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## RESEARCH ARTICLE | SPECIAL ISSUE: WOMEN'S STUDIES

# The Socio-Political Role of Women from New Salafist Point of Views and Their Comparison with Old Salafist Perspectives

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**Abstract:** Almost all Islamic classical movements believe that the main task of women is motherhood and housekeeping. However, from the perspective of new Salafist groups, there have been transformations in women's rights and duties. Studying the political and social role of women from the new Salafist point of views and comparing them with the views of old Salafists was because the issue was unexplored. This paper investigates differences between the perspective of the new and old Salafists regarding the role of women, through examining primary resources such as the works of old and new Salafist ideologues, as well as secondary sources such as magazines, manifesto, tweets, and websites. Based on the critical discourse analysis, this paper concludes that both the new and old Salafist groups shared the same theological sources and references, but the old ones have a literal (and not a contextual or interpretative) reading of the holy book (the Qur'an) and the Sunna as their fundamental resource and reference. In the new Salafist discourse, women have the right to participate in all social and military activities. Therefore, the big shift created in terms of social and political participation of women through new Salafists is based on new circumstances, ambitions as well as their different understanding and interpretation of theology concerning the role and duty of women.

**Keywords:** New Salafists; Old Salafists; Critical Discourse Analysis; Women; Socio-political Role, ISIS.

## Introduction

The views of old and the new Salafists regarding social and political roles of women is a new issue. Most studies have focused their

attention on issues like feminism, polygamy and veil in Islamic and European countries. However, some studies have been conducted

on the social and military roles of women from the viewpoint of jihadist terror groups.

### **Research Problem**

The key issues investigated in this paper are: How the foundations of old Salafists were changed? How factors affecting this change were created? How social and political roles of women were changed in the Islamic society where patriarchal structure was dominating?

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to increase our knowledge about how the roles and duties of women were changed in the Islamic society and what are the differences between the views of old and new Salafists regarding them. Finally, the paper presents a better understanding and knowledge of those changes from the perspective of new Salafists based on a critical discourse analysis.

### **Outline**

Islamic movements like old Salafists have a strict understanding of women's role and in fact they had a literal reading of the holy book and tradition and lacked a contextual or interpretative reading about women's role and rights. They interpreted them according to prevailing social conditions of the Arabs as well as jurisprudential laws codified by jurists without considering the circumstances of time.

Almost all old Salafist groups believe that women have a secondary role in society and their main task is breeding children and housekeeping. They have a conservative approach with regard to women's role and duty. Their literal reading of text (Qur'an) and Sunna (tradition) in the patriarchal era

without any Ijtihad (new interpretation) leads to gender inequity and discrimination.

There are changes in women role and duties from the perspective of other groups including those took shape in Iraq and Syria as ISIS or ISIL or Daesh. The group that spilled blood in the name of Islam could succeed to attract women worldwide through its self-proclaimed caliphate. Through its strong propaganda machine, Daesh attracted women from all over the world toward the areas it had takeover and permitted them to participate in military operations. In addition, it propagated that women can gain ideal status in establishing an idealistic caliphate state by joining ISIS. Compared to other movements, ISIS agreed on women being able to participate in political and social activities.

The most important difference between old and the new Salafists regarding women is the emergence of a major change in their role and duties from working at home as a passive role attending in the community as a missionary to participating in the battlefield. According to the view of the new Salafists, a Muslim woman plays a different role. This change leads to women having an active role in all aspects of the community. The political and social participation of women to create an institution like caliphate was the most important change in their role and duty in the Islamic society.

### **The Concept of Old Salafism**

The Salafi movement gets its name from the Arabic al-Salaf al-Saleh (the worthy ancestors, or venerable forefathers) which refers to early generations of Muslims, who had first-hand experience of Islam's rise and were regarded as an example of correct way of living for future

Muslims. Salafi (predecessor) means relatives who had died before a person (Tarihi, 1408: 140).

Ibn Manzor in *Lesan al-Arab* defines predecessor as: “the former population who although are not human relatives, yet there is some similarity between the two, and these ancestors and relatives are older and more virtuous than others” (Ibn-Manzour, 1408: 6, 30).

The terminological meaning of Salafist is to pay attention to ancients and accept the position of authority for Sahabah, Tabi-in, and Tabi al-Tabiin in the first three centuries of Hijri and adherence to them in understanding religious issues. Due to closeness to the time of Prophet Muhammad and his companionship and obedience, they understood the Qur'an more and their understanding and interpretation preferred to that of theologians, philosophers, and mystics (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1419, Vol.4: 96).

