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Women in Fundamentalist Terrorist Organisations as a Threat to Security

Kobiety w fundamentalistycznych organizacjach terrorystycznych jako zagrożenie dla bezpieczeństwa

• Abstrakt •

Współcześnie terroryzm jest niewątpliwie jednym z głównych zagrożeń dla bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego. Potwierdza to fakt, że Departament Stanu Stanów Zjednoczonych klasyfikuje jako organizacje terrorystyczne ponad 50 grup (witryna internetowa Departamentu Stanu Stanów Zjednoczonych).

W kontekście zagrożenia terrorystycznego możemy być świadkami rosnącej liczby kobiet – zwłaszcza w organizacjach, które radykalnie interpretują Koran, na którym opiera się Islam.

Celem artykułu było zbadanie zjawiska udziału kobiet w działalności fundamentalistycznych grup terrorystycznych.

Główny problem badawczy przyjął postać pytania: w jakim stopniu kobiety w fundamentalistycznych organizacjach terrorystycznych wpływają na poziom bezpieczeństwa? Główna hipoteza przybrała formę założenia, że wzrost skali udziału kobiet w organizacjach terrory-

• Abstract •

Today, terrorism is undoubtedly one of the major threats to international security. This is confirmed by the fact that the United States Department of State classifies more than 50 groups as terrorist organisations (The United States Department of State Website).

In the context of the terrorist threat, we can witness an increasing number of women, especially in the organisations that radically interpret the Quran (Koran) on which Islam is based.

The aim of the article was to explore the phenomenon of women's participation in the activities of fundamentalist terrorist groups.

The main research problem took the form of a question: To what extent do women in fundamentalist terrorist organisations influence the level of security? The main hypothesis, however, took the form of an assumption that the increase in the scale of women's par-

stycznych o charakterze fundamentalistycznym determinuje w kontekście zjawiska terrorystycznego rosnące z ich strony zagrożenie bezpieczeństwa. W artykule przedstawiono uwarunkowania terrorystycznej działalności kobiet oraz ich główne funkcje pełnione w strukturach organizacji terrorystycznych.

Jako podstawową metodę badawczą zastosowano analizę literatury i mediów internetowych z wykorzystaniem techniki analizy treści, a także analizy danych statystycznych (desk research).

Badania przeprowadzono w ramach projektu badawczego nr 146/WNB/65/DzS pt.: Polityka migracyjna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej jako wyznacznik jej bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego, realizowanego na Wydziale Nauk o Bezpieczeństwie Akademii Wojsk Lądowych imienia generała Tadeusza Kościuszki (Wrocław, Polska).

Słowa kluczowe: terroryzm; bezpieczeństwo; zagrożenie, kobiety

icipation in terrorist organisations of a fundamentalist nature determines, in the context of the terrorist phenomenon, the growing threat to security on their part. The article presents the determinants of women's terrorist activity and their main functions performed within the structures of terrorist organisations.

As the main research method, the analysis of literature and Internet media with the use of content analysis techniques, as well as statistical data analysis (desk research) were applied.

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Keywords: terrorism; security; threat; women

Introduction

In the global security environment of the 21st century, in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001, carried out by al-Qaeda on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, in which nearly 3,000 people died, terrorism has become a major focus of security policy. This event has permanently changed both the perception of the phenomenon and the approach to combating it. As a direct consequence of this attack, the then President of the United States, George W. Bush, announced the so-called *global war on terrorism* by means of adopting a resolution authorising the use of US forces against those responsible for the September 11 attack (Joint Resolution, 2001). Its main assumption was an international military intervention in Afghanistan, whose authorities created favourable conditions for the activity of al-Qaeda, a fundamentalist terrorist organisation founded in the 1980s by Saudi Osama bin Laden in order to militarily oppose the 1979 Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, based on a radical interpretation of the Quran. In the 1990s, the aim of the grouping was to exterminate the Western civilisation (according to S. Huntington's classification of civilizations – in his monograph *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington divided the world's population into nine competing civilizations: Western, Orthodox, Islamic, African, Latin American, Hindu, Buddhist,

Chinese, and Japanese), which was largely centered around the United States, and whose culmination were the aforementioned attacks of 2001. Over time, the international community's counter-terrorism efforts have expanded, one example being, among others, the United States' intervention in Yemen, where al-Qaeda had its headquarters.

