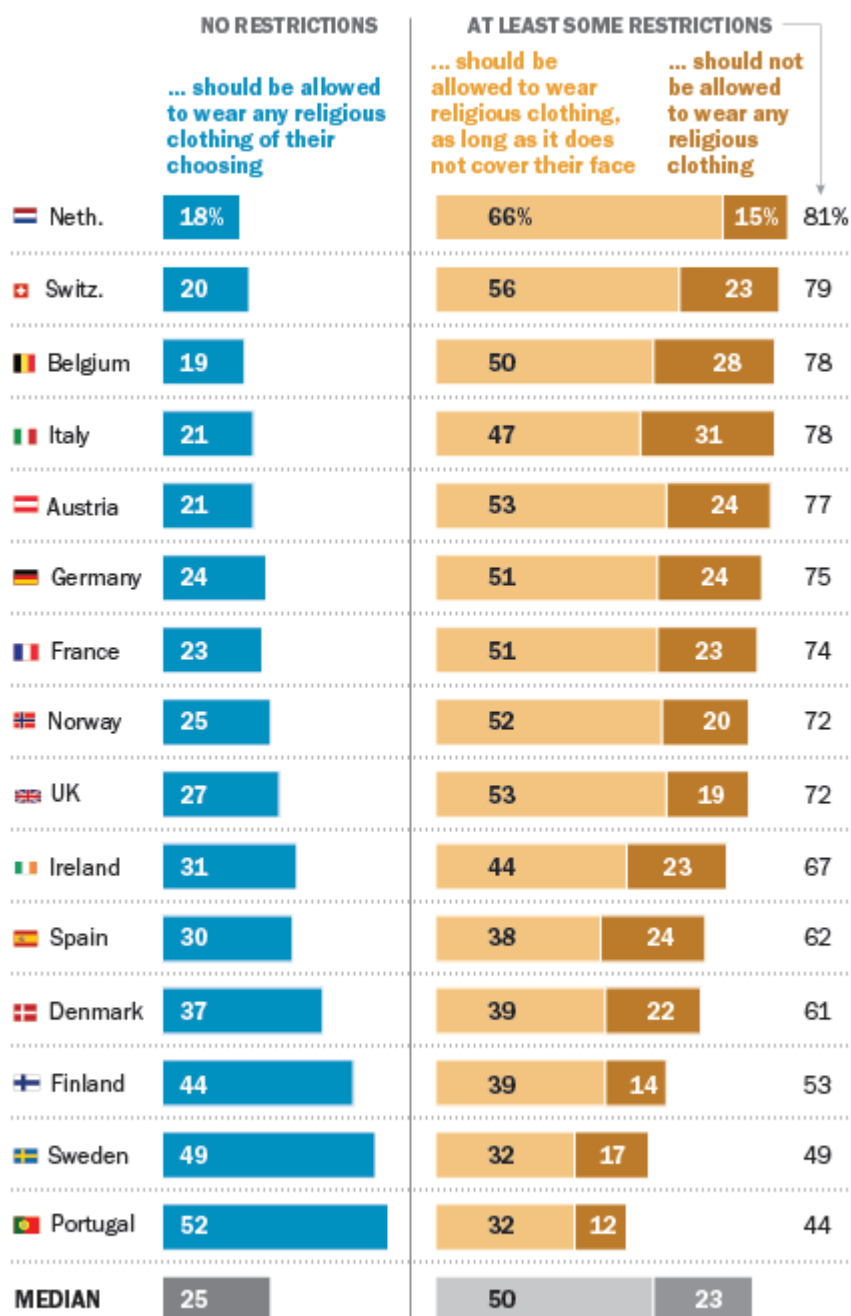


EUROPEAN UNION: Most Western Europeans favor at least some restrictions on Muslim women's religious clothing

By Ariana Monique Salazar and Scott Gardner

Most across Western Europe support at least some restrictions on Muslim women's religious clothing

% of non-Muslims who say Muslim women who live in their country ...



Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown. Muslims not included in analysis.

Source: Survey conducted April-August 2017 in 15 countries in Western Europe.

"Being Christian in Western Europe"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Pew Research Center (17.09.2018) – <https://pewrsr.ch/2Ep3IRc> – A Danish law that took effect in August makes it illegal for Muslim women to wear face-covering veils – such as burqas or niqabs – in public. Austria, Belgium and France, as well as

parts of Italy and Spain, have enacted similar laws in recent years, contributing to government restrictions on religion in the region.

These laws are largely in line with Western European attitudes on the issue. Most non-Muslim adults in Western Europe favor at least some restrictions on the religious clothing of Muslim women who live in their country, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey of 15 countries in the region.

The prevailing view (a regional median of 50%) is that Muslim women should be allowed to wear religious clothing as long as it does not cover their face. Fewer (regional median of 23%) say Muslim women should not be allowed to wear any religious clothing. And a regional median of 25% take the more permissive view that Muslim women should be allowed to wear any religious clothing they choose.

In the United Kingdom, for example, 53% of non-Muslim adults say Muslim women in the UK should be allowed to wear religious clothing as long as it does not cover their face, while 19% favor restricting all religious clothing. Roughly a quarter (27%) support allowing Muslim women to wear the religious clothing of their choosing.

The recently enacted laws in European countries do not explicitly target Muslim women's dress. In the case of Denmark, for instance, the statute prohibits face coverings except for "recognizable purposes," such as cold weather.

Proponents of the recent laws point to public safety and other reasons for the measures. Opponents say the laws are unfairly directed at Muslims and that people should have the freedom to wear what they want.

Overall, most people in Western Europe say they accept religious minorities – Muslims included. For example, a median of 66% of non-Muslim adults in the region say they would accept a Muslim as a member of their family, according to a separate question in the recent survey.

Yet even among non-Muslims with positive feelings about Muslims, large shares in most countries still favor banning face coverings. Among those who say they would be willing to accept a Muslim in their family, a median of 55% support banning facial coverings, and this includes majorities in Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands. This is not the case in every country, however. For example, about six-in-ten Portuguese adults with these positive feelings about Muslims favor no restrictions on religious clothing.

Among Western Europeans who say they would be unwilling to accept a Muslim in their family, there is relatively significant support for banning all religious clothing. For example, in France, 43% of those who would not want Muslims as relatives support a total ban, compared with only 16% among those who are willing to accept Muslims in their families.

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NEW REPORT: Women's Rights & Religion

Women's Rights & Religion

A report on women's rights and
Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

June 2018
Human Rights Without Frontiers



Excerpt:

In hopes to discover and highlight the powerful potential that religion and religious leaders have to help guarantee women's rights around the world, this report examines current tensions that exist between women's rights and some interpretations of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish doctrines.

This report addresses early, forced and child marriages, female genital mutilation, violence against women, 'honour' killing, public dress codes, and reproductive rights. Through these various facets of women's rights, the report explores the ways in which religious texts, practices, cultural influences, and patriarchal systems influence or motivate violations of these rights.

The Abrahamic religions as organized systems have always been led by men and have perpetuated a patriarchal culture that can be questioned in the light of the current human rights culture. Women have the right to gender equality, and some women reject the dominance of men and patriarchal social systems over their persons, claiming autonomy over choices on issues exclusive to their sex.

Women's rights and freedoms are guaranteed under international law and should be protected over social, cultural, or even legal norms when they result in gender discrimination and prejudices.

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