

# INCORRECT\_Hijab

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

hijab, muslim women, women, cover, pious, muslim, niqab, wear, folks, bodies, fashion, choices, clothing, laws, bans, muslims, people, modesty, megan, men

## SPEAKERS

Megan, Ilyse

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### M Megan 00:00

INTRO: hey nerds hey, and happy new year if you're into that whole gregorian calendar jawn. This is a quick note to say that we recorded this episode about Islamic modesty and pious fashion over the summer, before Mahsa Amini died in the custody of Iran's so-called "modesty police" and inspired widespread protests within and beyond Iran. Her death is tragic, unjust, and unforgivable. Here's what we're not going to do about it: trim our split ends for social media videos (I see you, Juliette Binoche, and immediately no). We're not going to talk over Iranians, especially Iranian women, when they tell us why they're protesting and how they want things to change. We're not going to collapse gender justice into facile white feminism or American imperialism. We—and by we I mean specifically white American folks but this is good praxis for all of us—are going to shut the fuck up and learn from the folks on the front lines of the fight, many of whom have been at this for longer than I personally have been alive. We of course have more resources in the shownotes, but we want to use this time up top to encourage you to check out the work of journalist Hoda Katebi [@hodakatebi on twitter], the Collective for Black Iranians [@collectiveforblackIranians on insta], and a five-part series on the history of modern Iran that Profs. Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi and Golnar Nikpour did for the Dig podcast. As always, thanks for listening, nerds. Here's the actual episode.

### I Ilyse 00:21

This is keeping it 101, a killjoys introduction to religion podcast. In 2022-2023, our work is made possible through both a UVM reach grant and a Luce AAR advancing public scholarship grant. We're grateful to live teach and record on the current ancestral and unseeded lands of the Abenaki Wabanaki and Auco Cisco peoples. As always, you can find material ways to support indigenous communities on our website.

### M Megan 00:40

What's up nerds? Hello, I'm Megan Goodwin, a scholar of American religions race and gender

and politics.

I Ilyse 00:46

Hi hellow, I'm Ilyse morgenstein Fuerst, a historian of religion Islam race and racialization and South Asia. Alright, Goodwin, how's it going?

M Megan 00:54

Warm and so warm, so warm.

I Ilyse 00:58

It's a soupy mess up here in the Northeast.

M Megan 01:01

Don't care for it. So what better conversation to have today than a conversation about covering up?

I Ilyse 01:09

Yeah, cuz Today's episode is an incorrect, where we kindly but firmly insist that religion does more in different work than you might think it does. **Because on today,** we want to challenge some basic assumptions about modest clothing and covering up specifically the idea that hijab is oppressive.

M Megan 01:31

This conversation Okay, fine, but like before we didn't we do this before, like, didn't we? We did. We did a whole season to gender and sexuality and what's not the United States for like a whole train stop and our whole whistlestop tour of gender and sexuality around the world like we did this.

I Ilyse 01:50

We did. And yet,

M Megan 01:52

yeah, people are still incorrect about hijab. And people keep asking you about her job. And you're mad. So, okay, all right. You're right. You're right. Of course, you're right.

I Ilyse 02:01

I think I'll not, I'll never not be mad about it for reasons, mostly because there are these big things that people are incorrect about.

M Megan 02:12

What kind of things? What kind of things are people incorrect about when we think specifically about covering your head to express a specific kind of relationship with God?

I Ilyse 02:23

I mean, firstly, think it's oppressive, right? Like, that's just number one. Number one, it's oppressive. And we're here to tell you please for the love of God, stop saying such stupid stuff.

M Megan 02:32

So stupid

I Ilyse 02:33

Just I beg of you. Just like our Jihad episode, there is not a month that goes by that some well meaning journalist, member of the public or student doesn't email me to be like, isn't this horribly incorrect thing super true. And I just, you know, selfishly I want my time to be imagined is more precious than that.

M Megan 03:00

Yeah, that's fair. That's fair.