The main doctrine of the Salafists is the return to the purity of Islam, the study of the main sources of Islam, the Qur'an, and *hadith*. The most important Salafist epistemological principle is preference of the transcendent. On the basis of this epistemological principle, direct reference to religious texts and traditions. Another basic doctrine of old Salafists was their belief in non-creation of Qur'an and its sanctity. According to theologians of the school of hadith, the Qur'an is the word of God which is revealed in Arabic language (Ibn-Abi-Yala, 1350: 25; Abou-Zahra, 1947: 488). The same sacredness and non-createdness of the Qur'an does not allow the text to be reinterpreted and communicated with actual and social realities and needs. Non-adherence to Qur'an prevents

interpretation and *Ijtihad* in the realm of belief. Another important principle of Salafis is Takfir which is established based on religious principles and beliefs. It means whoever either denies or leaves one of the principles of Islam, he or she will be outside the Muslim circle (Ahmad-Ibn-Hanbal, 36-6; Abu-Zahra, 1947: 502)

The central sign of old Salafists is monotheism. They, according to Salaf, regarded God as single, and unmatched whose traits are different from human ones. Salafists consider the verses of Ekhlas (monotheism) Sura (chapter) to be unique and absolute (Abu-Zahra, 1947AD, 162).

In the old Salafists discourse, obeying a tyrannical ruler is obligatory and criticizing him is prohibited. They confirmed an autocratic and tyranny government in the Islamic world both in theory and practice through issue decree to obey the ruthless ruler due to a theoretical weakness and a conservative approach (Ibn-Tayyimiyya, Vol.1: 142; Ibn-Tayyimiyya, 1419, Vol. 4: 96; Ibn-Tayyimiyya, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Vol. 3: 391-394; Al-Bukhari, Vol. 9: 47)

### The Concept of New Salafism

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of Islamic reformist movements are regarded as the beginning of establishing new Salafist movement, the era which was started with the reformist movements of Seyyed Jamaland Mohammad Abduh and continued with Takfiri - Jiihadi movements such as al-Qaeda and ISIS.

In the new Salafist movement, politics takes precedence over beliefs and beliefs are pursued through the acquisition of political power. Thus, New Salafists departs from the

form of a doctrinal school and is recognized as a political stream whose distinctive character is retrograde. A process whose primary concern is not to achieve the practice of religion but to make religion a prerequisite for political power.

Takfir is the central notion of new Salafist groups which separates them from other Islamic groups. Their strict reading of others' beliefs led to reproduction of new concepts like ignorance and Takfir in political literature of Muslims. They believe that the present Islamic society is an ignorant and infidel one and its restoration has no benefit and needs to be eliminated from its basis (Fahd al-Nafisi, 2001: 204)

In the context of belief, new Salafists tightened the circle of monotheism and expanded the circle of Takfir. They referred to verse of the Qur'an (Al-Maeda, 44 /5) which says: "whoever does not rule to what God has sent down, he is disbeliever". With this justification, they named ignorant and disbeliever not only non-Muslims but also Muslim rulers and Muslim communities that did not think like them. *Shirk* and infidelity that new Salafists believe in, to a large extent, cover all aspects of one's social and civil life. For new Salafists, to pursue new ideas or to join philosophical and intellectual schools and political parties, to work in government offices and organizations and to perform some religious and diplomatic rituals and ceremonies, if it is not in the interests of Salafist groups, is considered among actions of polytheists and disbelievers (Zein -Ol, Abedin Sororo, 42-46). The new Salafists believe that the ignorant polytheists had inherent monotheism, and believe in the existence of God, but they worship the monotheism of

Rabbi, which requires monotheism. For the new Salafists, the abandonment of Sharia and Islamic law and religious values, especially in the modern age, has engulfed Islamic societies, such as the pre-Islamic era, in ignorance and misguidance, and all non-Islamic governments are illegitimate (Isfahani, 1394: 100). The new Salafists believe that Islam has made unity obligatory and forbids ethnic separatism. So the ruling system in Islam is a single and unitary system.

### Literature Review

Research on social and political women point of view of the new Salafist is very limited. Valuable studies on women's rights in Islam, as well as important issues such as hijab (veil), have become more visible in Islamic societies. Research on women political and military activity has also been carried out; research on gender segregation has been conducted based on the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis, also a number of influential women with positive view of al-Qaeda and have been compared using the content analysis method. Research on women has tended to focus on women as passive bystanders, important contribution investigating women as active agents have however been made by Noureen Chowdhury Fink, Barkat and Lisa Shertet. They explored the roles of women in terrorism, conflict and violent extremism. Mia Bloom investigated the roles of women in terrorism, Rafia and Zakaria looked at women and Islamic militancy, female western migrants to ISIS; Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford provided groundbreaking insights into female ISIS-migrants' lives by examining the reason for migration; Saltmans and Smiths objective is to

explore who is being radicalized to join ISIS, why did women decide to migrate and how the process can be interrupted.

### Critical Discourse Analysis

The Critical Discourse Analysis is a method used for social and cultural changes alongside other approaches. The term was first used by Norman Fairclough. It is considered as an interdisciplinary study method that emerged in the 1970s and due to its interdisciplinary nature was used as one of the qualitative approaches in the fields of political science, social science, communication and critical linguistics (Fairclough, 2000:7).

