
ISLAMIC FEMINISM

MODERN LIFE MEETS CONSERVATIVE RELIGION

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Abstract

Feminism is a compilation of social and political movements and ideologies with the common goal of defining and maintaining gender equality politically, economically, personally and socially. Actually, feminism is also gaining popularity in the Muslim World. The traditional patriarchal roles of women have been challenged. This article analyses the meaning of feminism and the role of women in the Islamic tradition. In the twentieth century, women's movements began to emerge, which is the beginning of the feminism trend in Islam, which has two main currents: Muslim feminism and Islamic feminism. Muslim feminism cares for women's equal access to education, health care and civil rights. Islamic feminism, on the other hand, seeks to see women in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an. Modern women increasingly take up professional work, engage in politics, and join the military to fight for independence. This study states that the Qur'an and Shari'a provide Muslim women with rights that determine their position in society. Women's rights enable women to undertake various activities. At the same time, in many Muslim countries, the provisions of the Qur'an have not been fully implemented, which contributes to the popularization of feminism.

Keywords: women, feminism, Islam, ideology, religion

1. Introduction

The woman has occupied an important place in the history of the world since ancient times. They influenced rulers, politics, and often had a decisive role in shaping religion. A woman commonly considered a delicate and fragile person, very often she was also perceived as a being incapable of understanding many important matters, nevertheless she has always fascinated men. On the one hand, she is similar, but at the same time completely different, which is why she is often treated as a saint and goddess, as well as a harlot and a servant. The image of a woman in a given society is shaped primarily by culture and moral requirements stemming from religion. Its position and status in a specific group depended on many factors: historical era, geographical area, dominant philosophy and religion [1]. For this reason, the place of women in the world was determined by social conditions, as well as civilizational changes.

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Monotheistic religions and related philosophical trends, as well as the cultures that grew out of them, accustomed humanity to the patriarchal structure of the organization of social life. The belief in the superiority of a man over a woman results from the oldest divisions of duties, already present in prehistoric times. To put it simply, the man was responsible for maintaining the house, so it was on his shoulders to hunt and provide food for the family, while the woman had to maintain the home. It was she who ensured law and order in the immediate surroundings. Such a social structure can still be observed today among selected tribal communities living in Africa or Asia [1]. Thus, the dominance of the male factor in many regions of the world is very clear. In addition, it is emphasized by reserving certain, specific activities only for men, both in the material and spiritual dimension. The answer to the dominance of men in the world was the rise of the feminist movement.

Feminism combines a range of social and political movements and ideologies with the common goal of defining and maintaining gender equality politically, economically, personally and socially. And although the beginnings of feminist thought date back to 1791, when *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman* by Olympe de Gouges and *The Vindications: The Rights of Men and The Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft and the French Revolution in years 1798-1799, his postulates became very topical in the 21st century [2]. Feminism believes that societies favor men and their way of seeing the world, while women are treated unfairly. Successive waves of feminism were shaped on this foundation. The first was the *old wave* existing in the years 1840-1920, it was aimed at granting voting rights to women [2]. Another *second wave feminism* developed in the 1960s and 1970s [3]. Women then demanded equality in the labour market, raised issues of women's sexuality and the right to abortion. The consequence of these postulates was the emergence of *third wave feminism* in the 1980s [4]. The activists of the movement announced that the goals of feminism had not been achieved and the movement should become radicalized. It also highlighted issues previously overlooked, including ethnicity, race, economic and religious divisions, child sexual abuse and sexually transmitted diseases. The third wave feminism was inspired by contemporary philosophy, social theory, queer theory and gender studies [5].

Currently, we can observe the development of *fourth wave feminism*, which began in 2012. Fourth wave is a renewal of interest in the philosophy of feminism, to which social media has significantly contributed. Feminism researcher Kira Cochrane has described current feminism as defined by technology [6], as it uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube to oppose misogyny and advance gender equality. A special role in the fourth wave was played by campaigns referred to as the hashtag feminism, especially #MeToo, #YesAllWomen, #bringbackourgirls, #NotYourAsianSidekick, #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen [7].

Undoubtedly, feminist philosophy is part of the everyday religious life of societies at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. There is also no doubt that this European thought has penetrated the conservative Islamic societies living in

European countries, as well as in other parts of the globe where Islam is the fundamental religious system.

