



**Centre for the Response to
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Women and the Caliphate: Women's Rights and Restrictions in Islamist Ideology and Practice

Centre for the Response to Radicalisation and Terrorism
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Summary

- This paper seeks to provide an insight into how purportedly non-violent Islamist ideology overlaps with the violent Islamism of Islamic State (IS)¹ and al-Qaeda (AQ). It does so by studying the phenomenon of British women travelling to Iraq and Syria to join the Caliphate, and highlighting the common aims of both non-violent and violent Islamist groups regarding women's roles and obligations in society.
- Western societies are grappling not only with the significant numbers of its citizens travelling to Syria and Iraq to support IS, but also with the fact that many are women, often travelling with their young children. In recent years, IS has systematically forced women to live as second-class citizens. Women have been banished from public spaces, while those who do not conform to its restrictions faced brutal punishment. The decision taken by Western women to risk everything in order to live in an Islamic Caliphate – giving up their rights and freedoms in the process – has been a source of consternation to policymakers and analysts.
- In attempting to add some clarity to this discussion, *Women and the Caliphate: Women's Rights and Restrictions in Islamist Ideology and Practice* examines whether IS' ideology regarding women's roles in society can be found closer to home, among those living in Britain. This paper examines as its primary case study the prominent Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), with a focus on the messaging and activities of its British branch, Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain (HTB).
- HT often presents itself as the legitimate face of political Islam – as part of a movement that supports women playing active roles in society and stands entirely apart from violent Islamist groups such as IS. However, while they are ostensibly non-violent, their main aim and purpose echo that of violent Islamist groups, most notably AQ and IS: the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Muslim-majority countries in which women are forced to live according to the rules of *sharia*. Both violent and non-violent Islamist groups often condemn the treatment of women in the West on the basis that gender roles have become blurred: as women are unable to fulfil their duties, an “Islamic” model is the only system that liberates women.
- HT and HTB's theoretical position on women's fundamental purpose in society is to produce, raise and support men of the Caliphate. Women's primary roles - having responsibility for the household as wife and mother - are held up as having the highest importance to the survival of the Caliphate. Women are told to serve, and be submissive to, their husbands. While HT has not fulfilled its aim of establishing a Caliphate, the group's literature provides a blueprint for women's *sharia*-based roles and restrictions within a Caliphate. HT's founding documents detail the obligation and duty of women to remain in the private sphere and restrictions of their movements in the public sphere.
- HT's theoretical position is broadly mirrored within IS' propaganda and practice. Unlike HT and HTB, IS is able to enforce the rules of Sharia with virtual impunity. Having declared the establishment of a Caliphate in June 2014 in parts of Iraq and Syria, IS is actively implementing and enforcing *sharia*-based restrictions against women's movements and dress. IS' all-female police unit, Al-Khanssaa Brigade, states that while it supports education of women within its own restricted framework, it does not support women leaving the private sphere of their homes. Furthermore, the movements and dress of women and girls are heavily restricted in schools and universities under IS control.
- HT and IS both rule that women should be – to somewhat varying degrees - shielded from men in public spaces. According to HT literature, when a girl is of an age where she is

¹ Also known as Daesh, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS).

deemed able to produce children, she should be covered and separated from men in the public sphere. For both groups, this separation comes in the form of restrictions of women's movements and dress. For example, HTB has imposed an increasingly strict dress code among its female members, and has intimidated those who do not conform. Similarly, IS has enforced an increasingly strict dress code for women living in territory under its control. Under IS rule, girls as young as primary school level have reportedly faced restrictions of appearance and movements. Both groups believe in imposing restrictions on women's movements, including prohibiting women from travelling or performing daily tasks such as shopping without being in the presence of a male guardian, or *mahram*.

- The significant ideological overlap regarding women's roles and rights in society between IS and one of several influential ostensibly non-violent Islamist groups in Britain, provides a possible explanation as to why hundreds of British women are deciding to travel to live under IS rule.
- The powerful ideology of Islamism teaches women living in Great Britain that their freedoms are shackles, liberation from which can only come by living under Caliphate rule. It is likely that this narrative helps build the ideological foundations upon which moving to live in a so-called Caliphate is not only an attractive option, but a duty. As such, it is crucial Western governments do not fall into the trap of assuming that only violent extremists need challenging. Non-violent extremism is a potent threat that forms a core part of the challenge Islamist ideology poses to the West.

Introduction

Extremist groups are often presumed, by definition, to be violent. Yet this is not always the case. That both non-violent and violent Islamist groups actually share ideological aims, for example, is often overlooked due to the brutal tactics of the latter. While British Prime Minister David Cameron's recent counter extremism strategy recognised the fundamental role Islamist ideology plays in both non-violent and violent extremism, much of the debate within Western policy-making circles remains entirely focused on 'Preventing Violent Extremism'. Therefore, Western policy responses to the problem of Islamist extremism have been slow to account for its ideological underpinnings, often mistaking ostensibly non-violent Islamist groups as being part of the solution in challenging violent extremism.

While violent and non-violent Islamist groups differ in methodology, they share the same goal, setting them apart from the majority of British Muslims: to live in an Islamic Caliphate governed by Sharia law. Women's rights is one of the most effective and timely ways of highlighting this point. Western societies are grappling with the fact that hundreds of women are deciding to travel –² often with their young children – to live under IS rule in Iraq and Syria. The decision taken by women to risk everything in order to live in an Islamic Caliphate – giving up their rights and freedoms in the process – has been a source of confusion to many. Numerous reports of IS' abuses and restrictions against women provoke important questions: why are women choosing to give up their rights and freedoms in the West for a life of submission under IS rule? At what point do IS' ideas about women's roles in society take root in the minds of those who travel to join IS?

In attempting to begin answering these questions, *Women and the Caliphate: Women's Rights and Restrictions in Islamist Ideology and Practice* examines whether IS' ideas of women's role in society can be found closer to home, among non-violent Islamist groups in Britain. The paper uses the non-violent Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) as its case study, with a focus on the messaging and activities of its British branch, Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain (HTB).

An ostensibly non-violent revolutionary Islamist group, HT often portrays the Western system of liberal democracy as being detrimental to women's rights. It claims that its own interpretation of Islam provides the solution to this, and that its political vision of an Islamic Caliphate would allow women to live freely, without the constraints and temptations of Western society. The group is frequently given a sympathetic hearing among British Left-wing media. Its senior members frequently appear in mainstream newspapers – most often *The Guardian* – depicting HT as both the Islamic solution to – and victim of – the flawed Western democratic model.³

This paper challenges the idea that there is little common ground between the ideas of both groups by using their approach to women as a case study. In identifying points of convergence between HT theory and IS practice regarding women, the paper aims to highlight any underpinning similarities between non-violent and violent Islamist ideology. In doing so, this paper documents and analyses the status of women in writings published by both groups and draws from accounts of former and current female group members. It uses a number of sources to analyse HT ideology and activities,

² It was recently estimated that as many as 4,000 Western migrants and foreign fighters have travelled to support IS, of which there are believed to be more than 550 Western women. See: 'Her Majesty's Jihadists', *The New York Times*, 14 April 2015, available at: www.nytimes.com/2015/04/19/magazine/her-majestys-jihadists.html. Last visited: 6 March 2016.

³ For example, in a recent interview with HTB leader Abdul Wahid, journalist Peter Osborne implied that HT members are being denied their right to freedom of speech: "You can say many things about Wahid, and be appalled by much of what he says. But in a democracy he surely has the right to say it. Whatever the government thinks." *The Guardian* has also published material portraying HT as having been unfairly linked to extremism and extremist groups. In 2015, for example, William Scates Frances wrote: "The primary similarity between the two [ISIS and HT] is their religion – but when their membership, approach, rhetoric and demographics are so utterly distinct, the comparison stops there." See: "'Extremist is the secular word for heretic': the Hizb ut-Tahrir leader who insists on his right to speak", *The Guardian*, 24 July 2015, available at: www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jul/24/david-cameron-extremism-struggle-generation-abdul-wahid. Last visited: 7 November 2015; and: W. S. Frances, 'Why ban Hizb ut-Tahrir? They're not Isis – they're Isis's whipping boys' *The Guardian*, 12 February 2015, available at: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/13/why-ban-hizb-ut-tahrir-theyre-not-isis-theyre-isiss-whipping-boys. Last visited: 27 November 2015.

which include: HT's founding documents and literature, as well as interviews with and public testimonies from British former members of HT, social media statements and online material from HT's global media campaign. Primary and secondary sources are used to document and analyse the activities of IS, including: online publications written by IS supporters, social media activity of IS supporters and fighters, the official IS online magazine, and external publications analysing the rights and roles assigned to women in the ideology and activities of both groups.

