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The Burqa Ban in France and Its Potential Implications on Islamic Terrorism

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Abstract

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MA, Morgan State University, 2008

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Abstract

Islamic terrorism has become a global problem which has resulted in human, social,

political, and economic costs. Many Islamic terrorist organizations have focused their

attacks on the West and its interests. They justify these acts by making reference to

policies of the West, which they believe are inimical to Islam. France, a Western country,

recently introduced a law which bans the Islamic face veil (the burqa) in public places in

the country. This study examined the implications of this law. The research question

focused on the perceived relationship between this law and increased acts of Islamic

terrorism. The theoretical construct of this study was based off Huntington's clash of

civilizations theory. Data were collected through in-depth, open ended interviews with 23

Muslim participants who were identified through a snowball sampling technique. These

participants represented a variety of nations, including France. Data were inductively

coded and then organized around key themes and ideas. Findings indicate that

participants did not perceive a relationship between increased acts of Islamic terrorism

and the burqa ban specifically, but they did feel the burqa ban undermines Islam. These

findings were consistent with the study's theoretical construct as they revealed an

underlying conflict between some Western countries and Islam. These findings contribute

to positive social change as they highlight areas where policy makers have opportunities

to build more culturally sensitive relations between the West and Islam, perhaps

eventually serving to reduce future radicalization and religious extremism.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their support, understanding, and encouragement. I wish to also thank my family members and friend who provided me with information and advice that contributed to this study.

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I will like to thank Dr. Demeter and Dr. Lum. The support and the assistance these committee members gave me immensely contributed to the development of this research study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Some scholars have argued that the emergence of Islamic terrorist organizations

such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State whose ideologies focus on hatred for the West

have reignited the debate about Islam/West relations. For example, Jawad al-Tamimi

(2014) stated that the primary objectives of terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda have

been subject of intense debate (p. 11). Jawad al-Tamimi stated that Islamic terrorist

organizations such as Al Qaeda emerged from resistance they have against the type of

policies Western nations pursue in the Middle East (p. 11). Terrill (2014) stated that the

dangers posed by the Islamic State terrorist organization is now of great concern to the

United States and her allies (p. 14). This scenario leads to the argument about a supposed

tumultuous relation Islam has with the West. Huntington (1997) described this as a clash

of civilizations between the West and Islam (p. 20).

Huntington (1997) opined that the end of the Cold War would be followed by

another major conflict that would erupt between the West and Islam (p. 20). Huntington

also argued that one of the reasons for this clash between the West and Islam was because

of what he described as the "the West's universalist pretensions" (p. 20). This means that

Western countries consider Western values as universal values, which should be adopted

by other civilizations, including the Islamic civilization (Huntington, 1997). Furthermore,

the efforts by the West to make its values universal and applicable to other civilizations

"generate intense resentment among Muslims" (Huntington, 1997, p. 211).

Public policies, including foreign policies, have been used and are still being used

by some Western countries to project these Western values. In fact, some Western

countries have introduced public policies that project Western values as universal values

that should be observed by people from other civilizations. Boukhars (2009) described

this as "Western expansionist policies" (p. 306). Some of these policies have the potential

to undermine or challenge the cultural and religious beliefs of non-Western civilizations

and religions. The views expressed by Khan (2001) supported this assertion. Khan stated

that one of the reasons for the growth of extremism among Muslims is the desire to halt

the penetration of Western values into the Muslim world (p. 218). This is because, as

Khan further stated, Islamic extremists consider the expansion and penetration of

Western values into the Muslim world as inimical to Islam (p. 218).

One of such Western public policies that have the potential to undermine Islam is

the French law that prohibits anyone in France from wearing in public any clothing that

covers the person's face. Todd (2011), in a *France 24* online news report, stated that this

legislation that bans the burqa came into force in November of 2011(para. 1). This

legislation has been condemned by some Muslims. For example, Cody (2012) of *The

Washington Post* reported that some moderate and non-moderate Muslims expressed their

anger at the ban (para. 4). Cody further reported that a Muslim business man called

Rachid Nekkaz described the burqa ban in France as an infringement on the rights of

Muslim women in France (para. 13).

The French burqa ban was also condemned by some non-Muslim countries. Davis

(2011) observed that the United States expressed its disapproval of the burqa ban in

France (p. 119). This study examined whether or not this burqa ban in France could

contribute to the continuous rise in Islamic terrorist attacks against some Western countries and their interests around the world.

Background of Study

Many Islamic terrorist organizations have made reference to the policies of some Western nations as reasons for carrying out acts of terrorism against the West. Gupta (2009) observed that many Islamic terrorist organizations believe that some Western countries are bent on controlling the Islamic world "militarily, politically, financially, and even spiritually" (p. 116). This also explains why some Islamic terrorist organizations have also carried out terrorist attacks against non-Western countries that they believe have adopted policies that further Western interest.

A recent example is the 2013 Westgate Mall terrorist attacks in Kenya. As observed by Omondi (2014), the Somali Islamic terrorist organization called Al Shabaab carried out these attacks (p. 41). More than 60 people died, and many more wounded (Omondi, 2014). Samora (2013) stated that Al Shabaab has continuously threatened the Government of Kenya with retaliation for sending troops to Somalia (p. 100). Western countries encouraged Kenya to move its military into Somalia, and even gave Kenya some monetary incentives for the operations in Somalia (Omondi, 2014)

Furthermore, Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda expressed its displeasure over the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Islamic world. Chick (2010), a reporter with the *Christian Science Monitor*, observed that bin Laden also condemned the French government's decision to ban the burqa (para. 1). As further reported by Chick, bin Laden stated in an audio recording that such a policy was

sufficient reason for Al Qaeda's attacks against the French in Afghanistan (para. 1).

Chick's report further observed that bin Laden threatened more attacks because of the

burqa ban in France (para. 2). Bin Laden was also quoted by Chick to have claimed that

five French citizens were kidnapped in Niger because of "French injustices against

Muslims" (para. 5).

News reports from some media organizations gave details of the protests that took

place in France in 2011. This was shortly after the burqa ban legislation came into effect.

These protests, as reported by the press, came in form of defiance to the legislation. A

Fox News (2011) report observed that after the ban came into effect, some Muslim

women defied it by wearing the burqa to the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris (France's

ban on face-covering Islamic veil met with defiance, para. 1). Chrisafis (2011) of *the

Guardian* reported about one of the protesters named Halima. This report is quite

significant for this study.

As observed by Chrisafis (2011), Halima indicated that her participation in the

protest against the Islamic face-veil ban was the first time she had participated in any

type of protests (para. 6). Chrisafis further observed that Halima stated that she

participated in the protest because of what she perceived as the increased efforts in

France to attack Islam (para.6). Chrisafis stated that Halima admitted she did not wear the

burqa, but nevertheless she considered the burqa ban as a reflection of how

"Islamophobia" is increasing in France (para. 6).

Furthermore, a *France 24* (2013) online news report stated that four police

officers sustained injuries during the protests (para. 2). *France 24* also reported that an

organization called The Collective against Islamophobia in France (CCIF) gave some details about the protests (para. 9). The CCIF, according to the *France 24* news report, made public a statement supposedly made by the veiled woman involved in the case (para. 9). *France 24* further reported that the CCIF claimed that the woman stated that the police abused her, and also used excessive force on her (para. 9). The CCIF, as the news report further stated, made an accusation that the police in France was furthering "racism and Islamophobia," and that they have become "clearly institutionalized and legitimized" (para. 12).

Provisions of the Act No. 2010 – 1192 of 11 October 2010

The details of the burqa ban legislation did not specifically mention Muslims, Islam or the burqa. As observed by Kunz (2012) the legislation just stated that it is forbidden for anyone in France to put on in public any kind of clothing which hides or covers the face of the individual (p. 79). The burqa ban legislation also prohibits anyone from compelling another to wear the burqa with a fine 30,000 Euros or one year in prison for anyone who does so (Kunz, 2012). Kunz further observed that anyone who forces a minor to wear the burqa will be fined 60, 000 Euros and two year jail sentence (p. 79).

Potential Implications of this Legislation

The potential implications of the legislation could be examined using the views expressed by Walsh and Piazza (2010). The authors examined the possibility of a correlation or relationship between abuse of human rights and acts of terrorism. It is possible for acts of terrorism to occur when the human rights of individuals are violated or abused (Walsh & Piazza, 2010). Furthermore, a government that does not violate or

abuse the human rights of its citizens usually has the support of its citizens, and this gives it an advantage over terrorist organizations (Walsh & Piazza, 2010). Walsh and Piazza further asserted that any government that protects the human rights of its citizens not only reduces terrorist attacks on its soil but also fulfills its traditional responsibility to its citizens (p. 552).

One of the ways through which individuals could be deprived of their human rights is through public policies. This reflects, to a certain degree, what happened in France with the introduction of the burqa ban legislation. Some scholars, such as Spohn (2013) have argued that the legislation violates the rights of Muslim women to practice and express their religion. For example, some feminists in France such as Elsa Dorlin, Sylvie Tissot, Christine Delphy, and Houria Bouteldja opined that the burqa ban in France is an assault on the rights of Muslim women in France (Spohn, 2013). The feminists also stated that the burqa ban limits Muslim women's freedom to make their own choice (Spohn, 2013).

The scenario described above could potentially result in a strong feeling of displeasure within the Muslim community. A possible manifestation of this could be militancy and terrorism. Oberschaal (2004) supported this line of argument when he opined that there is now a frequent use of violence to achieve a political goal (p. 26). There are now cases where organizations, groups, and even states use violence to defend themselves and also to achieve a cause they believe could not be achieved without the use of violence (Oberschaal, 2004). Additionally, those who are not active participants in

political violence may give financial and logistical assistance to any one or group willing to participate in such acts of violence.

Problem Statement

Acts of terrorism carried out by Islamic extremist and/or terrorist organizations have become a paramount global issue. The problems these create in Western countries and throughout the world could be aggravated by laws or policies that contradict foundational faith-based values. While terrorism is not a new concept, recent technological developments have contributed to the availability of information resources to enable terrorist acts to occur. Adegbulu (2013) observed that transnational terrorism "extends far back into history" (p. 61). However, he also pointed out that there has been a dramatic rise in acts of terrorism in recent years (p. 21). Some of the reasons for this rise in terrorism in recent decades were technological advancements in the area of information dissemination and communication (Adegbulu, 2013).

Another terrorist organization that projects violent jihadist ideology is Al Qaeda branch in North Africa called AQIM. Laremont (2011) observed that AQIM was formed in 2007 after Abdelmalek Droukdel adopted the Al Qaeda ideology and linked his organization with Al Qaeda (pp. 242-243). Mokhtar Belmokhtar, who masterminded the deadly Algerian hostage crisis and terrorist attack, is linked with AQIM. An estimated 41 foreigners died in this Algerian attack.

Brinkley (2013) also enumerated how serious the problem of Islamic terrorism has become for the entire globe. He gave some examples of Islamic terrorist attacks that have occurred in many countries. Among the attacks he included were the terrorist

bombings in Boston in the United States. Brinkley (2013) stated that the problems created by Islamic terrorism, especially those perpetrated by Al Qaeda and its network of terrorist cells, pose "lethal threats all over the world" (p. 45). The current crisis in Iraq and Syria with the Islamic State organization (ISIS) may have validated Brinkley's assertion.

Haimes (2002) gave more details of the problems associated with the threat of terrorism. He identified specific areas in which terrorism negatively impacts societies. Terrorism is also a threat to computer-controlled public work systems of various countries and organizations (Haimes, 2002). Furthermore, terrorism imposes restrictions on people and also poses a lethal threat to their lives and their possessions (Haimes, 2002). The September 2013 Westgate Mall terrorist attack in Kenya carried out by the Somali terrorist organization Al Shabaab lends credence to Haime's assertions. The attack was also a reflection of the magnitude of the problem of Islamic terrorism.

One major characteristic of many of these Islamic terrorist attacks is the focus on targets in the West and also targets located in non-Western countries that are connected to the West. This problem underscores Huntington's (1997) argument that the next major conflict after the Cold War would be a conflict between Western and Islamic civilizations. Consequently, the decision by the French government to introduce a legislation that bans the Islamic face-veil has the potential to compound the problem of Islamic terrorism.

As observed by Savun and Phillips (2009), the problem of Islamic terrorism has already resulted in huge human, social, political, and economic costs for many countries around the globe (p. 879). All these underscore the need for additional studies on the

factors that contribute to this steady increase in Islamic terrorism. This is why the

potential implications of the burqa ban in France need to be studied as part of a wider

study on factors that could fan even further the flame of Islamic terrorism. Findings and

conclusions from this qualitative study will provide additional knowledge and

information that can help in finding ways to reduce or completely eradicate the problem

of Islamic terrorism.

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study was to explore how participants perceived the relationship

between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. The French

lower house of parliament passed the burqa ban legislation by 335 votes to 1 on July 13,

2010 (Davis, 2011). This was subsequently followed by the French senate which passed

the burqa ban legislation by 246 votes to 1 on September 14, 2010 (Davis, 2010). As

further observed by Davis (2011), the wordings of the legislation did not specifically

make reference to Muslims or the burqa (pp. 127-128). The legislation bans any

individual in France from using any kind of clothing to hide his or her face in public

places in France (Davis, 2011).

However, Davis (2011) stated that the remarks made by former President Sarkozy

some months before the legislation was enacted showed that this piece of legislation is

meant to ban Muslim women in France from wearing the burqa in public places (pp. 117-

118). It is pertinent to state that the practice of wearing the burqa is not generally agreed

upon by all Muslims to be a compulsory requirement in Islam. Many moderate Muslims

do not consider the burqa as strictly an Islamic mode of dressing. This explains why, as

observed by Davis, most Muslims in France support the decision of the French government to ban the burqa (p. 119). Therefore, they may not necessarily be aggrieved by the French government's ban of the Islamic face-veil. In this situation, the correlation explained above may not be valid.

However, Islamic extremists may have a different opinion. Their opinions matter because most acts of Islamic terrorism are carried out by Islamic extremists and not moderate Muslims. The Salafists (Salafi Movement), who are considered extremists, view the Islamic face-veil as a mandatory requirement for Muslim women. Brinkley (2013) observed that Salafist militias in post-Gadhafi Libya have formed the habit of "threatening unveiled women" in areas of Libya under their control (p. 48). This is a reflection of how important the Salafist Muslims take the wearing of the Islamic face-veil by Muslim women. This provided the basis for a study on how moderate Muslims perceive the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism.

Nature of the Study

This dissertation used primary data to explore how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. The focus was on the possible outcomes of feelings of resentment that some Muslims could have towards France and the West because of the burqa ban. Emphasis was on the potential implications on acts of Islamic terrorism. This study was qualitative because it involved a study on cultural and religious differences between the mainstream French society and Muslims.

I adopted ethnography as the qualitative approach for the study. Collingridge and Gantt (2008) observed that an ethnographic research study seeks to get more knowledge about the way of life of people sharing the same culture (p. 392). In addition, Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer (2005) stated that irrespective of their different "epistemological underpinnings," the majority, if not all "classical approaches to ethnographies" focus primarily on giving more information or account of cultures (p. 291).

Data collection was done through the interview of participants. The Student Affairs Division of the University of Southern California (2006) stated that interviews can help a researcher to "gather rich data, thick descriptions and ask follow-up questions" (para. 3). I interviewed 23 research participants after obtaining approval from the Walden University Institution Review Board (IRB). Sample interview questions are shown on the appendix section of this dissertation.

The IRB's approval number for this study is 10-07-14-0245491. Crouch and Mckenzie (2006) observed that an important consideration for samples in qualitative research should not be on "individuals" or the number of research participants (p. 493). Rather, the qualitative researcher should focus more on having research participants who possess the required characteristics (Crouch & Mckenzie, 2006). Details of the methodology are discussed in Chapter 3.

Research Question

This qualitative research study was an attempt to closely examine the possible implications the burqa ban in France could have on acts of Islamic terrorism.

Determining this involved a study on the level of resentment, if any, that some Muslims could have towards this public policy introduced in a Western country. Gaining information about the level or degree of this resentment is important. This is because it offers insights into the possibility that the resentment could be channeled towards acts of Islamic terrorism. The following was the research question (RQ) that this study attempted to answer:

RQ: Do Muslims report a correlation between the French law that bans the burqa and increased acts of Islamic terrorism?

This study was an ethnographic one, and therefore was not experimental. Patton (2002) observed that modern anthropologists use ethnography to examine "contemporary society and social problems" (p. 81). I considered Islamic terrorism as a man-made contemporary social problem. Therefore, the research question required the use of interviews to get the answers needed. In addition, documents and scholarly writings on this subject matter of the burqa were also consulted.

Conceptual Framework: Huntington's Clash of Civilizations

This was guided by the clash of civilizations. This concept was developed and made popular by former Harvard University Professor Samuel Huntington (1997). The use of clash of civilizations as a guide in the conceptual framework of this study was because of its importance as one of the pioneer concepts that energized discussions on the West, Islam, and terrorism. The importance of a conceptual framework lies on the fact that it lays the foundation upon which to justify a study's problem statement and research questions (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2010).

Huntington (1997) stated that the next major global conflict after the Cold War would be a conflict between Western and Islamic civilizations (p. 21). One of the reasons for this is "the West's universalist pretensions" (Huntington, 1997, p. 20). This is a situation where the West considers its values as universal values that should be adopted by other civilizations (Huntington, 1997). This would lead to confrontations (Huntington, 1997). Furthermore, the attempts by the Western nations to impose Western values on non-Westerners, particularly on Muslims, "generate intense resentment among Muslims" (Huntington, 1997, p. 211).

However, the clash of civilizations, as propounded by Huntington (1997), has remained controversial. In fact, some scholars have criticized Huntington's assertion with regard to this supposed clash or conflict between Islam and the West. For example, Bilgrami (2012) dismissed Huntington's assertions that Islam is on a warpath with the West. A critical look at the relations between Islam and the West shows that they have long enjoyed a relationship that is "enviably robust and healthy" (Bilgrami, 2012, p. 478).

Bilgrami also questioned Huntington's use of the words *clash* and *conflict* to describe the situation between the West and Islam. Instead, Bilgrami described the relationship between the West and Islam as more of a conquest of Islam by the West, and not a clash or a conflict (p. 479). Nevertheless, one would not argue the fact that Huntington did lay the foundation for intense discussions on the West's relationship with Islam. This is why the clash of civilizations was used as the guide for the conceptual framework of this study.

Theoretical Framework: Terror Management Theory

The conceptual framework of this research study laid the foundation for the study's theoretical framework. Consequently, this study's theoretical framework was based on terror management theory. Pyszczynski, Rothschild, and Abdollahi (2008) theorized that differences in cultural worldviews and the undermining of another group's cultural worldview by another group holding a different cultural worldview were among the reasons for conflicts and disagreements (p. 318).

Pyszczynski et al. (2008) further stated that, according to terror management theory, humans get comfort from their anxiety about life through the assurances that their cultural worldviews provide (p. 320). This, according to the authors, explains why humans can become violent to other humans who undermine their cultural worldview (p. 320). Terror management theory further indicates that when religion is involved, the situation could potentially result into more violent reaction (Pyszczynski et al., 2008). This explains why religious terrorists often blame the degrading of their worldviews by another group for their decision to carry out terrorist acts (Pyszczynski et al., 2008).

The clash of civilizations, as discussed in the conceptual framework, gave a general platform to suggest the supposed existence of some kind of confrontational relationship between the Islamic and Western civilizations. Huntington (1997) argued that similar cultures formed the nucleus of a civilization (p. 20). He further stated that cultural affiliations or identification with a particular culture will be at the center of many post-Cold War conflicts (p. 20).

Religion, Culture, and Cultural Worldviews

However, Saroglou and Cohen (2011) admitted that religion does not necessarily intertwine with culture, and in some cases religion may not be part of culture (p. 1311). Nevertheless, Saroglou and Cohen also opined that a high degree of relationship exists between religion and culture (p. 1309). This relationship and interconnectedness between culture and religion do have global implications when it comes to "interpersonal and intergroup relations" (Saroglou & Cohen, 2011, p. 1310). This is because once cultures are not the same, religious beliefs would never be the same, and these differences can lead to disagreements and conflicts (Saroglou & Cohen, 2011).

Differences in Cultural Worldviews as the Foundation of Conflicts

Miller and Landau (2005) also gave some details about terror management theory. They stated that terror management theory originated from the scholarly works of Becker published in 1971, 1973 and 1975 (p. 80). Terror management theory proponents have argued that one's beliefs and cultural worldviews could be undermined when others challenge and recommend a different cultural worldview and belief (Miller & Landau, 2005). This scenario leads humans to develop what is described as compensatory psychological mechanism, which is used to defend one's beliefs (Miller & Landau, 2005). The description suggests that these compensatory psychological mechanisms could come in the form of violence.

When this is applied to religious terrorism, it could then be acts of deadly terrorist attacks against those "others" who are undermining one's beliefs and cultural worldviews. Strachman and Schimel (2006) made assertions that are consistent with

those made by Miller and Landau (2005). According to Strachman and Schimel, the existence of different cultural worldviews is an impediment to any kind of peaceful coexistence among humans (p. 966). This intolerance could also be the case for groups of people with different cultural worldviews. This can even be more severe when one group not only challenges or questions the other's cultural worldview, but also takes measures that could limit or restrict the other from maintaining his or her worldviews.

The cultural worldviews of the mainstream French society are different from that of the minority French Muslims. This is because France has a historical link to Christianity, particularly Catholicism. The origin of the French concept of laicite, as observed by Davis (2011), supports this assertion. The first actions taken during the French Revolution of 1789 was the termination of every control and influences the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church had on the French monarchy (Davis, 2011).

Terror management theory provided the theoretical framework through which I examined the possible implications of the legislation in France banning the Islamic face-veil. In summary, terror management theory provided the necessary platform that helped to examine this study's central theme. The French government obviously represents a worldview that is different from the worldviews espoused by Islam. The French adopted a public policy that prevents some people with a different worldview from freely embracing a practice that is associated with their worldview. Terror management theory provides the lens through which one would explain or examine what could happen in such a situation.

Definition and Explanation of Terms

The definition and explanation of terms used are as follows:

Boko Haram: An Islamic terrorist organization based in Nigeria.

Burqa: The Islamic head to toe coverage for women (Shirazi & Mishra, 2010).

Muslims: Individuals who follow the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed and the Quran (Nacos, 2010).

Religion: A belief system that is built around the presence of supernatural entities capable of effecting changes in the natural world (Boyer, 2001).

Religious terrorists: Terrorists who are pushed into action by their strong desire to live according to their religion's teachings and follow God's will (Nacos, 2010).

Salafi movement: The strictest form of Sunni Islam, which promotes the return to the original teachings of the Prophet Mohammed and those who were with him. Many terrorist groups and cells are part of the Salafi movement (Nacos, 2010).

Shia Muslims: The Muslims who believe that Mohammed's descendants were his spiritual heirs, with son-in-law Ali, first in line (Nacos, 2010).

Sunna: The sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (Hafez, 2010).

Sunni Muslims: Muslims who believe that the most competent among Prophet Mohammed's companions were rightly succeeding him (Nacos, 2010).

Terrorism: Political violence or the threats of violence by groups or individuals who deliberately target civilians or noncombatants in order to influence the behavior and actions of targeted public and governments (Nacos, 2010).