It should be noted that despite the mentioned involvement of the international community, it will always be the result of a reaction to new forms of perpetrators' activity, who, through constant improvement of methods, forms and tools of attacks, will always have a kind of anticipatory advantage. One of the characteristic features of the terrorism phenomenon, along with the desire to maximise the dissemination of information about its activities, is also the activity that is as surprising as possible. To this end, terrorists, apart from applying the above-mentioned evolution of activities, often use as direct perpetrators people who, due to socio-cultural conditions, are not commonly associated with the analysed phenomenon. One such example is the terrorist activity of children and women.

In case of these groups of people, the element of surprise consists in the fact that in the context of carrying out the attack itself (e.g., in the form of blowing oneself up in the air in the crowd using the so-called Shahid's belt), both children and women may remain practically unnoticed before the explosion as they do not arouse as many suspicions as men. And due to a shock determined by the fact of the perpetrator of such attacks and breaking away from the generally accepted standard, they additionally generate greater publicity for the performed activities.

It should be noted that the women's participation in terrorism is not a new phenomenon, because the first and so far best known terrorist is considered to be the German Ulrike Meinhof – co-founder of the Red Army Faction Group (German *Rot Armee Fraktion* – RAF), also known as the Baader-Meinhof Group, operating from the 1970s to 1998, named after its founders (Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader). However, the ideology of this group was different from that of the fundamentalist groups analysed in the article because it was not based on religious radicalism, but on the fight against the capitalist system in the Federal Republic of Germany, motivated by extreme left-wing political views.

Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the role of women in fundamentalist terrorist organisations, the phenomenon of terrorism itself, as well as fundamentalism, which in many cases motivates it, needs to be described.

Describing the Fundamentalism Phenomenon

J. Danecki defines fundamentalism as “following some idea in the firm and uncompromising way, which excludes the possibility that other views may also be true to some extent” (Danecki, 1997, p. 126). The supporters of this view are united by the fact that they do not accept criticism of the ideas they proclaim, as well as by the sense of authority in proclaiming them, regardless of the presented content. In the public opinion, fundamentalism is usually identified with the sphere of *sacrum*, especially Islam, whose doctrines are often used in the political sphere as well.

The authors of the Encyclopedia Britannica, in turn, define fundamentalism as a type of militantly conservative religious movement characterised by the advocacy of strict conformity to sacred texts (Encyclopedia Britannica Website).

At the same time, however, it should be noted that it is a mistake to identify Islam or any other denomination as the sole source of fundamentalism. Religious fundamentalism does not always have to threaten the political and social order of the state. Social groups opposing socio-cultural canons common in their community may broaden the population of their supporters in order to disseminate the presented ideas, in this case based on a given religion. One such example are the Amish living in the United States. This group, however, does not seek to achieve a holistic “rebirth” of society, but rather to obtain social freedoms in terms of faith (or atheistic attitude), which in their opinion should not be an individual issue and should not in any way affect the functioning of individuals in society.

However, this is one of the few examples of a liberal interpretation of the religious fundamentalism phenomenon. Most often, people presenting analysed attitudes aim at legal and social subordination of the state functioning according to a radical interpretation of the doctrines adopted by individual denominations. This refers to areas such as the judiciary, education and health care. One example of this approach are the members of the Muslim Brotherhood, guided by the motto *Al-Islam hua al-hall* (Islam is the solution) (Izak, 2014, p. 11).

