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*Karaganda University «Bolashak» (E-mail: nazgulm2001@mail.ru)***Discourses of hijab in post-Soviet Kazakhstan: historical and modern aspects**

My paper is focused on some comparative analysis of Western and Islamic feminist interpretations of hijab and their application to post-Soviet discourse on the hijab in present-days Kazakhstan. During recent years there are diverse forms of hijab wearing in the country from totally covering of a female body to some open «Arab style» of the hijab. In the same time, after extremist attacks in the Western and Southern Kazakhstan, the situation with the hijab is changed to the idea of traditional («Kazakh») Islam when the hijab is not preferred with the power discourse. My main research questions for my paper are following: What interpretations about hijab in the Western and Islamic narratives are applied to the Kazakhstan's case? How the hijab discourse is constructed in post-Soviet Kazakhstan? What is the meaning of hijab after «atheism era» in the Central Asian country where majority is Muslims? What attitudes are between secular and religious discourses according to the hijab in Kazakhstan now? What hijab means for secular majority and young Muslims? What young Muslim men and women speak about hijab? My research is based on interviews of two males and two females who identify themselves as Muslims.

Key word: hijab, Islam, colonialism, postcolonialism, Islamic feminism, secularism, traditional Islam, discourse, narrative, Kazakhstan.

The large public discussions about hijab have been starting in Kazakhstan for recent two-three years. Authorities declare their position to the hijab from the point of view of traditional Islam that the hijab is not Kazakh custom and the hijab was not a part of Kazakh culture in the past. What young Muslims in Kazakhstan think and interpret hijab? Is the hijab a part of the Arabic culture only in the present world? What is the meaning of the hijab for today young Muslims in Kazakhstan? Why do young women start to cover their heads and bodies? What is the hijab in Islamic culture itself and what interpretations represent Eastern and Western discourses about hijab?

Western and Islamic feminist interpretations of the hijab

In the first part of my paper I would like to consider the different academic interpretations about hijab and veiling of some female scholars, mostly Islamic feminists in the North America, who gave many important and significant presentations about hijab with historical, anthropological and political perspectives. My paper is based on the articles and books of Leila Ahmed [1, 2], Saba Mahmood [3], Lila Abu-Lughod [4], Mohja Kahf [5], Bahar Davary [6], Kendra Sarna [7]. With analyzing and comparing of their works I tried to interpret the current debate about hijab in Kazakhstan. First of all, I realized that the story of the hijab has a long history, different senses and meanings and vary cultural, social and political aspects. So the hijab represents diversity and cannot be explained generally that it is a custom of Arab countries only. Secondly and very importantly, these researches and academic publications demonstrates the postcolonial discourses about hijab that could be applied to the post-Soviet reality also characterized with rising of religiosity with building and reconstructing of society, identity and ethnicity in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

The Western understanding of hijab is brilliantly presented in the classical reader of Leila Ahmed «Women and Gender in Islam». She showed the colonial Western discourse on the hijab as a symbol of women's oppression and unfreedom when Egypt was under British ruling with the ideal of Victorian Christianity [1]. The same opinion considered the hijab as a symbol of «Muslim backwardness» by the British I have read in the Mahmood's book [3]. Muslim countries under Western colonialism were influenced by secular policy and Westernization processes when unveiling was considered as the female liberation. Simultaneously Ahmed paid attention to the fact that unveiling reforms were for upper and middle classes in urban areas of Egypt, not for all [1]. When elites were secularized and unveiled in the middle of the 20th century, the society maintained religiosity that helped to Islamists to use it later to Islamize the Egyptian society for the 1970–90s.

According to the Central Asian countries and Kazakhstan in particular, it could be told that Kazakhstan had similar processes under Tsarist and Soviet rulings. Tsarist Russia also tried to convert Kazakhs into Christianity [8]. Then the Soviet authorities gave freedom for Muslim women in Central Asia when unveiled all of them. Socialistic and atheistic politics was successful in the process of eradication of veiling practice in

the Central Asian region. Whereas Soviet atheism excluded religion out of everyday life, the position about veiling as symbol of women's oppression made Soviet regime closer to Western colonial politics. Soviet propaganda demonstrated its democracy to women in Central Asia in many movies and posters about unveiling of Muslim women in the region.

The modern interpretations of women's rights in Afghanistan and Iraq within the first lady Laura Bush radio speech are also considered as well Leila Ahmed as Lila Abu-Lughod. Their analysis of Laura Bush's message points political aspect [2] and ignorance of cultural relativism by the West [4] due to the hijab.