This article is an analysis of the role of contemporary Muslim women living in Europe and the Middle East who were influenced by feminist philosophy. Islam is a religion in which the patriarchal structure of society is dominant. The main aim of the work is to answer the questions: does Muslim feminism exist? Is there a place in the conservative tradition of Islam for modern women who want to follow the latest trends in the non-Muslim world? And can these fashions be reconciled with the religiousness that shapes the social life of its followers?

2. Feminism in terms of Islam

The social law resulting from the Qur'an, guaranteeing women a certain status is not subject to discussion. The Qur'an, like any sacred text, is not subject to human interference as to its content. On the other hand, the interpretation of this text and the application of the rights arising from it, especially when they concern women, are a completely different matter. Islamic theology often emphasizes regulations regarding the status of women, pointing to the numerous legal guarantees given to women with the advent of Islam. However, the question arises whether the laws given in the 7th century are still respected and applied?

Some Muslim women are aware of their subordinate, lower status in relation to men, both in the family and in society. This awareness makes women strive to change this state. Women face unequal treatment due to the dominance of patriarchal systems in many parts of the world, both Christian and Muslim. The difference, however, is that women from the Latin culture did not have to deal with the religious issue, while for Muslim women religion is a key issue. At this point, a second important question arises: is there room for feminism in such an orthodox religion as Islam? The answer is simple - yes, because in every system where oppression or any other form of discrimination occurs, a resistance movement arises and a clear opposition to a situation that is harmful to a specific group, in this case women.

Feminism is a kind of state of awareness and activity of women striving to overcome their marginalization and discrimination in social life. These aspirations are supported by the belief that it is necessary and, above all, possible to change the current division of roles based on gender in a given society [8].

However, when addressing the issue of feminism in terms of Islam, one should remember about the difficulties associated with terminology. The term feminism is closely related to the Euro-American world, very often perceived by Islam as hostile, morally corrupt, often identified with the time of colonization and the forcible imposition of culturally and religiously alien customs. In addition, it should also be emphasized that Muslim women's empowerment activists do not call themselves feminists. Probably for this reason, the adjective feminist or gender activism is more often used to describe activities aimed at counteracting discrimination against women [9]. In the Muslim tradition,

feminism has many faces, among which three main currents stand out. An atheist who sees religion as the cause and reason for women's oppression, a secularist who is indifferent to religion, and a religious one. There are two types of religious feminism: Muslim and Islamic.

Muslim feminism is a movement with a longer history. It was created at the end of the 19th century in Muslim countries. This kind of feminism admittedly accepted religion as an element of human existence, but it remained and still remains a secular ideology, drawing on political ideas. The beginnings of Muslim feminism are identified with Egypt, as this country is considered the cradle of the emancipation of Muslim women. The activity of the organization was focused on working at the grassroots, and therefore primarily on improving the ordinary, everyday situation of women. The activists wanted women's access to education, health care, granting voting rights, and thus, also access to functioning in the public sphere, up to the possibility of practicing professions, until recently reserved only for men [10]. Interestingly, such attitudes of feminist movements have often been and still are criticized by moderate Muslim researchers, due to the perception of a kind of threats lurking for a Muslim woman. Similarly to the situation of women in Europe who, as a result of broadly understood emancipation, were forced to work full-time while remaining a wife and mother.

Islamic feminism, inspired by European women's movements, emerged at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, initiated by Muslim female intellectuals working at universities. In this group, the circle of the Arabic language, the term *niswiyya* has also developed, describing the phenomenon of feminism, because it means both feminist and feminine. Feminism in the Islamic tradition is understood as the imposition of various types of restrictions on women due to their gender [11]. The international nature of this women's activity was not without significance. He pointed to two important elements at the base of which is religion, i.e. identification and a sense of community. An important feature of Islamic feminism is emphasizing that the proclaimed postulates regarding gender equality are derived from the religious principles of Islam. The main assumption of Islamic feminists is to point out that the inequality, discrimination and violence experienced by Muslim women are a contradiction of the message of the Qur'an. Therefore, the goal of feminist groups is to reinterpret religion [10].

The growing movement of Muslim women in the Middle East and North Africa directed their demands towards the Qur'an. The basis of these aspirations for equality is to draw the attention of the male part of the Muslim community to the teaching of the Holy Book and the Tradition of Muhammad - Sunnah, and consequently also Sharia. Only on such prepared religious foundations are arguments in the field of human rights and democracy raised [12].

