

ISLAMIC STATE'S INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM AND ISLAMIC LAW CONCERNING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Abstract. *The paper presents a study on women's rights in the self-declared Islamic State through an analysis of the content of the pamphlet entitled "Women in the Islamic State", which is the first written document that provides detailed insight into this radical Sunni Islamist militant group's conception of women. The study points out the basic ambivalence of the pamphlet, which is expressed as the contrast between the declared and the actual role of women in Islamic State, as well as the contradiction between the desired domestic role of women and encouragement for participation in armed conflicts. The pamphlet uses reductionist and traditional interpretations of citations from the Qur'an.*

Key words: *Islamic state, women's rights, migration, Qur'an, Muslim women*

Introduction

Women in the Middle East face more obvious gender inequality in various fields than those in the West, mainly due to male dominance and the intertwining of religion and culture (Tohidi, 2003: 3). When comparing countries dominated by a Muslim population and western countries, Femin Ijtihad (2012: 3) reveals that the existence of cultural and religious patriarchal constructs and power of resistance to equal rights in many Muslim majority societies separates the Islamic world from the West. On the other hand, Muslim women in the West face a variety of problems. Western audiences frequently see these women not as individuals with their own values, knowledge and skills, but as a group which opposes the West with its "visible" expression of the Islamic faith. Therefore, they may be subjected to discrimination, Islamophobia, hate speech, and hostile action. That said, one of the most reactionary contemporary attempts of deprivation of women's rights is taking place in the self-declared Islamic State.

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Islamic State (IS) is a *jihadist*¹ group that occupied large areas of Syria and Iraq in 2014. Even though this radical Sunni Islamist militant group has started to lose territory in 2016, they are still launching terrorist attacks abroad. IS follows an extremist interpretation of Islam and acts of such extremism include terrorism, the advancement of *Sharia*-based governance, bigotry towards non-Muslims and rival Muslims and overall hostility to the West and human rights abuses – in particular, women rights (see Clarion Project, 2014). That is why several questions and concerns emerged after reports that several young women travelled from western countries to Syria in recent years to join IS. What drives them to migrate to IS? What prospects do they find in the self-proclaimed caliphate?

To answer those questions, we analysed the document entitled 'Women in the Islamic State: Manifesto and Case Study' (Manifesto) released by the all-female Al-Khanssaa Brigade, which was published on 23 January 2015 by online supporters of the self-declared IS. The document, which provides the reader with insight into the life of women in the IS, was widely distributed among its Arabic-speaking supporters, and in February it was translated in English and analysed by Charlie Winter (2015) who discovered ultra-conservative definitions of a woman's role inside. Although other scholars (Bonnet, 2015) have already analysed the Manifesto's content, none of them researched how the original verses from the Qur'an are used within (in comparison with other possible interpretations). This is the main scientific contribution of this paper.

The next section explains research questions based on the problem identified and the research methodology that we used.

Methodology

The basic document of our analysis is the afore-mentioned Manifesto, which is divided into three parts. The first part criticises western civilisation, its dominance and influence on lifestyle, and defines the role of Muslim women and a life 'which will make them happy in this world and the hereafter' (Winter, 2015: 12). The second part examines the life of women in parts of Syria and Iraq controlled by the IS, while the third part compares this

¹ As Knapp (2003) explains, the term *jihad* means to "struggle" or "strive" (in the way of God) or to work for a noble cause with determination; it does not mean "Holy war". Throughout history, Muslims themselves have disagreed on the meaning of the term, and thus the concept depends on different philosophical perspectives. Furthermore, there are differences in Sunni and Shi'a interpretations. However, the term *jihad* has retained for Muslims its religious and military connotation in modern times and it has widely appeared in the Western news media following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. In this article, we will use the term as it is understood by Muslim radicals and militant Islamic groups who are focusing "on the physical, violent form of struggle to resist what they see as cultural, economic, military, and political assaults from outside the ummah and oppression and injustice within" (Ibid.: 93).

life with the life of women living in 'hypocritical states', specifically Saudi Arabia. Winter's analysis reveals that the role of women described in the Manifesto is primarily sedentary, her responsibilities 'lie first and foremost in the house, except in a handful of narrowly defined circumstances' (Ibid.: 7). This role begins with marriage, which can happen when a woman is nine years old. From this point on, women should remain hidden and veiled. 'In a *jihadist* perversion of feminism, then, the importance of women is championed' (Ibid.: 7).