Limitation to the Study

People of the same culture and religion may have divisions and different views about their beliefs and what their religion teaches. Bilgrami (2012) understood this and, in fact, presented an argument underscoring the possible limitation this study may have. Writers and scholars who write about Islam are cautioned to avoid making generalizations about Islam because "there are many Islams" (Bilgrami, 2012, p. 477). This is because, in Islam, there exist internal wrangling and clashes between those described as ordinary Muslims and those described as absolutists (Bilgrami, 2012). The arguments by Bilgrami may be a reflection of the differences in Islam between the Sunnis, the Shia, and those of the Salafist movement, which is considered part of the Sunni sect. These different sects have made Muslims to have different opinions when it comes to what Islam teaches about the Islamic face-veil for women (the burqa). These differences presented a limitation to this study. However, I used the study's literature review to address this limitation.

Ethical Concerns

I obtained the informed consent of each participant who took part in the interviews that were conducted. I also explained to the participants what the study was trying to achieve and some of the questions that they would expect during the interviews. Additionally, I made every effort possible to maintain the anonymity of the research participants. This explained why numbers were assigned to each participant instead of using their names.

Furthermore, it is important to point out that I am a Christian. The research participants were made aware of my professed religion before participating in the study. This is particularly important because the study focused on Islamic terrorism, and the study participants were Muslims. Therefore, I assured all the research participants of my determination to make the study as objective as possible. I also gave my assurances to the participants that my professed religion would not influence the study in any way. This explained why my religion was never mentioned during the actual interviews and data collection process.

Significance and Implications on Social Change

This study has the potential to widen the scope of discussions and studies on the underlying reasons for of Islamic terrorism. This dissertation concentrated on the burqa ban in France and its potential implications on Islamic terrorism. This emphasis on the French public policy further highlighted the need for studies on the effects that Western public policies have on the increase in Islamic terrorism. This could help to widen discussions on factors that give rise to Islamic terrorism. For example, Adegbulu (2013) observed that former U.S. President Bush blamed poverty and lack of education for acts of Islamic terrorism (p. 66). Bush had stated that efforts would be stepped up to confront poverty and illiteracy because those two are among the factors that can be exploited by terrorists (Adegbulu, 2013).

Consequently, this study on the implications of the burqa ban in France provided another perspective through which the causes of Islamic terrorism were examined. This study also contributed to finding answers on why the majority of Islamic terrorist attacks

target the West. This study also added to more critical and objective research studies on the implications that some domestic and foreign policies of Western nations could have on Islamic terrorism. This dissertation also highlights the need for terrorism to feature more prominently in studies on public policy and administration.

This study also has social change implications. The increase in the emergence of brutal terrorist organizations such as ISIS and Boko Haram poses a serious threat and setback to any effort made towards achieving peace and security in the world. This underscores the need to find ways to curtail or tame this growing threat. Achieving this would require further intense research on the factors that facilitate the growth of terrorism. This study contributes to this, and therefore contributes to finding ways to mitigate or reduce the particularly serious social problem.

Summary

In this chapter, I gave background information of the study's focal point, which was the potential implication of the Islamic face-veil ban in France. This information gave an insight on how the legislation in France could have an effect on the relations between Muslims in France and the mainstream French society. This chapter also gave an insight into how such a bad relation has the potential to reverberate across the globe with negative impacts on relations between the West and Islam. The focus was narrowed down to how the hostile relations could have resultant implications on Islamic terrorism. In this chapter, I presented the research questions for this study. Answers to these questions would help address the study's subject of focus.

I also presented the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that the study was based upon. The study's research design, its significance, limitations, ethical concerns, and the implications it would have on positive social change were also presented in this chapter. This chapter was designed to lay the foundation for Chapters 2 and 3. In Chapter 2, I present a detailed review of literature that helped to shed more light on the study's subject matter. I used Chapter 3 to give detailed information about the research design, population, and research participants for this study. The findings were explained in Chapter 4, while Chapter 5 was used to give interpretations and recommendations from me.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This study explored how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. In this chapter, I aligned the study's theoretical framework with the study's research problem and questions. Consequently, this chapter examined the relevant literature and scholarly works that focused on the factors that give rise to acts of Islamic terrorism. This literature review also included other scholarly articles and books on the subject of Islamic terrorism. These include articles that focus on the primary reasons for the continuous rise in acts of Islamic terrorism and why this type of terrorism targets mostly the West.

The databases used to source the scholarly works for this literature review were found using the Walden University Library website. I primarily focused on the Policy, Administration and Security section of the Library. From this section, I sourced materials from Political Science Complete, which has over 800 scholarly articles on international politics. I also sourced materials from SAGE, which contains scholarly articles on international relations, peace/conflict studies, and policy studies. Among the keywords used for the literature search were the following: *Islamic terrorism, Islam and the West, the Islamic face-veil ban in France, clash of civilizations, terror management theory,* and *Islamic terrorism in Africa.* Others are *Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Ansaru and Al Shabaab, the burqa,* and *the hijab.*

The Study's Research Question

The central theme of this study's research question focused on exploring how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. In view of this, articles and other scholarly works examined in this literature review were those that further highlighted and helped to find answers to the research question of this study. This explained why most of the articles focused on Islamic extremism, terrorism, and the burqa ban in France.

Additionally, I also included articles that gave pertinent historical information on terrorism. A good example is the article written by Gupta (2009). Gupta observed that acts of terrorism and other forms of social conflicts erupt when individuals of different backgrounds subscribe to a common ideology (p. 110). This common ideology forms the foundation upon which their beliefs, perceptions, and worldviews are shaped (Gupta, 2009). In addition, this newfound ideology may differ from the status quo, hence conflict results (Gupta, 2009). Gupta's views reflect some of the assertions of this study's theoretical framework.

Terror Management Theory

In this literature review, it was important to give a summary of the theoretical framework of this study. This is because many books or articles used in this review reflected the assumptions of this theory. This dissertation was built around the theoretical framework of terror management theory. This theory, as observed by Pyszczynski, Rothschild, and Abdollahi (2008), theorized that differences in cultural worldviews and the undermining of a group's cultural worldview by another group were among the

reasons for conflicts and disagreements (p. 318). The central assumption of terror management theory is that the fear of death and what happens in the afterlife has made humans to cling to certain cultural worldviews (Pyszczynski et al., 2008). These cultural worldviews help to give them comfort and hope about life after death. These are basically religions (Pyszczynski et al., 2008)

Terror management theory theorizes that if one's cultural worldviews are challenged and/or undermined by another who holds different cultural worldviews; one could resort to the use of violence to defend what one believes in (Pyszczynski, Rothschild, & Abdollahi, 2008). The central premise of this dissertation focused on the implications of the Islamic face-veil ban by the French government. Without doubt, it is a fact that not all Muslims view the wearing of the veil as a requirement in Islam. However, there are some Muslims who consider the burqa as an important aspect of the Islamic religion. By banning the burqa in public places in France, the French government, which is Western, is literally challenging the cultural worldviews and beliefs of those Muslims who consider the burqa as an essential aspect of their religion.

Historical Perspective

Gupta (2009) identified four different stages of global terrorism described as "the waves of global terrorism" (p. 111). These stages of global terrorism include the anarchism wave of the 1880s, and the anti-colonial/nationalism wave of terrorist activities (Gupta, 2009). The third was the post-colonial (post-independence) wave of terrorism, which was caused by "the persistent problems of poverty and social injustice" (Gupta, 2009, p. 112).

However, it is the fourth wave of terrorism that is the main focus here due to its relevance to the topic of this dissertation. This fourth stage of terrorism is the type that is instigated by religious extremism and fundamentalism, and Islamic terrorism falls under this category (Gupta, 2009). Gupta (2009) observed that the primary objective of religious extremist groups and terrorist organizations is to effect some changes in their government (p. 113). Religious extremists also aim to move their countries toward the direction of "their own image of religious purity" (Gupta, 2009, p. 113). Islamic militant organizations based in some Muslim countries are the deadliest among the terrorist groups that constitute or make up the fourth wave of global terrorism (Gupta, 2009).

Islamic terrorist organizations have grievances that have contributed to the continuous rise of this type of political violence. Gupta (2009) identified some of these grievances, which basically represent some of the causes of the continuous rise in acts of Islamic terrorism. The major grievance of Islamic terrorist organizations is against those they describe as infidels who they believe have been exploiting the petroleum resources of Muslim countries (Gupta, 2009). This is an apparent reference to the oil and gas from the Middle East that many Western countries depend on for their energy and petroleum supplies. Gupta also stated that some Islamic terrorist organizations also believe that the so-called infidels (the West) have devised plans to dominate and control the Islamic world "militarily, politically, financially, and even spiritually" (p. 116).

Islamic Terrorism and Culture Wars

Another scholar who gave an analysis that is consistent with the views of Gupta (2009) on how Islamic extremists use terrorism as a tool to fight the West is Brinkley

(2013). Brinkley used the expression *culture war* to describe acts of Islamic terrorism against the West (p. 53). Brinkley stated that many Islamic extremists in different parts of the world have fused their violent struggles with a "culture war" against the West (p. 53). Brinkley also observed that Islamists have zero tolerance for Western values (p. 53). These opinions expressed by Brinkley further touch on both the conceptual framework and theoretical framework of this study.

Culture wars can be examined through the lens of a culture clash. This may also be described as a clash of civilizations, which is the guide for the study's conceptual framework. It can be argued that when Islamists or Muslims disparage the West or Western values, such could reflect a culture war. In terror management theory, as earlier observed, it is theorized that clash of cultures or differences in cultural worldviews usually triggers some kind of violence (Pyszczynski, Rothschild, & Abdollahi, 2008). Consequently, the view of Brinkley (2013) gives an insight into the problem that can potentially occur when Islam and Western values clash. The demonstrations and protests in France against the Islamic face-veil ban could be described as a form clash between two different worldviews.

The West as the Target of Islamic Terrorism

Some scholars have used examples to buttress the argument that Islamic terrorists usually target the West and its interests. One of such scholars is Laremont (2011). He gave some examples that he used to support this line of opinion. The examples given by Laremont include a run-down of some terrorist attacks and kidnappings of Westerners by Islamic terrorist groups in Africa. Laremont particularly mentioned those carried out by

AQIM. According to Laremont, this terrorist organization murdered four French tourists in Mauritania in December of 2007 and kidnapped two tourists from Austria in Tunisia in February of 2008 (p. 253). Laremont also observed that this group also kidnapped two Canadian diplomats in Niger in December of 2008 (p. 253).

Other instances given by Laremont (2011) include the kidnapping of five European tourists by AQIM in Mali in January of 2009, one of whom was killed (p. 253). Laremont also revealed that AQIM kidnapped one French citizen in November of 2009 in Mali and also killed two others in January of 2011 in Niger (p. 254). Laremont summed up by observing that the figures above represent a total 63 Westerners that were kidnapped between 2003 and 2011by these terrorist organizations (p. 254).

In addition, non-Westerners have also been targeted for supposedly supporting or maintaining domestic and/or foreign policies that Islamists believe further the Western agenda. An example is the 2013 West Gate Mall terrorist attack in Kenya carried out by Al Shabaab. According to Omondi (2014), the Somali based Al Shabaab took responsibility for the three day attacks that started on September 21, 2013 (p. 41).

The West Gate Mall attacks in Nairobi Kenya by Al Shabaab resulted in the killing of 67 people and wounding of 175 others (Omondi, 2014). As also observed by Samora (2013), Al Shabaab has continuously threatened the Government of Kenya with retaliation for sending troops to Somalia (p. 100). The terrorist organization viewed this as an action which promotes Western agenda in Somalia. Omondi (2014) stated that Western countries encouraged Kenya to move its military into Somalia, and even gave

Kenya some monetary incentives for the operations (p.41). These assertions are important

for this study on the potential implications of the burqa ban in France.

<div align="center">**Islamophobia and the Burqa Ban in France**</div>

Boukhars (2009) stated that many French people believe that France is gradually

being overrun by Islam (p. 209). Additionally, Chakraborti and Zempi (2012) also argued

that the burqa ban in France was meant to halt or slow down the rate at which Islam

seems to be flourishing in France (p. 270). Chakraborti and Zempi stated that the

argument of the French Government that the burqa ban advances gender equality may not

be the real reason behind the burqa ban (p. 270). A critical look at the underlying reasons

behind the burqa ban reveals that the ban may be because the burqa is a reflection of the

ever-growing status of Islam in Western countries (Chakraborti and Zempi, 2012).

Islamophobia Explained

Bleich (2011) gave a detailed explanation of what "Islamophobia" means. Bleich

pointed out that Islamophobia was used for the first time in 1997 by a British non-

governmental organization (NGO) called Runnymede Trust (p. 1582). Runnymede Trust

used their 1997 publication *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* to draw attention "to

dread or hatred of Islam … dislike of all or most Muslims" (Bleich, 2011, p. 1583).

Bleich observed that the Runnymede Trust publication did admit that there could be

justifications for "legitimate criticism and disagreement" with certain aspects of the

Islamic religion (p. 1583).

However, as further observed by Bleich (2011), Runnymede differentiated this

from the real Islamophobia which includes what they described as "unfounded prejudice

and hostility" against Islam and Muslims (p. 1583). This has led to situations where Muslims face segregation and other forms of discriminatory acts (Bleich, 2011). Bleich further asserted that, not only are "contemporary liberal democracies" afraid of Muslims and Islam, they also dislike and treat Muslims like enemies (p. 1584). France is one of these countries that fall under the category of contemporary liberal democracies. Interestingly, France has placed a ban on the burqa. This may be considered as a reflection of this Islamophobia by Islamic militant organizations.

Xeno-Racism and Muslims in Europe

Fekete (2004) and Boukhars (2009) also expressed some views which suggested the presence of Islamophobia in Europe. They also opined that Europeans are becoming wary of Islam and Muslims in Europe. Europeans now consider Muslims in Europe as "the enemy within" (Fekete, 2004, p. 4). Europeans believe that the rise of the Islamic religion and Muslims in Europe constitute a credible threat to the survival of Europe and Western values (Fekete, 2004). Fekete used the expression *xeno-racism* to describe the manner in which Muslims are treated in Europe (p. 4).

Fekete (2004) noted that the expression *xeno-racism* was coined by the Sri-Lankan author, Ambalavaner Sivanandan (p. 4). Sivanandan described xeno-racism as a recent kind of discrimination that manifested in Europe about a decade ago, and is directed against less privileged people who immigrated to Europe (Fekete, 2004). Fekete also stated that Sivanandan pointed out that skin color is of no consequence, as long the individual or group of individuals are not of European origin (p. 4). Unfortunately, in

recent years, Europeans have now directed this discrimination towards Muslims (Fekete, 2004).

Boukhars (2009) also made some observations which are consistent with those of Fekete (2004). Boukhars categorically stated that there is a rise in the number of Europeans who believe that there is "a Muslim problem" in Europe (p. 297). This assertion was based on the writings of Bawer (2006), Laidi (2002), and Leikem (2005). Boukhars was also of the opinion that many Europeans now consider Islam "as posing a direct threat to Western liberal democracy" (p. 297). Boukhars also made particular reference to France which I consider very crucial to this study.

Boukhars (2009) observed that the French had long been wary of Muslims and also considers militant Islam as a grave threat to France (p. 298). This perception has been made worse because of the 1995 Islamic terror attacks which targeted the Paris Metro, and other Islamic terror attacks in other parts of Europe (Boukhars, 2009). Boukhars specifically mentioned the Madrid and London terrorist attacks which were carried out by Islamists (p. 299). Boukhars further stated that Muslims reacted to this sour relation between them and the West by engaging in acts of violence such as jihadi Salafism (p. 306). This resulted in the rise of "French jihadists" and the emergence of "transnational jihad" whose primary objective became to wage an imaginary battle against "the forces of Western evil" (Boukhars, 2009, p. 306).

What Boukhars (2009) wrote about the radicalization of Muslims in France offers a perspective through which one can examine the potential implications of the burqa ban in France. Boukhars admitted that one of factors that led to the rise in militant Islam in

France is what he described as "political marginalization" of Muslims in France and Europe (p. 307). Evidently, the French burqa ban may lead to the further political marginalization of Muslims in France. The law can also be argued to be a reflection of how Muslims in the West are uprooted. Based on his views about political marginalization of Muslims and his analysis of the reactions from Muslims in response to their "uprooted Islamic diaspora," this ban could further fan the flame of transnational jihad. Such types of Islamic jihad can manifest in the form of Islamic terrorism.

French Public Opinion and the Burqa Ban in France

The views earlier expressed by Boukhars (2009) on the perception of Europeans about Islam underscore the influence the public opinion of the French may have had on the banning of the burqa in France. Those views propelled me to examine the role played by the public opinion of the French mainstream society. Based on his writings, one could assert that the Islamic face-veil ban in France may have been a public policy formulated to address the concerns the French public has about Islam.

The Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies (2012) describes public policy as a tool which a government uses to deal with matters of public interest (para. 1). The authors Wedel, Shore, Feldman, and Lathrop (2005) shared the same opinion by observing that public policies play crucial roles in every society including determining how a society is run or administered (p. 31). Burstein (2003) also stated that writers such as Wlezien (1996) and Page (1994) observed that it had been generally assumed that public policy makers and those in government formulate public policies that usually reflect the desires of those they govern (p. 29).

Furthermore, Wedel et al. (2005) also expressed an opinion that is consistent with the opinion of Wlezien (1996). Wedel et al. used what they described as "the anthropology of policy" to explain how the masses can influence public policies. In the anthropology of public policy, it is asserted that policy makers and government officials usually formulate policies which reflect their values, cultural, and perhaps their religious inclinations or beliefs (Wedel et al., 2005). Consequently, one may argue that the burqa ban in France may have been in response to the desires of the mainstream French society.

The Burqa Ban and Islamophobia in France

Nanwani (2011) also asserted that the burqa ban in France is a reflection of Islamophobia in France (pp. 1444-1445). She made some crucial observations about the burqa ban in France. Nanwani observed that in reality, the wordings of the legislation do not specifically mention *Islam*, *Muslims*, *Niqab* or the *Burqa* (p. 1455). The burqa ban law in France is not aligned with any political, religious or ideological undertone since it comprehensively bans all kinds clothing that cover the face (Nanwani, 2011). In addition, as Nanwani further observed, since the Quran does not specifically mention the wearing of the veil, there would be no basis to argue that the ban targets or violates the freedom of religion of Muslims (p. 1455).

This argument also presents a valid challenge to the central premise of this dissertation on the French law's implications on acts of Islamic terrorism. It may be difficult to argue that the burqa ban in France could potentially have an effect on Islamic terrorism. This is considering the fact that Muslims, the Islamic religion, and the dress codes of Muslims were not particularly mentioned in the law. Therefore, one could argue

that the law does not target Muslims, and therefore would not have any direct or even indirect impact on or fuel a rise in acts of Islamic terrorism.

Nevertheless, Nanwani (2011) insisted that the law actually targets Islam and Muslims (p. 1455). Nanwani insisted that despite its masquerading by French law-makers to make it appear neutral, it is "common knowledge" that the law is directed at Muslims and Islam (p. 1455). This implies that it is no secret that the burqa ban legislation targets Muslims. Nanwani also briefly mentioned what she described as the "rising Islamophobia in France" (p. 1446). This rising Islamophobia in France has resulted in economic and racial discrimination of Muslims in France by the mainstream French society (Nanwani, 2011). Nanwani further stated that this explains why immigrant Muslim women face serious obstacles when attempting to become French citizens (p. 1446).

Nanwani (2011) further observed that burqa-wearing Muslim women are treated differently whenever they apply for French citizenship (p. 1446). To buttress this argument, Nanwani made reference to a report by the *New York Times* and *The Economist* magazine about a young Moroccan woman named Faiza Silmi. According to Nanwani, these two reports stated that Silmi was denied French citizenship because of her refusal to abandon her Islamic values (p. 1446). Nanwani also stated that the French Government's decision to ban the burqa in France came at a time when Europeans have voiced their strong opposition to the steady influx of Muslim immigrants into Europe (p. 1447). Nanwani further observed that the French are afraid that this growing Muslim population in France could one day drown their European values and way of life (p.

1447). She summed up by stating that Muslim women are mostly targeted because their dressing code stands out as being non-European or non-French (p. 1447).

Profiling of Muslims in Europe

Fekete (2004) mentioned some European countries that have gone as far as perpetuating what she described as "a system of religious profiling" (p. 8). Among the European countries she mentioned were Denmark, Norway and Germany (p. 8). Fekete singled out Germany because, according to her, the Government there targeted foreigners in Germany who came from Islamic countries (p. 8). Fekete also revealed that many European countries have engaged in constant raids of communities in Europe where Muslims are in the majority (p. 11). Fekete added that some Muslim organizations in Germany such as the Central Council Muslims in Buden-Wurttemberg condemned the treatment of Muslims in some parts of Germany (p. 11).

It is important to observe that Fekete (2004) did not primarily focus on France. However, her analysis of the rise of Islamophobia in Europe provided some pertinent information on the state of relations between Europeans and the Islamic community in Europe. Additionally, Fekete's detailed analysis suggests the existence of frosty relations between Muslims in Europe and the mainstream European society. France is an integral part of Europe. It is on record that the French Government had, in 2004 banned the wearing in public schools of all kinds of dressing that are associated with a particular religion. One could argue that the wordings of the law which banned girls in public schools in France from wearing dressings that show any religious symbol did not

specifically target Islam. In fact, women in other religions such as Christianity also wear headscarves, which was the focus of the law.

However, Adrian (2009) opined that the focus of the French Government through the Stasi Commission was on Islamic symbols (pp. 352-353). This underscored the assertions by Fekete (2004) that the relationship between the Islamic community in Europe and the mainstream European society may well be antagonistic. However, one area of importance which Fekete did not examine in her article is the possible implications or consequences of these supposed antagonistic relations between Muslims in Europe and the mainstream European society. Therefore, when writers such as Fekete (2004) and Nanwani (2011) argue that Europe is becoming increasingly hostile to Muslims and Islam, it would not be out of place to carry out further studies on the implications of such an anti-Islam stance by the West.

The European Convention on Human Rights

Heider (2012) stated that the primary reason for the establishment of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in 1959 was to help make human rights more understandable and also help in its enforcement (p. 105). Another important objective for the establishment of the ECHR is to also ensure that the human rights identified in the European Convention are not violated (Heider, 2012). In addition, the ECHR is required and mandated to meticulously examine any law that impedes individual's rights so as to allow freedom of religion, which is an important aspect of democracy (Heider, 2012). Heider also made a particular reference to Article 9 which promotes freedom of religion.

The explanation given by Heider (2012) on how the burqa ban in France violates a fundamental important human right is quite admirable and courageous. This is more so considering that she made a particular reference to Article 9 which affirms everyone's right to freedom of religion including its subsequent expression either in public or in private. Heider should be commended for not ignoring the section which allows for some restrictions or limitations on the right to religion. These limitations, as she observed, include those that place these restrictions on the right to religion if a law backs it and if such a law upholds democracy and ensures public safety (p. 106). Heider was courageous enough to point out these limitations. This is irrespective of the fact that the limitations could be used to deflate her arguments that the burqa ban in France infringes on the right of Muslims in France to practice their religion freely.

Proponents of the burqa ban in France may, therefore, use these ECHR approved limitations to counter pundits such as Heider (2012) who oppose the burqa ban in France. Nevertheless, Heider stood her ground by making reference to this aspect of the restrictions. French policy makers may find it difficult to explain how the face-veil ban is "necessary in a democratic society" (Heider, 2012, p. 106). Heider's insistence is quite commendable. However, she left out an issue which I consider a gap. I would have commended her more if she had discussed the potential implications the burqa ban could have on Islamic terrorism.