Present authorities in Kazakhstan demonstrate some similar politics of ignorance for the hijab's phenomenon understanding it as a part of another culture, not Kazakh but mostly Arabic one. This point of view is close to Egyptian intellectuals who thought that veiling was not a divine injunction. It was a regional custom of Arab women in the early times of Islam which later was mistakenly accepted as a religious edict [3].

The other interpretations of hijabs include some historical, cultural, gender and social aspects of the hijab and veiling. Mohja Kahf viewed the hijab historically and claimed that veiling predated Islam. Many ancient communities in Greece, Near East, Rome and other societies had practice of veiling. She also proposed that the hijab was probably established by males to control female bodies [5]. The most important interpretations about hijab are considered it in the terms of cultural diversity when the hijab's practice is spread throughout various Islamic countries and societies and presented not only as the hijab but also as the baltu, khimar, niqab, jilbab, burqa [9].

Abu-Lughod in her article showed cultural relativism of imagination and practice the hijab in the different Islamic societies. Mahmood also demonstrates the hijab diversity in her fieldwork in Egypt through socioeconomic background of women studied at the Cairo Mosques. She excellent presented in her book how Mosques and veiling elicit a class, education level, language and political features of women in the city. In another words, the hijab and covering could present as well cultural as socioeconomic and political diversity of veiling not only inside one culture but also social differentiation within one city and even neighborhood [3].

Also Mahmood, Abu-Lughod and Kahf affirm such significant of the hijab as subjectivity which could reveal personal morality of a woman included modesty, divinity, piety, dignity, virtue, decency. In addition, the hijab signifies the distinction of social life of men and women where public is for men mostly and private is for women preferably [4, 5].

In my mind, the publications of contemporary Islamic female scholars discover and discuss the most considerable point about veiling and unveiling periods in Muslim countries during the 20th century when they were under the Western influence of ruling [2, 5]. Turkey in the 1920s, Egypt in the 1950s, Iran in the 1978s, Syria and Tunisia in the 1980s and other Muslim countries experienced policy of unveiling, secularization and Westernization in their modern histories. As a result, according to Kahf, «the hijab enjoys a new plurality» [5; 36]. That means that not all women in Muslim countries are veiled, the hijab would present vary aspects of different periods of its own history and history of some Muslim societies.

Rising of political Islam has been affecting on the hijab survival in Muslim and Western societies from the 1990s to the present [2]. From this perspective the hijab would be considered as the construction of Islamic identity in present Muslim countries and among Muslim minorities in the West. It could be possible to specify two sides of hijab politics today. Firstly, it was the colonial interpretation of the hijab as a symbol of women's oppression referred to politics of unveiling before the 1990s. Secondly, it is the Islamist understating of the hijab as an important part of Muslim identity, heritage and civilization which is denotative the veil resurgence after the 1990s [2, 3].

According to Ahmed, one of the important issues of political Islam's successfulness is the changing of policy to women. Islamist organizations involve actively women to their parties and associations. It could be told that political Islam changes its gender policy and probably adjusts to the Western values and worldview. Contemporary political Islam increased globally would present us some distinctions and, in the same time, interconnections with the West where the hijab and gender policy are important.

Summing up this part, I would like to conclude that the hijab is a religious, sociocultural and political phenomenon capable to change, transform, disappear and emerge again. It is an elastic component of modern Islam. Besides cultural and ethnic parts presently, the hijab became a tool of political and global Islam which could dawn locally everywhere (Ahmed, 2011). From this point of view, is it possible to interpret the hijab in present-days Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries as a display of global Islam? Maybe, yes.

Post-Soviet interpretations about hijab in Kazakhstan: Views atop and the ground

After Soviet collapse Kazakhstan experiences the fast growth of Islamic institutions. It could be told that specific religious infrastructure has been building in the country with many Mosques, Islamic café, shops, financial institutes, media and Halal productions. Recently public debates are occurred around hijab in Kazakhstan. It could be told that officials and secular majority try to reduce the hijab's performativity in the public space after encounters with extremist activities over the country and spreading of veiled women in the streets. While Islamic infrastructure (Mosques, shops, café) is static, extremists and covering women are alive, versatile and dynamic. Extremist are dangerous and veiled women became a part of everyday life. Probably, these two parts of Islamic gender representations tied with each other and called some discomfort perceptions in the public opinion. As a result, presently there is a great pressure over women in hijabs in Kazakhstan as well on the governmental as on the public levels. The hijab is criticized from the position of traditional Islam in Kazakhstan; the hijab was not a part of the Kazakh culture, it is a sign of the exterior, another, Arabic culture.