We would like to explore some additional aspects and explanations of the Manifesto, which go beyond Winter's remarks and conclusions. Some analyses of the Manifesto have already been made, in particular in Bonnet's essay (2015), which explores the role of women in the discourse of *jihad*. The Manifesto is also mentioned in Perešin's study (2015), who tried to explain western Muslim women's motivations to join IS, in Pooley's thesis (2015), which focused more on the role of social media, and in Bergin's et al. (2015) Australian study.

In addition to the existing research, we focused on the following questions: What kind of rights and restrictions does IS offer to women? Are they consistent or ambivalent? Why do women migrants find them attractive? And most importantly, how does the IS interpret specific Qur'an references to serve its purposes?

The basic method of our study is thus comparative content analysis by which we compared the case with other studies as well as with the original Qur'an's verses. In the latter, we also focused on analysing the meaning of particular Arabic words, and thus socio-linguistic analysis was also used.

The Qur'an is the main source of inspiration and guidance for all Muslims and holy verses about women's rights can be interpreted in many different ways. We are interested in how specific verses are understood by radical Muslims – and on the contrary by Islamic feminists who claim that is not the Qur'an that has kept women oppressed, but the patriarchal interpretation and implementation of it. For example, according to Abukhalil (2001), Amina Wadud in her book 'Qur'an and Women' examines the role of the influence of key female figures in the Qur'an, while Fatima Mernissi and Leila Ahmed blame religious scholars and the androcentric community for having distorted the original meaning of holy verses. All the above are contemporary scholars and women. However, to highlight how advanced feminist ideas arose in Islam quite a long time ago, we intentionally used the work of two male authors active at the end of the 19th century: Qasim Amin (2000) and Mumtaz Ali (2009). Amin, a jurist, often referred to as "Egyptian John Stuart Mill" and "Arab world's first feminist"², published his 'Tahriru-

² Lamberger Khatib's (2016) opinion is that Amin is today in Egypt not accepted as "the first feminist"

l-Mar'ah' in 1899. Ali, an Indian theologian (Islamic scholar) published his famous 'Hoqooqu-n-Niswan', which is also considered the "Indian first feminist interpretation of Qur'an", in 1898. We used the English translation of Amin's book 'The Liberation of Women' published in 2000, and of Ali's article 'The Supremacy Myth', (part of 'Hoqooqu-n-Niswan'), published in 2009 (translated by Asghar Ali Engineer). To better understand the interpretations of both authors, Muhammad Asad's (Leopold Weiss) (1980) English translations of Qur'an citations are added in the text.

Results of Analysis of the Manifesto

This Chapter is structured as follows: The first section provides evidence on the difference between the declared and actual women's rights in the IS. The next section clarifies and brings together a variety of causes (based on previous studies) of migration of women to the IS. The third section explores different interpretations of Qur'an quotes to show that the interpretation used by IS supporters can be directly opposite to some other interpretations.

Women's Rights and Restrictions in Islamic State

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Pursuant to the Qur'an, Muslim women received a significant number of rights already in the 7th century and during the medieval period. But currently the women's rights situation in Muslim countries is the worst in the IS (especially in the case of Yazidi women) according to various studies (Amnesty International, 2014; Clarion Project, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2015; Heideman et al., 2014: 8).