Some fundamentalist groups, in their activities, adopt an aggressive attitude against those who reject their ideology, and in case of the religious sphere, consider them “infidels”, against whom a kind of crusade should be conducted, understood as a forceful inducement to identify with their views. One of the consequences of such activities is that they become terrorist organisations, such as al-Qaeda or the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

One of the most important reasons for the birth of Islamic fundamentalism was the weakening of the Arab population’s status (the vast majority of whom

professed Islam) in some countries in the Middle East, which was manifested, for example, by the failure to create an independent Palestinian state (universally recognised), or the fact that Christians constituted the majority of the Lebanese population. Terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Hezbollah were born as a result of such events. These groups justify their activities with a desire to fight for their rights, which in their opinion are being violated as a result of the growing influence of the Western civilisation (countries of North America and Western Europe) – both in the political and cultural sphere. In addition, they believe that many governments in Arab states are too submissive or even too corrupt towards the aforementioned group of states, and that they should therefore also be combated, and after a potential takeover of power, the Sharia law should be implemented as a universally binding law. An example of such actions was Osama bin Laden's call in 1998 for Muslims to create a World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders (Alexander & Swetnam 2001, p. 107), because there is no distinction between the public and private spheres, and therefore the *sacred* is not separated from the *profane*. At present, fundamentalist terrorist organisations which base their activity on a radical interpretation of the Quran's writings refer to the notion of Jihad (Holy War against "infidels") formulated in the Middle Ages, which divides the world into areas of *dar al-Islam*, and thus subject to the Sharia law, and the others, *dal al-harb* (Herrmann & Tausch, 2005, p. 78), and in this way justify the terrorist activity against Israel, the United States, Western European countries and other Muslim groups, including those that do not identify themselves with Jihadism.

Summing up, the ideologies of contemporary Muslim fundamentalism are based primarily on:

- the rejection of reforms and the return to the original form of Islam, for fear of the influence of Western civilisation,
- the reference to the roots of Islam,
- giving religion a political character (introducing the Sharia law as a universally binding law) (Wnuk-Lisowska, 2003, pp. 115–116).

Describing the Terrorism Phenomenon

In the context of the terrorism phenomenon, it is reasonable to indicate a single, unified definition of terrorism, because in the public space (including the media) one can observe misidentification with other related concepts, such as terror, guerrilla war, independence aspirations or irredentism. In lexical terms, the term

“terrorism” is derived from the Latin *terrere*, which means “to terrify”. In the 14th century it also appeared in French language.

A. Zasieczny points out that the mechanism of action of the perpetrators of terrorist attacks is based on the ancient Chinese proverb which said: “Kill one, frighten ten thousand” (Zasieczny, 2004, p. 356). It refers to the main objective of terrorist activity, which is to provoke fear and draw attention to one’s actions. As indicated, the concept of terrorism should not be identified with terror, which refers to the activities of authorities who intimidate their citizens as one of the ways of exercising power, which is manifested, for example, by repressions. Characteristic applications of terror in exercising power include the rule of Adolf Hitler in the Third Reich or Joseph Stalin in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

As B. Hoffman points out, at present (as of August 2020) there are over 200 definitions of terrorism in the world of science and politics, mainly due to the heterogeneous nature of its factors (Hoffman, 2001, p. 36). K. Jałoszyński points out that despite their diversity, their common elements are:

- the desire to evoke fear,
- the underlying cause of their actions,
- using the power of argument and violence,
- the political context (Jałoszyński, 2008, p. 36).

Despite the most significant “media” event in the history of the terrorist attacks perpetrated by al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001, quoted in the introduction to this article, the origins of modern international terrorism can be traced back to the events of July 22, 1968, when members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine captured an aircraft of the Israeli airline El-Al during the flight and made the release of hostages conditional upon the release from prison of all fighters for the independence of Palestine (Żuber, 2013, p. 36). This event changed the face of interpreting the terrorism phenomenon so much that in the following years the international community started to intensify its activities which aimed at defining terrorism as an offence.

In 1974, the Government of the United Kingdom defined terrorism for legislative purposes as an act that consists in “the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of threatening the public or any section of the public” (Zasieczny, 2004, p. 355). As it can be observed, this notion of terrorism had a relatively broad definition, which could be applied, e.g., in the case of “classical” conventional war (between two or more state entities, using conventional methods and combat assets by armed forces, e.g., air raids or the use of armoured forces).

In the same period of time, however, the unified definition of terrorism was not adopted by one of the two world powers of that time, namely the United States.

