

How does government control over basic freedoms, such as how women dress, impact the society's perception of women?

Iqbal, Nomia. "Ban on Muslim Women Covering Faces with Veils in France." *BBC News*. BBC, 04 Nov. 2011. Web. 11 Mar. 2013.

This article by the British Broadcasting Company documents the French ban on articles of clothing that cover the face and neck. The article notes that the new law passed by (former) President Sarkozy does not attack the Islamic faith directly, but that many types of attire required for Muslim women to wear are now punishable by heavy fines. Only the types of headwear that cover or veil the face are banned. Additionally, men that require their wives to wear these types of attire are severely punishable, even with jail time. This article also includes a lot of opinions from the general public as well. The public (who aren't affected by this new law) feel that it is a useless law (because so few people wear these types of dress to begin with) and that the government should focus on more pressing issues.

This article helps my research because it provides me with a general idea of the problem. It also gives me a lot of the opinions of the people, and what they feel should be done. It is also mentioned that there are a lot of discrepancies between what the government is saying and what the people are. For example, the government believes that there are over 2000 people who wear these types of clothing in France, but others believe that these people make up only 0.01% of the Muslim populations (which would come out to about 600 people). Also, when interviewed, a man who sells various types of Muslim attire stated that he only sells about 5 of these a year (before the law was passed). This shows that the government might have a deeper reason to ban facial coverings.

Apetrei, Sarah. "Why Quakers Were the Burqa Wearers of the 17th Century." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 25 Sept. 2011. Web. 12 Mar. 2013.

This article compares the new French law to a historical event that has been resolved (the Quakers of the 17th century). The main event that it compares the burka wearing in France is the refusal of Quakers to remove their hats in the presence of a social superior. The article notes that the Quakers, much like Muslim women who wear clothing that obscures the face, have different definitions of what kinds of acts are deemed proper and courteous. With the Quakers, however, it wasn't an entire government that turned against their definition of etiquette, it was a group of people that bullied and persecuted them (so the two events are not exactly the same). The article even states that, by turning typical Muslim attire into a federal offense, they have "[formalized] the antagonism between the Islamic world and the secular west".

I feel that this article, by connecting two different events, sheds light on some of the "underground" repercussions of this new law. The article goes on to state several different similarities between the two events, as well as many key differences as well. Additionally, since the persecution of the Quakers is an event in history, the resolution of that problem may be something to consider when thinking about the "correct" solution to the French ban on Muslim attire. Towards the end, the article has a lot of predictions/possible effects of this new law. They helped me by giving more to think about and gave me a lot of information that I could use to develop my research question.

Erlanger, Steven. "Has the 'Burqa Ban' Worked in France?" *Nytimes.com*. The New York Times, 2 Sept. 2012. Web. 12 Mar. 2013.

This article, written well after the ban went into force, discusses how effective this ban has been in France and some of the after effects of it. It notes that many police on the street are hesitant to enforce it because of tension with Muslim communities that already feel the burden of discrimination. However, the government (especially President François Hollande) stated that they have no intentions of discarding the law. The article also brings a new point to light, which is that some women may be forced to wear very modest types of clothing because of the influence of radical Muslim husbands or family members. In addition, this article also discusses the origin of the law; it was proposed by a communist French mayor and it was originally aimed at banning Muslim attire because of "French republican values". However, the law was reworded to not include any references to Islam (presumably to avoid discrimination charges).

From this article, I learned that there may be some level of discrepancy between the government of France and its people, because although the government has stated outright that the law "has been generally popular with the French," even though (as stated above) Muslim communities have stated that they feel discriminated against and police are reluctant to enforce it. With this in mind, it may also render the opinion that Muslim women are forced to wear these types of attire to be conjecture. I also learned that this law was, in fact, aimed directly at Muslim women, although the French government tried to hide. This may be something to consider when writing my research question.

Gordts, Eline. "Dutch Burqa Ban Legislation Planned." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 27 Jan. 2012. Web. 17 Mar. 2013.