According to the Manifesto, women in the IS gained many rights with the establishment of the IS. This, however, is not consistent with research conducted by Chiu and Williams (2014) and with the above-mentioned reports. An example of anti-woman ideology in the IS is illustrated below:

Rape is routinely practised as both a weapon of war and as a means of humiliating and subjugating conquered populations. It is also used to "reward" fighters for services rendered. Women as young as 14 are being given as "gifts" to IS commanders, while others are sold as slaves in the marketplace (Clarion Project 2015: 29).

but as "the father of feminism". Although new feminism is currently arising in the region (which is for example in Morocco connected with the 20 February Movement), his contribution is still considered very important (Lamberger Khatib, Maja (2016): *Feminizem v Maroku*, the lecture at "Orientalška polentna plesna šola", Maribor, 20 August 2016).

According to the Manifesto, the main value that women have is as mothers/wives, to help expand the caliphate. As stated in the Clarion Project (Ibid.: 18), gender segregation is enforced in the IS and women must wear the *burqa* in public (Ibid.: 18; United Nations, 2014: 8). The Manifesto also presents several advantages for covering the female body:

After the establishment of the caliphate, coverings and hijab things returned to the country and decency swept the country. Now, women are able to travel to their people in Raqqa without having to show their face to the eyes of even one inspector. Respect for their bodies has returned (Winter, 2015: 28).

The *burqa* and *niqab*, two Muslim veils, which cover the entire face, apart from the eyes, encouraged a harsh debate across Europe about religious freedom, female equality, secular traditions and even fear of terrorism. The Manifesto severely criticises western women and the human rights concepts of gender equality. According to it, the main role of the woman in the IS is to be a good wife, a good mother and a good prayer (Ibid.: 18). Women need to have an extraordinary reason to leave their home (while men can leave their home as they wish). As the United Nations (2014: 8) state, in IS-controlled areas of Syria, women and girls have largely been confined to their houses, excised from public life. According to the Manifesto:

Women gain nothing from the idea of their equality with men apart from thorns. Under "equality" they must work and rest on the same days as men even though they have "monthly complications" and pregnancies and so on, in spite of the nature of her life and responsibilities to their husband, sons and religion (Winter, 2015: 25).

One of the most controversial points in the Manifesto is that it is considered legitimate for a girl to be married at the age of nine. Furthermore, it adds that 'most pure girls will be married by sixteen or seventeen, while they are still young and active; young men will not be more than twenty years old in those glorious generations' (Ibid.: 24).

The Manifesto's authors declaratively support education, because they do not support 'illiteracy, backwardness or ignorance' (Ibid.: 23). However, education of Muslim women should start when girls are seven years old and finish when they are fifteen. The focus is on teachings from the Qur'an, *Fiqh* and *Sharia* science, where the document gives a year-by-year guide on what religious teachings a girl should be attending to become a good wife and a mother. There are two important limitations of women's education: 1) the IS does not support the western idea of education for women; their

education is limited to religion and the domestic role of Muslim women; and 2) women should end education at age of 15. Men, on the contrary, do not face such limitations.

According to the Manifesto, security, the situation in courts, and previous poverty clearly significantly improved for all, especially women, under IS domination:

Sunni women suffered throughout the Crusader-Shiite war when they were abducted and kidnapped, tortured, violated and murdered in many situations./.../ When the Islamic State fully undertook administration of the land, the people regained their rights, none more so than women (Winter, 2015: 29).

Beside better security and justice for women expressed in the Manifesto, the IS is supposedly investing all possibilities to eradicate the level of poverty and realise social justice, especially healthcare, so for the people within the IS territory, life has become easier and there are opportunities to work and earn a living (Ibid.: 30). Contrary to these statements, the opinions of the Middle East Program contributors gathered by Heideman et al. (2014) implicate that the current situation is not good (especially for hostages): most crimes against women go unpunished and never make it to the justice system, and the IS has imposed a system of justice based on mass executions, beheadings, and forced conversions.