I Ilyse 03:01

But number two, I think also, folks want to use Muslim pious fashion a term that we're going to be borrowing throughout this episode from Liz Bukar as low hanging fruit. So hijabis, are on your college brochure to signal diversity. That's women who wear hijab, they're taught about in any number of political science classes usually derisively and by folks with no experience, I said what I said, as examples of political difference or political signification or case law around uniforms the military or sports so it's like a teaching tool. Hijab is a low hanging fruit for a lot of people but literally no one in largely white usually cis-het discursive spaces take seriously the why of hijab. It's assumed in these places where we use it as a symbol but not as a person as an idea as a community, as like forced or coerced and when it isn't, there's this like, noble piety

through line about goodness morality and submissive women happening. So Megan, of course, I'm Big Mad that hijab and hijabis are simultaneously hyper visible, hyper signified and then often left out, silenced, erased entirely.

M

Megan 04:12

Right? So they get to be signpost or again, and I, we talked about this in an earlier episode, but that New York Times, Merriam Duranie, talked about it as a birdwatching guide to Muslim women who cover they are objects for study, not humans making choices about what to put on their bodies.

I

Ilyse 04:27

That's exactly right. That's probably true. The thing that bothers me and it might bother you also, given what I know you've written about, is that pious fashion, women who choose clothing in a way that cultivates or signifies their own piety. So we're talking about Muslims here, because Hello, I'm a scholar of Islam, and y'all can't stop emailing me about hijab. But I know Megan that you've talked about say, LDS or FLDS fashion that like for God's sakes, Tan France of Queer Eye, Queer Eye fame, has made an Empire on modesty. Yeah. But if you add piety to modesty, then we get reductive use usually of women or femmes and assumptions about "their men" in big quotes, being aggressive and "their women" equally big quotes, being submissive, brainwashed or trapped. And you know what? That's incorrect on top of being stupid.

M

Megan 05:23

It's stupid in the face. It's also I mean, it's incorrect on so many different levels. But it also assumes that pious fashion is a thing that only women do. Yes, exactly. Men also dress modestly. It is a requirement for lots of men who are religious in lots of different religions to dress modestly. So, yeah, there's a lot of levels of incorrectness happening here.

I

Ilyse 05:43

Also, like the way that we construct modesty almost always assumes a feminized body. So even though my partner wears long sleeves and long pants year round to his office, that's just men's clothing. That's not modest clothing. That's just men's clothing. But if I take off a sleeve at any time of year, that's a body choice. Yeah. As opposed to just clothes and putting on my bod. Yep, yep. Yeah, so all of this is gendered all of it. T to B. Top to bottom. Gendered.

M

Megan 06:18

Yep. Yep, I am forever haunted by that Facebook video I saw where the woman just kept asking herself if her ass was professional, like, not how she was dressing her ass, but like, was it possible to be perceived as professional with the ass that God and her mama gave her?

Haunted, Anyway. So specifically, today, we're going to focus on pious or modest fashion in Islam. Right. So how does that relate to hijab? Why, why, why? I know why. But why are we still talking about this?

I Ilyse 06:55

Frankly, we're still talking about this for the reason that you always want us to talk about stuff, Megan. And it's because of law. Yeah. Nation states. I mean, like, yes, it's also about my inbox. Like, let's be clear, about my inbox. Nation states around the world are enacting laws that prevent, particularly women, so the way that these laws are written are particularly about women's bodies, from wearing niqab, a full body covering, often with a face cover of some kind, though, there's variation, and hijab, hair coverings, head coverings. Again, there's lots of variation within that. In addition to laws, so laws preventing women or enforcing women to wear specific types of Islamic dress. We also know that women who cover are the most likely targets of violence in the US and Canada, as well as the UK, France and Germany. And those are just the places that I have quick data from. We can add more to that if I had done more homework for this episode. But I did not.

M Megan 07:58

But even the homework we've already done says that women who signal their relationship to God on their bodies in ways that folks who are uninformed, not correct. Understand as oppressive, right, are the most likely targets of violence. And we know that is even more true when those women are brown or black.

I Ilyse 08:21

Yeah, and you know what, I'm just gonna, I'm gonna pick it up a little bit because you said uninformed, and I don't think people are uninformed. Willfully ignorant? See? I think folks see that these are Muslim women and harass them on purpose because of Islamophobia.