The Burqa Ban and Article 14 of the ECHR

The article by Nanwani (2011) also discussed the ECHR in detail. This is very important for this study. In her article published in the 2011 issue of the *Emory*

International Law Review, Nanwani gave a detailed analysis of how the burqa ban in France may have violated Article 9 of the Convention. However, one important observation which she made is the provision of Article 14 of the Convention. Reference to this Article 14 is very crucial, not just for her argument, but also for this dissertation. This is because its provision could be used by proponents and supporters of the burqa ban to deflate whatever argument is made against the law.

Nanwani (2011) observed that Article 14 cautions against discrimination of any kind (p. 1433). Consequently, it can be argued that if the French Government did not ban the burqa, then the government is encouraging the oppression of women (Nanwani, 2011). It is pertinent to note that Article 14 is not her primary focus. However, its mention is a bold attempt to examine the other side of the argument which considers the burqa as oppressive to women. Article 14 could provide a basis for that argument.

The argument that wearing the burqa is gender discrimination and places women on a lower status than men could be valid except for one important observation. It would be gender discrimination if all Muslim women in France are under duress or coerced to wear the burqa. Some studies carried out on the burqa in France revealed some crucial findings. Shirazi and Mishra (2010) noted that a study by Killian (2003) revealed that many young French Muslim women of North African origin did not view the burqa as a dressing code imposed on them (p. 46). Shirazi and Mishra also observed that findings from the study by Killian suggested that many enlightened young Muslim females view the burqa as a way to express their cultural heritage and freedom (p. 46). Hence, the

argument that the burqa is a symbol of the subservient status that Muslim women in France are allegedly subjected to could be somewhat flawed

Article 9 of ECHR

Nanwani (2011) further analyzed how the burqa ban in France violates Article 9 of the Convention. She observed that it is divided into two clauses (p. 1449). The first clause gives credibility to her argument that the burqa ban in France violates an important provision of the ECHR. However, the second clause placed some limitations on the provision of the first clause. These limitations have the potential to completely deflate her argument.

Section I (First Clause) of Article 9 of the ECHR

As Nanwani (2011) observed, the first section of Article 9 of the ECHR made it very clear that each individual has the liberty to subscribe to and practice any religion of his or her choice (p. 1449). The provision of this first section helps Nanwani's argument. However, the second clause could provide a platform to challenge whatever argument she made on how the burqa ban in France violates Article 9 of the ECHR.

Section II (Second Clause): Limitations to the Freedom of Religion

The second section or clause of Article 9 of the ECHR, and which Nanwani (2011) boldly mentioned, also gave individual governments the power to place certain limitations on the liberty their citizens have to freely practice their religion. There are three conditions under which such limitations could be placed by a government. Section II stipulates that the liberty an individual has to freely practice his or her religion can be restricted by a government if such restrictions are backed by legislation, and is also for

the achievement of a lawful objective (Nanwani, 2011) Furthermore, such restrictions can also be placed if it further advances that society's democratic ideals (Nanwani, 2011). With the provisions of these limitations, especially limitation one, it would be difficult to successfully challenge the burqa ban in France.

The stages that the law passed and its subsequent approval by the legislative and executive arms of the French Government make it "prescribed by law." Therefore, the ban would be recognized as legitimate by the ECHR if limitation one would be used as the basis for the argument. Such recognition would definitely puncture the assertion by Nanwani (2011) that the ban violates Article 9 of the ECHR. However, in relation to the current studies, the focus is on the consequences or implications of the burqa ban on acts of Islamic terrorism. This is one huge gap which Nanwani did not discuss.

Gender Equality and the Necessity of the Burqa Ban in a Democratic Society

Furthermore, in acknowledging how difficult it would be to argue that the prohibition of the burqa in France does not have legal backing, Nanwani (2011) focused her attention on the other two limitations. She particularly focused on whether the burqa ban in France was absolutely needed in a democratic country such as France. An important feature of many Western democracies is the promotion of gender equality. Nanwani identified some French Government officials who have cited gender equality as the reason for the ban. One of the French Government officials who cited gender equality as one of the reasons for the burqa ban in France was the President of the Parliamentary Commission, Andre Gerin (Nanwani, 2011).

As observed by Nanwani (2011), Gerin described the wearing of the burqa by Muslim women as a violation of the liberty and honor of women which is completely unacceptable (p. 1457). Gerin had also stated that the burqa denies women equal status with men (Nanwani, 2011). Other French Government officials who Nanwani identified as defending the ban were Jean Francois Cope and former President Nicolas Sarkozy. Cope described the burqa as an assault to womanhood, while Sarkozy described it as a symbol of enslavement (Nanwani, 2011). All these point to the gender equality argument of the French Government, which could be used to argue how the burqa ban is necessary in a democratic country such as France.

However, Nanwani (2011) argued that for the burqa to be considered as a means of lowering the status of women there has to be evidence which suggests that Muslim women in France are forced to wear the (p. 1459). Interestingly, it was revealed that the French Government did not have such a data or statistics to support this argument (Nanwani, 2011). This could invalidate the gender equality argument of the French Government, and could also invalidate any argument that the burqa ban is necessary in democratic society.

In addition, there are other characteristics of a democratic society which Nanwani (2011) did not touch on, and which the burqa ban in France may have restricted. Most democratic countries, particularly those in the West try very hard to distinguish their societies from other non-Western societies. The United States of America proudly describes herself as the "free world." Similarly, other Western nations including France

have painted themselves in the image of a society where every aspect of an individual's fundamental human rights is upheld.

Therefore, one could argue that any government in a democratic society that prides itself as part of the "free world" should not be regulating what their citizens should or should not wear. To be fair to the United States, the U.S. State Department did condemn the burqa ban in France. A law that puts a restriction on what someone should or should not wear in public may be considered by pundits as not being necessary in a democratic society such as France. It is even worse if such a law targets a particular group of people who share a common religion or value different from the values or worldviews of the mainstream society who control the government. Under terror management theory, this situation could be volatile and could result into violence.

The Quran and the Islamic Face-Veil (the Burqa)

Nanwani (2011) touched on another issue that has the potential to challenge both her assertions and the assertions of this dissertation. This has to do with the role of the burqa in Islam and what the Quran teaches about it. Knowledge of Islam's teachings concerning the burqa is crucial for any arguments or assertions on how Muslims view the wearing of the burqa by Muslim women. The Quran's teachings and injunctions about the burqa are also important for any argument about whether its ban in France violates Article 9 of the ECHR

Nanwani (2011) admitted that there are divergent opinions on whether wearing the burqa is required or mandatory in Islam (p. 1435). There is the urgent need for clarifications on this. This is because if the face-veil and other forms of veiling in Islam

are not required in Islam as part of the mandatory practices of the religion, then its ban by the French Government does not violate Article 9 of the ECHR (Nanwani, 2011).

Nanwani (2011) stated that veiling by Muslim women emanated from a section in the Quran. However, she admitted that this section of the Quran does not specifically require Muslim women to wear the burqa or any other kind of veil (p. 1435). Rather, the Quran urges women to be modest in the way they dress (Nanwani, 2011). This modesty in dressing has been generally interpreted to mean that Muslim women must wear the burqa (Nanwani, 2011). It is pertinent to point out here that Nanwani did not specify who or what authority in Islam interpreted modest dressing for women to mean that Muslim women must wear the veil.

However, Nanwani (2011) made reference to the section of the Quran which gives further insight into what modest dressing implies. According to Nanwani, Quran 24:31 describes what it means for a Muslim woman to ensure modesty in dressing. As observed by Nanwani, the Quran urges Muslim women to not make visible what it describes as the woman's "beauty and ornaments" (p. 1436). However, the exception to these, according to Nanwani, are what the Quran describe as "what (must ordinarily) appear" (p. 1436). This explains why Nanwani observed that despite what the Quran says in 24:31, there are still divergent views on what it means for a Muslim woman to dress modestly. Nanwani observed that cultural background have significant roles to play on how a Muslim woman should dress modestly. An example which Nanwani gave is that Salafist Muslims usually consider the burqa as a reflection of what it means for a woman to dress modestly (p. 1437).

The Salafists

As I earlier pointed out, Nanwani (2011) observed that the Salafist group of Muslims considers the burqa and other types of veiling as a requirement in Islam (p. 1437). The mention of the Salafists as the major group which interprets "modesty in dressing" to mean wearing the burqa is significant. The Salafists are among the strictest when it comes to observing the requirements of the Islamic religion, particularly the teachings of the Quran and the *Sunna* (Hafez, 2010). In addition, the Salafists abhor any type of interpretation of the Quran that is based on "human reasoning" (Hafez, 2010, p. 365). Boukhars (2009) also observed that the Jihadi Salafists are known to be strongly opposed to any kind of Western influence or domination of Islam (p. 301). As further observed by Boukhars, the jihadi Salafists are "confident in its final armed victory against what it sees as the imperialist West" (p. 301).

Furthermore, Hafez (2010) gave more pertinent information about the Salafists and the type of jihadism they adopt. Hafez identified Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi as "the intellectual father of Jihadi Salafism" (p. 366). Revelations from literature and teachings associated with al Maqdisi, as revealed by Hafez, contain some teachings that are useful in the analysis of the implications of the Islamic face-veil ban in France. Al Maqdisi's texts gave approval for jihadi Salafists to use violence, including killing of anyone or groups of people considered as infidels (Hafez, 2010). The use of the word *infidel* is quite significant for this study if one takes into consideration who the so-called infidels are referring to. Those that Islamic militants refer to as infidels are the West, particularly the United States of America, Britain, France, and other Western European countries

considered as allies of the United States (Gupta, 2009). Evidently, the French are among the so-called infidels.

Salafi Jihadi Terrorism

It was also earlier observed that Nanwani (2011) stated that the Salafist group of Muslims considers "modesty in dressing" by Muslim women to mean wearing the face-veil (p. 1437). The alignment of these assertions underscores how the burqa ban in France has the potential to trigger more acts of Islamic terrorism. The views expressed by Staunton (2008) buttresses this opinion. Staunton observed that the Salafist interpretation of what a jihad is revolves around the use of extreme violence and terrorism to realize their goals or express whatever grievances they may have (p. 151). This is referred to as "Salafi Jihadi Terrorism" (Staunton, 2008, p. 151). Staunton made reference to the Salafist jihadi group called the *Jemaah Islamiyah* which has a reputation for violence and terrorism against the West. This group, which is described as a good example of the Salafi Jihadi terrorist organization, was responsible for the terrorist attacks that took place in Indonesia's Bali province in 2002 and 2005 (Staunton, 2008). Staunton further noted that these Bali bombings, as it is now called, led to the death of 223 people (p. 144).

Staunton (2008) also attempted to establish some differences between the so-called Salafi Jihadi terrorist organizations and other Islamic terrorist organizations. He observed that Salafi Jihadi terrorist groups such as the Jemaah Islamiyah organization strongly oppose any form of cultural influence on the practice of Islam (p. 151). However, I consider the so-called Salafi Jihadi terrorism as an integral and an inseparable part of Islamic terrorism. This because modus operandi and the reasons given for these

attacks by the Salafists were not significantly different from other terrorist attacks carried out by other Islamic terrorist organizations. It has always revolved around some grievances against the West.

Stigmatization of Muslims in France

Nanwani (2011) also stated that Muslim leaders in France have cautioned French Authorities against further isolation of Muslims. This is because French Muslim leaders were concerned that such discriminatory acts against Muslims in France could lead to the stigmatization of the French Muslim population (Nanwani, 2011). The mention of stigmatization is very significant for this study because of the possible consequences of the stigmatization of Muslims in France. However, Nanwani failed to examine what the possible consequences of stigmatization of Muslims in France could be. Stigmatization of an individual or a group of people has the potential to lead to depression and most importantly hostility to the outside world or to those considered as sources of the stigmatization. Hostility could become acts of violence.

This is a gap which Nanwani (2011) missed when she failed to discuss the possible consequences of the stigmatization of Muslims in France. The French Government's decision to ban the burqa could possibly stigmatize some Muslim women and men who sympathize with them. If stigmatization of an individual could lead to depression and hostility, then there is a possibility that stigmatized Muslims in France could channel this hostility into acts of violence.

Human Rights Violations and Islamic Terrorism

The consequence of any type of human rights violation is a subject area which is relevant to this research study. This is because many pundits have argued that stopping French Muslims from wearing the burqa is a violation of their fundamental human rights to practice and express their religious beliefs. The reactions that could emanate from such violations are among the primary focuses of this study. This becomes even more volatile if religion is involved, and those suffering from such violations have a different religion and a different cultural worldview from the establishment that is accused of perpetrating such violations.

Walsh and Piazza (2010) expressed their strong conviction that abuse of human rights does have the potential to fuel acts of terrorism (p.552). They buttressed their point by making reference to a statement made by former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. According to Walsh and Piazza, Gordon Brown told his fellow Labor Party members during a meeting in 2007 that military might alone may not be able to stop terrorism (p. 552). Brown advised that efforts should rather be made to get the support of the populace (Walsh & Piazza, 2010).

Consequently, when governments show respect for and uphold the human rights of their citizens, they gain more support from their citizens (Walsh & Piazza, 2010). Furthermore, it will be difficult for terrorist organizations to recruit new members from the populace if the citizens are happy and supportive of their government (Walsh and Piazza, 2010). Walsh and Piazza argued that any government that makes every effort to respect and uphold the human rights of its citizens is fulfilling one of the duties it owes

its citizens (p. 552). Most importantly, such a government does not usually suffer numerous terrorist attacks (Walsh &Piazza, 2010).

Physical Integrity Rights

However, an aspect of the assertion by Walsh and Piazza (2010) which I differ with, and which could potentially be challenged is their one-sided focus on only one aspect of human rights. These are the rights which Walsh and Piazza described as "physical integrity rights." Based on the contents and opinions expressed by Walsh and Piazza in their article, they have this strong opinion that the risk of terrorism is higher and more certain if the human rights violation involved the violation of an individual's physical integrity rights. (p. 552). These physical integrity rights shields individuals from executions done without following the due process, and from being unlawfully incarcerated by the Government (Walsh &Piazza, 2010).

Walsh and Piazza (2010) also stated that any violation of physical integrity rights could be disastrous considering that such violations would go against the generally acceptable manner in which governments should behave (p. 552). They used these assertions to explain their reason for the emphasis on physical integrity rights. The reason for the focus on physical integrity rights is because when such rights are abused or violated, there is a very high propensity for terrorism to occur (Walsh &Piazza, 2010). One of the hypotheses is that when physical integrity rights are abused by the authorities, the government could become detached from its citizens (Walsh & Piazza, 2010). This could make it more difficult for the government to gather valuable intelligence from its citizens who may have information about terrorist organizations (Walsh & Piazza, 2010).

I consider this a valid point. Nevertheless, I would like to stress that violation of other human rights of individuals such as the right to practice one's religion freely could also have the same impact on terrorism.

State Repression of Rights

Interestingly, Walsh and Piazza (2010) used the expression *state repression* to refer to violations of physical integrity rights (p.557). This may result into a situation where groups held together by a common religion or race would be under the impression that they are facing discrimination from the government (Walsh & Piazza, 2010). This could potentially result into "collective grievances" which this group or groups would hold against the government or the state (Walsh & Piazza, 2010, p. 557). Consequently, Walsh and Piazza then argued that such collective grievances create a fertile ground which terrorist organizations would take advantage of by having ready recruits who would take part in acts of violence against the state (pp. 557-558).

However, I would like to observe that state repression may not just be used only in the context of violation of physical integrity rights of citizens by the government. It could also encompass violation of other types of human rights. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* describes the verb *to repress* in the following words: "to put down by force; to prevent the natural or normal expression, activity, or development of." From this dictionary definition, the act of repressing could be physical, psychological, and emotional. Therefore, "state repression" when used in the context of violations or abuse of human rights, could go beyond violations of physical integrity rights. It can include the violation of an individual's rights to freedom of religion and its expression. Formulating a

legislation which bans Muslim women who choose to put on the burqa from doing so may also be considered as a form of "state repression." Just like the victims of physical integrity rights abuses, the grievances of those who suffer from violations or state repression of their right to freely express their religion could also be exploited by terrorist groups.

Discrimination and its Potential Implications on Islamic Terrorism

The consequence of discrimination is another area of study that would be helpful in this study. Discrimination could be racial, religious, social, and even economic. The reason for the reference to discrimination is because some pundits have described the burqa ban in France as a discriminatory act against Muslims in France. For example Bowen (2011) opined that politicians in France had argued that Islam still allows the oppression of women through practices such as the wearing of the burqa (p. 325).

Similarly, Malik (2010) observed that many Europeans now associate the burqa with what she described as "Islamic radicalism" (para. 16). This, according to Malik, has led to situation where Muslims are systematically persecuted in the West under the guise of gender equality argument (para. 16). Malik further stated that Muslim women have been given this negative outlook in Europe because of the fear of Islam, the activities of over-zealous feminist, and the desire to maintain European values (para. 17). According to her, the issue of the burqa ban highlighted again the disagreement between the West and Islam (para. 17). Malik further argued that preventing Muslim women from wearing the burqa is not the solution to the fight against Islamic fundamentalism. In fact, she

categorically stated that "to force a female to remove her veil is just as subjugating as forcing her to cover" (para. 17).

Relative Deprivation and Political Violence

It was observed that some scholars consider the burqa ban as a discriminatory act against Muslims in France. Consequently, it will be important to examine articles that discussed the possibly implications of discrimination. This underscores the importance of the article by Piazza (2011). Piazza made reference to the scholarly works of T.R. Gurr who is a well-known scholar on political conflicts. Gurr, according to Piazza, carried out numerous research studies on the sources of political violence. One of them Gurr's research studies is his work on the theory of relative deprivation which establishes a link between the desire an organization has to engage in terrorism, and its ability to bring members together to commit such an act (Piazza, 2010).

The findings of the research studies by Gurr suggested that a feeling of social alienation can occur when an individual or a group of people feel that they are facing "collective or social status disadvantage" (Piazza, 2010, p. 341). Piazza added that this is more so if such a group also feels that it is under some kind of subjugation by the state (p. 341). Based on Gurr's model, one can assert that when minorities have such feelings of social alienation from the larger or mainstream society, it could result in "long-term grievances" (Piazza, 2010, p. 341). These accumulated grievances, as expressed in Gurr's model, have a high propensity to result into political violence (Piazza, 2010).

Piazza (2010) gave more credibility to Gurr's assertions by making reference to similar studies by Crenshaw (1981) and Ross (1993). The results of the studies carried

out by Crenshaw and Ross concluded that one of the primary causes of terrorism is when certain groups within a larger community or state hold collective grievances against the establishment or the government (Piazza, 2010). Furthermore, Crenshaw and Ross also concluded that terrorist organizations exploit these grievances by recruiting new members and potential terrorists from these groups that hold these collective grievances (Piazza, 2010).

Social Exclusion, Religious and Economic Discrimination of Minorities

Furthermore, Piazza (2010) wrote about what he described as social exclusion. I find his discussion on social exclusion very useful to this study. When used in the analysis of this study, social exclusion may reflect a situation where the Muslim women who like to wear the burqa would choose to stay at home rather than come out in the public without wearing one. Muslims in general who are sympathetic to this, and who are also convinced that Islam is under attack in France may also decide to exclude themselves from the mainstream French society. As Piazza argued, this social exclusion would further limit the chances or opportunities of this aggrieved minority of becoming stakeholders in the socioeconomic landscape of France (p.341). Piazza described this as "minority economic discrimination" (p. 341).

An important point which Piazza (2010) made here is the apparent link between religious discrimination and economic discrimination of minorities. This sheds more light on how religious discrimination of minorities could lead to economic discrimination of the minority group or groups in question. Piazza further stated that without this economic empowerment, members of the minority group in question could become "distrustful of

state institutions and authority" (p. 341). When this happens, as Piazza further observed, these minorities may become more susceptible to radicalization (p. 341). Evidently, this susceptibility creates a fertile ground and an enabling environment for terrorist movements to get more members, acquire more wealth which helps in organizing terrorist attacks (Piazza, 2010). This conclusion by Piazza was made after he studied the results of the test of six hypotheses.

Domestic and Transnational Terrorism

Nevertheless, it is pertinent to point out that Piazza (2010) focused more on domestic terrorism with no particular mention of or reference to Islamic terrorism. However, these indicators of terrorism and how discrimination could cause terrorism can also be used in research studies focusing on Islamic terrorism. This further explains why this article was featured in this literature review. An individual or a group of people who are victims of religious discrimination may also not become active participants in the economic sector of the country they live in. This does not mean that the government or the authorities are deliberately preventing them from making efforts towards economic empowerment.

They may choose to ostracize themselves from the mainstream society. Muslims in France who like to wear the burqa may choose to alienate themselves from the mainstream French society. This alienation may be the response they have for the burqa ban if they consider such a ban as a challenge to Islam. Such alienation could have the potential to provide a fertile ground for the growth of anti-government sentiments. This will be more so if they consider the French Government to be anti-Islam. These anti-

government sentiments could make them more vulnerable to exploitation by both domestic and international Islamic terrorist organizations. This explains why I differ with the views by Piazza (2010) on domestic terrorism. Piazza's focus on domestic terrorism may have failed to stress the fact that those conditions that could give rise to domestic terrorism can also give rise to transnational terrorism.

Alleged Violations of the Human Rights of Muslims by the West: A Muslim's Perspective

My desire to maintain objectivity in this study means that the views expressed by supporters of the French Government, Western authors, and non-Western authors would be examined. This underscored the need for the inclusion of the article by Ibrahim Aljazy (2010) of the Faculty of Law, the University of Jordan. Aljazy's views on the alleged violations of the human rights of Muslims by some Western countries would represent a Muslim's perspective on this topic. Aljazy drew a correlation which is somewhat consistent with the correlations made by Piazza. This correlation is between violations of human rights and acts of terrorism. Aljazy made this correlation in relation to what he asserted were human rights abuses that Muslims suffer in the hands of the West.

Aljazy (2010) observed that the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States made some Western countries to adopt rules that sometimes are draconian in nature (p. 73). Some of the counter terrorism measures adopted by some Western countries violated the human rights of Muslims and individuals of Arab descent (Aljazy, 2010). Nevertheless, the fear of terrorism cannot justify the constant infringement of the rights of Muslims and

individuals of Arab descent (Aljazy, 2010). Aljazy concluded that this discrimination by the West against Muslims and Arabs could lead to a rise in terrorism by Islamists (p. 74).

Aljazy (2010) went further to draw a correlation between this and acts of terrorism. Evidently, there could be some degree of correlation between violations of human rights and discrimination, and acts of terrorism (Aljazy, 2010). The views expressed by Aljazy provide another perspective through which the burqa ban in France could be said to constitute part of these human rights violations. This opens up further discussions on the potential consequences of such violations with regards to acts of domestic and transnational terrorism, including Islamic terrorism.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom in France

The decision by the French Government to ban the burqa in France was quite controversial. It was during the government of former President Nicholas Sarkozy that the burqa was outlawed in France. However, before the implementation of this legislation, there have been other French legislations which also limited religious freedom in France. Evidently, France has a record for that. Heider (2012) gave an example of a law in France which has also limited religious freedom in that country. In her article, she gave a historical account of the burqa ban in France. Heider also stated, "The subject of controversy around the world" (p. 93).

