

Islamic feminism

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



Women's veiling has been one of the most debated issues among scholars concerned with women's rights. Historically, Muslim veiling has been interpreted by the majority of western liberal feminists and others as a tool and symbol of oppression. One of the first western accounts about the practice of veiling was produced by Christian missionary women, who first came in contact with Muslim societies in the early 20th century Sommer and Zwemer 1907. Coming in contact for the first time with Muslim communities the missionary women found that women in those communities were greatly oppressed because of their customs which the missionaries thought, rendered them subordinate status in the society.

In this way, the veiling was construed as a symbol of women's oppression. Considering themselves being tasked with liberating the oppressed women and bringing light to their lives, Muslim women were rendered to be lacking freedom of choice and thus needed to be saved. Imperial feminism has a similar idea about Muslim women. They say " women are essentially powerless and voiceless victims of Islam." (Palombo). The westerners think that Muslims need freedom granted by them. The media shows Muslim women's that they don't do and enjoy what other women do.

They are completely covered by a black burka. They are so covered it looks like they can't speak for themselves. They do so much at home it looks like they don't have a freedom to leave the house.

According to Wadud. Islamic feminism involves getting equality for both genders and having it in the Muslim thoughts, thinking, and action. Shaikh thinks Part of it is working for social justice while studying Islam. " Mahmood

thinks, the postcolonial predicament in the Muslim world is important to focus on.

France is a good example of this where, in 2004, veiling was banned in public. The banning of the veiling in France is often linked with their earlier colonial attitude towards the practice of veiling in Algeria. In this way, there seems to be a continuity of colonial attitudes towards customs and practices of the colonized, which persists even in the present day. One of the reasons this practice still exist is to protect women and help them live a more peaceful live.

Wadud reminds us that we have to surrender to life this type of live. It's a common misconception that women who are covered are too oppressed to work for social justice and study the Quran. But shaikh tells us to do so. People are surprised to see that women who look oppressed are questioning the government, but people like Mahmood are.

To me Veiling is a Tool of Resistance and Liberation and not oppression. This is mostly advocated by Islamic feminists who urge that there can be many different meanings of the veiling depending on context. So, women use veiling as a tool to further their own interests in a society where they have no other means of doing so. In this way, veiling provides women with an opportunity to have access to public sphere of society which otherwise is inaccessible to them. Some people have been able to identify different meanings of the veiling for women across different societies.

Among other different perspectives, Muslim females have associated veiling with personal choice, a tool of personal and cultural identity formation, a symbol of modesty, an adaptive strategy, a resistance against western hegemonic culture, personal piety and a bargaining strategy within patriarchal societies.

The Muslim veiled women in western societies are persistent in the finding that the majority of Muslim women in those societies adopt veiling as a marker of their own cultural and religious identity and as a way of resistance to western culture by making themselves distinct from it. It seems to me that some of the Muslim women in western societies use veiling as a symbol of resistance to the objectification and commodification of women's bodies in those societies and it's true.

By wearing the veil, Muslim women not only get access to the public sphere but also convey a message about their specific religious and cultural identities. The understanding of the veiling practice resonates with the idea of patriarchal bargaining, which defines as women's strategies within a set of constraints to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression.

From this perspective, veiling can be thought of as a strategy for Muslim women to achieve any specific "goal" by complying with their cultural norms. While in my perspective on the veiling is the idea of patriarchal bargaining hint at the possibility of choice and women's agency in the practice of veiling, western discourse on the veiling render the veiled women as passive, and hence devoid of agency. According to Nussbaum humans

shouldn't be forced to do something against their beliefs and they should flourish in all their diversity.

Women's agency in the practice of veiling is based on the conception of agency differentiates between two different kinds of agencies one is residential agency and the other term is representational agency. Residential agency, argues, is closest to the concepts of " power" and " choice," The core difference between residential and representational agency is that between power and knowledge, while the former is all about having power over social processes and actions, the latter is knowledge about social processes and actions which informs the course of one's action. The practice of veiling can be thought of as a patriarchal surveillance of women's bodies. In Muslim societies, men's honor is associated with women's behavior. In this sense, men's honor is embodied in women's modesty, which is further associated with the control of women's bodies.

Feminists think the issue of Muslim women's head coverings the Hijab is similarly conflicted. I think that is difficult theoretical terrain for all feminists. Muslim women's head covering reflects the larger feminism/multiculturalism. Nussbaum summed up the dilemma for Western feminists. To say that a practice endorsed by tradition is bad is to risk erring by imposing one's own way on others to say that a practice is all right whenever local tradition endorses. It was right and good is to risk erring by withholding critical judgement where real evil and oppression are surely present.

If some of the Muslim women's Women were strongly agreed this, it represents a free choice are significantly more likely by twenty-nine

percentage points to consider the practice acceptable under at least one scenario than the other Muslim women who strongly would disagree.

Conversely, construing the niqab to be a visible manifestation of women's oppression reduces the likelihood of considering the practice to be acceptable in any of the scenarios. However, the effect is much smaller.

I think that if the practice of veiling can best be understood if analyzed through the lens of the idea of honor and modesty in the Muslim societies. In Muslim societies, safeguarding the sexuality of women is considered to be the responsibility of men.