M Megan 08:36

Yeah, I think that's accurate. I was trying to be generous, but no, no, you can be

I 08:40

generous. I don't have to be because I don't want to be but I appreciate your generosity. Because you're not wrong. Some people might be but like, frankly, my five year old knows better. So yeah, that's fair. Grown ass men ripping hijabs off women on the train. They're not being ignorant. They're being racist fucks.

M Megan 08:56

Yeah, that's accurate. They're being violent. Yes.

I Ilyse 08:59

Hijab is at once. They're, like this deeply personal and cultural choice, but it's also a public marker of difference in white Christian publics. But it's also a marker of belonging in Muslim communities or Muslim majority nation states. Yeah, but here's the thing Megan, this is why we're talking about it. Okay. It is never not a political choice on top of a personal religious cultural one.

M Megan 09:23

Oh, that sounds complicated. Can you can you tell me more about how it's political in addition to being religious I thought religion was just about belief, is the thing I say all the time on the internet. I love it when we reduce religion to belief because that's all it is really.

I Ilyse 09:38

I love when I make you say sarcastic things it makes me so happy because you're so mad. I can tell your teeth are such on edge and I...

M Megan 09:45

gritting my jaw. How could How could what we put on our heads be a political choice as well as a religious one? Please, please teach me your ways.

I Ilyse 09:55

I mean, I'm gonna go for the low hanging fruit here and be like we're 21 years post 911, 911 can drink. 911 has saddled up at the bar, which means we are 21 years into the explicit anti-Muslim hostility, the world over that manifests in legal limitations for Muslims. To say nothing of you know, war waged against Muslims on the premise of liberating them from their oppressive men. And we know they're oppressive, because hijab and niqab.

M Megan 10:21

The war against terror is the war for women's dignity. Laura Bush.

I Ilyse 10:27

Right, like that's the slogan. Which is to say, any Muslim woman or femme outside of Muslim majority countries who chooses to mark themselves as Muslim knows that they are doing so in a climate of, if not straight up hate, of suspicion, surveillance, and eyes. They know that they

are walking into spaces that will instantly read them as Muslim. And in many spaces, this is knowing full well that you're walking into a wall of judgment that might result in violence.

M

Megan 10:58

Yeah, I mean, this is also a space where just Americans are dumb about how this works to you because and we talked about this in our previous episode, but the women who are covering in a lot of these spaces aren't always necessarily marking themselves as Muslim per se, and just abiding by like local dress conventions. Christian women in Palestine also cover they're not saying I am Muslim, they are saying like, this is how I dress if I want to be treated a specific way in public, which is complicated, and I'm not going down a whole gender hole.

I

Ilyse 11:32

But no, but we're gonna get there in a second. So let me ask you a question then. Okay, great. Mega, in your opinion, what is pious or modest fashion?

M

Megan 11:41

So when I think about pious or modest fashion, I think about cultures that tell folks how they should present their bodies if they wanted to be treated respectfully, or taken seriously or assumed to be okay, honestly. So like a no shoulders intial. Sunday best at church, high coverage, looser fit clothes, in your Gurdwara, Europeans not wearing shorts on grown men, even when it is very hot. Sometimes when you cross the border into Vermont, you are issued danskos goes and muck boots. Right? It's it is a way that you show you fit in a space, right? Clothing, like everything else is culturally and historically contingent and comporting your body and specific ways, signals to folks around you how you are hoping to be received. Yeah. So if we're thinking about pious fashion, specifically, we are thinking about the ways that folks work within a framework of piety of purposeful religious cultivation and devotion of right relationship. But like pious fashion is also about looking good. This is not a fit that you put on that says, Don't look at me, I want to be invisible. I want to look like a monk. That the wearer says, I look cute as hell and also my look lines up with my moral and religious and or cultural values and norms. Like I am both right with God and I am right, like this is correct. So it can be how I have adorned myself how have celebrated my temple also helps me keep my own piety, my own commitments at the forefront of my brain, but not always. That's, that's it. That's pious fashion. It's sartorial choices that people are making with their religious and their cultural and their personal values and commitments in mind. And like, let's be real, when we're talking about this stuff. We are often talking about women and femmes because gender bias and misogyny locates these conversations on the bodies of women. And femmes and I know I mentioned this before, but I'm just gonna say it again. This isn't just a Muslim conversation, and I am forever haunted by watching friends in grad school play that left behind game where you convert people by like shooting prayers at them, but like it's still a shooter game and when you convert them by shooting them, the women's hemlines immediately drop in their sleeves get longer. Just

I

Ilyse 14:15

-  
What?