It is also evident that the French Government has a history of formulation of policies which limit the ability of people in France to express their religion in public (Heider, 2012). One of the laws in France that placed some kind of restrictions on the liberty people have in France to practice their religion was Law No. 2004-228 which was

passed on March 15, 2004 (Heider, 2012). This law made it illegal for French children in public elementary and high schools to wear any type of clothing that depicts a particular religion (Heider, 2012). It was five years after this law that the French Government under Sarkozy introduced another law which bans the burqa in public places in France.

The Muslim Population in France

Heider (2012) also implied that the supposed anti-Muslim stance in France is, apparently, in reaction to the country's growing Muslim population (p. 100). This is attributed to the supply of the much needed workers from some African countries that were colonized by France (Heider, 2012). The countries that Heider identified were Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia (p. 100). The influx of migrants from these countries in North Africa has made France to become the European country with the largest population of Muslims (Heider, 2012). This large influx of Muslims from North Africa has made Islam to be the next largest religion in France after Roman Catholicism (Heider, 2012). Consequently, this growing Muslim population in France may have become a source of concern for many French citizens, including those in government and policy making (Heider, 2012). This has also resulted in a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment in France, and the supposed increase in discriminatory acts which is allegedly being meted out to French Muslims (Heider, 2012).

Heider (2012) also observed that the discrimination faced by Muslims in France includes employment discrimination, racial and religious discrimination (pp. 101-102). Furthermore, a 2004 statistics indicated that Muslims in France accounted for about 50% to 80% of the inmates in French prisons (Heider, 2012). Evidently, this large population

of Muslims in French prisons may have been a reflection of the difficult situations which Muslims face in France. However, one shortcoming of this statistics is that Heider did not back up her claim with evidence which would indicate whether Muslims were locked up on frivolous or trumped up charges. An important point she made is the seemingly hostile relationship between France and her Muslim population.

Nevertheless, Heider (2012) failed to examine how this hostile relationship could have an impact on Islamic terrorism. This is significant considering the continuous rise in acts of Islamic terrorism against Western targets. In fairness to Heider, she did write about a violent incident in 2005 involving Muslim immigrants in France. The immigrants rioted after two Muslim teenagers died while running away from the police. Nevertheless, an important point which she may have missed is the potential implications of such hostile relationship on acts of Islamic terrorism.

More Perspectives from a Muslim

As earlier stated, I strongly emphasized my commitment towards maintaining objectivity in this dissertation. Objectivity also means that the views expressed by supporters of the French Government, Western authors, and non-Western authors would be examined. This explains the many references to the article by Aljazy (2010) of the Faculty of Law of the University of Jordan. In the article, Aljazy examined terrorism and its history. He also explained what the Quran says about violence. Aljazy stressed that terrorism has been in existence before the founding of Islam by Prophet Mohammed. Aljazy also made every effort to distance violence and terrorism from the Islamic religion.

Argument Against the Use of the Expression *Islamic Terrorism*

Aljazy (2010) made an observation which is very crucial for this dissertation. This is because his observation and assertions about the use of the expression "Islamic terrorism" could be used to challenge the topic of this dissertation. A historical look at the expression "Islamic terrorism" shows that the expression became popular after Islamists carried out terrorist attacks in U.S.A. on September 11, 2001 (Aljazy, 2010). This type of link between Islam and terrorism is misleading because Islam as a religion does not promote or encourage terrorism (Aljazy, 2010). Nevertheless, Aljazy (2010) admitted that Islamic terrorist organizations have used and misinterpreted the teaching of the Quran on "changing by force" as their basis for engaging in acts of violence (p. 71). The Quran categorically calls on Muslims to avoid all forms of violence, and instead use "kindness" and "gentleness" to bring people to God (Aljazy, 2010, p. 71). Consequently, the use of violence to settle disputes or grievances is an "illegitimate method in Islam" (Aljazy, 2010, p. 71).

Defending the Use of the Expression *Islamic Terrorism*

Nevertheless, one reality which Aljazy (2010) has to face is that linking Islam to terrorism and the use of the expression *Islamic terrorism* may have become widely accepted. For example Byng (2010) of Temple University observed that it has become a general opinion in the world today that Islam is intricately linked to acts of terrorism (p. 109). This assumption that Islam is now intricately linked to terrorism has become more pronounced in many Western countries including France (Byng, 2010). This belief on the intricate link between Islam and terrorism became the general assumption of many

Westerners after terrorists attacked the United States in September, 2001 (Byng, 2010).

Consequently, this perception has made it more difficult for many things that represent

Islam to be completely unacceptable in Western societies (Byng, 2010).

Aljazy (2010) also examined the real interpretation of Islamic jihad. It is

unfortunate and regrettable that Islamic extremists have interpreted jihad to mean the use

of violence to force people to convert to Islam (Aljazy, 2010). The concept of jihad in

Islam is primarily for peaceful purposes and not to be used to justify terrorism (Aljazy,

2010). Fighting and war, according to Aljazy, are necessary only for defense, to deter

aggressors, and also to ensure that justice prevailed (p. 72). Aljazy also asserted that

Islam does not support violence of any kind including the taking of human lives (p. 73).

Violent Radicalization of Muslims in Europe

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) expressed views that are consistent with some of the

views expressed by Aljazy (2010) and Piazza (2010). Dalgaard-Nielsen examined Islamic

extremism in Europe and the violence associated with it (p. 797). Radicalization is the

strong desire to effect seismic societal changes which most times has the potential to

seriously threaten or alter the status quo in a society (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). According

to Dalgaard-Nielsen, this becomes violent radicalization when there is the eagerness on

the part of the individual to promote or use acts of violence in the pursuit of a radical

agenda (p.798).

Europe and the Emergence of Militant Islam

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) observed that militant Islamism developed from a

reactionary movement to what some Muslims believe is the non-stop attack and

humiliation of Muslims and Islam by the Western world (p. 798). Militant Islamism also seeks to fight Israel and some governments in the Islamic world which the Islamists believe are full of corruption (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Nevertheless, the primary agenda of militant Islamists is to bring Muslims together to fight the West, which they view as the common enemy of Islam and Muslims (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Many young Europeans who become Islamists or extremists have not spent a lot of time outside the shores of Europe (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). This view indicates that Muslims in Europe who choose to become Islamists or extremists may not need to go to countries such as Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan, etc. to be indoctrinated by Islamic extremist organizations.

Apparently, events at home in Europe could turn a moderate Muslims into an extremist or an Islamists. The burqa ban in France could have the potential to become such an event. Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) made reference to three categories of scholars, or what may also be described as three schools of thought. She stated that these three categories of scholars carried out studies which focused on explaining some of the factors that propel some European Muslims to become violently radicalized (p. 799). These factors can also propel them to become Islamists.

The first of these three categories identified by Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) was described as the French Sociology category (p. 799). The second, as she further observed, was called the Social Movement and Network Theory (p. 799). The third category, according to her, was called Empiricism (p. 799). She gave detailed explanation on the studies carried out by these three categories. Three prominent scholars under the French

Sociology category were Kepel, Khostrokhavar, and Roy who studied why some European Muslims embrace violent radicalization and militant Islam (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). One important finding or result of their studies is that some young European Muslims have the perception that Europe and other countries in the West are hostile to Muslims (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Khostrokhavar and Roy stated that this perceived hostility by the West against Muslims in Europe and other Western countries is because of what some Muslims in Europe believe is the racism and other acts of discrimination against them (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010).

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) stated that Khostrokhavar and Roy discovered that the younger generation of Muslims who were born and raised in Europe and other Western countries still believe that they suffer from some kind of exclusion from the mainstream Western society (p. 800). Consequently, these young Muslims, despite their efforts to become "Westernized," still believe that the West is not ready to accept them and their Islamic faith (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). The feelings these young Muslims have are what Khostrokhavar and Roy described as "double sense of non-belonging" (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010, p. 800). The point made on this perceived hostility of the West towards Muslims in the West is quite remarkable and very important for this study. This is because this point is useful and could launch us into additional studies that would examine how Muslims all over the world could potentially view the burqa ban by the French Government.

***Ummah:* Solidarity among Muslims**

Furthermore, according to Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010), solidarity among Muslims is another key point which Khostrokhavar and Roy made in their studies on violent radicalization of Muslims in Europe. The point about solidarity is important for this study because it offers an insight into the potential wider global implications of the burqa ban in France. According to Dalgaard-Nielsen, Roy made reference to the concept of *ummah* which many Islamic extremist and militant organizations usually allude to in the defense of their actions (p. 800). Roy described this concept as "the neo-ummah" (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010, p. 800). Roy described neo ummah as an unreal or made up worldwide family that brings together all Muslims irrespective of where they may be (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010).

The History of the Concept of Ummah

Mandaville (2011) observed that the concept of ummah gained attention at the end of the nineteenth century (p. 9). According to Mandaville, it was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897) who was mostly credited with popularizing this concept (p. 9). Mandaville described Afghani as a man of great intellect who tried to unify all Muslims as a way to ward off the occupation of Muslim territories by foreigners (p. 9). Afghani believed that colonial masters from Europe were unjustly occupying lands owned by Muslims (Mandaville, 2011). Consequently, the concept of ummah that Afghani envisaged was a tool that was to be used as a deterrent to what he felt was "the prevailing hegemony of European Imperialism" (Mandaville, 2011, p. 9).

Mandaville (2011) further observed that though Afghani's movement was not successful, it however, brought to life the idea of unity among Muslims (p. 9). In fact, as observed by Mandaville, Afghani's movement paved the way for the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 in Egypt (p. 9). One important aspect of Mandaville's description of the reasons why Afghani came up with this idea of Muslim solidarity is his mention of European hegemony. This is significant for this study because the decision of the French Government to ban the burqa may be described as a reflection of European hegemony.

Preventing Muslim women who chose to do so from wearing the veil may be another way of imposing European values on Muslims. Huntington (1997) described this as "the West's universalist pretensions" (p. 20). This is the situation where Western countries consider Western values as universal values which should be adopted by other civilizations (Huntington, 1997). This has caused conflicts between the West and Islam. Huntington's clash of civilization is discussed in detail in the later part of this literature review

Ummah and Violent Radicalization of Muslims in Europe

As previously noted, the concept of ummah or the neo-ummah symbolizes the solidarity that Muslims are believed to have for one another. Though, not all Muslims have the same opinion about the burqa in Islam, however, solidarity or this concept of ummah could change all that. The French Government's ban of the burqa in public places in France may look localized where the potential consequences of the law would only be felt in France. However, this supposed solidarity or the so-called concept of ummah has

the potential to make the implications of the burqa ban go beyond the shores of France. It could metamorphose into a global issue involving Muslims and the West with the resultant wider global implications on transnational terrorism.

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) made reference to studies carried out by Khostrokhavar of the French Sociology school of thought. Khostrokhavar's studies revealed that one of the primary causes of violent radicalization by Muslims is the deep desire to show their support for fellow Muslims in other parts of the world (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). This is another way of showing solidarity. Muslims from all over the world usually show this solidarity for their fellow Muslims in different parts of the world in form of what they view as a rescue mission to save those Muslims who they believe are victims of repression or abuse (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). One major reason why Muslims became violently radicalized is because of their conviction that Muslims steadily face aggression and being humbled by cocky and proud Western countries (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). This underscores why the burqa ban in France may be viewed by some Muslims as having all the hallmarks of a Western country attacking and humiliating Muslims in France. This could further fuel the flame of violent radicalization by Muslims.

Consequently, the French Sociology's conclusions on the reasons for young Muslims in Europe to adopt the violent radicalization ideology or Islamism could be applied in this study. This will further help to examine the effects of the burqa ban in France. Based on their studies and the evidence they have given, some young European Muslims who turned to violent radicalization are convinced that Western countries are

arrogant and have continuously attacked and humiliated Muslims. The views are helpful in the analysis of the implications of the Islamic face-veil ban in France.

Globalization and Its Effect on Islamic Terrorism

Staunton (2008) examined the role of globalization and the earlier mentioned concept of ummah on Islamic terrorism. Many discussions and scholarly articles on globalization usually focused on economic integration of the countries of the world. Attributing the rise in Islamic terrorism to globalization is, in my opinion, not very common.

"Globalized Ummah" and Islamic Terrorism

Staunton (2008) used the expression *globalized ummah* to analyze how globalization fuels the fire of terrorism carried out by Islamic terrorist organizations. According to him, globalization has facilitated the growth of a "globalized ummah" (p. 154).This globalized ummah has witnessed tremendous growth because of the new technologies associated with making the world a global village (Staunton, 2008). Consequently, the invention of new technologies which help to further integrate the world economically, and remove many of the barriers impeding the concept of globalization have actually facilitated the growth of this globalized ummah (Staunton, 2008).

Staunton (2008) further stated that technological advances such as better internet services, advanced cable and satellite services have helped in the process of globalization (p. 154). These technologies have also made it possible for Muslims all over the world to become aware of what other Muslims are supposedly facing in the hands of the Western

world (Staunton, 2008). According to Staunton, it then became easier for Muslims from other parts of the world to see, as it is happening, the hostilities of Israel on Palestinians or Muslims in Iraq being exterminated by American soldiers (p. 154). This is described this as "globalized information services" (Staunton, 2008, p. 154).

This article by Staunton (2008) was written few years before the burqa ban in France. However, his point on how the "globalized information services" have made it possible for Muslims all over the world to witness the alleged sufferings of Muslims in some parts of the world could be applied to this study. When the French Government introduced the legislation which bans the burqa in public places in France, the globalized information services brought this law to the attention of the world. In addition, these globalized information services also made it possible for Muslims from other parts of the world that support wearing the burqa to become instantly aware of what was going on in France.

Therefore, what could be deduced from the argument by Staunton (2008) is that technological advances are closely tied to the concept of globalization. These advances in technology have made it possible for faster dissemination of information all over the world on the perceived plight of Muslims (Staunton, 2008). Therefore, information dissemination through televisions, the internet, radios and even newspapers have facilitated the growth of this globalized ummah (Staunton, 2008). This can then be analyzed from the perspective of what Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) had earlier described as solidarity among Muslims. This solidarity, or ummah, could result in violence against those perceived to be oppressing Muslims in any part of the world.

"Global Muslim Identity"

Staunton (2008) viewed this globalized ummah as having paved the way for what he described as "global Muslim identity" (p. 155). He identified two strong unifying factors that shape this global Muslim identity. The first factor which shapes the global Muslim identity is the Islamic religion (Staunton, 2008). The second factor is a shared anger that Muslims have against some Western countries because of the belief of an unjust treatment meted out to Muslims by the West (Staunton, 2008). An interesting point which Staunton made, and which has a direct connection to the central premise of this dissertation is the reference to Western countries.

Staunton (2008) observed that one of the terrorists who carried out the Bali bombings accused some countries of partnering with the United States to kill Muslims in Afghanistan, and also to put an end to country's Islamic government (p. 155). France is one of the countries mentioned. It is obvious that Afghanistan was the focal point. However, the inclusion of France among the key allies of the United States that allegedly commit atrocities against Muslims is significant for this study. That inclusion underscores the perceptions that some Muslims already have about France. Suffice it to say that Staunton's conclusion points to the assertion that this so-called globalized ummah or global Muslim identity does not consider France as a friend of Muslims. If one goes by Staunton's assertions, the burqa ban in France does have the potential to heighten this perception of France as an enemy of Islam. This could have some implications on acts of Islamic terrorism.

Argument against Global Muslim Identity

Nevertheless, I am also aware that the assertions by Staunton (2008) on the globalized ummah and a global Muslim identity may be faulted by some pundits. It is always objective to look at the other side of the argument. The concept of a global Muslim identity which is founded on resistance against the West has been questioned. Mandaville (2011) observed that Muslims have different standards of behavior and different political goals to achieve (p. 8). In fact, Mandaville categorically stated that Muslims hardly ever present a united political front that is supposedly guided by this concept of ummah (p. 8).

An important contributory factor to the serious division in the Islamic world is the divide between Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims. This could make it difficult to uphold the assertions by Staunton (2008) on a globalized Muslim ummah which supposedly brings all Muslims together. However, this does not ignore the fact that some Muslims from different parts of the world do have grievances against the West. That is the aspect of Staunton's point on globalization and Islamic terrorism which is considered relevant to this current study. Staunton's assertions on the globalized ummah or a global Muslim identity underscore the fact that the events in France with the burqa ban should not be considered as being localized to France alone.

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Social Movement and Network Theory

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Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) identified scholars under the social movement and network theory as the second category of scholars who empirically studied the reasons why young European Muslims adopt the violent radicalization ideology. The prominent

scholars were Wiktorowicz and Sageman who used "empirically based and theoretically informed insights" to immensely contribute to studies on violent Islamic extremism in Europe (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010, p. 801).

Framing Theory

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) stated that the framing theory formed the nucleus of the studies and researches carried out by Wiktorowicz. In framing theory, a frame is considered the sum total of a person's views, and conceptions about the world and reality (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). This description bears all the hallmarks of a person's religious views. In framing theory, it is assumed that different frames fight for dominance, and also fight over whose conceptions or views of reality and the world are superior (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). This may be described as different religions or religious views fighting for dominance. When these frames compete or fight, it produces grievances among those who are sympathetic to the different frames (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Consequently, with these existing grievances, different frames recruit more members who would join in this fight or competition (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010).

The analysis of the framing theory by Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) provides another perspective through which one can analyze the differences between Islamic cultural worldviews and Western cultural worldviews. Differences in worldviews or "frames" may have immensely contributed to the decision of the French Government to ban the burqa. Evidently, French Government officials have a totally different opinion about the burqa when compared to that of Muslims who support it.

In frame theory, the Government of France could be described as a frame. Muslims who support the burqa could also be described as a different frame. Further analysis may designate Muslims in France as the weaker frame who believe that the stronger frame, the French Government is unjustly imposing its cultural worldviews on them. They could consider this as a case of injustice. Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) stated that in frame theory, the issues at stake revolve around "injustices" (p. 802).Those who believe that they are victims of these injustices usually resort to the use of violent acts to address these perceived injustices (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). The fore-going analysis presents yet another perspective through which one can examine the potential implications of the burqa ban in France.

"Shared Grievances"

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) also made reference to another study by Wiktorowicz. This study by Wiktorowicz focused on the role of what is described as shared grievances and perceived discrimination (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Wiktorowicz carried out a study of a U.K. based Islamic militant group called al-Muhajiroun. Wiktorowicz discovered one of the primary methods which this group used to lure new members into taking part in acts of violence, including terrorism (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). This study discovered that this Islamic militant group relied on indoctrination of new members on "widely shared grievances" (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010, p. 802).

Two factors blamed for propelling the resentment were the different treatment given to Muslims in Europe, and the unpleasant situations Muslims are facing in war torn countries like Afghanistan (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). The study concluded that this

resulted to the strong desire of these members to use violence to defend their fellow

Muslims who are victims of these perceived acts of discrimination (Dalgaard-Nielsen,

2010). Shared grievances and the perceived discrimination of Muslims in Europe are my

major areas of focus because of their relevance to this study.

This study mentioned by Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) on shared grievances reechoes

one of the assertions of terror management theory which this study's theoretical

framework is based upon. Differences in cultural worldviews and the undermining of

another group's cultural worldview by another group holding a different cultural

worldview is among the reasons for conflicts and disagreements (Pyszczynski et al.,

2008). Evidently, these conflicts can be as a result of shared grievances which a group of

people with a particular worldview can have against another group with a different

cultural worldview. Muslims from other parts of the world who accept the burqa as a

requirement in Islam could accumulate these shared grievances against the French

Government or even the West.

In addition, fault line wars can also be aligned with this study on shared

grievances. In fault line wars, one or more of the groups in the conflict are usually "part

of larger cultural entities" (Huntington, 1997, p. 254). They are called "civilizational kin

groups" because they share the same values (Huntington, 1997, p. 254). Irrespective of

where they are, they could have the same shared grievances. The involvement of

civilizational kin groups in a fault line war usually expands the conflict (Huntington,

1997).

The Change Institute's Studies on Violent Radicalization of Muslims in Europe

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) also made reference to a social movement theory inspired studies and interviews conducted by some researchers from the Change Institute. Their studies focused on the possible reasons that could lead to violent radicalization of Muslims in Europe. One important finding of these studies is that most of Muslims who took part in the studies strongly opposed the resort to violence by some Muslims to address whatever grievances they may have (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). This is quite significant and very important for this study. This is because these findings basically challenge the central premise of this study.

However, the same study, according to Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010), also discovered that the majority of Muslims who participated in the study also believe that Europeans are generally hostile or unfriendly to Muslims (p. 803). The participants also believe that Europeans do not trust Muslims. The conclusions of the Change Institute researchers suggested that there is complete rejection of violence, and complete acceptance of the existence of valid grievances that Muslims have against the West (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). One gap here is the silence on what the possible consequences of these held grievances could be if they completely reject violence. This study attempted to answer that question.

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) did not ignore another important finding of the Change Institute researchers. These are their findings and assertions on the role of Western governments in fueling the fire of violent radicalization by Muslims in Europe. This is also very crucial for this study. The Change Institute opined that governments in Western

countries inadvertently fuel the fire of violent radicalization of Muslims by formulating

public policies that may be considered anti-Islam or anti-Arab (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010).

The Institute also agreed that some policies of governments in the West, especially those

considered anti-Islam by some Muslims could actually make it easier for Islamists to get

new recruits (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010).

The Empiricism School of Thought

The third and final category of scholars who Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) discussed

their views on violent radicalization of European Muslims is the empiricism category.

The general assumption of the empiricists is that there is no single reason to explain why

some Muslims adopt violent radicalization ideology (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). As further

observed by Dalgaard-Nielsen, a prominent empiricist Peter Nesser argued that Muslims

have distinct goals for embracing militant Islamism, and that they achieve this through

separate routes (p. 806). However, as she further pointed out, there are other empiricist

scholars whose views are consistent with the views expressed by other scholars

mentioned in the article.

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) made reference to the studies carried out by Slootman

and Tillie. These scholars concluded that three factors strongly motivate Muslims into

becoming violently radicalized (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Of all these three, one stands

out because of its relevance to this study. The studies concluded that Muslims become

violently radicalized in reaction to what they perceive as the unjust manner in which

Muslims are treated by the West in places such as Afghanistan, Palestine and Europe

(Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). However, this study focused more on violent radicalization. It

did not examine how these perceived injustices and the resultant violent radicalization of Muslims could actually become acts of Islamic terrorism.

Apparently, there are no further explanations on what this violent radicalization would result into or how this violent radicalization is expressed. The type of violence that Muslims could resort to was not specifically identified. There was no specific mention of Islamic terrorism as a possible consequence of this violent radicalization of Muslims in Europe. This is the same gap that has continuously been noticed in all the arguments the scholars have made on violent radicalization of Muslims. This explains why this study is an attempt to explore how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism.

Defending the Ban: Arguments in Support of the French Government

In other to maintain objectivity in this study, I also examined the arguments of scholars in support of the French Government's burqa ban. Supporters of the burqa ban and also some French Government officials made reference to the French concept of *Laicite* as one of the major reasons which justifies the burqa ban in France. Other reasons that were advanced were the fear of terrorism, and the need to maintain gender equality which is an important feature of a Western democratic country like France. I admit that the argument put forward in support of the ban are quite compelling. This is why it is absolutely necessary to ensure that those arguments are prominently discussed in this literature review.