This study uses the model introduced by Fairclough, which provides theories and methods to study the relations between discourse and social and cultural changes in different fields (Fairclough & Vodac, 15:1997). The critique of the critical approach to discourse analysis implies understanding the fact that there are propositions that are considered natural but have an ideological character and are in an inclusive way in the discourse, identity helps people as social subjects. (Fairclough, 1996: 23)

From the critical discourse analysis point of view, Fairclough reveals social issues, power relations, societal and cultural characteristics, ideological beliefs, and social actions in terms of metaphors. Fairclough's method of analyzing discourse requires analysis at the following three levels:

*Descriptive analysis:* The system of meanings is separated from its context and social conditions (Fairclough, 2000:172,171). At this stage, the meaning of old and new Salafist ideologies is expressed about the roles

and duties of women apart from the context and social conditions.

*Interpretative analysis:* It deals with the meaning of words and the aim is to understand the meanings and discover the essence of the discourse. In other words, attention is paid both to the context within discourse and its situational context since discourse takes its meaning from social context. At this stage, the concepts and meanings of discourses in old and new Salafist is analyzed according to the social context, location and time (Fairclough, 1379:215).

*Explanative analysis:* It requires a kind of hypertext analysis, that is, the answer to why and how the cross-talk occurred. The explanation focuses on the interaction between social structure discourse and crosstalk (Fairclough, 1379: 245).

From Ernesto Laclau's and Shantal Mouffe's viewpoints, discourses shape our perception of truth and the world, and changes in discourse will bring about a change in the social world, believing that each discourse will take over parts of society and shape the individual and social speeches and behaviors by controlling the subjects (McDonnell, 2001: 31-33).

In this scientific study, the data analysis is based on the discourse analysis using Ernesto Laclau and Shantal Mouffe's literary discourse. The most important concepts used in the Laclau and Mouffe discourse analysis method as well as in this study are: a) Articulation: it is the act of connecting multiple elements that are not necessarily related to each other in a semantic sense, and together they form an identity (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, 105); Central signifier: is a privileged sign that other signs are arranged

around; Floating Signs: They are multi-meaning signs that have not yet been conceptually consolidated.

The interpretive discourse analysis is the study of theoretical concepts of the discourse analysis. At this stage, the most important theoretical concepts of Laclau and Mouffe discourse analysis which reflects the views of old and new Salafists on the role and duties of women, is examined and analyzed. Through the discourse analysis of Freclough's interpretive critique and the discourse analysis pattern of Laclau and Mouffe, at first different signs are separated and a connection is created between them. Then words, concepts and meanings are clarified with different lines. Through this discourse approach, we seek to determine the difference between the views of old and new Salafist on the role and duties of women. Is this difference in ideology or it is theoretical or relational? After linking the main and secondary propositions of the discourses for both old and new Salafist, the opposition of two discursive domains will be revealed. Then, by analyzing the domain, their similarities and differences will be determined. After examining the roots, causes and factors of differences, it will be concluded that whether the discursive form of two groups has been changed or not? What is inside the vestibule? Have the manifestations of two discourses been changed about the role of women?

## Discussion

### *The Views of Old Salafists on Women's Social Role*

The social role of women is divided into three important issues: veil (hijab), superiority of

men over women and women's social participation.

### **The Viewpoint of Old Salafists About Women's Social Participation**

Most of old Salafists believe that the main role of women is to stay at home and to not interfere in society. The arguments of old Salafists concerning the prohibition of women from engaging in social activities was that the women of the Salaf didn't interfere in any social affair. Thus, women are banned from working outside the home because Islam prohibits the presence of a woman with outsider (Ben -Baz, 1986: 11-12)

One of the most important social roles of woman in the old Salafist discourse is her participation as a preacher in patriarchal society (Richard Nielsen, 2018: 3). In the old discourse, women are allowed to work out of the house as long as they obey God's law and work within the framework of Islamic virtue and values (Seran de Leede, 2018: 16).

Wahhabi Salafists have a strict view on women's social participation since they believe that women working out of the house leads to intermingling between the sexes that consequently results in corruption and immorality. According to them, woman can only go out of house in emergencies or in the case she is forced, thereafter she must adhere to Islamic values and divine laws (Abdel Aziz ben Baz, 1986: 21-22).

### **Political and Military Roles of Women from the Viewpoint of Old Salafists**

Most of old Salafists said that all forms of western political systems have no place in Islam; furthermore, men themselves are not allowed to practice political rights. Democracy in the old Salafist discourse is a system of

infidel and ignorance (Jahiliyya) and elections are prohibited by Islamic law since they are an instrument of democracy. Then women do not have the right to participate in such systems which is made by west and Jewish and Christian legislators. According to ideologues of old Salafists, both men and women are prohibited to imitate the infidel systems (Al-Albani, 1975: 11).