M Megan 14:16  
Yeah, fucked up about it.

I Ilyse 14:17  
I don't know any. I don't know any of that. And I'm horrified. Yeah, yeah,

M Megan 14:23  
I'm messed up about it. Hey, what's hijab? What does that have to do with pious fashion?

I Ilyse 14:32  
Great question.

M Megan 14:33  
Hey, thanks,

I Ilyse 14:34  
Hijab, at least in Western communities, and English speaking communities in particular is a catch all for Islamic modest fashion, especially but not exclusively head coverings for women. Okay, but like hijab is a particular word that, I know you're shocked Megan, means different things in different places. So like culture example, when I lived in Tajikistan, hijab was more of like a bandana or a loose fitting skullcap honestly, for women, so think, you know, because this is a great place to talk about the visuals of something, but I want you to imagine that there's hair visible always ears out, maybe your braid or a platt down your neck, which is like totally visible, which is super different from how my Arab hijabi friends often wear like an under cap and then tie a scarf over it, where one would never see hair or ears.

M Megan 15:31  
Right. I still remember to see in like a little bit in her like lovely, lovely way but mocking sister of the pod Kathleen M. Foodie. When she had to go get her picture taken for her visa to Iran, she had like, tied her head covering in the way that grannies do it and Tasim was like please, before you leave, let me show you how to do this so that you don't look like you're 90, right.



I

Ilyse 15:52

And that's like, again, like each place is culturally conditioned like but like my Indian Muslim friends like like the ones from India, not Indian Americans who also have a different style, often just wrap a longer scarf around their hair like easy, breezy, beautiful, and to be really assumptive in short handed here. They seem not to care if hair is poking out, like it's kind of like a soft drape, if you will. And I too have been made fun of relentlessly for like tying a tighter scarf, because it makes me look more conservative. And they're like you're the American. What are you doing? Like this is unnecessary. And I'm like, but I'm meeting your grandmother, like I need to look appropriate. And they're like, girl no, like you look at stodgy. Right. **So I want you to hear that this word hijab, which we use to mean like all Muslim covering forever, it actually has like local flavors and also local words. So there's other words for modest dress. Hijab is just the one that Western media and Western white folk fixate on.** Alongside niqab wear hijab, again, is a head covering almost exclusively, and in a cab would be a full face covering and a head covering and sometimes also includes the full body covering. I mean, that's how Muslims would use that phrase, but I've seen the media just like loosened lazy lucidly with this word.

M

Megan 17:12

Yes, yes, yeah.

I

Ilyse 17:13

So just as like a smattering of words that you might have heard of. There's hijab, niqab, jilbab, khimar and burqa. Burqa bans are the other thing we see, burqa and niqab tend to be linked up together, and hijab, jilbab and khimar tend to be linked together. But that's not how all of these cultures and communities would use them. Right? **So I want us to hear that we have already in just asking, "What is hijab?" Collapsed, Like many, many hundreds and hundreds of years of history, all of the cultures of the world, and really specific, specific local dressing practices.** And I want to be I want to be like a little bit of a bit here for a minute. But like, I often when I teach this in my class, and I'm, I'm so grumpy about it, because 911 can drink and my students are younger than that. And so you should know better, right? Like if we're going to be fixated on Islam, we should know better and yet we never do. And I always put up this like birdwatching guide. And it's like an image of how all the different regions, it's from a Muslim fashion blog that's like, here's how to channel your like super hot couture Istanbul versus your like, super cutie Cairo look, and it's like, from like a Cosmo, right? It's like that kind of genre. And I show them that and they're all like, oh my god, invariably, invariably, it's like, oh my God, there's so much to learn. I could never imagine and then I show them one of those pants guides from like an American Cosmo. That's like, flares, cigarette pants. Culots, capris, Bermuda shorts, short shorts, booty shorts, like and I'm like, you fucking know this about your own clothing. Right? Right. You know this, you know that, particularly women's clothing has 1000 different specific terminologies? Yeah, we know somehow what a high rise mom boot cut means. But you can't ,you can't like hijab means everything? Get the fuck out of here. Yeah, no, that's trash. That's trash. So I just I want to say out loud that fashion words. There are many. And that applies to Muslims and Muslim cultures too. Yeah,