*Laicite***: Justifying the Islamic Face-Veil Ban in France**

The word *Laicite* has been mentioned a couple of times in the Chapter 1 of this dissertation. It has also been mentioned a couple times in this literature review. However, I have decided to dedicate an entire section of this literature review towards examining in detail what *Laicite* in France stands for. Any study on the burqa ban in France would require a better understanding of the concept of *Laicite*. This is because the French Government had used *Laicite* in its defense of the burqa ban in public places in the country.

Laicite **in Ancient France**

Davis (2011) observed that *Laicite* is a concept which originated in France, and which defines how the church relates with the Government in France (p. 120). *Laicite* is the French society's form of secularization where the church is expected to have no influence whatsoever on the government and the affairs of the state (Davis, 2011). The concept of *Laicite* came into existence after the French Revolution in 1789, and it was used to counter the over-whelming influence that the Roman Catholic Church had on the French monarchy (Davis, 2011). This culminated, according to Davis, in the formulation of a law on February 21, 1795 (p. 121). This 1795 law ensured that all the affairs of the French Republic at the Government level are securely insulated from any kind of interference or influence from the Roman Catholic Church in France (Davis, 2011).

Shirazi and Mishra (2010) stated that *Laicite* promotes a secular French society where religion has no influence on the affairs of the government and the society in general (p. 46). *Laicite* or secularism in France made it practically impossible for any

religion to have an influence in the public affairs of France (Shirazi and Mishra, 2010).

From the foregoing, one can assert that *laicite*, as practiced in France, is a conscious

effort on the part of French people and their Government to keep France a secular

country. A country that would not officially recognize any religion or put establish

structures that will provide the enabling environment for any religion to have more

advantage than the others in the French society.

Laicite in Modern Day France

However, *Laicite* has assumed a different meaning in modern day France (Davis,

2011). It now almost has no reference to the influence of the Catholic Church in France.

The concept of *laicite* is now used as a shield to guard the French society against any

attempt by any religious group to undermine the secular nature of the French society

(Davis, 2011). Basically, the concept of *Laicite* in the French society has become

synonymous with the maintenance of secularism in France. A secular France, under the

concept of *Laicite*, implies that there is only one French identity for everyone in France.

This identity is devoid of any religion in particular. An individual or group of

individuals' has to maintain an identity that is similar to the rest of the mainstream

French society. Evidently, with the concept of *Laicite*, the burqa ban in France is

justified.

Davis (2011) also made an observation about *Laicite* which I find very important

to this dissertation. Davis stated that Laicite is now used in France as a decoy for the fight

against the rise of Islam in France (p. 123). Evidently, Davis is of the opinion that *Laicite*

in today's France may have become a tool used to stem the growth of Islam in the

country. However, he did not give enough instances or evidences to back up such a claim. Nevertheless, this assertion shows the divergent views about the burqa ban in France. It indicates that there are some scholars who consider the ban as a manifestation of France's sense of unease when it comes to the supposed growth of Islam in France.

Surprisingly, Davis (2011) did not give further analysis of the possible implications of the claim that *Laicite* is used to slow the growth of Islam in France. If *Laicite*, as he observed, is used as a tool to contain the rise of Islam in France, then there are the possibilities that the relationship between France and her Muslim population could be antagonistic. Such a relationship could have domestic and even wider global implications. These implications could be on acts of Islamic terrorism. This is a gap in the article which this dissertation attempted to fill.

Laicite, French Republicanism, and Gender Equality in France

Another aspect of *Laicite* which deserves particular mention in this literature review is the connection between *Laicite* and the promotion of gender equality in France. This connection is necessary in the analysis of gender equality in Islam and the French society. Daly (2012) stated that the French Government uses *Laicite* to ensure that women in France are not subjected to any sort of violation of their right to choose freely their religion (p. 293). Daly also observed that *Laicite* forms the foundation of what is described as "French republicanism." (p. 293). This French republicanism does not differentiate individuals based on cultural, political and religious backgrounds (Daly, 2012). Therefore, French republicanism which is built around *Laicite* views women as having the same status with men (Daly, 2012). Women should not be subjected to a

subordinate status because of their gender or because of what a religion teaches about women (Daly, 2012).

Additionally, Heider (2012) stated that Sarkozy had argued that banning the burqa was one way of championing gender equality (p. 69). Sarkozy stated that prohibiting the burqa helps to maintain secularism in France ways (Heider, 2012). Sarkozy also refused to view the burqa as a religious practice, instead describing it as a symbol of enslavement (Heider, 2012). Nevertheless, Heider countered Sarkozy's argument by observing that the gender equality argument was used by the French Government to masquerade the real intentions behind the face-veil ban (p. 97). She observed that the underlying intention of the law originated from the anti-Muslim stance of the French Government (p. 97).

Arguments by Feminists

However, the revelations by Nanwani (2011) could also be used to support the gender equality argument of the former French President. Nanwani pointed out that some feminists do not view the burqa as a requirement in Islam. In fact, some feminists consider the veil as sexist and oppressive (Nanwani, 2011). Two feminists, Fatima Mernissi and Elisabeth Badinter who championed the anti-burqa crusade argued that the burqa lowers the status of women to only the "domestic sphere" or "domestic tasks" (Nanwani, 2011, p. 1438). Their assertions point to a belief that Muslim men force or coerce Muslim women to wear the veil so as to maintain a subordinate status for women.

Interestingly, Nanwani (2011) mentioned other studies which differed from the views expressed by Mernissi and Badinter. These were studies by Professor Adrien Katherine Wing and Monica Nigh Smith. The findings of the studies were based on

responses from female French Muslims who talked about what motivated them to wear the Islamic headscarf (Nanwani, 2011). Based on what Wing and Smith discovered from the comments, many younger Muslim women who wear the headscarf do so because they choose to, and not because they are forced to do so (Nanwani, 2011).

This discovery, as Nanwani (2011) further stated, could also be said to be the case with some Muslim women in France who wear the burqa by choice. Reference was made to a young girl from Kuwait who stated that she wore the burqa by choice, and also because she sees it as one of the ways to practice her Islamic religion (Nanwani, 2011). Consequently, one can conclude that some Muslim women consider wearing the veil as one of the ways to practice Islam (Nanwani, 2011). The focus therefore, should be on those women because the French burqa ban violates Article 9 of the ECHR (Nanwani, 2011).

The Fear of Terrorism in France

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) also made reference to the conclusions of a study carried out by Marc Sageman (2008). The studies found that the fear of terrorism has led to a situation where Western governments are now "overreacting to the perceived threat" (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010, p. 804). This overreaction, the studies concluded, has made the countries of the Western world to adopt certain measures and policies that may be considered anti-Islam (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010).

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) also added that Sageman (2008) concluded that the policies and measures adopted by some countries in the West in their fight against terrorism have made Muslims believe that the West is hostile to Islam (p. 804). There

was no mention of the policies that Sageman was referring to in his study. However, I am convinced that the burqa ban in France could be argued to fall into such category of measures.

Politics of Recognition

Furthermore, Daly (2012) stated that *Laicite* is also a tool used in France to suppress any form of what he described as "politics of recognition" (p. 293). Therefore, *Laicite* ensures that governments in France do not use religion and customs as guides when making decisions on the rights of the French (Daly, 2012). Consequently, the burqa ban in France could be described as a measure to ensure that Muslim women are not subjected to any form of politics of recognition of their religion or any subordinate status. Nevertheless, the argument on *Laicite*, secularism in France and gender equality may have some disabilities. If *Laicite* means the separation of church (religion) from the affairs of the state, then the state should also not be involved in regulating how someone expresses his or her religion.

The Clash of Civilizations

This concept had earlier been identified as the guide for the conceptual framework of this study. The central premise of this concept is the view that the major conflict the world would face after the Cold War would be a conflict involving the Western and Islamic civilizations (Huntington, 1997). An important observation made by Huntington, and which is crucial for this study is that religion is a very important component of these civilizations (p. 47). For example, the predominant civilization in most of the Arab world and in countries such as Iran, Pakistan, and Indonesia are rooted on, or are intricately

linked to the Islamic religion. Similarly, many countries of the West including France, the United States, Britain, and Germany among others have Judaism and Christianity (Judeo-Christian) as the major foundation of Western civilization.

The West's Universalist Pretensions

Huntington (1997) gave some reasons why the West, in his opinion, has been in conflict with other civilizations, particularly with the Islamic civilization. One of the reasons he gave is what he described as "the West's universalist pretensions" (p. 20). This, according to him, involved a situation where Western countries consider Western values as universal values which should be adopted by other civilizations (p. 20). This has caused conflicts between the West and Islam. The French Government believes that the Islamic face-veil goes against the concept of *Laicite* and other Western values such as gender equality. *Laicite* may be acceptable and good for the mainstream French society but may go against the fundamental believes and values of the Muslim population in France.

However, just like Huntington (1997) pointed out, France, a Western country believes that its concept of *Laicite* and Western/French interpretation of gender equality should be adopted by French Muslims. Huntington also stated, "The West's efforts to universalize its values generate intense resentment among Muslims" (p. 211). The attempt by Western countries to universalize their values has led to even worse relations with Muslims because Muslims in general are dismissive of Western values (Huntington, 1997). Muslims do not like western values because they believe that the West has a decadent culture which basically promotes immorality (Huntington, 1997). Such an

assessment has made Muslims all the more eager to strongly reject the penetration of Western culture into Islam (Huntington, 1997).

Conflict between Modernity and Traditionalism

Fattah and Fierke (2009) made reference to the description of the supposed conflict between Islam and the West as a conflict between "modernity and traditionalism" (p. 68). According to Fattah and Fierke, the scholars in this school of thought argued that the total rejection of "modernity" by conservative groups in the Middle East gave birth to violent extremists who target the West (p. 68). It is evident that Fattah and Fierke consider Islamic values as traditional values while Western values represent modernity. This argument is consistent with the arguments of Huntington (1997) on a clash between Islam and the West. Huntington, as earlier observed, had argued that when Westerners make attempt to impose Western values on non-Western civilizations, it results into a conflict.

Secularism

Furthermore, Huntington (1997) also revealed how Muslims feel about any concept that promotes secularism. This revelation is also crucial for this study to examine how Muslims could possibly view the French concept of *Laicite* or secularism. One of the reasons why Muslims do not particularly agree with the West is because of the perception by Muslims that the West is secular (Huntington, 1997). Muslims consider the West as "the godless West" (Huntington, 1997, p. 214). However, there is a problem with this assertion by Huntington on the supposed perception Muslims have about the West when it comes to religion and secularism.

Some Islamic terrorist organizations like the Islamic State have repeatedly described the West as crusaders, and sometimes Zionists. The crusaders as we know were Westerners who waged a holy war against Muslims on behalf of Christianity. Therefore, the Islamic world does not necessarily view the West as secular. Instead, they view the West as a civilization which largely champions the spread of Judeo-Christian religious beliefs. This also includes championing what some Islamic militant organizations have sometimes referred to as the "Zionist Crusaders" which they believe is aimed at protecting Israel.

Differences in Cultural Worldviews and the Clash of Civilizations

There had been a steady increase in the clash between Islamic and Western civilizations because of the significant differences in their cultural worldviews and values (Huntington, 1997). Huntington wrote his book many years before the burqa ban in France came into effect. Nevertheless, the ban is a reflection of these differences in beliefs and values that still exist between the West and Islam many years after Huntington wrote his book. His opinion that this situation has also led to the growth of Islamic fundamentalism (p. 185) underscores how the face-veil ban in France could have implications on Islamic terrorism.

Furthermore, many Western nations adopt measures that are designed "to protect the cultural, social, and ethnic integrity of Western societies" (Huntington, 1997, p. 186). The burqa ban could be described as one of the measures taken by the French Government "to protect the cultural, social, and ethnic integrity" of France. Huntington

admitted that the West would encounter some problems in its effort to protect and propagate Western values (p. 186).

Fault Line Wars

The assertions by Huntington (1997) about fault line wars or conflicts are helpful for a better understanding of how the events in France could have wider global implications. Fault line conflicts arise when one or more of the groups in the conflict are usually "part of larger cultural entities" (Huntington, 1997, p. 254). Huntington argued that other groups which share the same culture, what he described as "civilizational kin groups" could rally around their own and this will expand the conflict (p. 254). The situation in France with the burqa ban does have the potential, just like fault line wars, to involve Muslims from other parts of the world who believe that the burqa is a necessary practice in Islam. The Salafist group, as previously stated, considers the burqa as a requirement in Islam. They could resort to Islamic terrorism in order to show support or solidarity for the French Muslim population. These acts of violence could be in the form of.

Though the opinion of Huntington (1997) about a clash of civilizations does reflect the central premise of this dissertation, however, there are aspects of his argument which may be challenged. His book was written in 1997, and since then a lot has changed. Since Huntington wrote his book, many countries of the Gulf Region have forged closer ties with the West. Islamic countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar are becoming increasingly "westernized." The Wahhabi rulers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have fostered closer military ties with the West, particularly with the United

States and her European allies. All these examples tend to fault Huntington's assertions that the Islamic world does not want anything to do with the West.

Challenging Huntington

The concept of a clash of civilizations between the West and Islam as propounded by Huntington (1997) has also been viewed differently by some writers. Korstanje (2011) challenged Huntington's assertions. The views and arguments put forward by Huntington are "nourished Anglo-American ethnocentrism" (Korstanje, 2011, p. 27). It was wrong for Huntington to group together as one civilization countries with different cultures (Korstanje, 2011). This is because "sometimes, ethnic or linguistic resemblances are not sufficient to determine we are in the presence of a civilization" (Korstanje, 2011, p. 59). Korstanje went as far as alleging that Huntington's book on a clash of civilizations was manipulated by politicians in the United States to justify the war on terror (p. 60). Interestingly, the expression "war on terror" came into existence many years after Huntington wrote his book.

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Summary

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This chapter started with a summary of the central premise of this dissertation which is on the potential implications of the Islamic face-veil ban in France. This was followed by an overview of the theoretical framework and the rationale for adopting it in the analysis of how the Islamic face-veil ban in France could contribute to a rise in acts of Islamic terrorism. I then examined some articles that are crucial for this study. Many of the scholarly articles used made strong assertions which could imply that the face-veil

ban in France may be viewed as an extension of the supposed conflict between Islam and the West.

This literature review also directly reiterated the assumptions of this dissertation's theoretical framework. Consequently, focus was on the possible consequences of one group with different values undermining another group's values or worldviews. As observed in the theoretical framework, terror management theory posits that when the beliefs and cultural worldviews of a particular group are challenged, undermined or questioned by another group which holds a different cultural worldview, it could lead to violent reactions. Most of the articles and books examined identified issues that could point to the undermining of the Islamic worldviews and values by the West.

Interestingly, apart from Huntington (1997) who observed that this could result in violence and Islamist terrorism, many of the authors in this literature review were silent or did not discuss in detail how what is going on in France could have an impact on Islamic terrorism. That gap is what the central premise of this dissertation is attempting to fill by carrying out a study on the possible implications the face-veil ban in France could have on Islamic terrorism. Huntington even went as far as asserting that the West has this belief that Western values are universal values and therefore, should be adopted by other civilizations in the world.

This chapter also examined articles that wrote extensively on what the Quran says about the veil, and how Muslims view the wearing of the veil by Muslims women. It was discovered that not all Muslims are in consensus on the significant of the veil in Islam. In fact, the chapter included articles which gave different versions of what the Quran says

about the veil. Some articles opined that it was the Salafist group of Muslims who consider the veil as a requirement in Islam. This is very important considering that many Islamic terrorist organizations have Salafist roots. The chapter also discussed topics that were used to argue in favor of the French Government.

In Chapter 3 of this paper, I enumerated how he carried out this study. The researcher explained the study's research methodology and its design, the population, and the sampling method that was used. In addition, I also used chapter 3 to explain the data collection methods and how data collected were analyzed. Finally, Chapter 3 also gave important information on the measures I took to ensure that the interests of the study's research participants were protected.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This study explored how the research participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. Consequently, the study involved taking a closer look at how this law affected the relationship between Muslims and the mainstream French society. The possible implications on acts of Islamic terrorism formed the primary focus of this study. This study was qualitative, and the ethnographic approach was adopted.

Newman and Hitchcock (2011) observed that qualitative research is used for studies whose research question is interested in knowing how participants view and react when something happens (p. 383). The five approaches to qualitative research are narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2007). However, Collingridge and Gantt (2008) narrowed the approaches down to what they described as the "three major qualitative approaches" (p. 392). The three major approaches to qualitative research are existential ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008). Ethnography was used in this study.

Research Design and Approach

The study's research question (RQ) as previously stated in Chapter 1 was as follows:

RQ: Do Muslims report a correlation between the French law which bans the burqa and increased acts of Islamic terrorism?

I did not use experiments to find answers to this research question. Instead, I used the ethnographic approach to qualitative research study. Collingridge and Gantt (2008) observed that ethnography helps to be thoroughly familiar with how people who share the same beliefs and traditions conduct themselves (p. 392). In addition, irrespective of the different natures it takes, the majority, if not all ethnographic studies, focus primarily on giving more information or account of cultures (Koro-Ljungberg & Greckhamer, 2005).

This study focused on exploring how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. Therefore, this dissertation is a study on the differences between Islamic and Western cultures and how those differences could possibly result into some kind of conflict. I would like to point out that in some instances, culture and religion are connected and/or intertwined. For example Saroglou and Cohen (2011) opined that religion is an essential component of culture (p. 1309). Saroglou and Cohen also stated that religion could have an effect on culture and could also go beyond culture (p. 1309). Islam reflects this link between the religious views and the culture of a group of people. Islam forms the foundation of the cultural values of Arabs and some non-Arab Islamic countries such as Iran and Pakistan. The burqa ban in France also underscores how religious and/or cultural differences could have an effect on intergroup relations.

Ethnography can also be used to study power, governance, and public policy formulation (Gains, 2011). This type of ethnographic study is described as "political ethnography" (Gains, 2011, p. 163). As indicated in the literature review, there were political intrigues and arguments surrounding the need for a law in France that bans the

burqa. Political ethnography can be used in such a study. Gains further stated that political ethnography is fast becoming common because of the increased link between political scientists and ethnographic research (p. 163). In addition, political ethnography is appropriate for studies that seek to shed more light on the series of actions that are taken before policies are formulated and implemented (Gains, 2011). The French policy-making process came under scrutiny in this dissertation as reflected in the literature review.

Sampling and Description of Research Participants

I used the purposeful sampling technique for this study. Koerber and McMichael (2008) observed that a researcher who uses purposeful sampling searches for research participants who have some specified qualities that distinguish them from others (p. 464). These qualities that Koerber and McMichael made reference to could be vast knowledge of the topic being researched. They could also be experiential knowledge (knowledge gathered from experience), close relationship with the object or person of study, and so forth. Furthermore, purposeful sampling also means that the person conducting the study is guided by the study's objectives when selecting the samples for the study (Koerber & McMichael, 2008).

The burqa ban in France directly affects Muslim women. Therefore, detailed information about the burqa in Islam would naturally come from Muslims. In addition, because this study was on the implications of the burqa ban on Islamic terrorism, it was also crucially important that the research participants be made up of Muslims. The objective would be to get reactions from Muslims on how they viewed the ban. This

further underscored the need for the research participants to be Muslims and also explained why the research participants selected for this study were all Muslims.

The sample size consisted of 23 Muslim research participants. Each participant met the prequalifying criteria of being self-described as of the Muslim faith. This study explored how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. The current trend has suggested that Islamic terrorism is now a global phenomenon. The views expressed by O'Shaughnessy & Baines (2009) supports this assertion. O'Shaughnessy & Baines observed that Islamic terrorism has metamorphosed into "a global insurrection, based on the core notion of an existential threat to the Islamic faith" (p. 228). This is why the research participants were drawn from the Muslim population in France as well as from different countries.

This became necessary because of the current trend where Islamic extremists who take part in terrorism do so from one geographic location to another. A good example is the terrorist organization called the Islamic State. As observed by Jawad al-Tamimi (2014), the Islamic State organization (ISIS) was formed in Iraq by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (p. 5). However, as further observed by Jawad al-Tamimi, the Islamic State draws most of its membership from different countries (p. 6). Jawad al-Tamimi observed that there is one remarkable difference between the Islamic State and other terrorist organizations in Syria (p. 6). Fighters of the Islamic State came from different countries of the world whereas the fighters of organizations such as the Al Nusra Front are mostly native Syrians (Jawad al-Tamimi, 2014).

Zakaria (2015) further gave information which also indicates that the Islamic

State has members from different parts of the world. According to Zakaria, many female

members of the Islamic State organization come from France, the United Kingdom,

Canada and even the United States (p. 118). In fact, Dewast and Ferran (2015) in an *ABC*

News online report stated that in March 2015, three female English teenagers were

suspected to have escaped from England and traveled to Syria through Turkey to join

ISIS (para. 2). According to Dewast and Ferran, the teenage girls were aged between 15

and 16 years old. Their common unifying ideology, as observed by Janbek and Williams

(2014) is centered on fighting against the West's supposed antagonism towards Islam (p.

297).

Incidents like the aforementioned underscore how the internet has evolved and

helped grow terrorists from any part of the world. Weimann (2008) observed that

terrorists are no longer localized or limited to one particular region (p. 74). The Internet

and other modern electronic methods of information dissemination have made it possible

for terrorists to be recruited from any part of the globe (Weimann, 2008). If a terrorist

organization intends to react violently to any issue such as the burqa ban in France, it

could recruit terrorists from other parts of the world to perpetrate such acts on French

soil. This underscored how crucially important it was for me to also interview non-French

Muslims.

Furthermore, there is also this belief among many Muslims on what is now called

the Muslim ummah, which is an imagined global Muslim community. A study by Guney

(2010) discovered that many younger Muslims are now more and more considering

themselves as members of a perceived worldwide fraternity of Muslims (p. 169). Guney

further observed that what unites these Muslims is their belief that fellow Muslims in

other parts of the world are being persecuted by non-Muslims, particularly in Western

countries (p. 172). According to Guney, the Muslims she interviewed stated that

"geographical distance" or location is inconsequential when it comes to this imagined

worldwide community of Muslims (p. 172). This is why the issue of the burqa ban in

France could have wider global implications and possible reactions from Muslims in

other parts of the world. This further underscored the need for the research participants to

include Muslims from other parts of the world.

  I understand that the burqa ban legislation under study pertained to France.

However, it does have a wider global implication because it affects Islam and Muslims.

The burqa ban and the subsequent images of Muslims being arrested for wearing the

burqa could fall under what Harrow (2010) called "humiliation by proxy" (p. 279).

According to Harrow, humiliation by proxy is the sense of suffering and pain that

Muslims across the globe have when they see the plight of other Muslims in any part of

the world (p. 279).

  Harrow (2010) further observed that this feeling of humiliation by proxy

encourages extremism and militancy among Muslims irrespective of which part of the

world they may be (p. 279). This is also closely aligned to the earlier mentioned belief in

an imaginary global community of Muslims called Muslim ummah. Evidently, whatever

impact that the burqa ban has on Muslims in France could also have an effect on other

Muslims around the world. This is why the implications of the ban on Islamic terrorism

could reverberate beyond France and have wider global outlook, as opposed to being a localized issue in France alone. This underscored the need for me to obtain views and reactions to the ban from not only Muslims in France, but also Muslims from other parts of the world.

