Abstract

This study analyzes how Iranian intelligence agencies use female agents referred to as swallows to conduct honey-traps against specific targets. Furthermore, the study critically reflects on the role of female agents within the context of the Iranian security system with reference to Manjikian's (2020) theory of queer intelligence. Since the Iranian state is based on strict gender-segregation laws, the interplay between the use of swallows within this system, will be reviewed. For this a total of twenty-four English and Farsi online news articles have been reviewed, coded, and analyzed. In addition, the gendered dimension that comes with the language used within the online news articles will be critically assessed. The analysis concludes that Iranian women are indeed being used as swallows for honey-trapping opposing voices yet much of the recruitment tactics, motivations and background information is left in secrecy. It is evident that the use of swallows by Iranian intelligence agencies includes an inherently gendered-dimension due to the official theocratic nature of the Iranian state, yet this is contrasted by its willingness to secretly use female agents for methods of seduction.

Keywords: Gender Studies, Intelligence Studies, Iran, Iranian Intelligence Agencies, Qualitative Content Analysis.