The situation is slightly different for women who voluntarily come from western countries to join the IS. For example, unmarried women stay in a women's hostel, called a *maqkar*, and pay neither rent nor costs. In addition to free housing, the women are provided monthly food supplies, as well as a monthly allowance. If the woman is married, she and her husband are given a house (Hoyle et al., 2015: 20–21), but they face gender inequality due to different limitations (compared to men) in the field of education, covering with *burqa*, leaving the house and realising their 'ultimate' goal under the IS through the household and raising a family.

Female Migrants to the Islamic State: Between Mulans and Angels of the Home

France is first in terms of the number of recruits among the European Union countries (1,200), followed by Germany and the United Kingdom with 600 and Belgium with 440 (Archick et al., 2015). A recent study by Azinović and Jusić (2016) discovered that by the end of 2015 there were also six foreign fighters in the IS that came from Slovenia. The share of women in the total number of migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina reaches more

than 30 percent, which is more than from other countries (EU average 17%, France 22%, Germany 20%). The average age of women that migrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina was 30 and they were mostly already married, while studies revealed that the average age of women from other western countries was 21 and many of them were looking for their future husbands (Ibid.: 29, 30). In one case, it was also possible to determine that a woman from Bosnia and Herzegovina cooperated within the armed members of the IS' police formations (Ibid.: 51).

Public perception of 'lone women travellers' is still more or less one-dimensional and stereotyped. They are seen as '*jihadi* brides', the victims of brainwashing by social media³. The extensive and decentralised use of social media among IS supporters has given IS an invaluable propaganda apparatus. This is in line with other observations that the IS has differentiated itself from other terrorist groups by creating a marketing arm (White-Montoya and Hofstetter, 2014). However, Saltman and Smith (2015: 9–17) showed that reasons for female migration are multi-causal and include a broad range of factors, such as feeling socially and/or culturally isolated, idealistic goals of religious duty and romanticisation of the experience. According to Huckerby (2015), in some cases women may actually be motivated by romance or be unduly influenced; in other cases they are drawn to IS by the same forces as men: adventure, inequality, alienation, and finally, a clear desire to enter the battlefield. The title of the report compiled by Hoyle et al. (2014) 'Becoming Mulan?' was also inspired by the tweet of a female recruit: 'I wonder if I can pull a Mulan and enter the battle field.' Perešin's (2015: 30–31) analyses also showed women migrants' sympathy for violence and willingness to fight.

Perešin's study is explicitly focused on women migrants of Muslim descent. She discovered that the women cite religious motivation as the most important driver (2015: 23). Yet there are some cases of IS fighters whose origin is Christian or atheist or of another religion. They later converted to Islam but we can say that in that case, the basic attractiveness of IS and caliphate is hardly explained by religion. As a Slovenian boy who went to Syria in 2013 explained: he went there to help since official media were at that time full of reports of the suffering of Syrian people fighting against Assad's dictatorship⁴. The role of official media reporting from the

³ See for example articles in *The Washington Post* ('Jihadi Brides': Young British women are among Islamic State's newest recruits, September 10, 2014), *The Independent* (The most dangerous Isis propaganda yet? Jihadi brides with M5s, fighters relaxing and children playing used to present caliphate as a utopia, March 20, 2015), *The Independent* (Isis 'jihadi brides' trying to radicalise girls and encourage UK terror attacks online as they remain trapped in Syria, August 13, 2016), etc.

⁴ See Mekina, Borut. 2014. »Boril sem se za islam«. *Zakaj se je mladi Kamničan spreobrnil v islam in odšel v boj za pravo vero v Sirijo*. Mladina, 10 October 2014.

beginning of the war in Syria as a pull factor has not yet been sufficiently analysed.