Data Collection Techniques

Hegelund (2005) made an important observation concerning data collection which I agree with. He examined the importance of defining or knowing the direction of one's research before the collection of data. He made reference to the views expressed by Kirk and Miller (1986) who had argued that "the ethnographer who gathers without knowing what he or she wants will find no happiness in the process" (p. 651). Consequently, collection of data was via techniques or methods that best provided the data which helped in answering the study's research question.

Interviews are usually considered as the most commonly used data collection technique for research studies that use the qualitative method. An interview is "a qualitative assessment method utilizing information from discussions with participants" (The University of Southern California Division Of Student Affairs, 2006, para. 1). Furthermore, qualitative methods are usually used to refer to the method whereby the researcher gathers data through the oral exchange of ideas and opinions with research participants (Crouch and Mckenzie, 2006).

Conduction of interviews with the research participants was the data collection technique for this study. I considered interviews to be very rewarding because the research participants were able to open up and give important information. Some of these

pieces of information may have been difficult to obtain without such close interactions

between me and the participants. Informal interviews that took the form of conversations

were employed for the research participants. Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson

(2002) described this as "unstructured or semi-structured interviews" (p. 727). Fossey et

al. (2002) stated that these types of interviews take the form of informal discussion in

which participants direct and play a principle role in sharing whatever information they

have (p. 727).

This style of interviews was particularly useful in study locations where people

tend to avoid topics on Islamic terrorism. I conducted face to face interviews in locations

in Silver Spring in the United States. Face to face interviews were also conducted in some

cities in Nigeria, particularly in the city of Abuja. The interviews took place in neutral

location such as schools, offices and private residences. In addition, telephonic interviews

were also conducted for French Muslims and other participants who live in distant places.

In addition, telephonic interviews were also conducted for participants who chose this

type of interview. Some participants did choose the form of interview. The Interview

questions focused on the Islamic face veil (the burqa), Islamic terrorism, and the

implications that the burqa ban could have on Islamic extremism, militancy and

terrorism.

The duration for both the face to face and the telephonic interviews was between

40-60 minutes. Some of the interviews were recorded while most were not. The majority

of the participants had reservations about recording of the interviews. I took field notes

for the unrecorded interviews. Participants talked slowly to enable me jot down some

information. The research participants were duly informed, and their consent sought before the interviews were conducted. Field notes were also taken to document each research participant's body movement, gestures and facial expressions. This was particularly beneficial during the face to face interviews.

Data Management and Analysis

The proper management of data collected is very important. Lack of proper data management could have serious negative implications on the eventual analysis of the data. Li and Seale (2007) observed that one of the problems a researcher could face during data analysis is being overwhelmed by data, and the subsequent difficulty in figuring out how to commence the analysis (p. 1445). Li and Seale also observed that another difficulty could be in connecting the research question with the data collected (p. 1445). Lack of proper management of data could lead to such an unfortunate situation. Miles and Huberman (1994) pointed out that good management of data leads to the successful analysis of such data because data management and analysis go hand in hand (p. 45).

Miles and Huberman (1994) also stated that good data management includes all the mechanisms put in place to ensure easy storage and retrieval of data (p. 45). Among the mechanisms that facilitate good data management are formatting, cross-referral, indexing, abstracting and pagination (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Coding, which Miles and Huberman grouped under indexing, will be used. Coding is described as "the process by which responses are classified into meaningful categories" (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 2008, p. 305).

Consequently, information and data collected from the interviews were grouped according to categories and similarities. These included categories such as proponents and oppositions to the face veil ban in France, the burqa as a required practice in Islam, and the burqa not a required practice in Islam. Other categories included negative, neutral and positive reactions to the burqa ban in France, French society as an extension of Western civilization, the burqa ban as a manifestation of the conflict between Islamic and Western civilizations. Other important categories used in the coding process included the burqa ban as a precursor to more acts of Islamic terrorism, and the burqa ban have no effect on Islamic terrorism. The study's research question laid the foundation for the formulation of these categories.

Data Analysis

The data in a qualitative research are usually in what Carter and Little (2007) described as a "textual form" (p. 316). This means that the data are presented in words and not in numbers and statistical/mathematical symbols. Fossey et al. (2002) described data analysis as the evaluation and the combination of various pieces of information so as to understand or explain what is being studied (p. 728).

Using the responses from the research participants, I evaluated whether there is a correlation between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. Relational studies check for the existence of "relationships between two or more variables" (BCPC, 2013, para. 5). The study's independent variable is the burqa ban in France while the dependable variable is Islamic terrorism. This study was designed to

evaluate whether the burqa ban in France will contribute or lead to more acts of Islamic terrorism against France and other Western countries.

Consequently, the analysis of the data involved a careful examination of the patterns that were made evident during the coding process. These patterns were carefully studied and interpreted in order to understand the meaning behind the responses gathered. It is also pertinent to point out that the major part of this process was manually done, without the help of any computer software. However, a little part of the coding was done with the assistance of the Australian developed Nvivo which is usually used in the analysis of data in a qualitative research. I would like to stress that the use of the Nvivo software was really minimal because most aspects of the data analysis process were manually done.

<center>**Reliability and Validity**</center>

Drawing conclusions or making assertions concerning an issue that people have different opinions about could be a difficult task. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) stressed the importance of validity and reliability in every research study by stating that the actual worth of every scientific research hinges on how credible the researcher's findings could be (p. 31). Moss (1994) attempted to make a distinction between validity and reliability. Moss examined the truthfulness of the expression "without reliability, there is no validity" (p. 6).

Moss (1994) made reference to the views expressed by the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, and authors such as Crocker and Algina (1980), and Cronback (1990). According to Moss, they all agreed that reliability is somewhat

needed to establish the validity of any study or finding (p. 6). It has been previously observed that Muslims have different opinions concerning what the Quran and the Islamic religion teach about the practice of veiling by Muslim women. With these in mind, certain measures were taken which ensured that the study's findings, conclusions and the resultant assertions are reliable and valid.

Reliability refers to the extent that different researchers on the same topic of study get the same findings (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). Reliability is achieved if subsequent identical studies come to the same conclusions with an earlier study, especially if the studies were carried out using the same procedures like the previous one (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). However, establishing reliability in an ethnographic study could be difficult because circumstances can make human behavior to change (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). This assertion is consistent with the views expressed by Trochim and Donnelly (2008). Reliability, according to Trochim and Donnelly, is the consistency of providing identical results repeatedly when the basic facts of what is being studied supposedly remain the same (pp. 80-82).

The foregoing reflects the views by Trochim and Donnelly (2008) on how difficult reliability can be when it comes to studies involving human behavior. For example, so many factors could contribute to why a moderate Muslim could view burqa ban in France as an attack against Islam by a Western nation. Factors such as French involvement in the wars in Afghanistan, Mali, and other parts of the Islamic world could have an impact on Muslims and influence their behavior or reaction to the ban.

Additionally, the seemingly hostile relations between parts of the Islamic world and the West also have a role to play. The Israeli/Palestine crisis is also another factor. When these factors are no longer present, the views that Muslims have about the burqa ban in France could shift. This is human behavior which can change at any time depending on the circumstances at a particular point in time. Cultures can also change or evolve. All these make the concept of reliability in ethnography a difficult thing to realize. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) rightly concluded that the fluid nature of human behavior makes it almost impossible for such studies to have the same results (p. 35).

Concerning validity, LeCompte and Goetz (1982) observed that the more a research finding conforms exactly to the truth, the more valid it becomes (p. 32). For a study's validity to be affirmed, it is necessary to find out the degree to which the findings mirror reality and verifiability (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). All through this research process, I recognized the fact that adherents of the same religion could have different views concerning certain practices within their religion. Christianity and Islam are among such religions. In the literature review of this study, it was revealed that there are arguments which suggested that Muslims have different opinions about veiling in Islam.

Consequently, their views about the implications of the burqa ban in France on acts of Islamic terrorism are bound to be different. This potentially could create validity problems. This is what Maxwell (2005) described as "validity threat" (p. 106). Maxwell observed that validity threat arises when a study's conclusions or assertions are refuted by another study which has a different conclusion on the same topic (p. 106). This

explains why I adopted measures that helped increase the study's validity. The measures adopted are enumerated below.

Managing Threats to Validity

It has been previously observed that whether the practice of veiling is a required practice in Islam is debatable. This was why I made every effort possible to ensure that this study's conclusions did not face any significant validity threat. One measure which I adopted was triangulation. Maxwell (2005) stated that triangulation in research studies involves the use of various techniques and different/multiple sources in the gathering of data for the study (p. 93). Triangulation decreases the chances of one's research conclusions manifesting some kind of conspiracy by different authors to ensure that their studies arrive at the same results (Maxwell, 2005).

The foregoing assertion by Maxwell (2005) is consistent with the assertions made by Patton (2002) on the need for researchers to use triangulation in their studies. When various techniques and different sources are used, it helps to ensure validity when the same method is used on another sample from the same population (Patton, 2002). Consequently, the validity of a study is boosted when a researcher employs various techniques and different sources in collecting data and the results remain the same.

Data for the study were collected from various locations and sources. In addition, I ensured that the research participants came from the different backgrounds and denominations in Islam. I also made sure that the research participants had different educational and social backgrounds, and also from different countries. Furthermore, I also ensured that the study location was not restricted to one place. The study location

included locations in the United States and in Nigeria. This is because, as previously stated, Muslims have different or divergent opinions about the relationship between Western and Islamic civilizations. I collected data from different locations and from different sources in different countries so as to help increase the validity of the study's conclusions. Cox and Hassard (2005) described this as "data triangulation" (p. 110).

Protecting the Research Participants

I was committed to ensuring that no research participant of this study suffered any kind of negative consequences on account of his or her participation in this study. Consequently, the anonymity of the research participants was maintained in this study. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) described anonymity as a situation where a researcher, under instruction or after a request from a research participant, does not link together the participant and the information he or she gives (p. 78). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias strongly encouraged researchers to protect their research participants by ensuring that their anonymity and confidentiality are maintained if they request for any or both of them (p. 78).

I took all necessary measures to avoid what Kaiser (2009) described as "confidentiality breaches via deductive disclosure" (p. 1632). Kaiser described this as a situation whereby research participants' identity can be obtained through certain descriptions given by the researcher in the study (p. 1632). Evidently, the identity of a participant can be compromised if he or she is traced using the characteristics given in the study by the researcher. I ensured that such a breach did not occur in this study. It is

important for researchers to uphold the "convention of confidentiality" because this ensures that research participants do not suffer any harm (Kaiser, 2009, p. 1634).

I heeded this advice by using numbers for the participants instead of their real names. All the pertinent information about the research participants was changed. Additionally, the precise venues of the interviews were shared only with the participants, and were not mentioned in the study. All recordings and all field notes taken during the data collection phase were locked in a bank vault. Also, to abide by the Walden University research policy, all the recordings, notes, and manuscripts will be in a safe box for five years. After the above-mentioned number of years, they would be completely destroyed.

One interesting aspect of this study was that it focused on Islamic terrorism, while I am a Christian from the Roman Catholic faith. The mention of Roman Catholic is quite significant because France is a country that is largely made up of Roman Catholics. The fact that I am Roman Catholic, and I am writing about the burqa ban in France and Islamic terrorism could have presented serious ethical challenges for this study. These challenges could be in the form of unintended bias and my inability to conduct an objective and an impartial or unbiased research study on this topic.

Additionally, it could be difficult for a researcher who professes a religion that is different from the religion being studied not to allow his judgment to be influenced by his or her own religious affiliations. However, all these ethical issues enumerated above were well taken care of during the writing of this dissertation. Most importantly, for the research participants who requests for it, I provided detailed information about my

background, the purpose of the study, and especially my religious background. No information was withheld.

Summary

The methodology and the research design for this dissertation were presented in this chapter. In addition, reasons were also given why this study was made an ethnographic qualitative research study. Some writers and researchers may argue that other qualitative approaches could also be appropriate for this study. However, the choice of ethnography was based on the basic characteristics of an ethnographic research which reflected to a great extent the contents of this dissertation. This chapter also examined the target population of this study and the criteria that will be used to make such a determination.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter reported the results and findings of this study, which explored how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. Consequently, this study was designed to get the perspectives of the research participants on whether or not the law in France banning the burqa would have any implications on Islamic terrorism. The responses of the research participants helped to understand whether the burqa ban in France could potentially contribute to any rise in Islamic terrorism. It is pertinent to point out that the wordings of the legislation did not specifically mention Muslims, Islam or the burqa. As observed by Kunz (2012) the legislation just stated that it is forbidden for anyone in France to put on in public any kind of clothing which hides or covers the face of the individual (p. 79).

Howard (2012) observed the burqa ban law and a similar one in Belgium impose a general ban on "all face-covering" and therefore do not specifically mention the Islamic face-veil (p. 148). However, she argued that the laws target Muslim women who wear the burqa (p. 148). She gave a reason for this assertion. Most debates and arguments within the government and the media about the law have consistently focused on the burqa and most other forms of Islamic face-coverings for women (Howard, 2012). The narrative has been on how the burqa violates women's rights and also symbolizes the unfair treatment meted out to women (Howard, 2012).

Spohn (2013) is another scholar who also opined that the French Act No. 2010-1192 of 11 October 2010 targets Muslims in France and the Islamic face-covering (the burqa). Spohn based her assertions on the statements credited to former President Nicolas

Sarkozy of France, as published in the *Le Monde* newspaper. Spohn stated that *Le Monde* newspaper reported that Sarkozy declared in front of the French Parliament in 2009 that the burqa will not be accepted in France (p. 146). Spohn further observed that the newspaper reported that Sarkozy added that the burqa is incompatible with French ideals on respect for womanhood (p. 146).

However, in as much as the authors mentioned above argued that the law targets Muslims in France, there have not been many discussions on whether the law could potentially contribute to a rise in Islamic terrorism. Consequently, my primary objective for undertaking this study was to explore and understand whether or not this law could contribute or lead to an increase in acts of Islamic terrorism. I also intend to make my own academic contributions to the subject of the French burqa ban and its implications on Islamic terrorism.

The world is facing serious problems created by Islamist terrorists in Nigeria, Pakistan, Kenya, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Iraq. In addition, the United States, Britain, France, Spain and other European countries have also been targeted by Islamist terrorists. Russia, a non-Western country, has not been spared. The world is now witnessing the emergence of an organization called the Islamic State (ISIS) which now poses even greater threat than Al Qaeda. The reason why the Islamic State poses more threat than Al Qaeda is because of its finances and the quantity of arms it has stockpiled. Terril (2014) stated that the Islamic State has accumulated enormous wealth through its illegal dealings on petroleum products (p. 17). Terril also observed that the Islamic State has also stockpiled large quantities of weapons that are both American and Russian made (p. 18).

These weapons were captured by the organization when their fighters defeated the Iraqi and Syrian militaries in some of the battles they fought with these armies (p. 18). These underscore the relevance of this study at this point in time.

<p style="text-align:center;">**The Study's Research Question**</p>

The research question was the following: Do Muslims report a correlation between the French law which bans the burqa and increased acts of Islamic terrorism?

<p style="text-align:center;">**Selection of Research Participants and Description of Sample**</p>

As earlier observed in Chapter 3 of this study, I adopted the purposeful sampling technique. Consequently, selection of participants for the study was guided by my desire to ensure that those selected for the study were those who would provide the information or data needed for the study. This study originally had 20 research participants who were all non-French Muslims. However, after data collection, I further added three more participants who were French Muslims. I deemed it important to add these additional Muslims living in France because the burqa ban was specifically imposed in France. The 23 research participants were selected from a pool of 33 people that were contacted. Out of the 10 who did not participate, two were not very fluent in English, and four (French Muslims) declined to participate citing the tense situation in France caused by the 2015 Charlie Hebdo shootings in Paris, France. The remaining four, also French Muslims, did not respond to my request.

The 23 research participants that took part in this study had varying levels of educational and business background. For example, one of the female participants I have referred to as Participant 2 graduated from the International University of Africa,

Khartoum in the Sudan with a degree in Islamic Sharia Law. Participant 14 came from the Muslim Community Center in Abuja, Nigeria while Participant 15 came from the College of Arabic and Islamic Studies also in Abuja, Nigeria. Participants 13 and 16 came from the Institute of Islamic Education also in Abuja, Nigeria. The other participants were drawn from France. Their participation was very vital for the study.

I have my reason for the inclusion of Muslims from different parts of the world for this study. This study explored how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. I recognized that Islamic terrorism has evolved into a global phenomenon that now involves Islamic extremists from different parts of the world. This is more so since the emergence of the Islamic terrorist organization called the Islamic State. With this evolution, Muslim extremists and would- be terrorists now move from one geographical location to another in order to join Islamic terrorist organizations or carry out terrorist attacks. Some Muslim extremists and/or fundamentalists in different locations have also pledged allegiance to Islamic terrorist organizations that are located in places thousands of miles away from them. Boko Haram, an Islamic terrorist organization based in Nigeria, has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, which is based in Iraq and Syria.

Furthermore, Taylor (2015) of *The Washington Times* reported that Chinese officials are now worried about ethnic Chinese Uighurs who return home from fighting for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (para. 1). This report is a clear indication that Chinese Uighurs are also traveling to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State. Evidently, a Muslim in Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, China, and Britain who strongly opposes the burqa ban

in France could become radicalized. He or she could also decide to go to France or any other Western country to carry out a terrorist attack. This would-be terrorist could also decide to travel to Syria or Iraq to join the Islamic state if he or she feels strongly that members of the Muslim ummah in France are being mistreated in a Western country.

Cordall (2014/2015) wrote about a young Tunisian man, Walid Sabahi, who left his home in Sejenene in Tunisia, Africa to join the Islamic state in Iraq (p. 70). Cordall stated that Walid "blew himself up in a suicide attack 2,500 miles away from Sejenene, in the Iraqi city of Mosul" (p. 70). Cordall made sure to lay emphasis on the distance between Walid's home in Sejenene, Tunisia and where he carried out his attack in Iraq. The distance is 2,500 miles. Cordall wrote, "Walid strapped explosives to himself and traveled to a city in a country where he'd never been before to blow himself up" (p. 71).

Cordall (2014/2015) also stated that the Ministry of the Interior in Tunisia has a startling statistic that as many as 3,000 Tunisians have joined the Islamic State (p. 71). Cordall also pointed out that five of the seven terrorists who blew themselves up during the 2004 Madrid train bombings in Spain were from Morocco in Africa (p. 75). Dewast and Ferran (2015) in an *ABC News* online report stated that recently in March 2015, three British teenagers left Britain and went to Syria to join the Islamic State (para. 2).

Furthermore, Smith-Spark, Fantz, and Shoichet (2015) in a *CNN* online news report stated that one of the most notorious figures of the Islamic State, Mohammed Emwazi (Jihadi John), grew up in London (para. 3). Janbek and Williams (2014) made reference to Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab in their article on how the Internet facilitated the radicalization of Muslims from different parts of the world (p. 300). Janbek and

Williams observed that Abdulmutallab was born and raised in Nigeria but he attempted in 2009 to detonate a bomb aboard an American airliner headed to Michigan in the United States (p. 300).

The aforementioned are all indications of how Islamic terrorism has become a global phenomenon. It also shows how Muslim extremists are being united by one common ideology. It further indicates that any incident that affects Muslims or Islam in any part of the world can radicalize Muslims in any part of the world. As Cordall (2014/2015) observed, the common unifying factor of the global jihadi movement is the perceived incompatibility between Islam and the West and the perceived aggression of the West towards Islam and Muslims (p. 75). A study by Guney (2010) also discovered that many younger Muslims are now more and more considering themselves as members of a perceived worldwide fraternity of Muslims (p. 169).

Guney (2010) further observed that what unites these Muslims is their belief that fellow Muslims in other parts of the world are being persecuted by non-Muslims, particularly in Western countries (p. 172). Therefore, the burqa ban in France could well be perceived by Muslims all over the world as part of the Western aggression towards Islam. This perception could have implications on global Islamic terrorism. Because Islamic extremists and/or terrorists can come from any part of the world, I saw the need to interview Muslims from different parts of the world, and not just Muslims in France.

Study Findings

Data were collected from multiple data sources which involved twenty research participants. There were four face-to-face and 19 telephonic interviews. The majority of

the telephonic interviews were conducted for the French Muslims and other research participants who live far away or live in a different country from me. In addition, many of the research participants felt more comfortable with telephonic interviews. Most especially, the French Muslims stressed the need for their anonymity to be maintained because of the recent Charlie Hebdo shootings in Paris, France. The duration for both the telephonic and face-to-face interviews was between 40 to 60 minutes. The differences in the duration of the interviews were because of the varying degrees of the participants' knowledge and experience on the topic being studied.

Before the commencement of each interview, I briefed each participant about the researcher's background, the purpose and objective of dissertation. He also gave details about informed consent. I also ensured that each participant was made aware of the voluntary nature of their participation. In addition, each participant was made to understand that they can terminate their participation in the study at any time if they wish to do so. Informed consent was subsequently obtained before each interview took place. Not all the participants were comfortable with recording of the interviews. In fact, the majority of the participants opted for the interviews not to be recorded. Only a few accepted for the interviews to be recorded. Consequently, field notes were taken for the participants who had reservations about the recording of the interviews.

The research question focused on exploring how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. However, the views of the research participants were also sought on some of the arguments put forward by some French government officials on why the burqa is banned

in France. Consequently, before asking the participants about the implications of the burqa ban on acts of Islamic terrorism, they were asked about their opinions on whether the burqa reflects a subordinate status or oppression of women in the Muslim world, the gender equality argument, and what the Koran teaches about the burqa, among other questions.

Muslims in France

Most of the responses from both the French and non-French Muslim participants were identical. However, there were some findings and data from Muslims in France which I consider very important. A female French Muslim participant (participant 21) admitted that the burqa ban forced her to stop wearing the burqa. She described this as very discriminatory. She also stated that even in her work place, it was practically impossible to wear the burqa because she could lose her job if she did so. Nevertheless, she also admitted that the burqa ban is not really a big issue in France because not many French Muslim women actually wear the burqa. She stated that what is common among French Muslims is the hijab. The hijab does not include covering the face with a veil. Her views are also consistent with the views expressed by another French Muslim participant (participant 23).

Another French Muslim participant (Participant 22) added that many French Muslims are already, in his words, "westernized," particularly those who were actually born in France. Most of them do not wear the burqa. He observed that the burqa is mostly common among immigrants from North Africa, and that they are usually found in poorer neighborhoods. He stated that their number and the number of women who wear the

burqa are too small to make any considerable impact on the law. According to him, the burqa ban has come to stay. He also added that on a general note, French Muslims are not really worried about the burqa ban and that no home grown terrorist from France would likely take part in any terrorist attack because of the burqa ban.

Participant 22 also made references to the Charlie Hebdo attacks and other attacks which the perpetrators never made mention of the burqa ban. For example, the Charlie Hebdo attackers were reacting to how the magazine made caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. He was also quick to add that he did not support the action of the attackers. He also stressed that the burqa ban was not the first time that the French Government has placed a ban on a symbol of religion.

Participants' Reaction to the Expression *Islamic Terrorism*

I would like to point out that some of the research participants frowned at the expression *Islamic terrorism.* They expressed displeasure with the manner in which, according to them, many in the West have coined the expression which have basically linked terrorism with the Islamic religion. As part of my effort to learn from the participants, I let those who had issues with the expression to air their views. One of the female participants who I refer to as Participant 2 stated categorically that "there is nothing like Islamic terrorism."