1. Background

1.1 Same Aim, Different Means: Islamic State and Hizb ut-Tahrir

Hizb ut-Tahrir is a global pan-Islamic political organisation founded in 1953 and made up of a network of national branches around the world. Islamic State is a radical Sunni Salafi-jihadist Islamist group controlling territory in parts of Syria and Iraq. Despite their differences, both HT and IS can be defined as Islamist groups, due firstly to their shared worldview that countries are divided into two camps: *Dar al-Kufr* ('lands of disbelief') and *Dar al-Islam* ('lands of Islam'); and secondly their aim to unite Muslim-majority countries under one Islamic state, or 'Caliphate', ruled over by a male leader, or 'Caliph'.^{4, 5}

HT considers Muslim-majority countries, or "Muslim lands", to be *Dar ul-Kufri*, focusing its activities on changing "the Islamic lands to Dar ul-Islam [land of Islam] and changing the society in the Islamic countries to an Islamic society."⁶ For example, in 2011 HT's Central Media Representative Dr. Nazreen Nawaz released the following statement regarding Saudi Arabia:

Hizb ut-Tahrir calls upon the Muslim men and women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to work with us to bring down this illegitimate regime and to resume the Islamic way of life by establishing the Khilafah state.⁷

While HT has not yet achieved its aim of establishing an Islamic Caliphate, IS has gained territory in large parts of Muslim-majority countries Syria and Iraq through what is an ongoing violent insurgency. In June 2014 the terrorist group declared the establishment of a Caliphate, announcing in an official document:

Here the flag of the Islamic State, the flag of tawhīd (monotheism), rises and flutters. Its shade covers land from Aleppo to Diyala. Beneath it, the walls of the tawāghīt (rulers claiming the rights of Allah) have been demolished, their flags have fallen, and their borders have been destroyed. Their soldiers are either killed, imprisoned, or defeated. The Muslims are honored. The kuffār (infidels) are disgraced. AhlusSunnah (the Sunnis) are masters and are esteemed. The people of bid'ah (heresy) are humiliated. The hudūd (Sharia penalties) are implemented - the hudūd of Allah - all of them. The frontlines are defended.⁸

⁴ 'The Methodology of Hizb ut-Tahrir for Change', Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1999 (London: Al-Khilafah Publications), p.5, previously available at: Hizb ut-Tahrir official website (archived by The Henry Jackson Society).

⁵ For example, IS' French-language online magazine is entitled 'Dar al-Islam'.

⁶ HT does however recognise Iran and Saudi Arabia in their application of "divine rules" in religious courts. See: 'The Methodology of Hizb ut-Tahrir for Change', Hizb ut-Tahrir (Al-Khilafah Publications), 1999, p.5, available at: hizb-ut-tahrir.se/images/Books/The-Methodology-Of-Hizb-ut-Tahrir-for-Change.pdf. Last visited: 6 March 2016.

⁷ 'Granting Saudi women voting rights is meaningless under absolute monarchy that politically disempowers entire nation', Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 29 September 2011, available at: www.hizb.org.uk/current-affairs/granting-saudi-women-voting-rights-is-meaningless-under-absolute-monarchy-that-politically-disempowers-entire-nation. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

⁸ 'This Is the Promise of Allah', Al Hayat Media Center, undated, available at: ia902505.us.archive.org/28/items/poa_25984/EN.pdf. Last visited: 10 November 2015.

Both HT and IS believe that society should be ruled by god-made law (*sharia*) rather than any form of man-made law and governance. HT states its aim as implementing *sharia* at a state level whereby “all of life’s affairs in society are administered according to the Shari’ah rules”.⁹ The group’s draft constitution states that “There is no validity in the opinion of the people over matters decided by the Shari’ah” and claims that its proposed rulings on women’s rights and roles in society are in accordance with what *sharia* permits and recommends.¹⁰

IS enforces its interpretation of *sharia* law throughout its territory, having established *sharia* courts and a religious police, known as the Hisbah. In June 2014, IS announced that “Courts have been established to resolve disputes and complaints”.¹¹ Furthermore, the Hisbah issues orders, both online and in written statements, warning against the violation of the city’s new rules and laws, patrolling the streets and ensuring that they are adhered to.¹²

Despite their shared aim of establishing and expanding a Caliphate governed by *sharia* law, HT and IS have entirely different methodologies in doing so. HT aims to bring about revolutionary change through grassroots activism in building mass support for its preferred system of governance. Former HTB spokesperson Imran Waheed described the group’s proactivity “in disseminating the Islamic intellectual and political thoughts widely in Muslim societies so as to challenge the existing status quo that exists there”.¹³ The group’s strategy is based on a concept called *nusrat* (defined by HT as “seeking the help”) meaning to stage a coup through infiltrating and gaining support from military posts.¹⁴

Unlike IS, HT does not explicitly advocate jihadist terrorism as a means of establishing a Caliphate. According to Waheed: “the party considers violence or armed struggle against the regime a violation of the Islamic Shariah”.¹⁵ IS, however, describes in its online magazine *Dabiq* how it achieved its goal of establishing a Caliphate “by the edge of the sword” rather than by the entryist or ostensibly non-violent revolutionary methodologies of Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and HT, respectively:

we did not do so through pacifism, negotiations, democracy, or elections. We established [the Caliphate] according to the prophetic way, with blood-red swords, not with fingers for voting or tweeting.¹⁶

In fact, in a recent interview, prominent HT member Reza Pankhurst took a somewhat sceptical view of IS’ ability to establish, defend and run a functioning and legitimate Islamic state, calling into question the foundations upon which IS established a Caliphate, and therefore the legitimacy of its authority. He appeared to imply that IS has not gone far enough in applying Islam as a ruling system, stating that a legitimate Caliphate:

⁹ ‘The aim of Hizb ut-Tahrir; Hizb ut-Tahrir’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, undated, available at: www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/index.php/en/def. Last visited: 17 August 2015.

¹⁰ ‘The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), p.459, 470, previously available at: Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh official website (archived by The Henry Jackson Society).

¹¹ Mahmood, M., ‘Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis’, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015, available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/17/isis-orders-women-iraq-syria-veils-gloves. Last visited: 8 October 2015.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ ‘Hizb ut Tahrir: An Interview With Imran Waheed’, *Wordpress.org*, 12 September 2005, available at: www.worldpress.org/Europe/2146.cfm. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

¹⁴ ‘The Methodology of Hizb ut-Tahrir for Change’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1999 (London: Al-Khilafah Publications), p.23.

¹⁵ ‘Hizb ut Tahrir: An Interview With Imran Waheed’, *Wordpress.org*, 12 September 2005.

¹⁶ ‘Slave-Girls or Prostitutes?’, ‘They Plot and Allah Plots’, *Dabiq*, 9th Issue, 21 May 2015, p.47, available at: azelin.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/the-islamic-state-e2809cdc481biq-magazine-9e280b3.pdf. Last visited: 6 March 2016.

goes beyond the application of a few punishments that attract intense media attention, and actually guides how the state is structured and operated, at the economic, social and foreign policy levels.¹⁷

However, while HT has criticised IS in its implementation of establishing an Islamic state, it has on other occasions refused to publicly condemn the group and sought to blame the West for its existence.¹⁸

2. Women outside the Caliphate

2.1 Critiquing the Western 'model'

HT condemns the treatment of women in the West, arguing that an "Islamic" model is the only system that liberates women. Women's Media Representative for HTB, Shohana Khan, claimed at a public event that HT's model for an "Islamic society" would protect women from problems, such as sexual harassment, that she argues are encouraged by Western societies. According to Khan, a Caliphate is designed to prevent and deter such things from happening, with:

[...] rules such as the dress code which prevent women being exploited, segregation of the sexes minimising the agitation of the sexual instinct prohibition of any business sexualising the woman, harsh punishment for sexual acts outside marriage which acts as a deterrent and even making a lustful glance to women a crime. These all protect the view of the woman.¹⁹

Khan argued that the liberal freedoms and free markets of Western societies had led to the exploitation and abuse of women through creating "a mind-set where one's whims and desires have become the determining factor for action". She also stated that Western women's fight for equality has blurred gender roles and "devalued the role of full-time mother and nurturer" so that "value for women [has become] synonymous with having a successful career and not being a successful homemaker". Khan argued that, as a result, women either "deny [their] maternal instincts" or "feel a failure if they embark on this role".²⁰

IS echoes this position on gender roles. The group's al-Khanssaa Brigade²¹ stated in a recent publication that women in the West "are not fulfilling their fundamental roles", and that these roles have "been tampered with" to the extent that they are being forgotten.²² The all-female wing of IS uses women's pursuit of further education in the West as an example:

¹⁷ Abedin, M., 'Islam: the Caliphate debate – Interview with Reza Pankhurst', *Religioscope*, 29 July 2014, available at: religion.info/english/interviews/article_646.shtml#.VhzQemYQVYd. Last visited: 13 October 2015.