Muslim activists emphasize the fact that Islam is a religion of equality of all people, both men and women, as taught by the Qur'an (4,124) [13]. However, the problem of women's disadvantage in the Islamic tradition, has a different background. Namely, it is the result of the development of Muslim law - sharia, mainly in the 9th century, formed under the strong influence of contemporary

practices and patriarchal traditions. For this reason, the current situation of Muslim women is the result of a misinterpretation of the Word of God and the Tradition of Muhammad, and even abuse of religion by men in order to maintain the patriarchy. Undoubtedly, such perception of the causes of the situation of women in the Muslim world is an important argument for taking action to change their status. Islamic feminism strives for women to become active participants in life, and not just to remain the subject of research and discussion. Islamic feminism is a conservative ideology, which is visible, for example, in the fact that it does not question the necessity of wearing the hijab. And the dignity of a woman is emphasized in her submission to all the precepts of the law. At the same time, supporters of Islamic feminism demand equal participation in public prayers and various religious ceremonies, as well as access to religious education for girls [14].

Fatima Mernissi and Amina Wadud are distinguished women for changing the status of Muslim women in a patriarchal society. Moroccan Fatima Mernissi was a professor of Sociology. She dealt with the relationship between a man and a woman in society before the advent of Islam and in Muslim times. In her scientific reflection and social activity, she dealt with issues related to contemporary Muslim women, with particular emphasis on the consequences of economic, civilizational and political changes. At the same time, Fatima Mernissi emphasized the importance of the Qur'anic message, which deserves respect because it is a guarantee of religious and cultural identity. Her work on behalf of women, especially the elderly and divorced, was important, thanks to which she was referred to as a spokeswoman for Muslim women, and she also served as an advisor for women in Islam at UNESCO [15].

Amina Wadud, on the other hand, is an American convert to Islam. Her father was a Baptist minister. He is scientifically involved in the exegesis of the Qur'an. Therefore, its postulates concern the reading of the sacred text. He believes that the Qur'an needs to be re-interpreted in order to indicate the texts it contains concerning women and men. In her opinion, it is necessary to clarify those verses that referred to the specific social situation of the Prophet's time, i.e. the 7th century. Due to changes in the world, they must be reinterpreted in a new historical context [16].

Feminism develops slightly differently among Muslim women living in Europe. They usually interpret religious sources in a European context according to the current situation in which they live. Among the main postulates of European Muslim women is the conviction that men should not decide about the fate of women today, because they are no longer the sole breadwinners of their families. European Muslim women work, they are often independent women, occupying important functions in society, so a man cannot exercise power over a woman [17].

Changes in the perception of women in Muslim society are becoming more and more visible and are not just a topic of discussion. Muslim women also gained the opportunity to practice sports, perceived as typically male, such as football. However, in Iran, men are not allowed to attend women's league

matches. Muslim women also more and more often represent their countries during international competitions and Olympics.

However, it should be clearly emphasized that the restrictions imposed on women depend on the country. In Oman, a country with an absolute monarchy, as in neighboring Saudi Arabia, the ruler who died in 2020, Sultan Qabus ibn Said, granted women many rights. And although women in public places wear long black abayas and carefully cover their hair, they can freely drive cars, work, and have passive and active voting rights. In addition, the Omani monarch gave women land to build their own houses, so that they could become independent from men, and granted them the right to marry against the will of the family [18].

3. Women's rights in Islam

The Euro-American world has created an unfair image of the Muslim woman, according to which she is a humiliated, ill-treated person whose task is to bear children, serve a man and meet his needs. Contrary to popular opinion, the situation of Muslim women is not bad. The Qur'an gave important rights to women living in the Arabian Peninsula, placing them on an equal footing with men. It was revolutionary because before the advent of Islam, women were treated as things. Until the advent of Islam, the practice of *wad*, i.e. burying a new-born baby girl alive, was common, usually considered a humiliation for the family. This barbaric behaviour came from the traditions of the ancient East. This was done because it was believed that sons were a value to strengthen the tribe or the whole clan, and with another daughter, new problems arose for the family. It was necessary to keep an eye on her and to protect her morals, because her daughter's ethical misconduct brought disgrace to the whole family. The prevalence of the *wad* had a significant impact on the subsequent treatment of the woman in her adult life. The society perceived it as a thing and an object of desire that could be rejected at any time without any consequences [19]. With the advent of Islam, the Muslim woman occupied an important place in the community, because she had important tasks to perform. Islam guaranteed equality to Muslim women, imposing on them the same duties towards God as men had, while prohibiting any form of discrimination based on sex.