According to Participant 2, Muslims who take part or engage in acts of violence, militancy, and terrorism "are not guided by the Islamic religion." She further stated that Muslims who engage in such acts only do so because of ignorance, poverty, selfish interests, and other reasons which do not come from Islam. Additionally, Participant 12

also condemned Muslims who take part in acts of terrorism. He stated that the Koran never encourages any Muslim to take part in such acts. He also observed that the Koran condemns the taking of human life. Furthermore, Participant 14 stated that violence is forbidden in Islam, and that the Koran views the death of an innocent soul as the "death of mankind."

The Burqa and the Status of Women in Islam

The opinion that wearing the burqa reflects a subordinate status for and the oppression of women in Islam may have been from what happened in Afghanistan during the Taliban regime. As observed by Rantanen (2005), the images of burqa wearing women in Afghanistan during the Taliban regime were used in the media to showcase the oppression of women in that country (p. 330). These images from Afghanistan are the major reasons why many feminists and some French Government officials consider wearing the burqa as "particularly oppressive" to women (Howard, 2012, p. 148).

Consequently, the research participants, particularly the female participants, were asked whether wearing the burqa reflects a subordinate status or an oppression of women in Islam by their male counterparts. All 23 participants disagreed with the notion or the argument that wearing the burqa reflects a subordinate status for women or the oppression of women in Islam by their male counterparts. Additionally, all the respondents stated that wearing the burqa and other Islamic dressing for women actually elevates the status of the woman who wears it.

Participants 1 and 14 stated that the burqa gives women moral respect, and is also meant to protect the dignity of women. The respondents stated that the burqa helps to

safeguard women's modesty and dignity. Additionally, Participants 2 and 4 who are among the female participants stated that wearing the burqa does not make them feel oppressed by their male counterparts. Instead, as they further stated, the burqa is a dressing which they use to identify themselves as Muslims. Another female participant, Participant 11, observed that the Koran does not even allow women to be oppressed or subjugated.

Participant 11 added that what actually lowers the status of women is when half-naked women or women who are not fully dressed are exploited and used to attract men for business purposes. Participant 13 stated that instead of reflecting oppression for women, the burqa is a reflection of how Muslims value and consider their women as being precious, and therefore be protected. In the words of Participant 13, "It is an honor for Allah to the women because women are considered precious and, therefore should be protected from exploitation by men."

Does Wearing the Burqa Reflect the Oppression of Women in Islam?

The French Muslims (Participants 21, 22, and 23) stated that it is unlikely for any French Muslim to be forced to wear the burqa. They stated that women have freedom in France. A French Muslim participant (participant 21) stated that generally, most French Muslims who wear the burqa in France do so out of choice. She stated that she used to wear the burqa on few occasions before the ban came into place. She stated that on the few occasions she wore the burqa, she was never forced by any male member of her family to wear the burqa. She said she wore it just for fun and not explicitly to demonstrate her piety. She added that the scenarios in places like Afghanistan may reflect

oppression of woman; however such things cannot be replicated in France. Hence, there was no need for the law because the French Muslims who wear the burqa do so by choice.

Nevertheless, another female participant, Participant 10, made several points which are very important. She stated that determining whether wearing the burqa reflects the oppression of women or not depends on what she described as the "circumstances" under which the woman wears it. She stated that if a woman chooses to wear the burqa, it does not portray oppression or a lower status for women in the society. Participant 10 then added that "in systems where women are forced to wear the burqa, then that reflects oppression and a subordinate status for women." When I asked her about the situation in France, she admitted that a situation where male Muslims could force their females to wear the burqa in a country such as France may not exist. This, she further stated, could make the arguments of the French Government somewhat untenable. She summed up by saying that the entire concept of the burqa and the hijab in Islam is to ensure that women show or exhibit modesty in dressing.

Another female participant, Participant 9 from Indonesia, made comments which are consistent with the comments made by Participant 10. Participant 9 categorically stated that it is wrong to force a woman to wear the burqa. This is because, according to her, wearing the burqa is more of a cultural thing for Muslims in the Arab world. She, however, observed that a woman who wears the burqa gets respect from men, and that men would not have any negative or amorous thoughts for the woman. This, according to Participant 9, actually elevates the woman.

Is the Burqa Compulsory in Islam?

The participants were then asked whether it is compulsory or required in Islam for Muslim women to wear the burqa. All 23 participants, including the Muslim participants from France responded that wearing the burqa is not compulsory or mandatory for Muslim women. Participant 10 stated that wearing the burqa is more of Arabian culture than a requirement in Islam. She added that wearing the burqa is a culture in Arabia meant to protect women. This culture, according to Participant 10 started because of an incident where the reputation of one of Prophet Mohammed's wives was ruined. According to Participant 10, one of the Prophet's wives was not decently dressed on one occasion when she came back with a male camel tenderer. This soiled her reputation. After the incident, it then became more of a cultural thing for women in Arabia to start wearing the burqa and the hijab.

These views are consistent with the views expressed by Participant 9 who is also one of female participants and from Indonesia. She observed that the burqa is not common in Indonesia which is the largest Muslim nation in the world. She said that wearing the burqa is not compulsory, and that it is more of the culture of Arabs than an Islamic requirement. Furthermore, another participant (Participant 6) stated that wearing the burqa, though mentioned in the Koran, "is not an Islamic religious obligation for Muslim women." Instead, as he further added, some of the most important and mandatory religious obligations for all Muslims are "praying five times a day, fasting for 30 days during the month of Ramadan, giving alms to the poor, and visiting Mecca at least once in a Muslim's lifetime." Nevertheless, Participant 6 was quick to add that even though

wearing the burqa is not mandatory in Islam, it is an important aspect of the Islamic religion.

Furthermore, another participant (Participant 12) also stated that wearing the burqa is not typically an Islamic injunction. According to him, wearing the burqa was the practice of Prophet Mohammed's wives. This was then adopted by women in Arabia. However, Participant 12 stated categorically that "any Muslim woman who wears the burqa will be abundantly rewarded by Allah." Additionally, another participant (Participant 14) also stated that wearing the burqa by Muslim women, though not mandatory in Islam, helps to raise the "spiritual and material status of Muslim women." The participants were basically of the opinion that wearing the burqa is a practice that increases the dignity of the woman. They all consider this very important for Muslim women to be decently dressed.

A Muslim participant who lives in France (Participant 23) stated that it was obvious that the French Government is quite aware that the burqa is not a universally accepted practice among all Muslims. She further stated that reactions and the few cases of demonstrations against the burqa ban did not generate overwhelming support from Muslims living in France. This is because, as she stated, not many Muslims in France wear the burqa. She also added that she does not wear the burqa, and that she does not feel offended by the ban because the burqa is not compulsory in Islam.

What Does the Koran Say or Teach about the Burqa?

The participants' responses on whether the burqa is compulsory revealed a theme which I picked. Their responses suggested that there are different views and opinions

when it comes to the origin of the burqa and also whether it is compulsory or not in Islam. Wagner, Sen, Permanadeli, and Howarth (2012) rightly observed that Muslim women wear the burqa (veil) for different reasons (p. 523). Wagner et al. further stated that the reasons why Muslim women wear the burqa may not necessarily be because wearing the burqa is a requirement in Islam (p. 523). In view of this, and in order for me to learn from the research participants, the interviewees were asked to specifically state what the Koran says or teaches about wearing the burqa by Muslim women.

One common expression "lower their gaze" emerged from the responses given by the majority of the participants when they were asked what the Koran says or teaches about the burqa. According to the respondents, the Koran says that Muslim women should always "lower their gaze." Some respondents made reference to the Koran Chapter 23 and 24, while others made reference to Chapter 24 verse 31. One important revelation from the interviews conducted is that there is no agreed upon interpretation on whether to "lower their gaze" includes wearing the burqa. For example, one of the female participants (Participant 2) said that the Koran Chapter 24 verse 31 states that Muslim women should "lower their gaze and guard their chastity." Participant 2 also added that the Koran teaches Muslim women to not display their charm except what is apparent. Basically, as she further explained, women should cover their bodies except those parts that are apparent.

I asked Participant 2 what she meant by body parts that are apparent. She stated that there are two schools of thought on the actual interpretation of what the apparent body parts are and whether covering the face with a burqa is included. For Ibn Abbas,

who she described as a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, they are the face and the hands. The other school of thought, according to Participant 2, is the Hanbali School of thought which believes Muslim women should also cover their faces and hands. She, however, stated that there is no agreed consensus on that.

Another female participant, Participant 4 also stated that the Koran teaches Muslim women not to display what is called the *zeenah*. The *zeenah*, according to her, means a woman's legs, feet, neck, ornaments, and other features that can attract the attention of men. However, she stopped short of saying categorically whether the face should be covered by the burqa or not. Participant 13 also stated that the Koran teaches who she described as the *muminat* to always lower their gaze or glances in public. I asked Participant 13 what he meant by the *muminat*. He responded "women who are believers." Participant 14 was more specific. According to Participant 14, the Koran only prescribed wearing the hijab and not the burqa. The hijab does not include covering of the face. Nevertheless, Participant 14 added that though the burqa is not prescribed by the Koran, it is highly recommended by Muslim scholars as part of the characteristics of the Islamic religion.

Another word which emerged from the interviews, and which may point to the absence of the burqa in the Koran is the word *jilbab*. The word was used by Participants 8 and 16. Participant 8 stated that the Koran Chapter 24 verse 31 instructs Muslim women to lower their gaze and "draw their *jilbab* over their bosom." Participant 8 also stated that the Koran, with this injunction about the *jilbab*, prescribes that Muslim women should cover themselves from head to toe. Nevertheless, Participant 8 pointed out that this does

not include total covering of the face with a burqa. He, however, stated that though the burqa is not explicitly mentioned in the Koran, it is highly encouraged for women to wear it. Participant 16 went further to explain what the Koran means by the word *jilbab*. He explained that the *jilbab* is the clothing from chest to down and to the feet while the *khimar* is from head to chest. He did not include the face-covering (the burqa) in his descriptions and explanations on what the Koran says about the *jilbab* and the *khimar*.

What I might describe as another detailed explanation about what the Koran prescribes or teaches about the burqa or not was given by Participant 3. In responding to the question about what the Koran teaches about the burqa, Participant 3 made reference to the Koran chapters 24 and 33. These two chapters, according to him, enjoins/commands Muslim women to cover up themselves with their veil. He also mentioned the *jilbab* and stated that women should draw the veil over their body except what is necessary. He, however, observed that there are two positions on how the covering should be done. According to Participant 3 the first says that Muslim women should cover their bodies except their eyes and noses. The second calls on Muslim women to cover everything including the face but have some opening for the eyes so that the woman can see. This is the burqa.

Basically, as Participant 3 further explained, the burqa is not specifically mentioned in the Koran but rather was introduced by Muslim scholars who had their own interpretations of how Muslim women should cover themselves. Participant 3 further added that one of the Muslim scholars who championed this view about the burqa was Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani, an Albanian scholar who resided in Syria. Participant

3 further stated that a resolution was reached by Muslim scholars who agreed and recommended that Muslim women, at the minimum, should cover their bodies leaving only their faces and palms, and at the maximum, should cover everything. He added that with this resolution, it is quite evident that wearing the burqa is not a universally accepted practice among Muslims. Participant 3 also added that this is a clear indication that wearing the burqa is not mandatory in Islam.

Another insightful explanation was given by Participant 7. He observed that there are two schools of thought which have given different interpretations on what actually the Koran teaches about the face-veil (the burqa). The first school of thought, according to Participant 7, argues that the burqa and the hijab means that the woman's clothing should cover her entire body including the face. The second school of thought, he further stated, advocates that a woman's face should be uncovered. He also stated that the chapter in the Koran which talks about the face veil is called the "Chapter of Light." He described the burqa and the hijab as a mentality and that the actual clothing is called the niqab.

Does the French Burqa ban Undermine Islam?

I conducted the interviews in such a way that questions asked would navigate and introduce the next question. After asking study participants what the Koran teaches about the burqa, and whether the burqa is mandatory in Islam, I introduced the next question. This question focused on whether the burqa ban in France undermines and/or challenges the Islamic religion. Out of the 23 study participants, only 2 (Participants 2 and 10) expressed the opinion that the law in France which bans the burqa does not undermine or challenge Islam.

Participant 2 observed that the burqa ban in France does not undermine Islam and its beliefs. Rather, as she further observed, it only frustrates those Muslim women who chose to wear the burqa. She stated that she has this view because wearing the burqa is not really an agreed upon practice in Islam, that's why its ban does not really undermine Islam. She also added that the burqa is, nevertheless, a symbol of Islam. Participant 10 stated that the burqa ban does not undermine Islam as a religion. Rather, according to her, the burqa ban only undermines the personal values of those Muslims who choose to wear it. This, according to her, is because wearing the burqa is not a universally accepted Islamic value or practice. She used Christianity to buttress her argument. As she observed, a law could undermine Anglican or Protestant church values but may not necessarily undermine Roman Catholic values. Consequently, that does not undermine the entire Christianity as a religion.

The other 21 participants gave reasons why they feel the burqa ban in France undermines Islam even though wearing the burqa is not a universally accepted practice among all Muslims. For example Participant 4 gave her reason why she opines that the burqa ban in France undermines and challenges Islamic beliefs and traditions. This, according to her, is because the burqa is one of the symbols or dressing code for some Muslim women. Participant 7 also observed that the French burqa ban undermines and challenges Islamic beliefs and traditions. This, according to him, is because wearing the burqa by Muslim women is "a central component of the Islamic religion." Participant 7 also added that Prophet Muhammad asked all his wives and daughters to be veiled.

Consequently, as he finally concluded, the banning of the burqa by the French government actually undermines Islam.

Participant 8 sounded more vocal when he gave his reason for saying that the burqa ban undermines Islam. He stated that the law is used to project French values and the concept of *laicite* (secularism) as being supposedly superior to Islamic values. Participant 13 also stated that the burqa ban in France undermines Islam. The reasons he gave for this assertion are consistent with the reasons given by Participant 8. According to Participant 13, the burqa ban projects Western values and undermines Islamic values because the hijab and the burqa are symbols of Islamic civilization. Participant 13 also added that the French Government should have had discussions with the Muslim community in France before placing a ban on the burqa.

The French Muslim participants (Participants 21, 22, and 23) all agreed that the burqa ban does challenge or undermine Islam. However, participant 21 stated that the reason for her response is because some Muslims wear the burqa, and that the burqa is associated with Islam even though it is not a universally accepted practice among Muslims. Participant 21 also added that her response does not mean that she feels aggrieved by the burqa ban, even though she used to occasionally wear it. The other French Muslim participants (22 and 23) did not give too much explanation other than their responses stemmed from the fact that the burqa is associated with the Islamic civilization. Participant 23 stated that she does not wear the burqa but that she also recognizes it as a practice in Islam.

The French Burqa Ban and Islamic Terrorism

As earlier stated, this study answers research question that focused on whether any correlation exists or could potentially exist between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. After I asked the study participants all the other questions, he then introduced the question which will directly answer the study's research question. The participants were asked if the burqa ban in France could potentially result in increased acts of Islamic terrorism as a reaction by Muslims. Interestingly, only Participant 1 stated categorically that the ban could lead to increased acts of terrorism. Participant 2 did not answer the question. Instead, she stated that there is nothing like Islamic terrorism. According to her, there is no terrorism in Islam because "Islam does not support terrorism." Participant 2 further added that Muslims who take part in acts of terrorism are not guided by the Islamic religion, rather by ignorance, poverty, and other factors which do not come from the Islamic religion.

The remaining 21 participants, whom I consider the majority, stated that there is no correlation that exists or could exist between the burqa ban and acts of Islamic terrorism. I asked them to give their reasons why they opined that the burqa ban would have no effect on Islamic terrorism. The reasons they gave were varied and very educative. For example Participant 3 stated that the burqa ban may not really have an effect or direct implications on Islamic terrorism. According to him, Islamic terrorism is not likely to happen because of the burqa ban in France. His reason for having this opinion is because, as he stated, he considers the burqa ban in France as an "ideological clash or an ideological warfare" between a Western country and its Muslim population.

He observed that Muslims have been known to react violently only to military aggressions or military warfare against them, and not to ideological clashes such as the burqa ban.

Hence, as Participant 3 further opined, Islamic terrorism would not likely be an outcome or an implication of the burqa ban in France. Participant 3 used Nigeria's Boko Haram as an example. He observed that Boko Haram resorted to militancy, violence, and terrorism only after the Nigerian security forces attacked and killed many Boko Haram members including killing their former leader and founder, Muhammad Yusuf. Participant 3 then concluded that instead of militancy and terrorism, what could happen as a reaction to the burqa ban could be that Muslim intellectuals may take the French Government to court, or seek other legal non-violent means to confront the French Government. He observed that the major case of violence in France by Muslims on account of the burqa ban took place only after a confrontation between the French Police and a Muslim man when the French Police attempted to arrest the man's wife for wearing the burqa.

Participant 5 also made observations that are consistent with the views of Participant 3. Participant 5 admitted that the burqa ban could make some Muslims angry. According to her, Muslims could stand up and fight for their rights. However, she stated that this fight for their rights may not necessarily be in the form of violence. She stated that some Muslims' reaction to the burqa ban could be in the form of legal challenges to the ban. She does not believe that the burqa ban would be among the strong reasons for acts of terrorism by Islamic extremists and terrorist organizations. Participant 6 made an

observation that is close to that of Participant 5. Participant 6 observed that Islamic

terrorist organizations are not bothered about the burqa ban in France. He argued that

Islamic terrorist organizations may consider the burqa ban as a domestic issue in France

which may not have any impact on the wider Muslim world. He also added that some

Islamic terrorist organizations even consider Muslims in the West as pagans or non-

believers.

Consequently, in the opinion of Participant 6, Islamic terrorist organizations such

as the Islamic state may not be bothered by the burqa ban in France. In his opinion, the

burqa ban would not lead to any significant act of trans-national terrorism. What could

affect Islamic terrorism, participant 6 further added, are actions from some Western

countries such as the killing of Muslims. Another study participant (Participant 9)

observed that some Muslims engage in terrorism for other reason and may not do so just

because of the burqa ban in France.

This, according to her, is because the burqa is merely clothing. Participant 9

further stated that wearing the burqa for some Muslims is like wearing a "blouse or a

jacket." So, she feels that terrorism may not occur or rise because of the burqa ban. Two

themes which emerged from the responses given by the study participants are the

preference for dialogue and resort to legal means instead of violence and terrorism. These

ideas of a dialogue and legal means were mostly advocated by Participants 13, 14, and

19. According to participant13, reactions to the burqa ban could come in form of using

legal action to seek redress. He also stated that he does not consider the burqa ban as an

issue that could lead to violent acts such as terrorism. He used himself as example and

stated that he himself would never support terrorism as a reaction to the burqa ban or any other issue like that.

Participant 13 advocated dialogue as a means of solving issues like that. Participant 14 responded that violence is forbidden in Islam. He stated that the death of an innocent soul is not allowed in Islam, and that it is viewed as the death of mankind. He also stated that the burqa ban is "not significant an issue to cause any kind of violent protest or terrorism." He later added that the burqa ban can be challenged or addressed through other means such as intellectual gatherings and other non-violent means. The burqa ban, in his opinion, should not lead to terrorism. Participant 16 described the burqa ban as an infringement on the rights of Muslims in France. He stated that normally when people's rights are violated, there are bound to be some reactions. He stated that stopping those who want to wear the burqa or the face veil from doing so could lead to some of violence and anarchy. However, he stopped short of saying that terrorism could occur because of the burqa ban.

In addition, the French Muslims did not consider the burqa ban an issue that can cause terrorism in France. For example participants 21 and 23 who are both Muslims living in France stressed that the burqa ban is not a hugely significant issue among Muslims in France. In fact, participant 21 stated that the number of Muslim women who wear the burqa in France is so small that when the law was made, reactions to it were not very violent or, in her words, "earth shaking." She stated that demonstrations against the law were mostly an accumulation of anger at the neglect suffered by many neighborhoods with large Muslim population. They argued that no terrorist act in France

have been associated with the burqa ban. This view was also supported by another French Muslim participant (participant 23) who cited the recent Charlie Hebdo shooting as an example. Participant 23 observed that the grievances of the shooters who were all Islamic terrorists did not include the burqa ban.

Evidence of Quality

After each interview, I read out the notes taken to each study participant. The reason for this is to ensure that participants have the opportunity to check, review, and verify each note taken. Each participant was asked to point out any concerns or reservations they could have about what have been written in the transcriptions of their interviews. I forwarded the transcripts to some of the participants. The participants checked and verified what was written down as their responses. One thing I noticed about the study participants was the desire to defend Islam as a peaceful religion.

The research participants believe that Islam has been unfairly portrayed as a religion which condones violence, and that this is not true. In fact, the French Muslim participants were aware of the fact that the Charlie Hebdo shootings did portray Muslims in a negative image. However, there responses were basically aimed sending the message that the majority of Muslims in France are law abiding and would not take part in any act of violence or terrorism. Additionally, I chose to maintain the anonymity of the participants so as to protect them. This is because of the nature of the study and how sensitive discussions on Islamic terrorism have become in the world today.

Summary

At the conclusion of the interviews, the responses given by the study participants helped to shed more light on how Muslims feel about some of the issues that are involved with the burqa ban in France. Based on the data collected from the interviews, participants did not believe that wearing of the burqa by Muslim women reflects the oppression or subordinate status of women in Islam. Interestingly, the female participants also have this same opinion that wearing the burqa does not make them feel oppressed. However, I would like to point out that one female participant actually said that it could become a tool of oppression in societies where women are forced to wear the burqa. That was an important point which she also argued could not exist in a Western country such as France.

Another significant aspect of this research is that almost all the participants made it clear that wearing the burqa is not compulsory or mandatory in Islam. In fact, many of the respondents also added that the burqa is not explicitly mentioned in the Koran. What participants focused on as a requirement in Islam is the hijab which does not include face-covering (the burqa). In fact, some participants described the burqa as a dressing that is mostly associated with Arabian culture and not really an Islamic injunction. Despite these views the participants expressed, it was still evident from the responses that participants still consider the law which bans the burqa in France as a law which undermines and challenges Islam. This is because participants still consider the burqa as one of the symbols of Islam even though it is not a universally accepted practice in Islam. Therefore, placing a ban on wearing it undermines Islam.

Lastly, I did not find it surprising that participants did not consider the burqa ban in France as a significant issue that would make some Muslims or Islamic terrorist organizations to engage in more acts of terrorism. This lack of surprise is because of the earlier responses given to the questions asked before the question on the correlation between the burqa ban and terrorism. Earlier questions asked and the responses given by participants revealed that wearing the burqa is not a universally accepted practice among Muslims. Therefore, that the majority of the participants did not see any correlation or potential correlation between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of terrorism was not surprising to me. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that participants still consider the burqa ban in France as a challenge to Islamic values and a kind of conflict between a Western country and Islam. These views and other views revealed during the research investigation will be used to form part of the study's conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this chapter, I presented the study's conclusions. In addition, this chapter also contains my recommendations and proposals on the ways to ensure that tensions between some Muslims and some countries in the West are reduced. It has earlier been stated that the findings of this work would make some intellectual contributions to the subject matter of Islamic terrorism. Such knowledge would help reduce acts of terrorism perpetrated by individuals and groups who commit such acts in the name of Islam. It is pertinent for me to point out that the majority of the study participants did not consider the burqa ban in France an issue that can lead to an increase in acts of Islamic terrorism. However, some of the responses the study participants gave to the interview questions did shed more light on factors that can contribute to a rise in acts of terrorism committed by Islamic extremists.