¹⁸ For example, when Emma Abericci asked HT spokesperson Wassim Doureih on Lateline whether he supported IS' "murderous campaign", he replied that the answer needed context first, adding: "IS exist as a reaction to Western interference in Islam and so IS regard themselves, rightfully or wrongfully, as the resistance effort to the occupation." See: 'Emma Alberici interview with Wassim Doureih: IS a reaction to unjust occupation', *YouTube*, 8 October 2014, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvjudQmPSWg. Last visited: 23 October 2015.

¹⁹ 'What truly liberates women? Secularism or Islam? Shohana Khan presentation', *YouTube*, March 2013, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxCNMRgqXNQ. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ The Al-Khanssaa Brigade is a wing of IS and is an all-female police force responsible for policing and enforcing women's clothing. However, in a recent publication on women living in the so-called Islamic State, it states: "First, this is not an official State policy document. Rather, it is something put together by a number of supporters in Al-Khanssaa Brigades. It has not been sanctioned by the state or its leadership as an official framework for women. Further, it should not be considered a constitution that has been decided upon by the state." See: 'Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade', *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.12, available at: www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/women-of-the-islamic-state3.pdf. Last visited: 17 August 2015.

²² The group defines gender roles as the following: "women have this Heavenly secret in sedentariness, stillness and stability, and men its opposite, movement and flux". See: 'Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade', *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.11, 17.

a woman studies these worthless worldly sciences in the farthest mountains and the deepest valleys. She travels, intent upon learning Western lifestyle and sitting in the midst of another culture, to study the brain cells of crows, grains of sand and the arteries of fish!

The document blames the West's blurring of gender roles between the sexes, leading to women "not [being] presented with a true picture of man" and an increase "in the number of emasculated men who do not shoulder the responsibility allocated to them towards their ummah, religion or people".

The publication attaches blurred gender roles to the failure of the Western 'model', stating: "The model preferred by infidels in the West failed the minute that women were "liberated" from their cell in the house", as Western women "do not consider staying in the home Heaven, and they do not consider the heat of the Sun fiery". It warns that the consequences of this threatens social order: "If roles are mixed and positions overlap, humanity is thrown into a state of flux and instability. The base of society is shaken, its foundations crumble and its walls collapse".

The document also criticises the 'beautification' of women, and criticises the West for encouraging women to "change God's creation" through spending money on fashion and changes to their natural appearance, such as "things hanging from ears, hair shaved in some places and not in others, and other things that do not please the eye of the beholder" and "demand[ing] that surgeons change the nose, ear, chin and nails".²³

In addition to criticising the Western model, IS' al-Khanssaa Brigade criticises the "Westernisation" of women in the Gulf, stating:

Currently, women are able to work alongside men in shops like banks, where they are not separated by even a thin sheet of paper. They are allowed to appear in ID photographs and those who do not possess ID cards find many things difficult. The door for Western scholarships is wide open and a university of corruption was even opened in Jeddah – may God cause it and its people to sink into the Earth. Its doors are for males and females who are able to mingle in the hallways as if they were in an infidel country in Europe.

The all-female wing concludes that, as a result of Saudi Arabia's "Westernisation of women", they are unable to "fulfil their duties" and that, as a result, "female dignity has been obliterated" there.²⁴

3. Women in the Caliphate: Private and Public Roles

HT's draft constitution provides a blueprint for the group's preferred system of ruling within its envisioned Caliphate, including a detailed account of proposed roles and restrictions of women. A senior HT member described the document as "the realistic and required political programme of Islamic government".²⁵ Article 3 of the draft constitution emphasises the nature of HT's preferred system of governance, stating:

²³ Ibid., p.17, 19-21.

²⁴ Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade', *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.12.

²⁵ Abedin, M., 'Islam: the Caliphate debate – Interview with Reza Pankhurst', *Religioscope*, 29 July 2014.

Once the Khaleefah has adopted a divine rule, that rule alone becomes the divine rule that must be enacted and then implemented. Every citizen must openly and secretly obey that adopted rule.”²⁶

While the group is not able to implement its proposed system of governance, IS – having already declared the establishment of a Caliphate – is making *sharia*-based rulings and restrictions a reality for those living in its territory. The group’s all-female al-Khanssaa Brigade recently described how the group’s efforts to create what it sees a truly Islamic society, “formed, first and foremost, to worship the one and only God”, is in its beginning stages and therefore in a state of flux:

[...the Caliphate] is only at the beginning of its formation, [and] needs more time and effort until it can return to the first picture [of a Muslim community], the time of the rule of the Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, when everyone in it fulfilled their Rightly ordained roles.”²⁷

3.1 Private Roles

HT allocates different roles to men and women, with the latter’s primary function and purpose in society being wife and mother.

3.1.1 Motherhood

HT emphasises the importance of raising future generations in order to maintain society. According HT founder Taqiuddin Al-Nabhani in his work, *The Social System in Islam*: “through this action the human race survives” and the “primary responsibility” of achieving this is that of the woman.²⁸ He places the woman’s role in “pregnancy, delivery, suckling and custody” of children above all other commitments, responsibilities and activities:

it should be clearly understood that whatever actions she is charged with and whatever responsibilities are placed on her, she should continue in her primary responsibility which is that of motherhood and the upbringing of children.”²⁹

Al-Nabhani’s position echoes the group’s draft constitution, which states that: “The primary role of women is that she is a mother and responsible over the household and she is an honour that must be protected”.³⁰

Both show attempts to design a system that makes it as easy as possible for women to prioritise the role of mother while placing restrictions on those who attempt to deviate from its status quo.³¹ For example, the draft constitution states that a woman receives greater right of custody than her husband, referencing Islam’s Prophet Muhammad saying to a woman whose husband wanted to take her child from her: “[y]ou have more right to him as long as you do not remarry”.³² Al-Nabhani states:

²⁶ ‘General Rules; The Draft Constitution of the Khilafah State’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, undated, p.2, available at: www.hizb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Draft-Constitution.pdf. Last visited: 29 October 2015.

²⁷ ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, pp.11-12.

²⁸ An-Nabhani, T., ‘The Social System in Islam’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1990 (3rd Edition), p.90, available at: hizb-ut-tahrir.se/images/Books/The-Social-System-in-Islam.pdf. Last visited: 14 October 2015.

²⁹ An-Nabhani, T., ‘The Social System in Islam’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1990 (3rd Edition), p.90.

³⁰ ‘Article 112; The Social System; The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), p.472, 510.

³¹ See: ‘5. Restrictions on Women in the Caliphate’.

³² ‘Article 112; The Social System; The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), p.472, 510.

the Shari'ah exempted her from praying if she is menstruating, or is in childbirth, and prevented the man from travelling with his child from the country in which the mother resides, as long as she still has custody over the child.

He uses this as direct evidence “to facilitate the completion of her primary role, which is her being a mother and a housewife”.³³

The group's early narrative on women's primary roles is echoed within HT's more recent campaigns in the UK and abroad. HT's Indonesian branch has published literature emphasising women's primary role “as nurturers and educators of the future generation”.³⁴ Furthermore, Women's Media Representative for HTB, Shohana Khan said at a 2011 event:

Women bear children, women nurse children. Islam does not hide or try to deny this fact, Islam does therefore designate the role of mother and wife to the women, not to oppress her but to elevate her. As the role of the mother is one of the highest roles in an Islamic society, this means she can fulfil her role as mother with dedication, support and full emotional wellbeing not feeling close to a failure because she doesn't have a monetary income. Islam rather makes the financial support the income from her nearest male relative as law, so she can she fully dedicate herself to this.³⁵

At another UK event, Khan echoed her previous statements: “the primary role of the woman, the role that women have done since the beginning of time that has become completely denied and devalued in society: motherhood.”³⁶

HT's position that motherhood is one of women's primary roles is echoed by IS. The al-Khanssaa Brigade recently stated in an online publication that motherhood is a “Divine duty” and therefore the purpose of a woman's existence.³⁷ IS' online magazine *Dabiq* also instructs women “to bring up and educate, protect and care for the next generation to come”.³⁸ IS states in *Dabiq* that “the nurturing mother” is the key to effectively “raising a Muslim generation” and that therefore the primary role and responsibility of women is to be “the producer of men” and “the mother of lion cubs”. The group tells mothers to bring their children up on:

clear tawhid [the doctrine of the oneness of God], a correct 'aqidah [creed], kufr bitaghut [rejection of idolatry] and worship of Allah alone, teaching them the heart-softeners, the remembrance of Allah, the Prophet's biography, and the fiqh of jihad [jurisprudence of war].³⁹

IS instructs women to educate their children to follow the Caliphate's gender roles. For example, the al-Khanssaa Brigade's recent publication tells mothers to “[b]ring up the sons of the Caliphate to know true tawheed”, while instructing them to “[b]ring up its daughters such that they know

³³ An-Nabhani, T., ‘The Social System in Islam’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1990 (3rd Edition), p.90.