This article talks about the ban on facial coverings in the Netherlands. The reasoning behind this is to allow everyone to "fully participate in society" and because of "security concerns". It specifically mentions that burqas and niqabs are prohibited. The article also expresses the fact that only about 300 women living in the Netherlands wear these types of Muslim attire, and that the ban is mostly symbolic. The article lists the shifting of Dutch society into a very conservative society as one of the reasons for this ban, and that many people believe that there is more pressure on women (especially immigrants) to "fit in" with society.

The most important way that this article helped me with my research was that it talked about a ban on facial coverings (clothing) in a different nation, and how it compared with the French ban. The Dutch ban followed the French ban, and it was stated in the article that Belgium has also banned facial coverings in public. One thing that really stood out to me was that there was a very small population of people that actually wore these types of dress in public, and the fact that these countries are listing one of the reasons for this ban is for "security reasons". This leads me to believe that there might be an underlying reason for why European nations have begun to ban many types of Muslim attire. There was a quote in the article by Leyla Cakir, a prominent Muslim leader in the Netherlands, that said, "You are taking away women's right of self-determination, and it is all based on fear," which might be an implication that the Muslim population feels attacked and discriminated against.

King, Neil. "French Man Ripped Veil from Muslim Woman's Face." *ArabianBusiness.com*. Arabian Business Publishing, 13 Mar. 2013. Web. 17 Mar. 2013.

This article, written very recently, details a shocking situation in which a man forcefully tore a woman's niqab from her face. He claimed that he was simply trying to enforce a French law. The police were stated as saying that "ordinary citizens are not entitled to take the law into their own hands". The article does not specify what his sentence was, only that he was ordered to compensate the victim and that he plead guilty to a charge of "aggravated assault". The article, in addition to covering this event, also goes into more detail about the ban itself. According to the article, a woman caught wearing one of these banned garments can be fined up to \$190 USD or be forced to enroll in citizenship training.

The enforcement of this law, passed nearly 2 years ago, is a very current aspect in many Muslim women's lives. It helps me answer my research question by providing a current event that is deemed "radical" and provides a "victim" showing how this law has impacted people in a negative way. However, the article also includes a lot of defensive arguments in favor of the ban (stated in many different articles that I read) that include specific quotes from former President Sarkozy. Some of these include, "[Muslim veils are] an affront to the nation's values of dignity and equality," and "they oppress women and are not welcome in France". These statements provide both a positive and negative argument for the ban, and allow me to think of an answer to the question without a lot of bias.

Erlanger, Steven, and Elvire Camus. "In a Ban, a Measure of European Tolerance." *Nytimes.com*. The New York Times, 02 Sept. 2012. Web. 17 Mar. 2013.

This article is not about an event, but a study of sorts that involved interviewing many Muslim women who previously (and sometimes currently) wear the burqa or the niqab in public. The general consensus is that they find the law discriminatory, unnecessary, and imprisoning. One Muslim mother even said that she has been "spat at, honked at from cars, and also beaten". She was also assaulted "while [she] was carrying her daughter in her arms". This article seems mostly weighted against the law. Additionally, the article contains critics' opinions on the law, and that they feel that it would inflame tensions already created by the economic crisis and the lasting fears of terrorism. It also includes helpful statistics, such as the fact that "425 women have been fined up to 250 Euros and 66 others have received warnings".

The last part of my research question is about how laws such as this one would affect a society's perception of women. This article, filled with firsthand interviews from a lot of people's disputes with this law, puts me in a better position to answer it. One opinion that I found to be especially helpful was that many people do not see this law as an act of discrimination, but as just another security measure, and view people who break this law as common criminals. I feel that it also gives the impression that discrimination against this ethnic group is acceptable, seeing as how a woman was assaulted and verbally abused for wearing such clothing. Even so, many women are taking this matter into their own hands, and a woman who was arrested for breaking this law has appealed all the way up to the European Court of Human Rights, by pleading an infringement on religious freedom. This can also lead to a society perceiving these women as leaders and people who are capable of change, which might also lead to a positive perception of these women.