ABSTRACT

of the dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the educational program "8D03101-Sociology"

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"Sociological aspects of hijab (head cover): the case of big megapolis of Almaty"

General Information about the Dissertation. The dissertation is devoted to a sociological analysis of the hijab (headdress) in a modern city. Hijab is considered not only as an element of religious practice, but also as a socio-cultural phenomenon related to women's religious identity, public perception and the dynamics of the modest fashion industry. The study focuses on Muslim women in the cities of Kazakhstan, for whom the hijab is a marker of religious affiliation and a means of self-expression. The topic of the dissertation is at the intersection of the sociology of religion, gender and culture, the research focus is aimed at identifying the features of the practice of wearing the hijab and its consequences in the Kazakh urban community.

The relevance of the work is determined by the need for a comprehensive study of the socio-cultural aspects of hijab, including the influence of family, society, media and global trends on the formation of women's religious identity. The increased interest in the topic of hijab in scientific research, publications and public discussions is justified. As a headdress / headscarf worn by many Muslim women, the hijab has been representing a very wide and ambiguous range of opinions for more than twenty years, from biased/negative to contextually positive. There are several circumstances that determine the relevance of studying hijab. First, there is currently no clear answer to the question of how many women wear hijabs around the world, as different countries have different customs, regulations and religious practices. And whatever the reason, it is obvious that the hijab is an important part of many Muslim women's lives.

The subject of the study is the formation of a new Muslim religiosity of young Kazakh women who have adopted the hijab, determining the role and significance of the hijab as a new religious practice in the daily life of residents of Almaty.

The object of the study is urban Kazakh women who practice wearing a hijab (headdress).

The aim of the work is to study the sociological aspects of wearing the hijab.

The purpose of the dissertation research is revealed by solving the following **tasks**:

– Conceptualization of theories of religious identity, women's religiosity, and everyday religious practices in the social sciences. Identification of the most relevant conceptual models applicable to the study of women's religiosity in modern conditions of urbanization and globalization.

– Search for an adequate methodology based on the analysis of various research approaches to the description of women's religious identity in sociological science and their adaptation to the study of new Muslim women's practices in urban settings.

– Application of bibliometric analysis in the study of hijab (based on the Scopus database) and identification of key research trends (authors, countries and organizations) studying hijab as a religious, socio-cultural and political phenomenon.

– The use of narrative interviews in the study of Muslim religious identity and the symbolic load of the hijab (headdress) in a modern multicultural and religiously diverse city. Analysis of women's narratives in the context of the complex interaction between religious affiliation, cultural identity and the social environment of a multicultural and multi-confessional city.

– Identification of factors and motivations that influence women's decision to wear hijab. Determination of a set of internal and external factors (social, cultural, religious, psychological) that influence women's decision to wear hijab. A study of the public perception of hijab in society among young people, including stereotypes, the level of tolerance and the influence of social institutions.

– Designing social interactions of women in hijab with the "near" and" far " environment. Assessment of the role of social institutions such as the family, school, media, and religious organizations in shaping public perception and attitudes towards the external attributes of religious identity.

– To determine the influence of social constructs (social experience, capital, and agents) that have a significant impact on the formation and reproduction of cultural and religious practices in modern Kazakhstan society.

Research questions:

1. What are the key factors (individual/collective) in following the practice of women wearing the hijab?

2. How does society form an opinion of symbolic significance in the context of public perception?

3. What causes the influence of relatives (family, relatives and friends) and society (social environment, colleagues, communities) on decision-making in following the practice of wearing the hijab by women?

4. How are the social interactions of women who practice wearing the hijab constructed, and what determines the formation of social constructs (social experience, capital, and agents)?

The hypotheses on research issues:

1. Individual (religious affiliation, cultural context, level of education, and degree of social support) and collective (social experience, capital, and agents) constructs are crucial in deciding whether to wear the hijab.

2. Relatives (family, relatives and friends), society (social environment, colleagues, communities) support/do not support, accept/do not accept women's observance of the hijab.

3. Relatives (parents, relatives and friends), society (colleagues, communities) have a direct / indirect influence on the acceptance of wearing / not wearing the hijab.

The scientific novelty of this dissertation is determined primarily by the fact that it is one of the first comprehensive sociological studies specifically devoted to the study of the phenomenon of wearing the hijab in the context of Kazakhstan's urban society, which combines a deep theoretical analysis and a large-scale empirical base that covers both the personal narratives of women who practice the hijab, and in relation to this phenomenon.