³⁴ ‘Hizb ut Tahrir will host an International Women's Conference: “The Khilafah: Protecting Women from Poverty and Enslavement”’, Hizb ut Tahrir Indonesia, 9 December 2012, available at: hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2012/12/09/hizb-ut-tahrir-will-host-an-international-womens-conference-the-khilafah-protecting-women-from-poverty-and-enslavement/. Last visited: 14 October 2015.

³⁵ ‘What truly liberates women? Secularism or Islam? Shohana Khan presentation’, *YouTube*, March 2013, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxCNMRgqXNQ. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

³⁶ ‘Liberation of women talk - 'Revival of Sisterhood' Shohana Khan’, *YouTube*, June 2013, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX3cp6a0jxk. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

³⁷ ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.18.

³⁸ ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.18.

³⁹ ‘A Jihad Without Fighting; From the Battle of Al-Ahزاب to the War of Coalitions’, *Dabiq*, 11th Issue, 9 August 2015, p.41, 44-45 available at: www.clarionproject.org/docs/Issue%2011%20-%20From%20the%20battle%20of%20Al-Ahزاب%20to%20the%20war%20of%20coalitions.pdf. Last visited: 6 March 2016.

chastity and decency” and “bring up their girls according to how God has ordained it. He created them as such that the Muslim household would be established”.⁴⁰

IS also instructs mothers to teach their children about *jihad* and killing unbelievers. For example, it tells women to read *The Book of Jihad* by classical Islamic scholar Ibn al-Nahhas al-Dumyati (d.1411) to their children at bedtime.^{41,42} The book has been translated into various languages and is frequently misappropriated by Salafi-jihadist clerics, including deceased al-Qaeda cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, to advocate the killing of non-believers.⁴³

3.1.2 Role as Wife

HT states that women should serve and answer to their husbands, acting as their base of support. HT’s draft constitution portrays the woman as subservient to her husband, describing her as obligated to serve him and prohibited “from leaving her husband’s house without his permission”. For example, it references Islam’s Prophet Muhammad stating that a woman would need her husband’s permission to visit her ill father or “undertake any voluntary fasting” or fasting in his presence, and states that the woman is “subservient to the husband’s right over her” in these decisions.⁴⁴

The group’s draft constitution states that a woman’s primary role is to be “responsible over the household”, referring to “evidences which prohibit the woman from leaving her husband’s house without his permission and obligate her to serve her husband”.⁴⁵ The document refers to the “obligation of the work of the woman in her house” and that:

the husband must carry out all the work which is usually undertaken outside the house, while the wife carries out all the work which is usually undertaken inside the house, according to her capability.⁴⁶

However, HT’s more recent UK campaigns have attempted to convey that a woman’s primary roles do not restrict their opportunities in the public sphere. In 2015, HTB leader Abdul Wahid said: “Islam puts the burden of providing for the family on the man, which doesn’t mean to say that a woman can’t work”.⁴⁷ HTB has also claimed that women have “a crucial and indispensable part in public life, whether that be politics, business or trading etc.”⁴⁸

The emphasis in HT’s draft constitution on women’s responsibility to remain in the private sphere is echoed by IS in practice. The group heavily restricts women’s movements in the public sphere (for example, they are only allowed to leave the house with their husbands’ permission and with a male *mahram*, or guardian).⁴⁹ IS’ al-Khanssaa Brigade describes the “fundamental function” of women as being “in the house with her husband and children”.⁵⁰

⁴⁰ ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.17, 41.

⁴¹ ‘A Jihad Without Fighting: From the Battle of Al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions’, *Dabiq*, 11th Issue, 9 August 2015, p.45.

⁴² Abi Zakaryya Al Dimashqi Al Dumyati, “Ibn-Nuhaas”, undated, *The Book of Jihad*, p.162.

⁴³ See: Ali, R. & Stuart, H. (2014) *A Guide to Refuting Jihadism: Critiquing radical Islamist claims to theological authenticity*, The Henry Jackson Society, available at: henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Refuting-Jihadism.pdf, p.65. Last visited: 28 October 2015.

⁴⁴ ‘The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), p.470, 473.

⁴⁵ ‘Article 112; The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), pp.470-474.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.474, 506.

⁴⁷ “‘Extremist is the secular word for heretic’: the Hizb ut-Tahrir leader who insists on his right to speak”, *The Guardian*, 24 July 2015, available at: www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jul/24/david-cameron-extremism-struggle-generation-abdul-wahid. Last visited: 7 November 2015.

⁴⁸ ‘Right to work & the right to be a housewife’, *After the Arab Spring: The Islamic Khilafah; A Manifesto for Change*, Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, June 2012 (1st Edition), available at: issuu.com/hizb_ut_tahrir/docs/the-islamic-khilafah-a-manifesto-for-change?e=2034447/3061582#search. Last visited: 17 August 2015.

⁴⁹ See: ‘5. Further Restrictions on Women in the Caliphate’.

⁵⁰ ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.22, 24.

IS regards one of women's primary roles as supporting and sustaining men in their efforts to expand the Caliphate as "the wife of a mujahid".⁵¹ The group's online magazine *Dabiq* similarly instructs women to "[f]acilitate all matters" for their husbands and to "not make things difficult for them". It also tells them not to waste their "time and energy in play, futility, and what does not concern you".⁵² IS encourages women living in IS territory to be stoical and prepared for times of hardship. The group's online magazine *Dabiq* warns women that marrying an IS fighter could mean their husbands are killed, injured or kidnapped at any point, and asks, "[H]ow ready is your supply of patience and steadfastness?"⁵³

The group's al-Khanssaa Brigade considers it legitimate for girls to marry at the age of nine, and that "[m]ost pure girls will be married by sixteen or seventeen, while they are still young and active".⁵⁴ IS views the role of women supporting men as an essential part of *jihad*: "the Companions ... did not spread Islam in these vast lands except with their righteous wives behind them."⁵⁵ According to Aqsa Mahmood (or 'Umm Layth'), a woman who left her home in Glasgow in 2013 to join IS and has since encouraged others to do so online, days for women living under IS rule "will revolve around cooking, cleaning, looking after and sometimes even educating the children".⁵⁶

Both groups state that there is no obligation of women to engage in military *jihad* (unlike the requirements on their husbands). HT's draft constitution states that *jihad* as warfare is "an obligation upon the men and not women", citing the following *hadith* (reported speech of the Prophet) that narrates that Muhammad said "Yes, they have to take part in Jihad in which no fighting takes place: Hajj and 'Umra."⁵⁷ IS states that there is no obligation of women to engage in military *jihad*, with the exception being defending herself if someone attacks her. IS advises that, while women are obligated to remain in the home rather than fighting, they still play a key role in *jihad* by "building the Ummah, producing men, and sending them out to the fierceness of battle". This role, according to IS, includes teaching their children "the difference between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong".⁵⁸ From early 2015, IS in Aleppo ruled that "women are not allowed to bear arms openly in the markets or streets".⁵⁹

3.2 Public Roles

Both HT's recent online global campaigns and its British branch, HTB, emphasise the importance of education for women. HTB stated in its 2012 'Manifesto for Change' that, in an Islamic Caliphate, "[w]omen are to be given every educational opportunity for self-development".⁶⁰ HT's central office claimed on a YouTube video that the Caliphate "will deliver a first-class education system for its women" and ensure "the educational rights and aspirations of women are met" in order to "encourage women into higher studies to become for example, doctors, scientists, architects, or engineers".⁶¹ The group frames this positive narrative around the Caliphate's obligation

⁵¹ 'A Jihad Without Fighting; From the Battle of Al-Ahزاب to the War of Coalitions', *Dabiq*, 11th Issue, 9 August 2015, p.41.

⁵² 'A Brief Interview with Umm Basir al-Muhajirah; From Hypocrisy to Apostasy', *Dabiq*, 7th Issue, 12 February 2015, p.51.

⁵³ 'A Jihad Without Fighting; From the Battle of Al-Ahزاب to the War of Coalitions', *Dabiq*, 11th Issue, 9 August 2015, p.41.

⁵⁴ 'Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade', *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.22, 24.