The Wahhabi Salafists believe that women are not allowed to govern; they can't become leaders of state, or judges in courts, or governor or an employee of any work that is related to governance (Abdel Aziz Ben Baz, 1986: 258).

In general, the military role of women in Islam is a supportive one. The main role of women is housekeeping. She does not have right to interfere in any military operations since according to the theological interpretations of old Salafists, participation in military operations requires the companionship and supervision of men even if the Islamic lands are attacked by the enemy. That's because women are vulnerable to sinful desires of men without having a companion (Al-Shingiti, 2012: 160, wage makers, 2011: 148-162). Therefore, the woman in the old Salafist discourse has merely a supportive military role.

### **The Viewpoint of Old Salafists about Veil**

Almost all old Salafists believe that women must cover parts of their body. The obligation of wearing hijab has been stressed in two Qur'anic verses. They say veil is obligatory for women; their argument is that the veil eliminates temptation and prevents the prevalence of immorality in Islamic society. Also, veil is considered as measure of women

greatness and protects them against the men desires (Rashid Rida, 1428: 5). The view of old Salafists concerning the veil is more tolerable than that of Wahhabi Salafists, they said that woman should wear the whole body, except face and hands, but wearing the veil is unnecessary (Al-Albani, 1997: 37).

Hasan-Al Baan, Muslims Brotherhood leader, had a different view about women's veil; he believes that woman must cover her face along with her body (Al-Banna, 11-12). The old Salafists say the most important reason for wearing veil depends on the context of the cultural crisis and inadequate cultural and social conditions of their communities (Al-Bana, 7).

The Wahhabi Salafists have a strict reading about veil. They believe that the lack of covering leads to crimes of indecency and the prevalence of immorality. Then the woman must cover all of her body and face before foreigner men (Abdel Aziz ben-Baz, 21-22, Sheikh Mohammad Ban Saleh ben otheimayeen, 81).

Both the old Salafists and Wahhabi Salafists consider women's veil as a reaction to western culture and woman who are the promoters of corruption, immorality and sexual deviance.

### **New Salafist Views about Participation of Women in Society**

One of the most controversial issues about the role and duty of women that have not been resolved so far is the verse of Qur'an, *Al-Rejal Qawamoun Ala-Al-Nesa*, which each Islamic group has an interpretation and reading of this verse.

Both old and new Salafists believe that the preference of men over women are in charge

of women by [right of] what God has given over the other (Quran 4: 34).

His right to guardianship is set on the basis of men's social abilities and experiences because intellectually men can better handle social affairs (Sayyad Qutb, 1995, 48, Rida, 1428: 37).

Then men's preference over women or their superiority is due to the fact that they have the ability to do and take responsibility for money. This financial factor plays a key role in differentiating between man and woman in the concept of *qawama*.

From the viewpoint of New Salafists groups, the woman can take careers in the field of medicine, nursing, teaching and administrative affairs within the framework of Islamic law and values and the foundations of Salafi Islam (Saltman, Smith, 2015: 17)

In the vision of new Salafists, women can gain their identity through marriage, while also being able to obtain high status in society.

In the jihadist realm, women were active in social networks especially twitter. Through these networks, they propagated the ideology of terrorism. In fact, social media enables them to explain their beliefs more freely than in the real world.

One of the most important social roles of women in Daesh is the Al-Khansa Brigade which serves as a moral police force enforcing social norms on women living in the ISIS realm. The greatest role and duty of women in the new Salafists discourse is the attempt to create an Islamic Caliphate.

### **Political and Military Roles of Women from Viewpoint of New Salafists**

With the war in Afghanistan, we witnessed a big shift from women's supportive roles to

their direct involvement in military and jihadi operations. In traditional Islamic perspective, the main duty of women is housekeeping and taking care of the children. But after the war in Afghanistan, there was a great change in the ideology of Islamic movements, especially the jihadi Salafists and new Salafists. Abdullah Azzam, one of the main jihadist ideologues, issued a fatwa that a woman is allowed to enter into jihad without the permission of her husband or guardian. Whereby, if the Islamic lands are under attack or occupation, the most important duty of women is to defend the lands of Muslims (Abdullah Azzam, 19).

From the viewpoint of new Salafists, the most important political and military role of women is to propagate the jihadi ideology, glorify the jihadi operation and reject western society and culture.

Through participation in jihad, the women had to attract the support of women of other countries in joining jihadist groups especially ISIS.

According to jihadi Salafists, one of the most important duties of women is an active participation in military and terroristic operations alongside men in order to change ruling regimes and attain the great goal of establishing Islamic Caliphate (Carter Center, 2017: 8).