However, this attempt was made by its state bodies, including the secret services. In 1976, the Central Intelligence Agency – CIA – defined international terrorism as “The threat or use of violence for political purposes when such action is intended to influence the attitudes and behavior of a target group wider than its immediate victims and its ramifications transcend national boundaries as a result, for example, of the nationality or foreign ties of its perpetrators, its locale, the identity of its institutional or human victims, its declared objectives, or the mechanics of its resolution” (CIA Website). However, as a result of the conducted analyses, in later years there was a redefinition, in which terrorism was interpreted as “the use of violence or of the threat of violence in the pursuit of political, religious, ideological or social objectives and acts committed by non-state actors (or by undercover personnel serving on the behalf of their respective governments), acts reaching more than the immediate target victims” (CIA Website). As can be observed, the new definition also extends the scope of terrorism to non-politically motivated activities.

Another US secret service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), also proposed its definition of terrorism. In contrast to the CIA’s definition, it was simplified and recognised terrorism as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives” (FBI Website).

As it can be noted, the definitions of terrorism (including international terrorism) vary to a greater or lesser extent, but there are common elements in the definition, such as the use of violence by perpetrators, the political motivation, the desire to cause fear and the use of threats as an element of intimidation affecting the human mind. However, the lack of a uniform global definition is a major obstacle to international cooperation in preventing and combating this phenomenon.

Summarising the considerations concerning the description of the terrorism phenomenon before proceeding to characterise the role of women in it – on the basis of the analysis of sources, five elements distinguishing it from other offences can be identified, i.e.:

- a terrorist act is a much wider concept, and breaking the law is only a way to achieve other goals,
- the perpetrators of the attacks seek to make their actions public, want them to be as spectacular as possible, while, e.g., criminal groups act discreetly,
- terrorists are driven by certain ideologies that motivate them to act even when they seem chaotic and inconsistent,
- terrorists seek to force public authorities to take or refrain from taking specific actions,

- acts of terrorism, because of their wish to cause fear in society, are also characterised by relatively greater social harm in psychological terms (Zasieczny, 2004, p. 356).

Women's Participation in Contemporary Terrorism

As the data of the *Global Terrorism Index* indicate, men are statistically much more often responsible for terrorist attacks (Global Terrorism Index, 2015, pp. 34–39). Therefore, it is reasonable to explore the marginal role of women in terrorism, to which, for statistical reasons, considerably less attention is paid both in the media and in the scientific sphere. However, regardless of the gender of the perpetrators, every information about the attack is associated with a sense of fear in society. The natural response is therefore an increased public interest in the phenomenon of terrorism, including the identification of the perpetrators of attacks, their motivation, the measures taken, etc., as well as information on how to ensure future protection against similar attacks.

From the perspective of the economics of terrorist activities, one of the cheapest and at the same time most effective methods are the attacks carried out in large population centres (e.g., in public places such as railway stations, shopping malls, etc.), suicide terrorist attacks in which also other, innocent people are killed. This mode of operation is both cheap (due to low training costs), effective (because of low risk of failure), safe for the organisation (the perpetrator will die and therefore cannot be prosecuted), and effective (in terms of both the number of victims and the publicity gained).

This is confirmed by the words of one of the spiritual leaders of Hamas, Abd al-Aziz Rantissi, who said: "Israel uses F16s, helicopters, tanks and rockets to kill our children. If we had F16, we'd be using them, but we don't have them. So there are two options for us – to surrender and prepare for silent death, or to use our own means. And one of the more effective means, comparable to F16, are shahids" (Filipkowski & Lonca, 2010, pp. 11–23).

It is worth noting that the first suicide terrorist attack by a woman took place on May 9, 1985 in Lebanon, and its author was Sana Khyadali, a 16-year-old member of the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (Olson, 2012, p. 185).