⁵⁵ 'A Brief Interview with Umm Basir al-Muhajirah; From Hypocrisy to Apostasy', *Dabiq*, 7th Issue, 12 February 2015, p.51, available at: azelin.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/the-islamic-state-e2809cdc481biq-magazine-722.pdf. Last visited: 8 September 2015.

⁵⁶ 'Diary of a Muhajirah; Fa Tubalilghuraba; Umm Layth, 9 April 2014', available at: web.archive.org/web/20140529061827/http://fa-tubalilghuraba.tumblr.com/post/82181535227/diary-of-a-muhajirah. Last visited: 15 November 2015.

⁵⁷ 'The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1', Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), p.322.

⁵⁸ 'A Jihad Without Fighting; From the Battle of Al-Ahزاب to the War of Coalitions', *Dabiq*, 11th Issue, 9 August 2015, p.41.

⁵⁹ Al-Tamimi, A. J., 'Specimen SE: General notification, Aleppo Province, Jumada al-Awal 1436 AH (February/March 2015); Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents', *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi's Blog*, 27 January 2015, available at: www.aymennjawad.org/2015/01/archive-of-islamic-state-administrative-documents. Last visited: 28 September 2015.

⁶⁰ 'Right to work & the right to be a housewife', After the Arab Spring: The Islamic Khilafah; A Manifesto for Change, Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, June 2012 (1st Edition), p.23.

⁶¹ 'Women's Education under the Khilafah; The Women's Section of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut-Tahrir', *YouTube*, 16 March 2015, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtUyUXL8L0. Last visited: 14 October 2015; 'Fathima Al-Fihri – Founder of the First University in the World; The

to “provide the best education and medical services possible to its citizens” and that this makes “an abundance of women doctors, nurses and teachers to fulfil these roles” a necessity.⁶²

HT’s global campaign describes educational opportunities as a way of challenging women’s traditional gender roles, stating that free education would help ensure women “aren’t held back in doing household labour chores”.⁶³ It also commits to tackling “[m]edia and cultural influences that promote women staying at home and not having a public life that keeps women out of education” in its imagined Islamic state, and to “removing any traditional attitudes or cultural barriers that devalue female education or prevent girls from pursuing their educational rights”.⁶⁴ In regard to HT’s founding documents, Article 173 of its draft constitution refers to the state’s obligation “to teach every individual, male or female, those things that are necessary for the mainstream of life”.⁶⁵ It also lists the areas in which a woman is permitted to work, including trade, agriculture, and industry, and states that she can “own any type of property and invest her wealth whether personally or otherwise” and “teach and carry out *Jihad*”.⁶⁶

However, despite permitting women to carry out the above activities, the draft constitution also places heavy emphasis on women’s primary role in society being to stay at home as mother and wife, and outlines a plan to impose restrictions on women’s movements and appearance in the public sphere.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the document also lists the leadership roles that women would be forbidden from taking in a Caliphate: “women are not permitted to undertake anything at all from any of the actions of ruling, whether the *Khilifah*, assistant, governor, Supreme judge, judge in the *Madhalim* court, or *amil* in the district”.⁶⁸

Another point of agreement between HT’s draft constitution and modern online campaigns is its position on gender segregation in education. Article 172 of the draft constitution states that teaching in private schools “should not be mixed between males and females, whether the students or the teachers”.⁶⁹ HT’s more recent online campaign stated it would segregate educational institutions by gender in an Islamic Caliphate:

The Islamic state will provide girl only universities so that parents can feel a peace of mind with the fact that their girls are only going to school for education and for no other deviant purposes or destructive purposes.⁷⁰

However, there also appears to be a point of tension between the HT’s global campaign and its national branches regarding women’s roles in private and public spheres. In 2012 – the same year that HTB released its ‘Manifesto for Change’ – HT’s Indonesian branch criticised systems placing:

Women’s Section of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut-Tahrir’, *YouTube*, 9 March 2015, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF4tqkWfKMc. Last visited: 14 October 2015.

⁶² ‘Women’s Education under the Khilafah; The Women’s Section of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut-Tahrir’, *YouTube*, 16 March 2015.

⁶³ ‘Securing the Educational Aspirations of Women? Central Media Office Hizb ut-Tahrir’, *YouTube*, 6 October 2011, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLaZACHunKs. Last visited: 14 October 2015.

⁶⁴ ‘Securing the Educational Aspirations of Women? Central Media Office Hizb ut-Tahrir’, *YouTube*, 6 October 2011; ‘Women’s Education under the Khilafah; The Women’s Section of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut-Tahrir’, *YouTube*, 16 March 2015.

⁶⁵ ‘Education Policy; The Draft Constitution of the Khilafah State’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, undated, p.21.

⁶⁶ ‘The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), p.485.

⁶⁷ See: ‘5. Restrictions on Women in the Caliphate’.

⁶⁸ ‘The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), pp.490–491.

⁶⁹ ‘Education Policy; The Draft Constitution of the Khilafah State’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, undated, p.21.

⁷⁰ ‘Securing the Educational Aspirations of Women? Central Media Office Hizb ut-Tahrir’, *YouTube*, 6 October 2011.

employment and women's empowerment ... above all other values in life ... and eroding the concept of male and state maintenance of women - all in an attempt to drive women into the workplace.⁷¹

It also stated that this "dehumanized women to nothing but economic commodities that bring financial benefit to their state".⁷²

Like HT, IS' al-Khanssaa Brigade claims that women should receive an education, although to a lesser degree. The group emphasises that women should be educated only to the extent that women can fulfil their "fundamental role" as mother "to bring up and educate, protect and care for the next generation to come" as "[s]he cannot fulfil this role if she is illiterate and ignorant". The group caps the need for further education of women, stating: "there is with no need for her to flit here and there to get degrees and so on, just so she can try to prove that her intelligence is greater than a man's".⁷³ It states that, while it supports education of women within its own restricted framework, it does not support women leaving the private sphere of their homes:

Yes, we say "stay in your houses", but this does not mean, in any way, that we support illiteracy, backwardness or ignorance. Rather, we just support the distinction between working - that which involves a woman leaving the house - and studying, as it was ordained she should do.⁷⁴

Al-Khanssaa claims that IS "has not been stingy towards its women in providing institutions and courses on the entirety of the Shari'ah sciences."⁷⁵ The al-Khanssaa Brigade has outlined "a plan for the ideal education of our girls" in which it lists subjects for girls aged seven to fifteen years old "or a little earlier", largely based around the group's proscribed primary gender roles of wife and mother:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 7-9 years: | there will be three lessons: fiqh and religion, Quranic Arabic (written and read), and science (accounting and natural sciences). |
| 10-12 years: | there will be more religious studies, especially fiqh, focusing more on fiqh related to women and the rulings on marriage and divorce. This is in addition to the other two subjects. Skills like textiles and knitting, basic cooking will also be taught. |
| 13-15 years: | there will be more of a focus on Shari'ah, as well as more manual skills (especially those related to raising children) and less of the science, the basics of which will already have been taught. In addition, they will be taught about Islamic history, the life of the Prophet and his followers. ⁷⁶ |

The movements and dress of women and girls are heavily restricted in schools and universities under IS control. According to a source living in Mosul, IS planned to introduce gender segregation into universities in Mosul from 1st September 2014.⁷⁷ In early 2015, the group's al-Khanssaa Brigade

⁷¹ 'Hizb ut Tahrir will host an International Women's Conference: "The Khilafah: Protecting Women from Poverty and Enslavement"', Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia, 9 December 2012.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ 'Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade', *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.18, 21.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.23.

⁷⁵ 'A Jihad Without Fighting: From the Battle of Al-Ahزاب to the War of Coalitions', *Dabiq*, 11th Issue, 9 August 2015, p.44.

⁷⁶ 'Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade', *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.24.

⁷⁷ 'Report: ISIS axes gender mixing in Mosul universities', *Al Arabiya*, 1 August 2014, available at: english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/08/01/Report-ISIS-orders-no-gender-mixing-in-Mosul-universities.html. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

confirmed that IS had “spared no efforts” in enforcing gender-segregated classrooms in Mosul.⁷⁸ In Deir el-Zour, the non-profit organisation The Borgen Project reported that:

Male and female students and teachers are taught in separate classrooms or schools. Girls and women also must wear the niqab, a full-body veil that leaves only the eyes visible. The Hisbah, the ISIS religious police force, monitors schools to make sure teachers and students follow the Islamist guidelines.⁷⁹

4. Further Restrictions on Women in the Caliphate

HT seeks to impose restrictions on women’s movements and appearance in public. HT states in its draft constitution that a woman “is an honour that must be protected”, and is therefore surrounded with rules restricting her movements and visible appearance, both in private and public spaces, as methods of protection.⁸⁰ More recently, a senior HTB member stated at a UK event: “The Islamic state then implements these rules and laws which protect the women in society, ensuring that she cannot be sexually exploited by even a lustful glance from a stranger”.⁸¹

Similarly, IS’ al-Khanssaa Brigade states that its restrictions on women’s movements and dress place additional physical barriers between the sexes and, therefore, safeguard against temptation. It is, according to the group, “always preferable for a woman to remain hidden and veiled, to maintain society from behind this veil”.⁸²

4.1 Dress Codes

HT’s draft constitution cites a verse from the Koran stating that Allah said:

And tell the believing women to not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their husbands’ sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women.