### **Veil from the viewpoint of the new Salafists**

Like the Wahhabi Salafists, new Salafists believe in veil and body covering for women. According to them, women should remain hidden and veiled and they must cover all of their body and face (Charlie Winter, 2015: 7).

In the discourse of new Salafists, the veil is examined according to political and social conditions of the Muslim World in the first-



twenty century. Events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the hegemony of the United States over the globe and important phenomenon like globalization caused the sharp reaction of modern Islamic movements, especially new Salafists, against the west and the United States.

The veil, in the new Salafists discourse, symbolizes a challenge against the West as a symbol of resistance against western hegemony, As well as a symbol of Muslim women's identity, dignity and freedom from the slavery of authoritarian and tyrannical regimes, and as a symbol of the revival and awakening of the Ummah from its stupor and refusal to subjugate to the corrupt civilization of west (Al-Makdissi, 61-62)

### Analysis

#### **What are differences between old and new Salafists regarding their views on role of women?**

Both old and the new Salafists believe that women have a secondary social role. They share similar theological foundations, but differ in how they interpret and translate the text (Qur'an) on the role and duties of women. There are so many factors that affected the vision of old and new Salafists about the role of women: factors like context (social conditions), type of government and government laws. The way political laws and Sharia were understood, were different between the old and new Salafists discourses. Thus, the description, understanding and resolution of political and social crises in Muslim societies especially in Muslim women have led to a different role for women in two groups. The ideology of new Salafists about women changed a lot, because their context is

different from the context of the old Salafists. From the viewpoint of the old Salafists, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, women didn't have a socially important role. But from the viewpoint of new Salafists, the social role of women was very important because new Salafists had a new idea and project called the Islamic caliphate. Meanwhile, the new Salafists did *ijtihad* on various social and political issues, especially the role of women in Muslim societies.

New Salafists view about the concept of qawmoun is similar to the views of the old Salafists in terms of theology. Both of them agree on men's preference over women and the reason for this preference is men's social abilities, experience and training. (Qutb, 1365, 95, 90, 86) (Rida, 1428: 37), we witnessed changes in the idea and viewpoint of new Salafists about this concept. However, no changes have been seen in the ideology of old Salafists, they relied on the fundamental and rudimentary source of the book (Quran) and Sunna. According to their reading of the text, man has superiority over women in all social aspects including important governmental, judicial, and legal positions (Rida,1428: 37). The superiority of man over woman in all social affairs leads to the exclusion of women from social welfare, the reinforcement of patriarchal discourse and the elimination of women as the second gender. But the ideology of new Salafists has changed extensively concerning the concept of Qawmoun, because their interpretation, understanding and application of theology of this Quranic concept were in accordance with their situation. Thus, they had very different interpretation and reading of Qawmoun concept in that they believe that men's

superiority over women is limited to family and home affairs.

### **An Emphasis on Natural Role of Women as Mothers and Wives**

In the conceptual definition of mother within the old Salafists discourse, the role of Muslim women as mothers is to bring children and provide new generations (Seren de Leede , 2018: 5) The new Salafists also believe that motherhood is a good experience for women to bring children for the exceptional generation. Both of them believe that the purpose of women's existence is the divine duty of motherhood (manifesto, 18, Dabiq issue1: 44). We see a shift between the reading of the old and the new Salafists on the role of women as mother and wife. The old Salafists believe that the critical duty of woman as mother is housekeeping and taking care of children. For them, the emphasis on the role and duty of woman as mother is only to protect family and her main task is absolute obedience to her husband. However, the new Salafists have a different interpretation about women role as mother since their context is very different from old Salafists and events like globalization, modernity, Afghanistan war, hegemony of the United States over the world and a new project called Caliphate forced new Salafists groups to react against west and the United States. In the Islamic state, the role of woman as mother has been changed a lot. Her duty is to take care of children in order to provide the exceptional generation of jihadist fighters (Seran De Leede, 2018:5) and train them based on the doctrines of new Salafists ideology for increasing the population to gain the goal of establishing Caliphate and confront with western culture and hegemony.

Compared to old, the new Salafists had a different ideology about the role of women as wives, because their context was very different. In the context of jihadist groups especially ISIS, the attempt to attain the new project called Caliphate was obligatory for everyone. Also, these movements believe that revolution is the main instrument of change to establish Caliphate. Thus, these factors caused jihadist groups to issue different ijtiḥad about the duty of women as wives. In the context of new Salafists, the main duty of a woman as a wife was to propagate the martyrdom ideology of new Salafists and jihadist groups.(Rory Mccarty, 2006, 4).