The media are usually dominated by the image of a terrorist as a person with a masked face and a gun in his or her hand. Therefore, in order to surprise and prevent the identification of their members, terrorist organisations are more and more frequently using women for their activities. K. von Knop points out that

regardless of the country, special services, as far as suspicion of terrorist activity is concerned, monitor mainly men aged between 17 and 45 (von Knop, 2007, pp. 397–414). In the light of the cultural image of women, the attacks they carry out are also perceived in a different way by the international community. Because of the aforementioned cultural aspect, there is often a subconscious search for justification for them, and the reasons for their behaviour are attributed to their traumatic experiences, which would explain such actions, because the female nature seems to be incapable of cruelty whose victims are innocent people – including children. Women terrorists also have more options for camouflage, because it is easier for them to smuggle an explosive under clothes, pretending to be pregnant. For cultural reasons (it is impossible to interfere with their “purity”), women in the Middle East are also subject to relatively less stringent security checks at airports, which is further facilitated by the small number of female officers (also for cultural reasons) who can carry out security checks. This principle must also be applied by soldiers from other countries who are in the Middle East as part of peace missions.

A tragic example of such a situation was the attack on the leader of the Indian opposition, Rajiv Gandhi, on May 21, 1991. During a meeting with the electorate, Thenmozhi Rajaratnam, a woman associated with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam separatist organisation (fighting for the independence of Tamil Eelam, located in the north of Sri Lanka – in 2009 it declared disarmament), approached him and, according to tradition, bent down to touch his feet, which is a sign of respect. At that moment, she detonated the explosive device hidden under her dress, which killed her, Gandhi and 14 others.

The overall scale of the terrorist attacks carried out by women between 1982 and 2015 is shown in Figure 1.

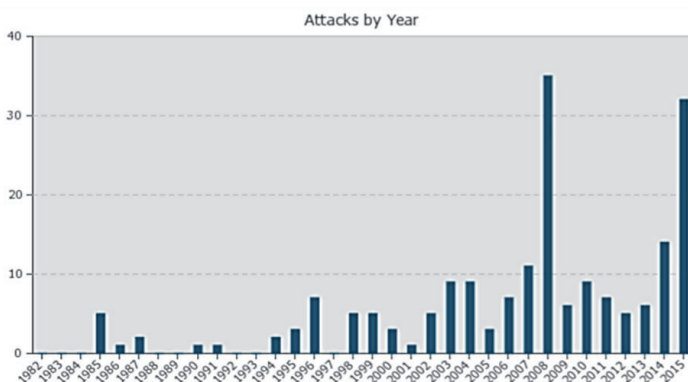


Figure 1. Number of Suicide Attacks Carried Out by Women between 1982 and 2015

Source: M. Waddell-Harris, 2017, p. 61.

As can be seen, this scale has been relatively stable since 2003 (international military intervention in Iraq), with significant spikes in 2008 and 2015.

As in the case of other members, terrorist organisations nowadays also make considerable use of the media for recruitment purposes in respect to women. One example of this is the activity of the online “Al-Khansa” magazine, in which women are called upon to participate in attacks. Some of them engage in terrorist activities voluntarily, but some are forced to do so, such as in the case of kidnapping of more than 200 schoolgirls in Chibok by Nigeria’s fundamentalist organisation Boko Haram in 2014. Underage women are often forced to marry jihadists who are much older than they are. They often do so voluntarily as a result of strong indoctrination and then become involved in terrorist activities.

The percentage of women participating in the largest contemporary terrorist organisations is shown in Figure 2.

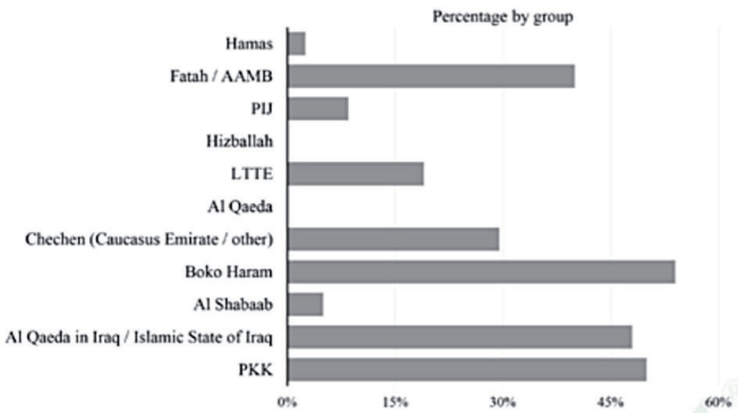


Figure 2. Estimated Women’s Participation in Selected Terrorist Organisations
Source: M. Waddell-Harris, 2017, p. 28.