As there are recruits of Muslim or non-Muslim origin, there is also a distinction between western and Gulf women migrants to IS and hence there are also different approaches used by IS promoters to obtain women recruits (Winter, 2015). As Winter notes, the Manifesto was widely distributed among Arabic-speaking supporters, thus its target are Arab women and it is not aimed at a western audience seeking adventure and romance. However, in all cases the role of women, as Winter put it, is 'divinely' limited. Let us look at some fragments:

Hence, while Islam gives man dominance, it bestows upon women the honour of implementation (executive) (Ibid.: 18).

The greatness of her position, the purpose of her existence is the Divine duty of motherhood. Truly, greatness is bestowed upon her, and it is God's will that her children honour her (Ibid.: 18).

We have already clarified what the fundamental function for women is – it is in the house with her husband and children (Ibid.: 22).

Glorification of women's limited rights and inferiority, 'the divine right for women to stay at home', is quite comparable with Victorian notions of women as 'household nuns' or 'angels of the house'. The 'new science', pronounced by authorities such as Auguste Comte, claimed that 'women should shrink from any participation of power as in its very nature degrading', surprisingly did not include working-class women who slaved in factories and upper-class homes (Slee and Burns, 2010). In the same manner, the Manifesto sometimes permits women to leave the house, and *jihad* is the first such reason:

However, there are other causes for which it is permissible for certain women to leave her home in order to serve society that we will recount below, God permitting /.../ Women may go out to serve the community in a number of situations, the most important being: 1) Jihad (Winter, 2015: 22).

Therefore, great principles can quickly be forgotten or reversed when there are some practical benefits which do not correspond to these principles, and this is one of the ambiguities of the discourse on women role in *jihad*: while valorising women as mothers and wives they are at the same time encouraged to participate in violent actions like fighting or suicide

bombings (Bonnet, 2015). Such ambiguity is not common only to 'jihadist patois'. During the WWII, women participated in military, and there were millions of women working in war and other industries, which was in particular in the USA supported by extensive propaganda campaigns by the government. However, after the war, in the US many of them were fired from their jobs since mobilising women was considered a temporary measure for extraordinary conditions (just the same as in case of *jihad*).

Interpretations of Specific Qur'an References in the Manifesto and by Qasim Amin and Mumtaz Ali

According to the Manifesto, a crucial point of good human life in this world is well-balanced social organisation, based on 'true' comprehension of a man by a woman, and vice versa. This is, at the same time, as it is explained, the only possible interpretation of some social aspects of the Islamic way of life and opposite-sex relations. Therefore, this deals with the essence of 'female nature' and the essence of 'male nature', the idea of two different life principles that are intrinsic (God-given), and must be considered when talking about 'natural' (Islamic) family conduction and fair society. Therefore, we compare below some of the Manifesto's Qur'an argumentations of their beliefs with the same Qur'an citations, as interpreted by two Muslim writers from the 19th century.

We find that the Manifesto uses verse 34 in the Chapter En-Nisa' (Women) to emphasise man's role in his marriage relationship with a woman⁵:

MEN SHALL take full care of women with the bounties which God has bestowed more abundantly on the former than on the latter, (Lit., 'more on some of them than on the others')⁶ and with what they may spend out of their possessions. And the righteous women are the truly devout ones, who guard the intimacy which God has [ordained to be] guarded (Lit., 'who guard that which cannot be perceived (al-ghayb) because God has [willed it to be] guarded').

Men's role is to take full care of women, considering that God bestowed more abundantly on him than on her. The Manifesto mentions two roles of man that are described in the verse, but does not explain them. In this verse,

⁵ See also Winter's (2015: 17) translation, which is slightly different.

