emphasis is on their ideas and preaching as expressed in mass media outlets. The three preachers chosen for this study are Dr. Sharifah Hayati Syed Ismail, a professor of Islamic studies at the National University of Malaysia, Siti Nor Bahyah Mahamood, a preacher and a motivator who owns a motivational company, and Dr. Fatma al-Zahra, an Egyptian medical doctor who migrated to Malaysia. This study analyzes their works as expressed in lectures at mosques, through interviews, and articles in print and electronic media. This paper seeks to answer the following questions: What issues are prominently featured in the lectures delivered by Muslim women preachers? Are their works limited to women’s issues? What are the challenges faced by women preachers? Do they feel being discriminated against? What motivates them to engage in such work? Are their views and opinions accepted and valued by the general public? Are their views accepted because of their religious education? Are their targeted groups mostly women?