At the same time, a Muslim woman, as the one thanks to whom children are born, is surrounded by special care and care of the community of believers. The important rights of women in the Islamic tradition include: fulfilling religious duties, marrying a man, ensuring maintenance by her husband, no need to take up paid work for economic reasons - a Muslim woman can work for pleasure, and the funds she earns are her private property. A woman's job is to raise children and take care of her husband. These activities are very exhausting in the light of Islam and especially important for the unity of society, therefore women should not be burdened with additional responsibilities. An interesting fact is that the husband cannot demand that his wife perform activities that she did not do at home. For if the father did not require the daughter to clean, wash

and cook, then the husband cannot expect it from her, but he must provide his wife with appropriate household help.

A Muslim woman is protected not only by male family members, but also by religious and state law. Various women's groups in the Latin world object to the traditional dress of a Muslim woman, generally known as the hijab. It is often identified by feminist circles with the enslavement and oppression of women in the Islamic tradition. What is noteworthy, however, is the perception of this dress by the stakeholders themselves, who often say: "I am protected like a precious pearl that becomes black and dirty when touched by everyone" [20]. Therefore, increasingly in many regions of the liberalized Muslim world, young women are returning to traditional dress, believing that modest dress protects society from adultery and other forms of illicit sexual relations that often lead to the breakdown of families and the corruption of society.

However, following the rules of the hijab, especially in the 21st century, does not mean wearing ugly clothes resembling a sack [21]. A European politician accidentally contributed to the change in the perception of Muslim fashion. Because the negative statement of French President Nicolas Sarkozy about Muslim women's clothing, who said: "The burqa is not a religious symbol, but a sign of subordination and humiliation. It is not welcome in the territory of the French Republic" [22] caused a reaction from fashion designers. John Galliano and Carolina Herrera and many other recognized designers organized a fashion show in Paris in 2009, in a *haute couture* version in accordance with the principles of Islam. The originator of the event - Daria Tarhini from Lebanon, wanted to offer modern abayas to Muslim women during the fashion gala. Saudi women in particular are required by Sharia law to cover their bodies with loose coats. Women often wear branded clothing of recognized fashion designers under the abaya, which should be covered for moral reasons. That is why the idea of designing an abai by artists working for such fashion houses as Christian Dior, Nina Ricci, Azzaro and Alberta Feretti was born. The desire of the creators is therefore that Muslim women who follow the rules of hijab wear their clothes out of pleasure, not out of obligation. During the show, various types of abayas were presented: patchwork, velvet, lace and richly decorated with Swarovski pearls and crystals [23]. In addition, managers of recognized department stores, such as Harrods, see the need for branded clothes in line with the Islamic tradition. Not without significance is the fact that the Middle East market is large and, moreover, rich, which is not without significance during the economic crisis.

Despite the efforts of fashion designers, Muslim women are still looking for their own, personal distinguishing feature that will allow them to slightly differ from other similarly dressed sisters in faith. Increasingly, such individual distinguishing features are accessories, i.e. shoes and handbags. Islam does not specify the rules to be met by shoes, which is why women try to make this element of the outfit original and unique. Often in a contrasting colour to the rest of the outfit, as well as a unique cut. Also a typical attribute of every woman, regardless of her religion, so a handbag is increasingly becoming a distinguishing feature of a faithful Allah. Wealthy Muslim women choose pieces

from the collections of Prada and Gucci, but also from the Polish designer Bożena Batycka [24].

It should also be noted that the above rules of rigorous and even ascetic dressing apply in ordinary, everyday social life. In intimate relationships between husband and wife, they cease to apply. A woman can and even has a duty to take care of her appearance in such a way as to feel and be attractive to her husband. Probably for this reason, Middle Eastern countries are the main importers of exclusive women's underwear from Europe.

4. The struggle of women - jihad and kital

Jihad is commonly mistakenly identified with armed struggle and the way of conducting war. Jihad literally means effort, fighting evil within oneself, spreading faith in God by helping those in need, such as building hospitals and schools. The word jihad in Arabic does not mean aggression, and therefore it does not mean waging war in an armed sense, nor does it mean killing people. The term defining the characteristics of war as an aggressive action is the word kital, meaning 'to wage war', 'kill', 'battle'. Thus, jihad literally means 'making efforts in some field' [25].