M

Megan 19:24

Cuz they're people? shock

I

Ilyse 19:36

So Goodwin, Let me ask you a question. Now that we know kind of what a hijab is, and we're more or less clear on pious fashion. Why? Why do women choose to wear hijab?

M

Megan 19:46

I mean, why do women do anything really? I don't. Yep. Just like all of the fucking reasons that women do anything. Ever, right? They make choices. Those choices are constrained by the cultures and the time periods they find themselves in, but they're making choices all the time. For some folks, it is about piety. It is about building right relationship with God and yourself and your community and your family. Women might choose to cover because they look good doing it, and they want to look good and great for them. For some of them, it is about carving out space to not be looked at, to say that my whole body is not for you to behold and fuck off. Love that. For some folks, they are pressured into doing it. We get pressured into doing a whole lot of things. Jesus, my parents pressured me real hard to like, I don't know, get married have babies. I did one of those things, but not in ways that they like, right? So peer pressure, coercion, absolutely a thing too. Your family expecting it, your culture, expecting it. feeling better about leaving your family and being out going to college or something. That's sometimes why folks choose to cover. Yeah, you're just used to it. You're just in the habit as it were. That's a Catholicism joke, as well as the truth. It can be comfortable. Sometimes it just feels good on your body, she says autistically. And then also like straight up speaking of coercion, there are legal reasons that people do it. In the past, Saudi women had to cover Iran, currently women have to cover but like, and we're going to talk about homophone far in the homework, but like in Iran, women were also forced to uncover as part of like a secular modernization. So is it about what's on their head? Or is it about controlling women's bodies? I think you know, the answer to that, sometimes for legal protest. In the past, Turkish women have covered and uncovered for protest reasons. And in Quebec, and in the Netherlands and France, currently covering is complicated, which is particularly fucked up in a time of COVID, where folks had been compelled to cover their faces for public health reasons, but were punished for doing it for religious reasons. Everything is a mess. And people are not great to each other, particularly when you're different. Yeah, that's why women might choose to cover their heads.

I

Ilyse 22:02

Yeah, I want to take like a pause for two seconds on the feminism one because this always breaks a particular audience member of a particular age. Because we have been so taught in the United States to see hijab as oppressive that when folks in their own voices like there's this clip I have that I always play where it's like a bunch of young college aged or like 20s Muslim women saying things like, yeah, I wear this because I'm a raging feminist, and this is awesome. And this is where like, white women of a certain age like short out, like truly you're like, Okay, Boomer shot, they're just like, be quiet. I know. Like you are, you have shorted out. We will reboot you in a second. But like, let me explain this through



M Megan 22:49  
your gun maximum, Derek.

I Ilyse 22:51  
Yeah, like I just like, I'm aware that when you have been taught that this thing is oppressive. And when you are part of like a burn your bra, I can show my shoulders and shool generation that this might feel untrue to you. But the idea, I just want to underline what you said Megan, which is the I wear hijab, I cover, I wear loose fitting garments, so that I control what men have access to see, yeah, I'm going to use men here because that's often who we're protecting against, right? The male gaze is often the one that we are worried about. I want you to hear that within a feminist context. That does not mean all Muslim feminists cover or at all, but there are plenty of Muslims who cover who then identify as feminist or egalitarian or like politics, or like radical because this is about moving in the world. It's not about the clothing having an inherent value.