### **Political and Social Participation of Women from Perspective of Old and New Salafists**

Compared to new Salafists, old ones had a conservative interpretation of the political and social participation of women. Due to believing in the revival of ideal caliphate of the Salafi Islam, the only way to establish it was to return to the fundamental teachings and practice of Islam. Thus they called heresy any philosophical and rational thought that was opposed to the Scriptures and considered Western culture, civilization and its teachings as examples of infidelity and ignorance. Hence, in the old Salafists discourse, modernity and all its foundations including democracy and modern politics have no place in the Salafi jurisprudence (Al-Albani,1975:11) because from the viewpoint of the scholars of old Salafists, legislating and ruling in Islam is a divine issue and democracy and modern policy contradicts with it. Modern politics, therefore, has no place in Sunni jurisprudence in general and in Salafi jurisprudence in particular. Most importantly

in traditional Sunni jurisprudence not only women, but also men don't have no right to interfere in political affairs. In traditional jurisprudence, only jurists and scholars have the right to interfere in politics and governmental affairs.

In the viewpoint of the new Salafists, women have a supportive role in jihad. (Seran Le Leede, 2018: 8) According to their conservative interpretation of women's military activities, it becomes an obligation of women to join jihad if a minority of Muslims are persecuted.

In the old Salafists discourse, women have a secondary and superlative role in jihad. According to their conservative interpretation, women are not allowed to attend military and war without the supervision of a guardian or accompany.

Contrary to Salafists jihadi groups, new Salafists groups (on the basis of their interpretation and Ijtihad which is the product of the new political and social conditions of their time) believe that when infidels enter the Islamic lands and invade the borders of Islamic lands, jihad will become individual obligatory for all Muslims. Therefore, women can participate in jihad without the presence of a guardian or accompany (Azam, 6).

The jihadi Salafists especially ISIS, through their metaphors and religious language were able to convince women that participation in the formation of the Islamic caliphate is a religious necessity and a divine goal. (Saltman, Smith, 2015: 14) Through their powerful propaganda machine, they promoted the ideology that women can participate not only in military operations, but also in jihad when the enemy invades the Islamic land; because men alone are not

enough to protect the Islamic land. In addition, scholars should issue *fatwas* on the necessity of women's participation in jihad. If the enemy enters Islamic land, jihad will be as individual obligatory for women as it is for men. (Charlie Winter, 2015, 8).

We are witnessing a major shift in the ideology of Jihadi and new Salafists in comparison to old Salafists regarding the military presence of women in the battlefield, because of changes in their situation, time and context. Most importantly, they had a new project called the Establishment of the Islamic Caliphate, which needed an ideal plan of world-wide revolutionary resistance to western neo-imperialism. Thus, the women have an instrumental role in military operations to create the new project called Islamic State (Saltman, Smith 2015: 16). Due to their attire; women attract less security attention than men. As a consequence, they can enter crowded areas easily without raising suspicion and have a better chance to partake in committing suicide (Seran de leede, 2018: 8).

New Salafists like old Salafists believe that modernity and all its manifestations including democracy are in contrary to the teachings of authentic Islam. From the viewpoint of new Salafists, women can have a great role in confronting western culture and its teachings. Thus, in the new Salafists discourse, the role of women changed according to their new political and social needs and ambitions. The presence of women in social and political affairs was due to necessity, because there are roles and duties that women have more capacity and potential to perform than men. Therefore, women's political and social participation is a necessity and an obligation

for achieving the goals and ambitions of the new Salafists.

### **The Central Concept of Old Salafists about Women: Intrinsic Inequality between Men and Women**

Inequality between men and woman is rooted in the traditional theological interpretations of old Salafists. In the old Salafists discourse, the intrinsic inequality is characterized as male domination in the early centuries of Islam. They interpreted the verses of the Qurans according to patriarchal understanding; hence this interpretation became the basis of *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence and dominated all aspects of Muslims life.

The old Salafists considered the superiority of men over women based on the biological nature of men and women, meaning that it is the difference between the creation of women and men that leads to this inequality (Rida, Vol 5: 57; Rida, 1351:12-3; al-Seyed, 1383:112-119).

Since old Salafists didn't have contextual or interpretive readings of Quran, their reading about the role of women reinforced patriarchal discourse and gender inequality. According to their understanding of theology, the women have a secondary social and political role. As a result, the natural difference between women and men leads to inequality of jurisdiction, domination, belief and social affairs between two genders.

In the old Salafists discourse, the woman is looked at from a jurisprudential perspective. The inequality between men and women is rooted in their traditional theological interpretations. Women were considered inferior creatures than men physically and

mentally, this is as a result of the difference in the creation and nature of woman and men.

### **The Central Concept of New Salafists about Women: Division of power between Men and Women**

Concerning rights and duties of woman, new Salafists like the old ones believe in gender discrimination. However, in accordance with their interpretations and reading of theology, practice of Ijtihad as well as new social and political circumstances, they agreed with the division of labor and power between men and women.

The new Salafists groups attempted to promote their ideology against western civilization and hegemony through the political and social participation of women. ISIS succeeded in making a major change in the political and social participation of woman which enabled them to work in society larger than family.