As can be seen, Figure 2 confirms the dominance of organisations radically interpreting the Quran both in the contemporary face of terrorism, and in the dominant scale of the analysed phenomenon in Boko Haram. Interestingly, women’s participation has not been recorded in the most dangerous terrorist organisation of the first decade of the 21st century, namely al-Qaeda (except Iraq), as well as in Lebanon’s Hezbollah, and minimal in Palestinian Hamas. However, this situation is gradually being reversed, with the first cases of suicide attacks by women working with groups directly linked to al-Qaeda, for example, in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan, having been reported in 2005 (Kais, 2013). In turn, the next ones were these carried out in Africa by people linked to this organisation,

such as Ash-Shabab in 2010 (their first attack carried out by a woman), or Boko Haram (the first one in 2014).

Since these organisations operate in countries where, for cultural reasons, women are almost entirely dependent on men, this scale should be considered as high.

Determinants of Women's Motivation to Participate in Terrorist Organisations

S. Mahan and P. Griset pointed out in their monograph *Terrorism in Perspective* four basic categories related to the role of women in terrorist organisations:

- activities that are supportive of the organisation (relating to its logistical needs financial resources, accommodation, food, supplies, etc., as well as sexual services),
- espionage (relating to the acquisition, processing and transmission of necessary information),
- warrior (referring to weapon construction and direct attacks),
- leader (relating to leadership and influencing significantly the strategy and policy of the groups) (Mahan & Griset, 2008, pp. 136–140).

B. Hołyst points out that the role of women in terrorist organisations is usually limited to the first three categories mentioned above, and notes that it is incorrect to identify the perpetrators of terrorist attacks solely with men (Hołyst, 2011, p. 807).

Other determinants of women's participation in terrorist organisations, the result of which are suicide attacks, are indicated by G. Kędzierska:

- revenge (e.g., for the death of a relative at the hands of public service),
- love (for a member of a terrorist organisation),
- childhood trauma (e.g., losing one's parents),
- personal issues (e.g., infertility, rape),
- fatal disease (Kędzierska, 2011, p. 145).

It should be noted that in a culture based on Islamic ideology, a lot of women choose a terrorist route because they have no other prospects in life. One such example is the impossibility of remarrying even after the husband's death, which, in view of the women's role in the local culture, makes it impossible for them to provide for themselves and their families. As a result, under the additional influence of psychological manipulation, many of them decide to die a martyr's death, which will "free" them from their worldly suffering and, above all, will guarantee, out of a sense of gratitude for the sacrifice of their lives, the financial security of their families provided by the terrorist organisation recruiting them.

Apart from the direct preparation and execution of attacks, the second extremely important role of women in the context of terrorism is that, through being mothers, they shape desirable attitudes in their children from an early age, such as the ideology of jihadism. A professionally prepared pedagogical guide by Islamic partisans from Chechnya, available on the Internet, was an example of this (Adamczuk, 2013, pp. 64–82). Its authors pointed out that this process, due to the high level of knowledge acquisition (based on unconditional submission to Allah) at this age, may begin even with two-year-olds, both boys and girls (Zimny, 2017, p. 147).

Despite these socio-cultural restrictions, the role of women in the Middle East is gradually, though slightly, improving on a regular basis. A simple example of this is the permission given to them in 2019 by the Iranian authorities to visit stadiums in order to watch football matches. In the context of the phenomenon analysed in the article, it also occurs in the fundamentalist terrorist environment. This was confirmed by the words of Muhammad Khayr Haykal, a scholar who pointed out that women should receive general training in the use of firearms and that jihad itself can become a “pleasure” for them and a duty at the same time (Khayr Haykal, 1993, p. 46).

The writer and one of the main ideologists (religious leader) of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, Yusuf al-Ayiri, in turn, rejected conservative (mainly Saudi) opinions against women’s participation in terrorist activities, indicating that they would only play the traditional role of wives and mothers, arguing that participation in the “Holy War” is an individual duty and therefore also applies to women, regardless of the consent of their families (Khayr Haykal, 1993, p. 46).