The founding document uses this as evidence to support its position that a woman:

can only let her family (Maharim – those men who cannot marry her) and those who do not have sexual desires (children and elderly) see more than her face and hands.⁸³

It also refers to the prohibition of *Tabarruj*, defined by the group as “beautification which attracts attention”, and the wearing of the following clothing as “obligatory”: wrapping the headscarf to cover upper and outer clothing so that the chest is covered; wearing the *jilbab*, a long garment worn over the clothing to the floor; and, avoiding “the open display of beautification”.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.34.

⁷⁹ ‘Education Under ISIS: A ‘Generation in Darkness’’, *The Borgen Project*, 2 July 2015, available at: borgenproject.org/education-isis-generation-darkness/. Last visited: 6 March 2016.

⁸⁰ ‘The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), p.470, 476, 478.

⁸¹ ‘What truly liberates women? Secularism or Islam? Shohana Khan presentation’, *YouTube*, March 2013

⁸² ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.22.

⁸³ ‘The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), p.470, 476, 478.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.480-481.

HT's draft constitution is echoed in the group's recent activities in the UK. According to a former HTB member, 'Umm Mustafa', female HT members have "a very specific dress code": "the jilbab (a loose dress), khimar (headscarf) and socks" in a "uniform-like style".⁸⁵ Former HTB member Alison Tawil states that, during her time in the group in the 1990s, its dress code was a "two-piece hijab consisting of scarf (khumar) and lower garment (jilbab) which was worn over the normal clothing". According to Tawil, the dress code was decided by the group after its former leader Omar Bakri Mohammed "suggested a dress design typically worn by women in Syria".⁸⁶ According to Umm Mustafa, women were forced to cover up if they wanted to remain in the party, and the dress code was made mandatory by the HT *emir*.⁸⁷ Tawil further describes how women were pressured into covering up:

Evidences in scripture were manipulated to prove that this dress was obligatory in Islam and you were not allowed to study with the party if you were openly committing haram (sin) and therefore would not be allowed to join. ... You were not allowed to study with the party unless you fulfilled the dress code.⁸⁸

Women in HT have faced social as well as religious pressure to abide by the party's dress code. According to Maajid Nawaz, who is a former member of HTB's national executive, "We intimidated Muslim women until they wore the hijab."⁸⁹

IS has enforced an increasingly strict dress code for women living in territory under its control, and has even chastised its terrorist rival AQ for having "so far made no effort to ... regulate how women dress".⁹⁰

In the year prior to the group's announcement of an established Caliphate, IS had already begun imposing restrictions on women's dress in various areas under its control. In November 2013, IS in Jarabulus imposed the "obligation for women to wear the Shari'i hijab", warning that every woman had one week to comply or be sent with her male guardian to be put on trial at a *sharia* court. It stated that the *hijab* "should be wide and fluttering, not tight, transparent, and not attractive for the eyes with adornment or perfume".⁹¹

The following month, an Islamic court in Tel Abyad of the Raqqa province ruled that women were to be completely banned from wearing "tight trousers and cloaks" and unveiling, as well as "the adorning of oneself and imitation of kafir [disbelieving] women". These restrictions, enforced by the 'Virtue and Vice Committee' prior to formation of the Diwan al-Hisbah,⁹² were followed by a

⁸⁵ Mustafa, U., 'Why I left Hizb ut-Tahrir', *New Statesman*, 28 February 2008, available at: www.newstatesman.com/politics/2008/02/party-hizb-tahrir-members. Last visited: 22 September 2015.

⁸⁶ Interview with Alison Tawil, former HTB member, 6 October 2015.

⁸⁷ Mustafa, U., 'Why I left Hizb ut-Tahrir', *New Statesman*, 28 February 2008.

⁸⁸ Interview with Alison Tawil, former HTB member, 6 October 2015.

⁸⁹ Ahmed, H. & Stuart, H., *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy*, Centre for Social Cohesion, 2009, available at: henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/HIZB.pdf. Last visited: 26 October 2015.

⁹⁰ 'The Law of Allah or the Laws of Men', *Dabiq*, 10th Issue, 13 July 2015, pp.67-68, available at: azelin.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/the-islamic-state-e2809cdc481biq-magazine-1022.pdf. Last visited: 9 September 2015.

⁹¹ Al-Tamimi, A. J., 'Specimen 5P: Imposition of Hijab Shari'i on Women, Jarabulus, November 2013; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents', *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi's Blog*, 27 January 2015.

⁹² Later established in areas under sole IS control which, as Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi notes, Tel-Abyad was not at the time the restrictions were announced.

warning that “any woman who contravenes this statement for distribution will expose herself to the severest consequences”.⁹³

In April 2014, Aqsa Mahmood posted online from Raqqa, advising women travelling out to join IS to “try and bring your 3 layer Niqaabs, Jilbabs and Khimars from back home”.⁹⁴ According to a former member of the all-female al-Khanssaa Brigade living in Raqqa, “It’s compulsory to wear a burqa, no heels, all black, no colors.”⁹⁵ She also criticised the Syrian people’s “view of Hijab”: “the abayas are skin tight and their niqaab starts from their forehead and ends at their nostrils, I wish I was exaggerating but unfortunately I’m really not.”⁹⁶

Within weeks of taking Mosul in June 2014, IS published a charter of the city’s new restrictions on women’s dress and movements “to end the pretext of debauchery resulting from grooming and overdressing” and “to prevent her from falling into humiliation and vulgarity or to be a theatre for the eyes of those who are looking,” rather than acting as “a restriction on her freedom”.⁹⁷

Women were first ordered by IS to cover their entire bodies by wearing a black *abaya*. IS then issued a command to wear a veil, followed by a command to wear a shield on top of the *abaya*, and instructed women to wear black clothes, shoes and gloves. The group then ordered women to wear a double-layered veil in order to cover their eyes, and designed a looser robe because it deemed some of the previous *abayas* too revealing of the body’s outline. A Mosul resident reported that IS had forced all women to wear a veil even though the majority of women living in the city previously had chosen to wear the *hijab*.⁹⁸ The group warned women living in the city that they would risk severe punishment if they did not abide by the restrictions, declaring:

Anyone who is not committed to this duty and is motivated by glamour will be subject to accountability and severe punishment to protect society from harm and to maintain the necessities of religion and protect it from debauchery.⁹⁹

IS’ restrictions on dress extend to hospitals. Raqqa residents reported that nurses working in hospitals were being forced by IS to wear a full veil and IS’ “Islamic dress”, and were forbidden to lift them. Furthermore, IS’ strict dress codes in hospitals apply to patients, including women in labour. According to a woman living in Mosul:

When I was in labour, I went to the hospital wearing a veil though it was too hot. Isis Hisbah were at the front door of the hospital. I saw some women in labour who seemed to be in a panic and did not have time to wear a veil. I was shocked to see that they were denied access to the hospital unless they put veils on their faces.¹⁰⁰

⁹³ Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen 11: Restrictions on women’s clothing, Tel Abyad, Raqqa province (December 2013); Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

⁹⁴ ‘Diary of a Muhajirah; Fa Tubalilghuraba; Umm Layth’, 9 April 2014.

⁹⁵ Boghani, P., ‘How ISIS Is Using Women To Police Other Women’, *Frontline; PBS*, 13 July 2015, available at: www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/foreign-affairs-defense/escaping-isis/how-isis-is-using-women-to-police-other-women/. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

⁹⁶ ‘Diary of a Muhajirah; Fa Tubalilghuraba; Umm Layth’, 9 April 2014.

⁹⁷ ‘Iraq’s top cleric sends subtle message to Maliki: step aside’, *Reuters*, 25 July 2014, available at: uk.reuters.com/article/2014/07/25/uk-iraq-security-idUKKBN0FU0TO20140725. Last visited: 2 November 2015.

⁹⁸ Mahmood, M., ‘Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis’, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015.

⁹⁹ ‘Iraq’s top cleric sends subtle message to Maliki: step aside’, *Reuters*, 25 July 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Mahmood, M., ‘Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis’, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015.