ISIS propagated an apocalyptic ideology to oppose the West and its teachings, an ideology whose message was to emancipate women from the corruption and evil culture of the West. In this ideology, ISIS declared it a liberator. ISIS introduced itself as an alternative in the fight against modernity and allowed women to participate in all social fields to gain their goals and objectives) Saltman, Smith, 2015: 13).

The greatest role of women from ISIS perspective compared to old Salafists were women participation in creating Islamic Caliphate and protecting the Islamic lands through the participation in the military operations.

Compared to old Salafists, ISIS and other new Salafists groups were successful because

they could create changes in the duties and role of woman.

Although new Salafists groups especially ISIS remained loyal to the historical background of the Salaf's, they had a transnational ideology with strong anti-western views. They believe that the revolutionary efforts are the main instrument of change. Through giving fatwa and ijihad about the political and social participation of woman, they made a big change in traditional Islamic jurisprudence regarding the military activities of women. Their new interpretation and Ijtihad led to the presence of women in society and the change in the ideology of Islamic discourse.

Women in the discourse of new Salafists were merely a ladder to achieve their lofty goals of establishing the Islamic State. However, there was no change in the approach of old Salafists concerning women's role and duties because their reading was based on the deep conviction of the wholeness and the perfection of Islam. In their view, any reinterpretation of the Qur'an about women's roles and duties would have ignored divine law.

### **The Veil**

Both old and new Salafists have the same understanding about the veil. They believe that the veil is obligatory and is one of the legitimate and religious responsibilities of Muslim women in order to protect divine law (Charlie Winter, 2015, 7). But their interpretation, understanding, and practical application their understanding of the veil is very different. Old Salafists don't have contextual interpretation of the Qur'an about hijab; they have a conservative approach to

politics, society and various issues including the role of women.

According to them, the hijab has a practical reason. In old Salafists discourse, Hijab is not a matter of belief nor it is a matter of God, but it is about jurisprudence. They examined hijab from a moral dimension. The purpose of hijab in the viewpoint of old Salafists is to protect women against the gaze of men. It is mostly an ethical issue rather than a political one. Thus, women have the duty to protect the authentic teachings of Islam and Sunnis. Old Salafists considered hijab as a symbol of challenge of immorality, corruption and sexual deviation of Western culture (Abdel Aziz ben Baz, 1928: 21-22). They challenged the culture of western sexual liberalism and commerce through propagating Muslim woman hijab as one of the most important Islamic critical foundations.

However, in the context of new Salafists, veil is a matter of belief (Alaghideh) and faith rather than jurisprudence. According to them, the veil of woman is related to monotheism (Faez, 1369:145-146). It represents a fundamental difference between Islam and infidel (Kufr) and is considered as one of the most important doctrines of new Salafists (Saltman, Smith, 2015: 14).

Since allegiance with the caliphate in the new Salafists discourse is individually obligatory for both men and women (Christopher Anzalone, 2017: 3), thus the role and duties of women are placed in the realm of faith and belief. The new Salafists have a strict approach to the West and Western civilization which affected their reading and interpretation of the role and duties of women. The Muslim woman's veil is considered as one of the most important

symbols of new Salafists and fundamentalist identity against the west. The veil in their viewpoint is a social, political, religious and individual issue.

New Salafists groups defined women's veil as a symbol of her dignity and freedom from the slavery of the tyrannical regimes. While women in Syria, Iraq Islamic state do not have right to choose their own dress or work out of house, since she is subject to ISIS laws and values. The Muslim woman is captive of the system of jurisprudence that is the product of their interpretation and understanding of the Quran and Sunna.

### **Conclusion**

Old and new Salafists interpretations and practices of theology about women are different. Both of them believe that woman has a secondary social role. There were many factors that affected the vision of old and new Salafists about the role of women including: the presence of different context, globalization, hegemony of western culture, the ideal plan of a world-wide revolutionary resistance to western neo-imperialism, the soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the war of Palestinian with Israel and most importantly the creation of new project so-called Islamic state. Their different application of divine law as well as different description, interpretation and reading of theology led the two group assigns different roles and duties to women.

The new Salafists ideology concerning the role of women has changed. Compared to old Salafists, they had a different interpretation and understanding of Quran verse "Qawamoun" due to having different social conditions. They presented new readings on

guardianship and only agreed with male guardianship at home affairs.

Both old and new Salafists have the same theology about women's veil. They believe that the veil is obligatory and is one of the legitimate and religious responsibilities of Muslim women in order to protect divine law. But their interpretation, understanding, and practical application of theology about veil is very different. The old Salafists didn't have contextual interpretation of the Quran. In their viewpoint, the hijab has a practical reason. It is a matter of jurisprudence and does not have any relation to belief and faith. However, in the context of new Salafists, hijab or veil is a matter of belief (Alaghideh) and faith rather than jurisprudence. It is one of the central foundations of their ideology. Because of their aggressive approach to the West and its manifestations, the Muslim woman's veil is regarded as one of the most important symbols of the new Salafists and fundamentalist's identity against the west. The veil in their viewpoint is a social, political, religious and individual issue.