⁶ The expression *qawwam* is an intensive form of *qa'im* ('one who is responsible for' or 'takes care of' a thing or a person). Thus, *qama 'ala l-mar'ah* signifies 'he undertook the maintenance of the woman' or 'he maintained her' (see Lane VIII, 2995). The grammatical form *qawwam* is more comprehensive than *qa'im*, and combines the concepts of physical maintenance and protection as well as of moral responsibility: and it is because of the last factor we rendered this phrase as 'men shall take full care of women'.

the Manifesto identifies the essence of male nature, which is forgotten, especially in western societies, where women are forced to work outside their homes and to compete with men. The result of this situation in which the woman is not in her house, submissive to her husband, completing household chores on behalf of her husband and their children, represents the loss of true gender identity, for both men and women, which leads to societal pathologies and disorders. Mumtaz Ali (2009) explains that this verse, according to theologians, points to two characteristics which are intrinsic to men: 1) the ability to think and operate and 2) to supply his wife (wives) with food, shelter and protection. Ali disagrees with them, saying that the word *qawwam* does not mean 'the one who takes full care' (for which he needs mental and operational capacity), but rather 'the one who is ready to travel or is already abroad', or even 'the manager'. He further explains 'God has honoured them (males) over them (females)', saying that we cannot infer the general superiority of all men over all women from this. Even if that may be the case, it does not mean that this superior position of men is inherent or God-given. Besides, as Ali explains, it is not clear what specific superiority we are dealing with. If it is mental, operational and economic superiority, it is disputable whether this kind of male superiority is inherent or God-given. Hence, we cannot accept this as an argument for men's superior position over women. Male superiority, which is a result of education and enduring polish of character, is completely different from the statement that a man is superior only because he is male. The first superiority is socially conditioned, while the other is intrinsic. There are many women whose intellect is superior by many criteria. When comparing male intellectual and operational advantages with female intellectual and operational advantages, Ali compares those of Ebu Jahl (the Prophet's contemporary who opposed Islam) with those of the Prophet's first wife Hadija. He also calls for excellence of knowledge about faith, and devotion that we find within famous mystic Rabia from Basra. Furthermore, Ali compares the positions of a rich man and his male servant, and asks whether it is sound to conclude that the first's superior position is inherent. Ali concludes that the word *qawwam* is to be taken as a hyperbole rather than literally. A person who cannot find the time to rest because of his/her overscheduled day, is *qawwam*. Since a man must travel away to furnish his family with all the necessities, he was called *qawwam* or the one who works or stands for his wife. Since the Earth is full of different people, rich and poor, strong and weak, generous and illiberal, God claims that he established differences between them. The cited verse does not talk about men ruling over women, nor about women being submissive to men.

The Manifesto recognises only two models of human social life, the western model and the Islamic model. It acknowledges only one true Islamic

model, which is represented and protected by the IS. When they advocate a sedentary life style for women, they cite part of Qur'an verse 33 from Chapter Al Ahzab (The Confederates) which says:

And abide quietly in your homes, and do not flaunt your charms as they used to flaunt them in the old days of pagan ignorance⁷; and be constant in prayer, and render the purifying dues, and pay heed unto God and His Apostle: for God only wants to remove from you all that might be loathsome, O you members of the (Prophet's) household, and to purify you to utmost purity.

Their explanation could be understood as malicious towards the general tradition of Islamic jurisprudence, because they ignore the well-known *Sharia* explanation of this question, which discuss two perspectives. One concerns the Prophet's wives and the other concerns all other women. If we look at the preceding verse, we can see that this imperative applies only to the Prophet's wives. The verse emphasises that they are not like other women:

O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any of the [other] women, provided that you remain [truly] conscious of God⁸. Hence, be not over-soft in your speech, lest any whose heart is diseased should be moved to desire [you]: but, withal, speak in a kindly way.

Amin (2000) writes about this in his book *The Liberation of Women*. This shows the lack of knowledge of authors of the Manifesto who also openly advocate just basic education for women. There is no need for a woman to educate herself 'just so she can try to prove that her intelligence is greater than a man's' (Winter, 2015: 21). We find similar attitudes in the work of Vedždi (2011), who argues with Amin (2000) on the question of liberation of women. Amin writes that seclusion of women ruins their health, isolates them from reality and thus produces effects opposite from those intended. This kind of woman abandons herself in laziness and heart illness, sees her husband mostly just in bed, and the gap between them thus becomes wider. In contrast to this attitude, the Manifesto claims that the western model failed in the very moment that women came out of their houses.