Female doctors in Mosul reported to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) that:

ISIL is monitoring the implementation of their takfiri regulations at the hospital entrances and, on two occasions, female doctors were stopped and insulted. ISIL also inquired in hospitals into the marital status of the female doctors and stated that married women should wear black, while unmarried females other colours, so as to be easily distinguishable. On one occasion, a female doctor reported that she was stopped from attending to an urgent case because she was not covered properly; after a long heated discussion with the ISIL fighter, she was allowed to perform her duties. In another case – not related to the covering of the face – a male anaesthetist was prevented from providing anaesthesia to a female patient; after arguing that there was no female anaesthetist available and that the life of the patient was in danger, he was permitted to attend to the case.¹⁰¹

Similar rules are enforced in schools. In December 2014, in Wilayat al-Furat, an IS-designated province spanning Eastern Syria and Western Iraq, an IS “Education Centre” declared that “[w]omen visiting schools may not enter without embracing Shari’a regulation dress”.¹⁰²

In Deir el-Zour, Syria, a secondary school student reported that “neither students nor teachers are allowed to lift the veil of [sic.] their faces inside the classroom”, despite the fact that “all the teachers in girls’ schools are female”. She added that young girls at primary school level “have to wear an abaya until the 4th class, when they have to wear a veil too”.¹⁰³ Moreover, *sharia* lessons for schoolteachers are segregated by gender.¹⁰⁴ A woman living in IS territory recalls: “I had to quit my university studies in Aleppo because I’m not allowed to cross the checkpoints without a mahram and leave the city by myself like before.”¹⁰⁵

By early 2015, the all-female al-Khanssaa Brigade described women as having been “returned to their Rightful jilbabs and sedentary lifestyle” under IS. It outlined how women were being “returned” to a state of modesty and dignity following “the establishment of the Caliphate”:

[...] coverings and hijab things returned to the country and decency swept the country. Now, women are able to travel to their people in Raqqa without having to show their face to the eyes of even one inspector. Respect for their bodies has returned and has been taken from the eyes of onlookers, with their corrupted hearts. Causes of their humiliation are prevented, revealing dresses were confiscated from shops and scandalous photos were banned from walls and shelves. Muslims, with the permission of God, were cleansed.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ ‘Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 6 July – 10 September 2014’, UNAMI/OHCHR, 2014, p.10, available at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI_OHCHR_POC_Report_FINAL_6July_10September2014.pdf. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

¹⁰² Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen 4D: Education Regulations: Euphrates Province (Iraq sector); Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

¹⁰³ Mahmood, M., ‘Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis’, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen L: Shari’a Session for Teachers, Raqqa Province; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

¹⁰⁵ Mahmood, M., ‘Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis’, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.28, 41.

Those caught violating IS' restrictions are subject to severe punishment. For example, the Hisbah have been reported to use a stick to strike women over the head if they are caught not wearing a veil. If a woman is caught in public not wearing gloves or a shield, the Hisbah either offer her the recommended dress, warning her not to leave the house without them again, or take her to their headquarters and detain her until the woman's *mahram* comes to collect her. A female hospital worker reports that IS takes a heavy-handed approach to female doctors striking in protest against restrictions:

Hisbah took ambulances and went to their houses and brought them by force to the hospital. One of my colleagues was alone in her clinic in the hospital and thought it was all right to strip off her veil. All of a sudden, two Hisbah broke in her room and reproached her for not wearing the veil and warned her not to do that again.¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, it has been reported that in August 2014, a female doctor was killed during IS' attempt to remove her from her home for having organised or taken part in the strike.¹⁰⁸

Women are used by IS to police and enforce restrictions on women's attire as part of the group's all-female al-Khanssaa Brigade. In July 2014, an IS official in Raqqa declared:

We have established the brigade to raise awareness of our religion among women, and to punish women who do not abide by the law. [...] There are only women in this brigade, and we have given them their own facilities to prevent the mixture of men and women.¹⁰⁹

According to a former member, the brigade polices and administers punishment upon women found to be in violation of IS' restrictions:

The first thing we'd do is take her and whip her. Then we'd take her clothes and replace them with clothes required by Sharia law. Then we'd take her husband's money to pay for the clothes.¹¹⁰

Women's husbands and family members are also held responsible for ensuring they adhere to IS' restrictions. Male guardians, or *mahrams*, face punishment if women are caught violating IS' rules on dress code. For example, if a woman is taken to Hisbah headquarters, her *mahram* may face punishment of either lashes or a fine.¹¹¹ A former member of IS' al-Khanssaa Brigade described whipping the husbands of women who do not adhere to IS rules.¹¹² A woman from Mosul reported she "had heard stories of men being flogged because their wives didn't put their gloves on" and that "Another woman's parents were banned from driving their car."¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ 'Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 6 July – 10 September 2014', UNAMI/OHCHR, undated, p.10.

¹⁰⁹ 'In Raqqa, an All-Female ISIS Brigade Cracks Down on Local Women', *Syria Deeply*, 15 July 2014, available at: www.syriadeeply.org/articles/2014/07/5799/raqqa-all-female-isis-brigade-cracks-local-women/. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

¹¹⁰ Boghani, P., 'How ISIS Is Using Women To Police Other Women', *Frontline: PBS*, 13 July 2015.

¹¹¹ Mahmood, M., 'Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis', *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015.

¹¹² Boghani, P., 'How ISIS Is Using Women To Police Other Women', *Frontline: PBS*, 13 July 2015.

¹¹³ 'Inside Mosul: What's life like under Islamic State?', *BBC News*, 9 June 2015, available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-32831854. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

One of the consequences of IS' restrictions on women's dress is that women have been deterred from leaving their homes and entering into the public sphere. One woman living in Mosul reported:

One day I felt so bored at home that I asked my husband to take me out, even if I had to wear the full khimar [a long, cape-like veil that covers the hair, neck and shoulders completely, but leaves the face clear]. I had not left home since IS took over the city. As I was preparing, he told me I would be forced to put on a niqab [veil for the face]. I was shocked at this and considered staying at home for a moment, but eventually I relented.¹¹⁴

IS' restrictions have also meant that women are no longer able to stay in employment and businesses have been forced to close. For example, IS also ordered the closure of all female hairdressing salons in Mosul in order to prevent beautification.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, one woman reported that female staff are now almost entirely absent from hospitals in Raqqa.¹¹⁶ Another woman living in Mosul was forced to close her medical eye clinic due having been forced to wear a burqa at all times, including whilst performing operations.¹¹⁷ IS has reportedly ordered the closure of any women's medical clinics run by male doctors.¹¹⁸ A consequence of fewer women working in the health sector has had a knock on effect on service provision. A source living in Mosul recalls:

I can't forget when the only female anaesthetist in the hospital quit her job and we had women who needed caesarean operations, and we asked for the help of another hospital who sent us one of their male anaesthetists to save the lives of the patients. When the male anaesthetist [sic.] reached the hospital, the Isis monitor denied him access for being male. Two women died that night. The hospitals began to bleed doctors who were not able to cope with the unusual situation, especially female doctors and nurses who had to wear a veil all the time. My hospital was also full of Isis militants who were monitoring all the wards and medical staff.¹¹⁹

4.2 Restriction of Movements and Gender Segregation

HT states that women's primary role is to remain in the private sphere, and that her movements should be restricted in the public sphere. Article 113 of the group's draft constitution states that "In origin men and women are segregated, and do not come together except for a need by Shar' agrees to it and agrees to their assembly for it, such as trade and the pilgrimage", meaning "that men are segregated from women, and so each of them lives in a different sphere of life than the other".¹²⁰ The draft constitution also provides *hadith* (reported speech of Islam's Prophet Muhammad) as "evidence" for the banning of gender mixing, including narrations that Islam's Prophet Muhammad

¹¹⁴ 'Inside Mosul: What's life like under Islamic State?', *BBC News*, 9 June 2015.

¹¹⁵ Mahmood, M., 'Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis', *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015; Paraszczuk, J., 'The ISIS Economy: Crushing Taxes and High Unemployment', *The Atlantic*, 2 September 2015.

¹¹⁶ Mahmood, M., 'Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis', *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015.

¹¹⁷ Paraszczuk, J., 'The ISIS Economy: Crushing Taxes and High Unemployment', *The Atlantic*, 2 September 2015, available at: www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/isis-territory-taxes-recruitment-syria/403426/. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

¹¹⁸ 'Isis shuts down women's clinics in Raqqa to prevent male gynaecologists treating female patients', *The Independent*, 30 October 2015, available at: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-shuts-down-womens-clinics-in-raqqa-to-prevent-male-gynaecologists-treating-female-patients-a6713266.html. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

¹¹⁹ Mahmood, M., 'Life in Mosul one year on: 'Isis with all its brutality is more honest than the Shia government'', *The Guardian*, 10 June 2015, available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/10/mosul-residents-one-year-on-isis-brutality. Last visited: 1 November 2015.