It also means striving hard for something, often in relation to intellectual and social effort. For this reason, progressive Muslim parties promote positive jihad, understood as making an effort in the way of God, but this effort is for the good of the person and society. Every believer can take part in a jihad characterized in this way, including women who are not obliged to fight in the armed forces. Nevertheless, Islam appreciates the efforts of women who endure hardships in the path of God, leading man to a happy life in heaven. This effort, undertaken by almost every Muslim woman, is to bear the burden of pregnancy, childbirth, and then feeding and raising children to be good citizens obedient to God. A woman becoming a mother must constantly fight with her weaknesses, primarily physical ones, bravely enduring the discomfort of pregnancy in the name of higher values. And although the husband is obliged to help and support his wife, he will not relieve her of the greatest effort, which is childbirth.

Of course, women also engage in armed combat, known as kital, as female soldiers. Undoubtedly, these behaviours testify to liberalizing customs and changes in the awareness of society. With the start of the so-called Islamic State, many women began to fight both for and against the jihadists. An example of women fighting for freedom and independence is the military armed formation of the Kurdish National Defence Forces in the Rojava region, in the northern part of Syria, controlled by the Kurds, established to fight for independence and also fighting against ISIS. In the ranks of the Women's Protection unit - YPJ, there are over seven thousand female soldiers [26]. The armed struggle of women is dangerous, but also very glorious. According to Islamic tradition, the greatest disgrace for a male Muslim fighter is to die at the hands of a woman. Such death means closing the road to paradise [27]. That's why one fighting woman is worth more to her squad than a hundred men.

However, if the enemy captures a female soldier, they are treated very cruelly as prisoners. Torture and cruel death await the woman.

5. Performing religious functions

Muslim tradition clearly separates men's activities from women's. However, before God all people are equal, regardless of gender. Therefore, the fulfilment of religious practices: prayer, fasting and participation in the pilgrimage is the duty of women and men. The function of imam, i.e. the person responsible for the proper spiritual formation of the community of Muslim believers, can be performed only by a man. However, there are exceptions to this rule. A woman can lead the prayer of a women's community, she can also teach religion to children and youth, regardless of gender. Increasingly, Muslim women are also educated in Qur'anic schools. In Morocco, there are women called *morchidate*, or spiritual guide, whose task is to explain and promote the knowledge of the Qur'an among people. Until 2006, women could not be *morchidate* in any Muslim country due to the divided opinions of religious law experts in this area [28]. Nevertheless, both supporters and opponents agreed that nowhere in the Qur'an forbids a woman from performing this function. One should also pay attention to the mystical trend present in the Muslim tradition, referred to as Sufism. Although it is considered heretical by a large part of the followers of Islam and contrary to the ideas of Muslim monotheism, it occupies quite an important place in religious practices. The Bektashiya Brotherhood, founded in Turkey, accepts women who, after appropriate formation, can become dervishes.

6. Islamic businesswoman

The man is financially responsible for maintaining an appropriate standard of living for the family. For this reason, the Islamic tradition did not burden women with professional work, recognizing that women already had a large responsibility for running a home and raising children. The image of a 'housewife' woman has been in force for many centuries in Muslim society. It was accepted as a norm and a natural duty of women, and to this day, such a model of organizing family life is in force in many places in the Middle East. However, the ubiquitous pursuit of equal rights for women and men has also marked its presence in the Islamic tradition, making it necessary to develop an Islamic position on the professional work of women.

Islamic law permits a woman to engage in gainful employment, subject to certain restrictions and regulations. A woman must not neglect her family and household duties. For this reason, it is the husband who must consent to the woman taking up professional work. Basically, according to the rules of Qur'anic law, the choice of professional work as well as the place of work should not expose a Muslim woman to contacts with men. However, nowadays this postulate is not paid as much attention, also in countries dominated by Islam. Muslim women also increasingly want to take up professional work in

order to be able to fulfil their own professional ambitions and the need to work for the benefit of the community in which they live.

It should be remembered that more and more Muslim women are educated women with diplomas from world-renowned universities. That is why they are more and more often thriving businesswomen. Also, a significant group of Muslim women work in universities, conducting research and teaching activities. Muslim women also take up work in other fields on the labour market: from the most popular, typically female jobs, such as a teacher or doctor, to firm CEOs and women running their own businesses. There are many reasons for taking up professional work, but two seem to be the most important. The first is economic considerations, especially in European realities, it is difficult to implement the ideal of a Muslim marriage in which only the man works for the house. Indeed, such extravagance and convenience can be afforded only by a small percentage of Muslims, usually with extensive international business. The second reason is the woman's desire to pursue her own professional ambition. Of course, raising children and running a home can give a lot of joy, but in the long run, limiting yourself only to doing housework can lead to depression and total discouragement. Consequently, it will have a negative impact on family relationships.