The opinions mentioned above, proclaimed by intellectuals, also have their practical application. At the turn of 2000–2001, the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade formed its women’s troop, while at the same time the Supreme Muslim Council in Saudi Arabia issued a *fatwa* (religious decree), in which Muslim women were allowed to participate in the fight against Israel (Bolechów, 2010, p. 201). In 2003, the aforementioned Y. Al-Ayiri allowed women to participate in jihad, which was a cultural revolution due to the violation of the traditional role of women in society (Peresin, 2019, p. 103).

At present, however, the women’s participation in terrorist activity is not only observed in the Middle East, but continues to be mainly directed towards the Islamic fundamentalist trend. In the years 2000–2003, the Russian Federation (mainly the Caucasus) recorded a series of suicide attacks by Chechen women (Adamczuk, 2013, p. 79) who lost their men as a result of two Russian-Chechen wars, which confirms the theory of G. Kędzierska. It should be noted that Chechen terrorists (like Palestinians) interpret jihad even more radically, describing it

as *fard kifaya*, i.e., every Muslim's obligation to fight against the "infidels", regardless of gender, age, or social position (in contrast to the less radical *fard 'ayn* interpretation of jihad which assumes only an individual motivation to participate in a fight). It is significant that the increase in the level of women's terrorist activity in fundamentalist groups was a new phenomenon, not only for the services responsible for providing security, but also for the male members of terrorist organisations themselves, because, as has already been mentioned, it was a part of a certain cultural revolution.

In the light of the case studies mentioned above, it can be concluded that today women may pose the same terrorist threat as men, which is significantly influenced by cultural doctrines that "abolish" the traditional role of women in the context of terrorism. Surely over time, they can be expected to assume leadership positions, even in a conservative Islamic culture, as they are more and more often not forced into their activities, but rather pursue their desires and ideologies with full conviction.

Conclusions

On the basis of the conducted research it should be stated that the women's participation in fundamentalist terrorist organisations and thus in the whole phenomenon of terrorism is on the rise, which directly influences the increase of security threats on their part. In the analysed context, not only the scale of the phenomenon is increasing, but also, thanks to ideological reforms of religious leaders, their position in the groups themselves, which in the context of the social role of women in the Islamic civilisation should be considered a kind of cultural revolution. For their role in terrorist organisations is more and more often not only limited to logistic support or carrying out attacks (mainly by blowing themselves up with an explosive), but also concerns leadership functions. In the aspect of terrorism, however, the traditional role of women in Islamic civilisation is still very important – as mothers who, by passing on to their children the ideologies desired by fundamentalists, can raise future jihadists.

Women's motivation for terrorist activity is most often driven by a desire to take revenge for the death (e.g., at the hands of the services) of men-terrorists who are close to them (husbands, fathers, sons, etc.), or by love for them, but may also be the consequence of propaganda, including the Internet, with the use of social media. Terrorist organisations are constantly searching for new motivational elements that could even more effectively encourage women to join their ranks. They

unscrupulously take advantage of their innocence, enthusiasm, desire for revenge, or personal suffering to achieve their goals.

Recruiting women into the ranks of terrorist organisations, including those with a fundamentalist ideology, allows not only for the services to be surprised when women carry out their attacks, but also to achieve more effectively the basic objective of terrorists, which is to seek publicity for their activities.

It should also be noted that due to the dynamic development of the analysed phenomenon, the results of the research presented in the article do not fully exhaust the problem, which is the involvement of women in the activities of fundamentalist terrorist groups, therefore this issue requires further exploration. Cultural aspects play a significant role in the analysis of the security threat posed by female terrorists, which should be seen as a confirmation of the political constructivism emphasising the importance of these factors in international relations, one element of which is the common international counterterrorism policy. Further research is needed, for example, to find effective procedures to be applied by the services with respect to hindering terrorism recruitment processes, including cyberspace, or to create effective legal regulations concerning the control of persons in public places, such as railway stations or airports.

The cases mentioned in the article, as well as statistical data, clearly indicate that the women's involvement in terrorist activities constitutes an increasingly serious threat to security, which cannot be underestimated. There is no doubt that in order to combat this phenomenon, as with all terrorist threats, the international community must therefore take joint, coordinated actions.

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