¹²⁰ 'The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1', Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), pp.479-480.

said: “A man should not be alone with a woman unless she has a Mahram (male family member) with her” and: “It is not permitted for a woman who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement to travel a day and night journey without Mahram”.¹²¹

IS shares HT’s position that women’s movements should be restricted in public, around which it has begun restricting the movements of women living in its territory. In February 2014, IS in Manbij, Aleppo, released a statement on gender mixing claiming that women should be veiled from men through the prohibition of free mixing in order to maintain “the honour of our daughters and sisters”.¹²² The group therefore ensures that women’s movements are heavily restricted without being in the presence of a *mahram*. According to a recent al-Khanssaa Brigade publication, IS “tries to stop men and women mixing and works to prevent it as much as possible”.¹²³

There are only certain exceptional circumstances whereby women are permitted to leave the house in order “to serve the community”, according to the al-Khanssaa document. Alongside “things that she customarily needs to do like traveling, on visits or hospitalized and so on”, the most important circumstance, according to the group, is: “Jihad (by appointment) – if the enemy is attacking her country and the men are not enough to protect it and the imams give a fatwa for it”, followed by “studying the sciences of religion”. It also states that “Female doctors or teachers may leave, but they must keep strictly to Shariah guidelines.”¹²⁴

In November 2014, IS’ al-Bahuth wa al-Eftaa’ Committee (Fatwa Issuing and Investigation Department) issued a *fatwa* (religious edict) ruling that “A woman may not travel without a mahrim.”¹²⁵ IS’ Hisbah in Raqqa released a statement of regulations including the prohibition of women from leaving the province of Raqqa without a *mahram* (unless they have approval from the Hisbah). The statement read: “It is absolutely forbidden for women to travel to the land of kufr [disbelief]”, with the only exception being if she had “serious medical conditions” and approval from the head of the hospital. It then warned that anyone who goes against these rulings “will subject himself to the necessary consequence and inquiry”.¹²⁶

Women living in IS territory face restrictions not only on travel but also on performing daily tasks such as shopping or working in public settings. For example, from September 2015, in Albukamal, a city in Eastern Syria, the Hisbah imposed regulations on shop owners, including prohibiting them from selling to women who are without a *mahram*.¹²⁷

¹²¹ Ibid., p.478.

¹²² Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen 7Y: Prohibition on gender mixing, Manbij, Aleppo Province; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

¹²³ ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.33.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.22.

¹²⁵ Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen 1Y: Fatwa on Women’s Travel: Al-Buhuth wa al-Eftaa’ Committee; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

¹²⁶ Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen M: On Movement of Women and the Garages: Raqqa Province; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

¹²⁷ Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen 8F: Regulations for clothes shop owners imposed by Diwan al-Hisba (Albukamal area): September 2015; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

IS released a *fatwa* on the subject of female nurses mixing with male doctors ruling that “[i]t is forbidden for a woman to be left alone with the man who is a stranger [i.e. not a close relative]”.¹²⁸ It further states that the male doctor should take precautions against temptation through being left alone with a female nurse:

if you excuse the presence of the mahrim, let there be with her a group of women to avert what fitna [temptation] may arise, but if you excuse the presence of the group of women, the nurse's presence is forbidden.¹²⁹

Furthermore, when visiting a doctor, female patients must now be accompanied by a *mahram*, who is ordered to wait outside the doctor’s clinic.¹³⁰ In early 2015, the al-Khanssaa Brigade declared that the Caliphate “has become the first and only place in which full government healthcare is given without mixing in modern hospitals”.¹³¹

4.3 Age Range of Women Facing Restrictions

HT determines that, when a girl/woman is of an age where she is deemed able to produce children, she should be – to varying degrees – covered and separated from men in the public sphere. The group’s draft constitution provides as evidence a *hadith* that states that Islam’s Prophet Muhammad told one of his female companions: “If a girl reaches puberty (indicated by starting menstrual cycle), it is not correct that any part of her be seen other than her face and her two hands up to the wrists”.¹³²

HT appears to take a slightly more relaxed approach towards restricting the movements and dress of older women. Its draft constitution cites a verse from the Koran stating that Allah said: “And women of post-menstrual age who have no desire for marriage – there is no blame upon them for putting aside their outer garments [but] not displaying adornment.”¹³³ HT uses this as evidence to support its position that a women of a post-menstrual age

should not be beautified, since beautification is permitted for the woman without any restriction, rather they should not display their beautification in such a way that would turn men’s attention towards them, and so the prohibition is for the open display of the beautification and not the beautification itself.¹³⁴

In this regard, IS practice appears to reflect HT theory, owing to the fact that girls as young as primary school level have reportedly faced restrictions of appearance and movements. In Mosul, IS imposed restrictions on school children as young as primary school level. According to a resident living there, in October 2014:

¹²⁸ Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen 2L: Fatwa on Nurses with Doctors; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Mahmood, M., ‘Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis’, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015.

¹³¹ ‘Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade’, *Quilliam Foundation*, February 2015, p.33.

¹³² ‘The Draft Constitution Or The Necessary Evidences for it, Part 1’, Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2010 (2nd Edition), p.476, 493, 498.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.479.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

the headmistress told them that they all have to wear the hijab when they come to school. ... Then an Isis order came to stipulate that only girls in 4th, 5th and 6th class in primary school have to wear hijab, not 1st and 2nd classes.¹³⁵

A secondary student living under IS rule reported that in Deir el-Zour, Syria, young girls at primary school level “have to wear an abaya until the 4th class, when they have to wear a veil too”.¹³⁶ Like HT, IS also appears to have taken a more relaxed approach towards the movements and attire of older women. IS permitted women over the age of 55 to travel outside the city in groups of three or more in order to complete “matters of necessity” such as “pension transactions”.¹³⁷ One IS statement ruled that “[e]lderly women are not pressured on the issue of the hijab”.¹³⁸ One IS statement ruled that women over the age of 50 are permitted to travel without a *mahram*;¹³⁹ another ruled that women living in Mosul under the age of 55 are not allowed under any circumstances to travel without a *mahram* (therefore implying that those over 55 are).¹⁴⁰

However, there are conflicting sources regarding whether this is being enforced. According to a resident living in Mosul, IS “forced women of all ages to wear a veil”. The same source recounted sharing a taxi with an older, unveiled woman who was told by the driver, “I’m afraid if I have you in my car, Isis Hisbah will stop me at a checkpoint and fine me”.¹⁴¹

Conclusion

Hizb ut-Tahrir often claims that its model for an Islamic society would both empower and protect women. It claims that women would be free to pursue further education and employment. In reality, its very purpose is to achieve the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate whereby women would face many of the same restrictions enforced by Islamic State.

Both groups claim that these restrictions benefit not only women but the rest of society. Women are given the role of producers and supporters of men, a role that is celebrated by both groups as crucial to society, in that it enables male fighters to continue expanding the Caliphate into the future. Women are expected to be subservient to their husbands and remain within the private sphere as much as possible.

HT envisions a society where women are not allowed to leave their houses without a male guardian. Women would be forced to wear what is effectively a uniform, designed to further cut them off from the public sphere. For many, IS have made this vision a reality, imposing the same restrictions on women’s movements and dress that appear in the teachings of ostensibly non-violent groups such as HT. As a result, female doctors and nurses have been driven out of hospitals, and women

¹³⁵ Mahmood, M., ‘Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis’, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Indirect testimony via Deir el-Zour under siege, see: Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen 6G: Conditions for travel outside Mosul; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

¹³⁸ Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen M: On Movement of Women and the Garages: Raqqa Province; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Al-Tamimi, A. J., ‘Specimen 6G: Conditions for travel outside Mosul; Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents’, *Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi’s Blog*, 27 January 2015.

¹⁴¹ Mahmood, M., ‘Double-layered veils and despair ... women describe life under Isis’, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2015.

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are afraid to step out into the street. Were HT to achieve its goal of making its draft constitution a reality, we should expect to see similar damage to women's rights and roles in the public sphere.

The powerful ideology of Islamism teaches women living in Great Britain that their freedoms are shackles from which liberation can only come from living under Caliphate rule. This narrative helps build the ideological foundations upon which moving to live in a so-called Caliphate is not only an attractive option, but a duty, in the minds of many. The significant ideological overlap regarding women's roles and obligations in society between IS and one of the most influential Islamist groups in Britain suggests that Western governments should not fall into the trap of thinking that it is only the violent extremists that need challenging.

About the Author

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