What do Muslims in Kazakhstan think and tell about hijab themselves? How Muslims and «secular environment» interpret the hijab? Is it possible to reconcile these two polar attitudes to the hijab?

I interviewed two young women and two young men who identify themselves as Muslims about how they understand the hijab and what are their attitude to veiling of women. All interviewees are confidential and under pseudonyms. These interviews were conducted in the different periods of 2011–2012:

Alia, 22 years old: An external hijab is an attire of Muslim woman covering all her body except her face and lower parts of a hand (palm and its back). It is unacceptable to show female beauty in public for Muslim woman except males whom she cannot get married because of kinship relations. It is necessary to cover all parts of a body except a face and lower parts of hands.

It is important to say that Alia often made references to the Quran (Surah 7 and 24), the hadith of as-Suyuti (the commentary of the 31st Ayah of the Surah 24), and commentaries of the Islamic scholars (ulama) as Ibn Abbas and Ibn Mas'ud about the hijab and veiling.

Dinara, 21 years old: My father first interested with Islam and persuaded me to wear the hijab. But I have the great interest to Islam too. I study a lot about Islam and the hijab is very important for Muslim women. Some Surah in the Quran and many ulama tell about necessity of the hijab for Muslim women.

The case with Dinara presents the different and complex aspects of social, family and personal relations between Islam and the secular majority in Kazakhstan. After wearing the hijab she impacted a great pressure in the university where she studied. Dinara was growing in the city and had many 'secular' friends who did not accept her new dress and hijab as well as some her classmates. Later she encountered with permanent rejections while seeking a job because of her hijab. At last she had to take the hijab off to find the job. When I met her later in the street wearing 'secular' dress, she told me that anyway she is a Muslim and she would wear hijab again when it would be possible for her. Her avatar in one social network represents a small girl in the pink hijab.

Nurlan, 21 years old: When you follow Islam, you should do it perfectly. Most people think that the hijab is old fashioned and out-of-dated. The mode and time are not significant at all here. Allah *orders* in the Holy Quran about wearing of the hijab. In the other words, it is necessary to cover female body from dirty people eyes. Wearing of the hijab is obligatory. Islamic and non-Islamic scholars confirmed the detriment if a woman does not wear the hijab.

It could be told that this male discourse represents some confident and ultimate tone. As above female responses Nurlan's opinion about hijab also based on the Holy Islamic texts and commentaries of the ulama. In the same time, his message would be characterized with stronger and more persistence features. He considers the hijab from positive and contrary positions for confirming his mind about mandatory of the hijab that strengthen his assertion. It could be told that this masculine discourse is more sustainable and firm in comparing of two previous females.

Abdullah, 32 years old: There is a Surah about veiling of a head and a body. Christians had the same but they forgot about it. Woman is beautiful. The hijab covers forehead, neck and other important parts of the body. Our society is prejudiced to the hijab. The hijab is very important for me.

The Abdullah's case is also interesting. He is a Korean converted into Islam three years ago. He characterized his previous life as *jahiliyyah* (non-Islamic practice) and regretted about it. He has chosen the pseudonym for his interview himself and asked to name him as Abdullah. It is clear too that he interprets the hijab on the Quran's Surah like the other interviewees. In addition, it is very important to note that his state-

ments about hijab is also stemmed on the binary opposition of Islamic (presence, using) and Christian (absence, forgetting) practices of veiling. It could be told that both male interpretations demonstrate more stable and steady masculine discourses according to the hijab. These gender relations support the Irving Goffman's inference that men do dominance and women do difference [10].

Summing all messages, it could be told that both female and male discourses about hijab based on the Islamic texts and commentaries of the Islamic scholars. All of them quoted and cited to the Quran towards the obligation of the hijab. Though many contemporary researches contest this position; there are seven words 'hijab' in the Quran but no mention about its obligation for all Muslim women. The hijab was related to the wives of the Prophet whose status was distinctive in early Islamic communities and all men arrived to the Prophet were special recommended about communication with them. The wives of the Prophet and Mary, mother of Jesus, were veiled according to the Quran [3, 6]. Also Mahmood mentioned about the veil (hijab) as a custom rather than a religious duty [3; 50–52].