⁷ The term *jahiliyyah* denotes the period of a people's or civilization's moral ignorance between the obliteration of one prophetic teaching and the emergence of another; and, more specifically, the period of Arabian paganism before the advent of Muhammad. Apart from these historical connotations, however, the term describes a state of moral ignorance or unconsciousness in its general sense, irrespective of temporal or social environment.

⁸ Sc., "and, thus, conscious of your special position as the consorts of God's Apostle and mothers of the believers".

The Manifesto states that genders are created to populate the Earth. The advocated differences arise from the fact that women are from a man (Adam) and for men. A woman has no other responsibility than being a spouse to her husband. These claims are derived from verse 21 of the Chapter Ar-Rum (The Byzantines) and are also explained with this verse:

And among His wonders is this: He creates for you mates out of your own kind, (Lit., "from among yourselves") so that you might incline towards them, and He engenders love and tenderness between you: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who think!

When Amin (2000) explains this same verse, he says that it is only a perfect definition of marriage. In a similar manner as they did before, the authors of the Manifesto are perceiving equality between genders when they comment verse 19 from the Chapter En-Nisa' (Women):

O YOU who have attained to faith! It is not lawful for you to [try to] become heirs to your wives [by holding onto them] against their will⁹; and neither shall you keep them under constraint with a view to taking away anything of what you may have given them, unless it be that they have become guilty, in an obvious manner, of immoral conduct¹⁰. And consort with your wives (Lit., 'with them'.) in a goodly manner; for if you dislike them, it may well be that you dislike something which God might yet make a source of (Lit., 'and God might place in it'.) abundant good.

They believe Islam has given dominance to men while honouring women with the obligation of implementation. Man is the competent commander and all others must obey his commands, especially his wives. Man is expected not to abuse his position and should live in the harmony of a kind giving-accepting relation. Amin on the contrary does not see the verse as an

⁹ According to one of the interpretations by Zamakhshari, this refers to a man forcibly keeping an unloved wife – and thus preventing her from marrying another man – in the hope of inheriting her property under the provisions specified in the first sentence of Verse 12 above. Some authorities, however, believe that the meaning is: 'It is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will' – thus expressing a prohibition of the pre-Islamic custom of inheriting the wives of deceased near relatives. But because Islam does not permit the 'inheriting' of women under any circumstances (and not only 'against their will'), the former interpretation is more plausible.

¹⁰ In case that a wife's immoral conduct has been proven by the direct evidence of four witnesses, as stipulated in Verse 15 above, the husband has the right to divorce her, and to demand the return of the whole or of part of the dower which he gave her at the time when the marriage was contracted. If – as is permissible under Islamic Law – the dower has not actually been handed over to the bride at the time of marriage but has taken the form of a legal obligation on the part of the husband, he is absolved of this obligation in the case of proven immoral conduct on the part of his wife.

expression of male domination, but only stresses man's obligation to treat women with kindness, referring to this verse. He continues with verses 20 and 21 from the same Chapter, pointing out the seriousness of the marriage obligation.

The Manifesto extremely reduces the topic of women rights in Islam, mainly on the issue of seclusion and partly education, which must be in function of the former. Other issues such as polygamy and divorce are not discussed, though they could be recognised, as polygamy is not questioned in the text. Amin (2000) and Ali (2009) cite many other verses from the Qur'an in 'The Liberation of Women' and 'The Supremacy Myth', when they abundantly discuss this topic. We only compared interpretations of those Qur'an references that appear in both the Manifesto and in the works of Amin and Ali, and which address the topic in strict sense of the word.

The simplification and reductionism of Islamic thought is not only a part of theological extremism; one can find similar kinds of reductionism in various popular articles not authored by Muslims. Said (2003) believes it to not be an exaggeration to say that western authors mostly report about Muslims and Arabs as either oil suppliers or potential terrorists.