M Megan 23:47  
Right? Well, and we have folks, Muslim women and other women of religious conviction talking about feeling empowered, that they're taking their bodies back. I use an article in class that woman who started covering when she went to college, also said it helped her rethink her relationship to food and disordered eating because she didn't feel like she was on display or for public consumption all the time. I also I have a clip that I like to use that I think we've assigned before but it's the niqab bitches in France after one of countless stupid attempts to tell Muslim women how they should be in public where they're running around in niqabs right? So they're they're covered to the waist with just their eyes poking out and they're running around in booty shorts and like high high heels in front of public offices and and government buildings and the protest there is, "Why is it okay for me to uncover like this, but not to say I don't want my body to be for public consumption?" Yeah. Anyway, feminism is complicated, and maybe doesn't always look like what you think it should look like. I have a question for you.

I Ilyse 24:57  
Hit me.

M Megan 24:58  
How can people, how can our beloved nerds and the folks that they're going to talk about this with later, how can they be less incorrect about covering up?

I Ilyse 25:09  
For starters, care less, care less about what others are wearing, unless you want to throw someone a badass compliment? Like, truly, if you can let men with big Johnson T shirts live in peace? I'm curious, like, just curious if we could let a bitch have some fabric on her head

without being dicks about it. Like I? I'm over it like I just, it's just clothing. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**M** Megan 25:34

Sometimes we put stuff on. It's not that complicated. Also, I'm just going to I'm going to add in my thing here, which like, person wearing a piece of cloth on their head, however significant it is, or is not to them, does not equal brainwashing. A) brainwashing as we have discussed at length on this spot is not a thing. But like also, what if we take women seriously, and trust that they dress themselves in the morning, on purpose? What if they make choices and are adults?

**I** Ilyse 26:06

And I would add to that, you should also ask whether or not you're a trusted person. Because I have been in tons of Muslim women's spaces where like when it is just gals, or folks identifying as gals, the headscarves come off, because that's a space wear that feels comfortable. And if you're not a person for whom that feels comfortable, that's on you, bro, that's not Muslim women's problem, be safer. So yeah, be safer. And I'll add for my final like, what can we do to be less incorrect? **Let's stop thinking that a person in modest clothing stops thinking, at their modesty or their piety. So like, I promise that women who cover are far more than their headscarves or their niqab or they're a nibayaya or their salwaar or their burqa. And like I'm mixing in names of clothing styles, on top of things that we might consider Islamic fashion on purpose, because women are not just their jeans. I just like, what if we imagined that a hijabi was more than her hijab?** Like, frankly, even describing women as hijabis is a conversation we have in my classes, like why are we comfortable with like, referring to a group of women as like, yo, hey, headscarves?

**M** Megan 27:25

Yeah, that's not great. And like, listen, lots of hijabis refer to themselves as hijabi. So I don't want to like take away that agency. But I also want to name that like, I don't know if it's like when my dad would like, say, like, "those skirts"? Like that's like really messed up. That's like, a really 1950s way to say like "broads" or something? And like, what if we don't do it? Like Guys and Dolls? Level? Yeah, like wow.

**I** Ilyse 27:48

Yeah, so like nicely, nicely, please sit down. Let's talk about some stakes. What are the stakes, Goodwin?

**M** Megan 27:58

You can't just give me the musical theater cue. And now, sorry, I

**I** Ilyse 28:01

I Ilyse 28:01

I cued you up and I didn't I did not think of the consequences.

M Megan 28:04

You didn't think it through? It's okay. What are the stakes? Well, what if? What if we take women seriously? What if their clothes and their choices are theirs to make? And they are agents who get to make their own decisions and probably do so on purpose? Yeah, like, also, as we're saying that I'm curious about the woman who gets up in the morning and for whom it is important to cover because that's how she wants to present herself to the world and to her community and to God, but also she didn't spend like an hour thinking about this is how I will signify it like she got up and she got dressed. Sometimes it's also just a thing that you did without thinking about it that much and maybe stop making such a big fucking deal about everything all the time and let women live. Yeah, I would like also very much encourage us to take the patriarchy seriously, like if you are so angry that women want or need to avoid a male gaze, maybe take that shit up with men, because it's their eyeballs and their rapey selves that need correction and also just consumer culture that says women's bodies are to be consumed and devoured. I hate that and it like as as we're saying this too. I want to specify again, obviously, not all perpetrators of sexual violence are men, but the numbers are not on your sides. They're friends. And I want to emphasize that when we're talking about folks who cover doing so, to control their bodies to claim their bodies for themselves, that you should be able to walk the streets wearing whatever you want or nothing at all and still be safe. What and how you are dressing your body does not give other people permission to touch or hurt you. And thinking like that is also gross.