The old Salafists have a conservative interpretation of the political and military participation of women than the new Salafists. In traditional Sunni and Salafi jurisprudence, modernity and its manifestations conflict with Islam and its teachings. Thus, democracy and modern politics have no place in the Islamic state and caliphate. According to the classical Sunni jurisprudence, not only women but also men do not have the right to interfere in political affairs. Only a group of scholars and jurists have the right to interfere in government affairs.

In the Old Salafists viewpoint, women have a supportive role in jihad. According to their conservative interpretation of theology about women military activities, when a minority of Muslims are persecuted jihad becomes a Fard Kifaya (optional obligation). They said women are not allowed to participate in combat operations, because their military participation requires the permission of husband or father. Thus, women have a supportive role. But new Salafists and Jihadi groups believe that jihad is a Fardayn (individual obligation) when infidels enter the Islamic lands and invade the borders of Islamic lands. In such situation, women don't need the permission of husband, debtor or father. The understanding of new Salafists and jihadist groups concerning the political and social participation of women is based on their new interpretation of theology and new social and political circumstances and ambitions.

The greatest social role of women from the perspective of ISIS compared to the old Salafists is participation in creating Islamic Caliphate and protecting the Islamic land through participating in the military operations.

We are witnessing a major shift in the ideology of Jihadist and new Salafists in comparison to old Salafists regarding the military participation of women, because their situation, time and context have changed a lot. Most importantly, they had a new project called the Establishment of the Islamic

Caliphate, which needed an ideal plan of world-wide revolutionary resistance to western neo-imperialism. Thus, women have an instrumental role in military operations to create the new project called Islamic State. The ideologues of new Salafists and jihadist groups proposed a new plan about the role of women. Like old Salafists, they considered democracy and modernity as a symbol of ignorance and infidelity. Contradiction with democracy and modernity is one of the fundamental principles of new Salafists. They believe that women play a key role in countering western culture and teachings. In the context of new Salafists, the military and social participation of women is a necessity because sometimes they have more ability than men to do their role and duties.

Although new Salafists and Jihadi Salafists remained loyal to Salaf's historical background, they created a transnational ideology with strong anti-western views. They believe that the revolutionary efforts are the only way to come to power and overthrow the ignorant and infidel regimes. Therefore, through giving fatwa and Ijtihad about the political and social participation of woman, they made a big change in traditional Islamic jurisprudence regarding the military activities of women. Their new interpretation and ijihad led to the presence of women in society and the change in the ideology of Islamic discourse.

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## نقش سیاسی و اجتماعی زنان از دیدگاه نوسلفی‌ها و مقایسه دیدگاه نوسلفی‌ها درباره زنان با سلفی‌های قدیم

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**چکیده:** تقریباً همه جنبش‌های کلاسیک اسلامی معتقدند که وظیفه اصلی زنان مادر بودن و خانه‌داری است. با اینحال، از دیدگاه گروه‌های نوسلفی، حقوق و وظایف زنان تغییر کرده است. مطالعه نقش سیاسی و اجتماعی زنان از دیدگاه نوسلفی‌ها و مقایسه آن با نظرات سلفی‌های قدیمی تاکنون بررسی نشده است. این مقاله از طریق بررسی منابع اولیه مانند آثار اپیدئولوگ‌های سلفی قدیم و جدید، همچنین مجلات، مانیفست، توییت‌ها، وبگاه‌ها و سایر منابع مربوط به این تحقیق، تفاوت بین دیدگاه‌های سلفی‌های جدید و قدیم در مورد نقش و وظایف زنان را مورد بررسی قرار می‌دهد. براساس تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی، این مقاله به این نتیجه می‌رسد که هر دو گروه سلفی قدیم و جدید از منابع کلامی و الهیاتی مشترکی در زمینه نقش و وظایف زنان برخوردار بوده‌اند، ولی سلفی‌های قدیم از کتاب (قرآن) و سنت به صورت ظاهری و نه تفسیر و خوانش استفاده کرده‌اند، در گفتمان نوسلفی‌ها، زنان حق شرکت در همه فعالیت‌های اجتماعی و نظامی را دارند. بنابراین، تحول بزرگ ایجاد شده در زمینه فعالیت اجتماعی و سیاسی زنان از دیدگاه نوسلفی‌ها مبتنی بر شرایط اجتماعی و سیاسی جدید، بلندپروازی‌های آنها و همچنین درک و تفسیر متفاوت آنها از کلام و الهیات در مورد نقش و وظیفه زنان است.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** نوسلفی‌ها، سلفی‌های قدیم، تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی، زنان، نقش اجتماعی-سیاسی، داعش.



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