7. Women in politics

There are no religious law obstacles preventing women from actively participating in the political life of the community and the world. The history of Islam points to many women who, with their activities, advice, as well as devotion and sacrifice, had a significant impact on the development of Islam. Undoubtedly, Khadija, Muhammad's first wife, is such a model, as well as A'isha, the youngest of the prophet's wives, who actively participated in the political life of the young umma.

Today, women can actively participate in the political life of their countries, with the proviso that they should belong to honest political parties. At the turn of century, women occupy the highest positions in Muslim countries: female president of Indonesia Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001-2004), women prime ministers of: Pakistan Benazir Bhutto (1988-1990; 1993-1996), Turkey Tansu Ciller (1993-1996), Bangladesh Khaleda Zia (1991-1996; 2001-2006), female Minister of Justice Rashid Dati (2007-2009) they sit in parliaments and take up professions, until recently reserved only for men.

A modern, outstanding female politician was Zainab al-Ghazali, an Egyptian, originator of the creation of the female branch of the Muslim Brotherhood *Jamaa'at al-Sayyidaat al-Muslimaat*, i.e. the Association of Muslim Women. In her activities, she criticized the policy of President Abd an-Nasser, for which she was imprisoned for many years (Ghazali and Sabjan 2020) [29]. Political changes in the Middle East also concerned electoral rights. However, in many countries these upgrades have been implemented very slowly. Turkish women gained the right to vote first, in 1930. Other citizens who could

take part in the elections were residents of: Pakistan (1947), Syria (1949), Egypt (1956), Algeria (1962), Iran (1963), Afghanistan (1963) voting rights were suspended during the Taliban rule in the years (1996 -2001), Jordan (1974), Qatar (1997), Bahrain (2002), Oman (2003), Kuwait (2005), United Arab Emirates (2006), Saudi Arabia (2015). In Lebanon, only women with a certain education are eligible to vote.

In many Muslim countries, a type of local court is the shura, which is an assembly of tribal or administrative elders. During the shura meeting, the current problems of the community are discussed and important decisions are made. The shura also has the power to issue judgments and impose punishments. Shura can also be a consultative assembly and this is currently the case in Saudi Arabia. Thanks to the changes initiated by King Abd Allah in 2013, in the 150-person council, 30 seats are reserved for women [30]. During the Shura meeting, women share the same room with men, but must follow the rules of hijab and enter the plenary hall through a separate entrance. Saudi women also serve as vice-presidents of three committees: Rights and Petitions, Information and Culture, and Health and Environment. In addition, two representatives of the royal family sit on the Council: Sara bint Saud Al-Faisal and Moudi bint Saud Al-Khalid.

In December 2015, regional elections were held in Saudi Arabia, in which women participated for the first time, who were granted the right to vote and to vote. Undoubtedly, this event is a great breakthrough, and at the same time an expression of changes taking place in such a very conservative country as Saudi Arabia. The freedom of choice granted to women, however, did not change the customs. Therefore, it was necessary to prepare polling stations in accordance with the rules in force in the country, i.e. the separation of men and women. In addition, an important element of the pre-election campaign were significant disproportions among the candidates for councils, as 6,000 men and 900 women were candidates. In addition, due to the existing cultural and religious restrictions, women faced difficulties in running an election campaign [31]. The election results can therefore be considered a success, as a woman, Salma bint Hizad al-Oteibi, was elected to the city council of Madraka in the province of Mecca, defeating seven men and two women in her constituency [32].

8. Conclusions

Summing up, it can be said that the position of women in Islam has its rank and importance. A woman is protected and valued for her personality, defining her rights and duties, and determining her position in society. The above examples show a woman as qualified to do any kind of work. A woman is not obliged to fight in armed jihad, but Islam does not prohibit her from doing so. This is a telling aspect of equality between men and women proposed by Islam. Increasingly, women also choose a political career, drawing on historical models and striving for changes in their environment. At the same time, it should be emphasized that a modern Muslim woman is able to combine the functions of a mother and wife with realizing her ambitions, even at the business level.

Therefore, being in accordance with the rules of religion is not in opposition to being a modern Muslim.

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