Conclusion

As previously noted, what characterises the Manifesto is its brutal simplification of the topic, which is (the simplification) allegedly derived from the Qur'an. This is particularly clear when the Manifesto calls on women to take a sedentary way of life in its extreme form, using part of the Qur'an sentence 'And abide in your homes'. When this or any other issue is seriously disputed, opposite or different opinions are discussed. Amin (2000) explains that all writings on Islamic jurisprudence agree that these passages refer exclusively to the women of the Prophet. Accordingly, seclusion is not a religious duty required of any other Muslim women. We can say that Islamic thought is, contrary to the Manifesto's explication, much more complex and full of 'temporarily undefined', rather than 'permanently defined' matters. Another conclusion one can draw from this research is that the Manifesto addresses women who lack proper information on the way that credible Muslim thinkers find solutions for different problems. Such blind acceptance of obscure ideology, which is titled as Islamic, could be a good starting point for explaining the eventual success of the self-proclaimed IS' recruitment of women (or men). When Razi (2014) investigates theological extremism, he also notes that illiteracy and a lack of scientific understanding of philosophy of Islam enhance extremism among the Muslims.

The next reason for the success of IS' recruitment could be hidden within its ambiguities. Discrimination of women is glorified. It is not women's duty

but their 'right' to stay at home. The Manifesto claims that women gained many rights with the establishment of the IS while the United Nations' research (2014) shows that the current situation of IS women is far from the Manifesto's 'perfect' picture. Moreover, the research of Hoyle, Bradford and Frenett (2014) shows that women in the IS face gender inequality/segregation due to limitations in the field of education, covering, leaving the house and realising their 'ultimate' goal through the household and raising a family. However, despite being valued as mothers and wives, women are at the same time encouraged to participate in violent actions.

This ambivalence expressed within the Manifesto as well as in other actions of the IS seems to attract very different groups of recruits. Although there is no doubt that IS' recruitment propaganda through social media is aggressive, women should not be viewed stereotyped as victims of terrorism and extremism only, but also as participants who play several roles and who could be active in both fighting and recruiting other women. Since the reasons why women (and men) want to abandon their countries and travel to the IS are, according to recent studies, very different, we below expose one of the reasons that we believe should be the subject of further research. This is the feeling of alienation, isolation and inequality, which arise from the fact that some Muslim women feel unwelcomed or as strangers in the West. Studies from the past 10 years show that discrimination towards Muslims (and especially Muslim women) in the West is present in almost all the larger western countries (Pucelj, 2016). Consequently, some Muslims do not feel integrated in the West and want to find a place where they feel as a part of a society that does not consider them foreigners. The IS is on the other hand extremely welcoming to foreigners and welcomes all Muslims as equal, without any discrimination. Muslims (especially covered Muslim women) in the West could face different obstacles when living/integrating in(to) the western societies: limited possibilities to practice Islamic faith or the Muslim way of living, higher levels of discrimination, difficulties in finding employment, lower educational achievements compared to non-Muslims, segregation or even ghettoisation in one part of the city, negative perception by the public and the media, islamophobia or anti-Islamic feeling are rising and consequently negatively affect the feeling of integration, etc.

Since the causes of migration of western Muslims to war zones are complex, there can be no single simple measure to prevent migration (such as an international and national legal framework for countering-terrorism, partnership between governmental, non-governmental organisations, and civil society). One important factor, in light of Amin's ideas, is also education, not only education of all western inhabitants about Islam to better understand Muslims and refugees who are currently migrating to their states, but also

religious education of Muslims in the direction of “moderate” Islam with sufficiently educated muftis. According to Razi (2014: 70), Qur’anic science should be taught scientifically and the minimum level of required education for becoming a mufti, should be enhanced to at least graduation level, because the Qur’anic sciences are not easy to understand and only a person of scientific understanding can understand them correctly.

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