(1) An in-depth sociological analysis of key theoretical concepts that reveal the concepts of religious identity, gender religiosity, and everyday practices of believers, with an emphasis on their interpretation within the framework of modern sociology, cultural anthropology, and religious studies. At the same time, the most relevant conceptual models applicable to the study of women's religiosity in modern conditions of urbanization and globalization are identified.

(2) The author's concept*of "social adaptability of religious clothing" has been developed and put into scientific use*, which the author understands as the degree of consistency or conflict between individual religious practice and the dominant norms and expectations of a given society. Based on the analysis of interviews and public opinion, a typology of behavioral strategies of women in hijab was proposed, including, in particular, the strategy of integration (when a woman tries to be accepted as a member of secular society without giving up the headscarf), the strategy of concealment (limiting or removing the hijab in certain social situations) and the strategy of activating the religious community (using the headscarf as political and cultural markers of identity and belonging).

(3) A comparative analysis of existing sociological methodological approaches to the study of women's religious identity is presented, including both classical and recent modern studies, with a relevant assessment of their applicability to the study of transforming forms of female Muslim religiosity in an urban context. Based on this, the adapted methodological framework for studying the religious practices of Muslim women living in a multicultural metropolis is defined for research purposes.

(4) New empirical knowledge based on original qualitative and quantitative data obtained by the author as a result of field research was introduced into scientific circulation, which made it possible not only to fix the scale of the spread of the practice of wearing the hijab among women in Kazakhstan, but also to reconstruct specific motivational and cultural models underlying this choice.

(5) A comprehensive analysis of the social environment that influences the spread and perception of the practice of wearing the hijab was carried out, taking into account the interaction of factors at both the micro-social and macro-social levels. The paper attempts to take a holistic view of the influence of family, the immediate environment, educational institutions, public opinion, public policy, and transnational cultural trends-not in isolation, but in their aggregate dynamics, which allowed us to identify the mechanisms through which a woman's individual decision becomes included in a broad social context, generating not only personal, but also socially significant changes. consequences.

(6) Andthe study provided new empirical data on how the hijab is perceived in the public consciousness of various social groups, which were not previously recorded in the scientific literature of Kazakhstan. It was found that the attitude towards women in hijab is not uniform and is formed under the influence of factors such as age, level of education, degree of religiosity, as well as the place of residence (city or village). A particularly important result was the identification of the so-called "tolerance paradox", the essence of which lies in the formal transmission and hidden latentforms of religious expression.

(7) The validity of using bibliometric methods for systematization and analysis of academic publications on the topic of hijab, using data from the international scientific database Scopus, is proved. In the course of its application, key research trends, authors, countries and organizations studying hijab as a religious, socio-cultural and political phenomenon in various country contexts are identified. Identifying research and thematic gaps, as well as prospects for further research, allowed the author to publish a scientific publication *"Hijab Research Trends: A Bibliometric Analysis Over 20 Years Using the Scopus Database"* in the journal *Cogent Social Sciences* (Q2), which is part of the peer-reviewed international Scopus database.

(8) The contribution to the development of the international discourse related to the phenomenon of "modest fashion"was determined, namely, the Central Asian study analyzed the degree of influence of the global modest fashion industry on local practices, with a focus on Kazakhstan. It is shown that the activity of Kazakhstani designers creating clothing in the modest style, as well as the growing popularity of Muslim bloggers in social networks, significantly contribute to changing the public image of the hijab – from an exclusively religious symbol to an attribute of modern, stylish and respected femininity.

The methodological and theoretical basis of the research is the integration of key conceptual approaches of modern sociological science, which provides a comprehensive, multi-layered and comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of wearing the hijab in urban society in Kazakhstan. The theoretical and methodological framework is based on the ideas of the sociology of religion, cultural sociology, gender studies, symbolic interactionism, as well as the theory of globalization and systems analysis, which makes it possible to cover both micro-social and macro-social levels of research.

The structure and scope of the dissertation is determined by the goals and logic of the research. The paper consists of an introduction, six chapters, a conclusion, a list of sources used, and appendices.

The volume of the dissertation is 200 pages of typewritten text. The list of references includes 200 titles, of which about 170 are in English (foreign sources). The structure and content of the work reflect the step-by-step solution of the tasks set, and the volume meets the requirements, ensuring completeness of the presentation of the material and justification of conclusions.