I Ilyse 30:04

Nor does a full bodied burqa protect you. Because it's not as if Muslim women who cover are immune to sexual violence exactly like the the logic here is just patriarchy. And so, what if we don't do that.

M Megan 30:20

What if we don't do that, right, well, and I've also seen that kind of rhetoric weaponized against survivors of sexual assault, who are also Muslim and like, well, if you had covered, then surely properly, that's not right. That's not how this works. It is not. And then women who covered are also visible targets for perpetrators police and laws. So again, 16 nation states are currently banning burqas. Again, 16 nation states have said that Muslims cannot choose their own clothing that Muslim women are not adults who can make choices about what they put on their bodies, 2 nation states require covering Iran and Afghanistan, which proves the same thing citizens cannot choose their clothes. And others still have partial bans, like government employees not being able to wear hijab or niqab and we've we've got a list in the show notes.

I Ilyse 31:08

Yeah. I also want to I want to underline this legal stake yeah, here because that's where we started and I we're gonna wrap up, but that's where we're gonna end too, because this is not

just about like women be doing things for themselves making choices getting dressed. This is not like a Cher Horowitz, clothing montage moment where like, all choices are equal. These are politicized choices in de facto and de jure ways. And I'm very excited about and frustrated by the legal things because there's all of these laws happening around the world. So as you just said, 16 nation states, ban burkas, and then there are, I think, dozens more that have partial bans or contextual bans on either hijab or niqab. But there, and like a lot of those are located in white, predominantly Christian, European and American, European and North American states. But there's also laws in the Indian state of Karnataka that made hijab illegal for students. These are Hindu, right Hindu fundamentalist, Hindu nationalist laws that erupted in violence not that long ago. In the state, just 40 minutes to my North, Quebec, there's an anti niqab and hijab law making Muslim women who cover illegal in public service jobs. So you want to be a teacher you want to be a government employee? Nope. So what does it mean that we are writing out? Muslim women and Sikh men and in some cases, Jews from working in any government sector? What are we teaching children if we are teaching them that Muslims are not suitable to be teachers?

M Megan 32:49  
in an alleged democracy, right, and

I Ilyse 32:53  
Oh, also in an alleged liberal country. K, France also disallows hijabs into calves, but specifically won't let girls under the age of 18 cover. So your childhood choices, which normally would be adjudicated by your guardian, or parent are not because France, one of the most racist places ever has a real problem with Muslims. And it does not trust Muslim parents to raise Muslim children, or, as a friend of mine once said, It does trust Muslim parents to raise Muslim children, which is why it does not allow it. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And there's also all of these other places where hijab has been banned, either partially or not in the United States, I lost track. At one point, there were 17 states in the United States that had put forth either an anti-Sharia or an anti-hijab ban. And the Sharia was almost always tied to these ideas of jihad and hijab, like visible Muslimness. So I want you all to hear that getting hijab wrong. Getting why people cover, wrong is not just annoying, because it's like, bad interpersonal, or like bad interfaith politics. It has legal and physical and violent ramifications, specifically written on the bodies of women identifying Muslims.

M Megan 34:25  
Thanks, I hate it.

I Ilyse 34:27  
So I think I also want to just say, like when we politicize this garment, it's bad news, right? But you're also incorrect to think that Muslim and women and femmes are just like being herded. There's protests and demonstrations, both against hijab bans or niqab bans, but also against hijab and niqab mandates. There are moments of solidarity between and among Muslim

communities. I think there are some ill advised hij, like what is it like to wear hijab solidarity white women movements, like I think that's a problem, but that's like a separate issue. There are conversations about how and when and why one might cover so quite a lot of my students make that choice based on situations, but reducing Muslim women to a hijab and then calling that hijab oppressive or backward, is incorrect. And it's racist as fuck. And it authorizes violence like the entire war on terror. I hate it, as you should. So stop emailing us about it. We're sick of it.

**M** Megan 35:28

We are we're very tired and sweaty.