The practice of the hijab in today Kazakhstan presents encounter of two different positions as secular and religious ones. The secular society often interprets the hijab as a way to get marriage for young women. I heard many stories about young Muslim women used the hijab in their personal purposes and manipulated with it. Most people do not trust to young Muslim women and assume that they use the hijab in their pragmatic targets. I did not see such intentions when I interviewed young Muslim women. On the contrary, I watched some experience of their religious subjectivity, some aspiration to follow to Islamic precepts, seeking of own morality in Islam, filling of own identity with some Islamic norms and rules which are eternal. It could be told that it is so close to «politics of piety» of Saba Mahmood. According to marriage, young Muslim women in Kazakhstan interpret family also under the religious values. They intend to have the Muslim family which is ideal and close to the God.

In addition, it is necessary to bear in our mind that «men factor» is also considered in the hijab's practice in present-days Kazakhstan. The male dominance and insistence could inflict to wear of the hijab by women.

From today perspective it could be told that the hijab is a new and alien tradition for the Kazakh culture and society (public and official view). From the other side (opinions of Muslims themselves), the hijab is some old and virtuous tradition emerged under influence of global Islam when the «Arabic style» became spreading among young Muslim women in Kazakhstan and worldwide. Is it possible to peace these opposite minds? What would be changed first? Could the secular majority soften its secular policy and accept some reconstructed Islamic practices? Or maybe Muslim women would take the hijab off?

Conclusion

The present period in Kazakhstan could be interpreted as some initiated stage of study in Islam. The phenomenon of the hijab could be also considered as a part of this process of studying. Young Muslims in Kazakhstan understand the hijab as a religious duty but not as a custom. The hijab's obligatory explained with the Quran, the hadiths, and ulama. This case demonstrates clearly some amalgamation of religion and different social practices. It would be interpreted that the religion embraces the custom while modern academic sources differentiate these two institutions [3, 6]. Such combination of the religious duty and the custom supports the above argument about opening stage of Islam's inquiry in present Muslim communities of Kazakhstan. It would be also told that Islam and the hijab perform as the knowledge and the part of religious identity of young Muslims in the country.

In the same time, it is important to note that the hijab does not belong to one cultural tradition as Kazakhstan's authorities declare during last years. The meaning of the hijab is broader and deeper presently. The hijab has many aspects, features and tissues. The hijab is not only some modern political construct of Islamic identity but also a symbol of the religious subjectivity based on modesty, piety, and decency of a woman. Reinterpreting the thoughts of Mahmood, Abu-Lughod and Kahf, the hijab could be defined as a personal choice of the woman besides some outside political and cultural manifestations. The young Muslim women in Kazakhstan confirm such statements.

Resuming the paper, I would suppose that the present debates around hijab in Kazakhstan elicit some collusions as well of the secular majority referred the hijab to another cultural tradition as of the young Muslims who sanctify the custom. In addition, it could be told that the hijab performs some diversity of the current social processes which became sophisticated and multivocal in present-days Kazakhstan.

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Н.МЫҢҒЫШ

Посткеңестік Қазақстандағы хиджаб дискурстары: тарихи және қазіргі аспектілері

Мақала өзімен хиджабтың батыстық зерттеулер мен ислам феминисттерінің жұмыстарынан орын тапқан компаративтік талдауды және мұндай түсіндірулердің қазіргі Қазақстандағы хиджабтың посткеңестік дискурсына қалайша қолданылуын айқындайды. Соңғы жылдары Қазақстанда әйел денесін тұтастай жауып тұрудан ашық «араб стиліне» дейінгі хиджабты киюдің алуан түрлілігі байқалады. Сонымен қатар Батыс және Оңтүстік Қазақстанда орын алған экстремистік шабуылдардан кейін хиджаб билік дискурсы үшін дәстүрлі ислам идеясымен байланыстырылмайтын болған. Бұл мақаланың негізгі зерттеу сұрақтары келесі: хиджабтың батыстық және исламдық нарративтеріндегі қандай түсіндірулер Қазақстанға қолданыла алады? Хиджаб дискурсы посткеңестік Қазақстанда қалай құрылымдалады? Көпшілігі мұсылман аталатын орта азиялық еліндегі хиджабтың «атеизм дәуірінен» кейінгі мағынасы қандай? Қазіргі уақытта Қазақстандағы хиджабқа қатысты секулярлы және діни дискурстардың арасында қандай қатынас бар? Секулярлы көпшілік үшін және жас мұсылмандар үшін хиджаб нені білдіре алады? Хиджаб туралы жас мұсылмандар, әйелдер мен ер кісілер не деуде? Бұл зерттеу өзін мұсылманбыз деп анықтайтын екі ер кісі мен екі әйелдің сұхбаттарына негізделген.

Н.А.Мингишева

Дискурсы хиджаба в постсоветском Казахстане: исторические и современные аспекты

В статье представлен компаративный анализ интерпретаций хиджаба в западных исследованиях и работах исламских феминисток и того, каким образом данные интерпретации приложимы к постсоветскому дискурсу хиджаба в современном Казахстане. Отмечено, что в последние годы в Казахстане наблюдается разнообразие в ношении хиджаба — от полного покрытия женского тела до открытого «арабского стиля». Одновременно доказано, что после экстремистских атак в Западном и Южном Казахстане хиджаб перестает ассоциироваться с идеей традиционного ислама для властного дискурса. Определены основные исследовательские вопросы в данной работе: Какие интерпретации хиджаба в западном и исламском нарративе приложимы к Казахстану? Как дискурс хиджаба конструируется в постсоветском Казахстане? Каково значение хиджаба после «эры атеизма» в центральноазиатской стране с мусульманским большинством? Каковы отношения между секулярным и религиозным дискурсами в отношении хиджаба в Казахстане в настоящее время? Что может означать хиджаб для секулярного большинства и для молодых мусульман? Что говорят молодые мусульмане, женщины и мужчины о хиджабе? Данное исследование основано на интервью двух мужчин и двух женщин, идентифицирующих себя мусульманами.

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Алаш арыстары идеясы — ЕСЕП партиясын құру

Мақалада Алаш ұранды ұлт қайраткерлерінің тәуелсіздік мұратында атқарған саяси және рухани еңбектерінің тарихи сабақтастық тұрғысынан тарихи санада жаңарып жаңғыруының жолдары ХХ ғасырдың 40-жылдары кеңестік кезеңде Қарағанды қаласында құрылған ЕСЕП — Елін сүйген ерлер партиясы негізінде қарастырылды. ЕСЕП өз кезегінде қалыптасу, даму, шарықтау кезеңдерін өткеріп, тарихи сабақтастық арқылы Алаш ұлт зиялыларының идеясынан туындаған Қарағандыда «Елін сүйген ерлер партиясы», Батыс Қазақстанда «Қазақ халқын қорғаушылар одағы», Мәскеудегі «Жас тұлпар», Керекудегі «Жас ұлан», Хасен Қожа-Ахмет құрмақ болған «Жас қазақ» секілді ұйымдармен жаңғырып және соңғы Желтоқсан көтерілісімен — Тәуелсіздікке қол жеткізу екендігі дәлелденді.

Кілт сөздер: Алаш партиясы, Алашорда, Алаш азаматы, Алаш идеясы, Елін сүйген ерлер партиясы, алаштану, Мәңгілік ел.

Кез келген өркениетті ел өз тарихының тамырын тереңнен іздестіреді. Тарихының бастауын ежелгі дәуірлерден тартқан мемлекет мызғымас саяси-идеологиялық сана қалыптастыра алатындықтан, онда ұлттық құндылықтар негізінде қоғамдық келісім және демократиялық өрлеу, нарық пен ғылым байланыстары дамиды. Сондықтанда ұлттың келешегі мен болашағы үшін өткенге бет бұру, одан сабақ алудың маңыздылығы ешқашан төмендеген емес.

Қазақстан Республикасы тәуелсіздігін жариялағаннан кейін қазақ халқының бұрын «ақтаңдақ» болып келген тарихы қайта жазылып, сан алуан мәселелер заман талабына сай өзінің ғылыми бағасын беру үрдісі жүргізіліп жатыр. Әсіресе Қазақстанның ортағасырлық, жаңа және қазіргі заман тарихында орын алған көптеген мәселелер қайтадан қарастырылып, іргелі еңбектердің зерттеу нысанына алынды.

Қазақстан егемендігін алғанына, ел тәуелсіз болғанына 23 жыл толды. Осыдан жиырма үш жыл бұрын туған балалар — апталдай бозбала мен бойжеткен. Қазақстан Республикасының азаматтары мен азаматшалары «тәуелсіздік» сөзінің парқына үңіліп, таным-түйсігімен сезіне алып жүр ме? «Тәуелсіздікке біз қалай жеттік, оған жету жолында нендей әрекеттер, іс-қимылдар және кімдер құрбан болды?» деген өзекті сұрақ туындайды. Сондықтанда Қазақстан Республикасында қазіргі таңдағы ең өзекті мәселе бақытымыз баянды, тәуелсіздігіміз ғұмырлы болуына орай, тарихтан