**I** Ilyse 35:31

Don't pack up yet nerds. You got homework, homework? Why don't work. All right. So we've got a convert, like the conversation has a podcast on Niqab bans in Canada, and how those bans are tied directly to Islamophobic hate crimes. So we are linking up the law and the violence right off the bat. It's a pretty good podcast. There's a lot of news that I'll put in the show notes also, but book wise, we want to recommend where we started Liz Bucars pious fashion is a really great book with Harvard University Press. And then she's got a ton of related public scholarship. There's a podcast with Building Bridges out of Georgetown, and that's really listable and very, very assignable. And Liz also has an article called "Dear Nancy Pelosi, hijab is not a hat", which I find very cheeky. There is Sahar Khmers what is veiling, which is a book from UNC press, super easy to read, very consumable for the public. James libeled and Timothy gross have a really important book on Islamic veiling in shijang. The political and societal struggle to define Uyghur female adornment. Sorry, that's an article not a book, but the Chinese government is doing an ethnic cleansing of Muslims, and is barring Muslims from wearing head coverings. These are all related things so I want you to get a big picture. And then there's a Faegheh Shirazi's article, "The veiling issue in 20th century Iran and fashion and society religion and government". So we're thinking about it as fashion. And then there's the classic Houma Hudfarr's "The veil in their minds and on our heads: the persistence of colonial images of Muslim women". It's old, but it's great. Yep. And then my favorite media for you is "Wrap my hijab". Hadar she's a she's like a cool music artists slash rapper. Yeah. What do you got? Megan? Anything?

**M** Megan 37:26

I mean, I'm just like, I'm excited about that video. I use it in class and you just get a sense of how many different ways there are to cover and who's covering and again, just the like, beautiful fashion of it rather than just having it reduced to kind of dour modesty, like, No, these are gorgeous, gorgeous people. So Kayla Wheeler did some amazing writing about Black Muslim women's pious fashion "First pellet square", I will get you a link for that. We together wrote a piece for Religion dispatches, religion. Jeff Goldblum did a racism to our girl Jackie, and we did not like it. So you can read us yelling about that. I have a piece in Well, we both have pieces in Tina Howls great Routledge Handbook of Islam and gender. But my piece on gender, race and American Islamophobia specifically talks about an image of a Muslim woman covering being used to protest the inauguration of the 45th president it showed up in the Washington

Post. She is wearing a Stars and Stripes hijab it was presented as like a bastion of liberal values. And I'm using liberal here very deliberately. And a lot of folks were concerned about the American imperialism of that image so and Shepard Fairey basically didn't care and isn't Yeah, great. So anyway, that's in the article. And then I also have a piece in the Journal of the American Academy of Religion called "unmasking Islamophobia, anti Muslim hostility and as white supremacy". In the roundtable, that Alarm Acti edited that came out of our AAR roundtable on Judith Weisenfeld's work, but I was specifically in that piece looking at anti Klan anti masking laws in Georgia. And the way that local lawmakers were trying to use them to basically make it harder for Muslim women who cover to be in public. So spoilers but the way that these laws were trying to be written, it would have been fine to drive around dressed as Santa Claus even if your whole face is covered, but not if you're a Muslim woman engaging in a pious fashion.

I Ilyse 39:47  
everybody loves Santa

M Megan 39:49  
right, everybodys loves Santa. It's fine. It's not fine. Demon Klaus. Anyway.

👤 39:54  
Shout out to Evie Wolfe, Rachel's Zieff and Juliana Finch the KI101 team whose work makes this pod accessible, therefore awesome listen to both social media-able among many other things for which we are grateful.

M Megan 40:04  
Sure, you can find Megan, that's me, on Twitter @mpgPhD and Ilyse @profirmf, you can also find the show @keepingit\_101. Find the website at keepingit101.com Peep the Insta if you want to check us out on tik-tok, I guess and drop us a rating or review in your pod catcher of choice with that peace out nerds, your Honor, it's on the syllabus

👤 40:55  
make you sweat don't feel too tight your wit your hair dryer that your hair looks nice how long your hair

👤 41:02  
is you need to get your life you only see your employees working let dental you pop in and run your mouth like the trend don't let your exotic vacation number with your bank the nation now need that paper paper paper if you want education