The objective of this study was to learn and get a variety of opinions from Muslims on the issue of the burqa ban in France and Islamic terrorism. This explained why I interviewed Muslims of different backgrounds, different countries, and different views about Islam as a religion. The participant group was composed of Muslim scholars, Islamic Sharia Law experts, Islamic teachers, and a host of other Muslims from a broad range of disciplines and backgrounds. For instance, Participant 2 (one of the female participants) had a degree in Islamic Sharia Law from the International University of Africa in Khartoum, Sudan. Participant 3 was an Islamic scholar and teacher while Participants 13 and 16 were both teachers at the Institute for Islamic Education in Abuja,

Nigeria. Participant 14 was from the Muslim Community Centre in Abuja while Participant 15 was a lecturer at the College of Arabic and Islamic Studies also in Abuja, Nigeria. Participants 21, 22, and 23 were Muslims who lived in France. These are some of the examples of how the study participants reflected a broad range of Muslims. The responses the participants gave demonstrated, despite their different backgrounds, how Muslims share a common interest and concern about Islam/West relations. It also demonstrated how Muslims share a common concern about the association of violence and terrorism with Islam.

Overview

My objective for conducting this study was to answer a research question that focused on exploring how participants perceived the relationship between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. I conducted interviews during which study participants were asked questions on the burqa ban in France and other related topics. The responses given by the study participants provided the bulk of the data used for the study. I also took notice of the body language and the general tone of the participants during the face-to-face interviews. These complemented and provided additional information that I also used as part of the data for the study.

Research and Interview Questions

The study's research question was the following: Do Muslims report a correlation between the French law which bans the burqa and increased acts of Islamic terrorism?

Some of the interview questions I asked the study participants were the following:

1. The French Government had argued that wearing the face-veil (the burqa) by Muslim women lowers the status of women. Do you think that wearing the burqa by Muslim women lowers the status of women in the society?

2. Do you think the burqa ban promotes gender equality?

3. Do you think the burqa ban in France is a reflection of a conflict or clash between some countries of the West and the Islamic Religion?

4. Could such a clash encourage or create a fertile ground for Islamic extremism and terrorism to grow?

5. What does the Quran teach about the burqa or Islamic face-veil?

6. Is wearing the burqa by Muslim women compulsory in Islam?

7. Do you think the burqa ban in France undermines Islamic beliefs and traditions?

8. Could the ban trigger further acts of terrorism by Islamic extremist groups?

Research Method and Results

I had 23 study participants who were all Muslims. The participants were of different nationalities. As I earlier stated, this became necessary because Islamic terrorism has now become a global phenomenon that seems to bring together Islamic fundamentalists and/or extremists from different locations and countries. Islamic terrorism has metamorphosed into "a global insurrection, based on the core notion of an existential threat to the Islamic faith" (O'Shaughnessy & Baines, 2009, p. 228).

An important contributory factor that has made Islamic terrorism a global phenomenon is the notion of the Muslim ummah, sometimes written as *umma*. This is the

belief that Muslims all over the world belong to one global Muslim family that is not restricted or limited by geographical boundaries or location. A study by Archer (2009) found that most Muslims in Britain considered themselves as members of this worldwide family of Muslims, also called the Muslim ummah (p. 332). It was evident that Muslims in Britain recognized that, as British citizens, they were nationals of a particular geographical area (Archer, 2009). However, they also considered themselves as members of the Muslim umma whereby their identity has no geographical boundaries (Archer, 2009).

I am not dismissive of the fact that there are also divisions in the Muslim world, especially between the Shias and the Sunnis. However, when it comes to relations with non-Muslims, especially with the West, most Muslims in different countries share this belief that they belong to this Muslim umma. The assertion by Staunton (2008) supports this opinion. One of the factors which shape the Muslim umma is a shared anger that Muslims have against some Western countries (Staunton, 2008). This is because of the belief of an unjust treatment meted out to Muslims by the West (Staunton, 2008).

Therefore, an important element of the Muslim umma is the held notion among many Muslims of the existence of a not-too-cordial or friendly relation between the Islamic world and some Western countries (Thomas & Sanderson, 2011). Young British Muslims, as observed by Thomas and Sanderson (2011), view with apprehension the role that the British government played in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (p. 1038). Consequently, Muslims in Britain are now more than ever under the impression that

Muslims face persecution both at home in Britain and in foreign countries (Thomas & Sanderson, 2011)

The struggles between the Muslim umma and the West started many years ago in many countries including Egypt and Algeria (Khan, 2001). The history of Islamism reveals that the ideology that has evolved into militant Islamism started with the rejection of the domination of the West in Muslim countries (Khan, 2001). As further observed by Khan (2001), many Islamists have this belief that the West's political and cultural influence is a threat to Islam (p. 218).

Evidently, the West has had a tumultuous history with Islam and the Muslim umma, and France is a Western country. The burqa ban in France could heighten and further sustain this narrative. This is why the implications of the ban on Islamic terrorism could reverberate beyond France and have wider global outlook, as opposed to being a localized issue in France alone. This underscored the need for me to obtain views and reactions to the ban from not only Muslims in France, but also Muslims from other parts of the world.

I conducted interviews with these 23 participants. The interviews were conducted between October 2014 and March of 2015. The study participants' responses to the interview questions were categorized into coded entries. These codes greatly assisted me to identify common themes, similarities, and differences of opinions among the study participants on the burqa ban in France and Islamic terrorism. I would also like to highlight again the fact that the study participants (most of them) stated that they did not necessarily agree with the expression *Islamic terrorism.* The participants also seemed

very determined to distance Islam from violence, militancy, and terrorism. They made it clear to me that Islam is a peaceful religion and that Muslims are peaceful people. The study participants went further to condemn Muslims who use the name of Islam to engage in acts of violence and terrorism. Many of the participants stated categorically that the Koran does not encourage Muslims to take part in such acts.

The majority (22 of 23) of the responses to the study's research question revealed a general opinion that the burqa ban in France would not lead to an increase in acts of Islamic terrorism. Evidently, the study participants do not see any correlation between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. The participants do not consider the burqa ban in France as a significant issue that would result in or push Muslims into violent reactions or terrorism. The reason for this consensus, as revealed from the responses, is because wearing the burqa by Muslim women is not a universally accepted practice in Islam. Therefore, as the responses further revealed, the French burqa ban would not really have any wider or significant implications on the Islamic community. Further responses from the study participants also indicate that wearing the burqa is not compulsory for Muslim women. It is, as the participants observed, a thing of choice. In fact, one of the male participants stated that his wife initially did not like wearing the burqa, and she never wore it. However, as he further stated, his wife recently started wearing the burqa "out of conviction and not compulsion."

Nevertheless, responses from the participants point to a near general consensus that the burqa ban in France undermines and challenges Islamic values and traditions. This was an important recurring theme and a finding which I consider very significant.

This reflects a near general disaffection among the participants that the French Government enacted a law which bans the burqa in France. In fact, one of the respondents went as far as asserting that the burqa ban is a reflection of how some Western countries consider Muslims as being backward. Another participant also stated that the burqa ban projects Western values because the hijab and the burqa are all symbols of Islamic civilization.

Interpretation of Findings

The consensus was that the burqa ban in France does not and would not lead to an increase in acts of Islamic terrorism. This brings us once more to the study's research question.

Study's Research Question

Do Muslims report a correlation between the French law which bans the burqa and increased acts of Islamic terrorism? Evidently, the participants do not report any correlation between the French law which bans the burqa and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. Their responses suggested that the burqa ban in France is not a significant issue that could result in violent acts from Islamic extremists or Islamic terrorist organizations. In fact, French Muslims who participated in the study observed that the burqa ban issue is almost forgotten in France.

The Muslims participants who live in France added that the burqa ban was never an issue of big significance to them in France. This is because, as they observed, the number of Muslim women who actually wear the burqa is very small since it is not compulsory in Islam. One reason for this, as revealed from responses from participants, is

the general consensus that wearing the burqa is not compulsory in Islam. This implies that Muslim women are not under compulsion to wear the burqa. This also explains why the number of women who wear it in France is reported to be very low. In the words of Spohn (2013), only "a few hundred out of more than 5 million Muslims in France" wear the burqa (p. 146).

Participants' responses also suggested that wearing the burqa is not a universally accepted practice among all Muslims. In fact, about one or two participants described the burqa as more of Arabian culture than Islamic tradition. The responses are consistent with the observations of Khiabany and Williamson (2008). Most young Muslim females consider wearing the veil "as an expression of ethnic, rather than religious identity" (Khiabany and Williamson, 2008, p. 73).There was also other important information obtained from the participants, and which I consider significant. The subsequent narrative highlights the responses and views the participants gave on issues concerning the burqa ban in France.

The Burqa, Gender Equality, and Women in Islam

As I earlier stated, the wordings of the burqa ban legislation do not specifically mention the burqa or Muslims. Spohn (2013) observed that Article 1 of the law made it illegal for any person in France to wear any clothing that covers the person's face, and did not make any particular mention of any religion or group (p. 145). Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that the burqa ban legislation actually targets Muslims and the burqa (Spohn, 2013).

Spohn (2013) observed that some French Government officials publicly spoke out against the burqa and their dislike for it (p. 146). Spohn stated that many French politicians think the burqa subjugates women in Islam (p. 146). Spohn also specifically mentioned former president Nicolas Sarkozy under whose government the burqa ban was implemented (p. 146). Sarkozy declared in 2009 in front of the French Parliament that the burqa would not be welcomed in France (Spohn, 2013). Sarkozy also described the burqa as a mode of dressing which is at odds with French traditional respect and honor for womanhood (Spohn, 2013). Some prominent French feminists such as Fadela Amara, Sihem Habehi and Elisabeth Badinter described the burqa as being "oppressive to women and deprives them of their dignity" (Spohn, 2013, p. 146).

Howard (2012) also stated that the burqa ban legislation targets Muslims who wear the burqa even though there was no mention of Muslims in its wordings (p. 148). Howard observed that this assertion was based on discussions in the French Parliament which promoted the burqa ban as necessary to advance gender equality (p. 148). Howard also stated that French parliamentarians have this conceived notion that women are oppressed in Islam by their male counterparts who force them to wear the burqa (p. 148).

The foregoing narratives point to a general assumption, perhaps conclusion, among French policy makers and government officials. This conclusion is that the burqa is a reflection of how women are supposedly oppressed in Islam by their male counterparts. The narratives also indicate that French government officials and policy makers consider the burqa ban as a tool for advancing gender equality and preventing the oppression of Muslim women by male Muslims. This explained why I also sought the

views and perspectives of the participants, particularly the female participants, on this argument by some French government officials.

Interestingly, the responses from the participants suggested a near general consensus that the burqa does not reflect the oppression of women. In fact, the female participants were even more vocal in disagreeing with that line of argument. The female participants, who are all Muslims, stated that they do not consider wearing the burqa as a reflection of the subservient status of women in Islam. The participants stated that it was wrong for anyone to assume that women are oppressed in Islam. They also stated that banning the burqa does not advance gender equality because wearing the burqa does not put any kind of limitations on them. On the contrary, the participants stated that wearing the burqa and the hijab is a way of showing decency in dressing. The participants argued that Muslim women are required to show decency in dressing in order to preserve the dignity of womanhood.

Evidently, responses suggested the existence of an overwhelming focus and importance attached to decency in dressing by both Muslim men and women. Participants' responses also indicate a general consensus that decency in dressing is very important to uplift the status of the woman. There is also this general consensus that decency in dressing by Muslim women can also be achieved without necessarily covering the face with a burqa. However, data derived also show that the majority of participants believe that any Muslim woman who goes as far as covering her face with a burqa to maintain decency in dressing would receive additional abundant blessing from God. This reflects the importance that participants attach to the burqa.

An important theme that emerged from the responses is the notion that the burqa ban is oppressive to women. One of the female participants did make reference to what happened in Afghanistan during the Taliban regime. She stated that during the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, women were forced to wear the burqa against their wish. She observed that it was wrong. This suggested an admission that what happened in Afghanistan may have contributed to the negative perception of the burqa.

However, the same participant also stated that the possibility of women wearing the burqa under compulsion may be slim in France. Therefore banning the burqa prevents them from exercising their rights as citizens of a democratic society. Some female participants went as far as stating that it is actually the burqa ban, and not wearing the burqa, that is oppressive to the Muslim women in France who wear the burqa. This is because, according to them, the law prevents Muslim women in France from making their own choice when it comes to what to wear. It prevents those who choose to wear the burqa from doing so. Responses suggested that participants consider this oppressive to Muslim women in France.

The foregoing view is consistent with what Spohn (2013) observed in his study. Some feminists in France such as Elsa Dorlin, Sylvie Tissot, Christine Delphy, and Houria Bouteldja also disagreed with the French government (Spohn, 2013). These feminists opined that the burqa ban in France is an assault on the rights of Muslim women in France (Spohn, 2013). The feminists also stated that the burqa ban limits Muslim women's freedom to make their own choice (Spohn, 2013). This line of argument is quite significant.

Result of a study by Walsh and Piazza (2010) reported that governments which respect the rights of their citizens usually enjoy huge support from the populace (p. 552). This study by Walsh and Piazza concluded that when a government enjoys popular support from its citizens, the government has an advantage over terrorist organizations (p. 552). This study may be suggesting that terrorists may not find it easy to exploit the citizens of a country whose government upholds and respects human rights. Evidently, what this implies is that if the contrary is the case, it could make the fight against terrorism even more difficult.

The Burqa Ban as a Challenge to the Values of Islamic Civilization

As I earlier observed, data derived from the participants do not report any correlation between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. Nevertheless, responses from participants also indicated another near general consensus that the burqa ban undermines and challenges a tradition/practice associated with the Islamic civilization. An analysis of this vis-à-vis the Islam/West divide would be important in this study. Islam and the West are on a collision course and would be involved in a clash of civilizations (Huntington, 1997). This concept is the guide for this study's conceptual framework. I would like to stress, like I did in chapter one, that this study was not designed to further validate Huntington's concept of clash of civilizations.

I recognize the fact that Huntington's CoC is among studies that laid the foundation for intense debates and discussions on the relationship between Western countries and the Islamic world. This relationship was highlighted again in the responses given by the study participants. As stated earlier, data derived from participants'

responses reported a near general consensus that the burqa ban in France undermines and challenges Islam. Data derived from responses suggested that the reason for this assertion is because participants described the burqa as one of the symbols or dressing style for Muslim women.

There was also a reoccurring theme which underscored that participants consider the burqa as a central component of the Islamic religion. This is despite the fact that wearing the burqa is not compulsory and not universally accepted by Muslims. But data still suggested the general belief that the burqa is considered to be one of the central components of the Islamic religion. Consequently, its ban by a Western country may have been viewed as a direct challenge to Islamic values by a Western country.

Further analysis of the data derived also revealed more significant information. This information suggested that participants, especially non-French participants, view the burqa ban in France as a step taken by a Western country to further perpetuate and project French values as being supposedly superior to Islamic values and traditions. Surprisingly, the French Muslim participants did not take it this far. This is one distinction which I observed from the responses given by the French and non-French Muslim participants. These distinctions are discussed in the subsequent sub-section of this chapter. Nevertheless, both the French Muslims and the non-French Muslims unanimously agreed that the burqa ban does undermine a practice associated with Islam. This is more so because participants described the burqa and the hijab as symbols of Islamic civilization which have been made illegal in public places in a Western country. The foregoing narratives and findings highlighted how the burqa ban in France may have reflected this

"conflict" or "clash" between a Western country (the West) and its Muslim population (Islam).

Distinctions between Responses from French and Non-French Participants

I also consider it crucially important to state the distinctions he observed between the French Muslim participants and the non-French Muslim participants. The French Muslim participants are the participants who live in France and are Muslims. I had three French Muslim participants who were added later in the study because the burqa ban being discussed is in France. I would like to state that responses given by the French and non-French participants were basically the same on almost all the interview questions. For example, they all agreed that the burqa ban does not have any correlation whatsoever with increased acts of Islamic terrorism. They were also unanimous in stating that the burqa ban does undermine and challenge a practice associated with the Islamic civilization. In addition, they all stated that wearing the burqa by Muslim women is not compulsory in Islam because it is not a universally accepted practice among all Muslims.

However, there are a couple of distinctions between the French and non-French Muslims which were made evident in the responses given during the interviews. Unlike the non-French Muslims, it was obvious that Muslim participants who live in France do not consider the burqa ban an issue of huge significance for the majority of Muslims in France. One of the French participants (participant 21) stated that the burqa ban did not generate that much of attention or reaction from Muslims in France. Participant 21 also stated that this is because the actual number of Muslim women who wear the burqa in France is significantly low. Another French Muslim participant (participant 22) stated

that many Muslims in France, particularly those born in France, are more or less

westernized. Evidently, this response suggested that many Muslims in France have

adopted Western lifestyle, and would likely not be bothered about the burqa ban

legislation in France since they do not even wear it.

The views expressed by Ahmed (2013) could support the opinions of the French

Muslim participants. Ahmed observed that most French Muslims, though still

maintaining some degree of Islamic and family values, have a adopted a lifestyle that is

French and conforms to French values (p. 267). Another study carried out by Fellag

(2014) also supports this line of argument. Most Muslims in France seem to be more

willing to identify with the French nation than to champion or project hardline Islamic

values and practices in a forceful manner (Fellag, 2014). Furthermore, it is obvious that

many Muslims in France would like to be considered moderate Muslims, and would not

want their religion to come in between them and their loyalty to France (Fellag, 2014).

Another distinction between the responses given by French and non-French

participants is on the possibility of the French Government reversing the burqa ban. The

non-French Muslims were silent on whether enough pressure can be mounted by

Muslims on the French Government to force them to reverse the ban. I would like to state

that he did not ask any of the participants whether the French Government can be forced

to reverse the ban. This question was not one of the interview questions. However, a

French Muslim participant (participant 22) stated on his own accord that there was no

way the burqa ban will be reversed by the French Government. Apparently, participant

22 made the statement to drive home his point that opposition to the ban among Muslims

in France is not significant enough to influence or force the Government the reverse the ban.

What I understand from the responses given by Muslims in France is that they are not living in denial on the actual impact the burqa ban has on Muslims in France. Obviously, the French participants made sure to state to me that the burqa ban in France has not adversely affected Muslims in France in the practice of their religion. This underscores their earlier assertions that the burqa ban is not a hugely significant issue for Muslims in France because the majority of Muslim women in France do not wear the burqa. This is an important distinction between them and the non-French Muslim participants who showed more displeasure at the ban. This is quite interesting considering that one would normally expect Muslims who live in France to be more vocal or forceful in condemning the ban.

Implications for Social Change

Many parts of the world today are facing increasing problems created by acts of terrorism carried out by Islamic extremists. Countries that have been affected by these acts of terrorism include the United States and some of her Western European allies. Additionally, Russia and China have not been spared by Islamic extremists. Russia continues to deal with the problems of terrorism carried out by Islamic extremists from Chechnya and the Caucuses. China has the separatist Uighurs Islamic extremists to contend with. However, it is the United States and its European allies (France included) that have been the primary focal point of many prominent Islamic terrorist organizations. Among these organizations are the Islamic State and Al Qaeda. Many of their

membership, particularly the members of the Islamic State, are drawn from different parts of the world including Europe.

Many of them, if not all, were once moderate Muslims before becoming extremists. Evidently, a religious extremist and/or fundamentalist was once a moderate one. The Islamic extremist who joins organizations such as the Islamic State, and takes part in acts of terrorism was once a moderate Muslim. Therefore, there are certain factors that could motivate or turn a moderate Muslim into an extremist and a terrorist. The results of a study carried out by Zhirkov, Verkuyten, and Weesie (2014) revealed some interesting findings.

Most Muslims in Europe attribute their support for terrorism and radicalization to the domination of Islam by the West (Zhirkov et al., 2014). When one analyses this finding critically, dominance could be in military, economic, and even cultural spheres. Dominance could be in the form of formulation of foreign or domestic policies which project Western values and relegate to the background non-western values and way of life. These non-Western values and traditions are from civilizations such as the Islamic civilization.

The burqa ban in France may be viewed as one of such policies. I understand that the majority (22 of 23) of this study's participants stated that the burqa ban in France has no correlation with increased acts of Islamic terrorism. However, the same majority also stated that the burqa ban in France undermines and challenges the traditions and values of Islam. I consider this quite significant. I also consider that response as one which underscores this study's social change implications. This is because such a finding would

help Western and Muslim countries take measures that will facilitate more cordial relations between them.

A better understanding of factors that could further create what Hashemi (2014) described as "the great Islam-West divide" would help to find ways to bridge this gap. When this so-called divide is bridged, it would go a long way in helping to have more integration between Muslims and the West. This type of integration would foster cooperation and the emergence of a united front which will stand up against religious extremism and fundamentalism. When the West and Muslims work more closely, it would help to reduce, and perhaps eradicate Islamic terrorism. This has huge positive social change implications.

Islamic terrorism has metamorphosed into a huge social problem and a nightmare for governments and people around the people. This is more so considering its implications on global peace and security. Consequently, it is crucially important for efforts to be redoubled towards finding an enduring panacea for this social problem. This would help to ensure a much more secured world that would be free from the dangers of Islamic terrorism. Therefore, this study could immensely contribute to positive social change.

Recommendation for Action

The responses by this study's participants point to a belief and conclusion that there is no correlation between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. However, their responses also indicated an almost a general consensus that the burqa ban in France does undermine and challenge Islamic values and traditions. I

consider this theme as quite significant. Participants insisted that wearing the burqa, though not compulsory in Islam, is a tradition and/or practice associated with the Islamic civilization. Hence, its ban by a Western country constitutes an action which undermines and challenges Islamic values. These conclusions by the participants suggest that the burqa ban does have the potential to further create more divide between the Islamic community in France and the mainstream French society and government.

The above also highlights the arguments credited to the theoretical framework of this study, terror management theory (TMT). Pyszczynski et al. (2008) wrote extensively on TMT. The authors observed that one of the reasons why people or groups of people have conflicts is when their "worldviews" are challenged by another group with a different worldview (p. 318). Pyszczynski et al. further stated that when the threat to a person's or group's worldviews becomes "sufficiently strong," the affected group could take action which may include the "extermination" of the other group (p. 318).

Consequently, one could assert that one reason why conflicts emerge is difference in worldviews, and this includes differences in religions and values. This is more so when people with different values and beliefs take actions which could undermine or challenge other people's beliefs and values. Both Western and Islamic countries should, therefore, make efforts towards accommodation one another instead of confrontation. One way to do this is through more dialogue between the West and Islam (Etzioni, 2013).

In a paper presented at the Middle East Dialogue Conference in Washington, DC on February 21, 2013, Etzioni (2013) stressed the need for dialogue between the West and Islam. Etzioni encouraged the West to dump what he described as a "position of

exhortation" when dealing with the Islamic world (p. 348). Countries of the West should engage in "genuine dialogue" with the Islamic world (Etzioni, 2013, p. 348). When dealing with the Islamic world, Western countries should desist from placing themselves in "a position of assumed moral superiority" (Etzioni, 2013, p. 348). Rather, Western countries to move closer to "moral parity" with the Islamic world (Etzioni, 2013, p. 348). Etzioni's views echoed some of what the research participants stated.

Participant 8 had also stated that the law which bans the burqa in France projects French values (which reflect more or less Western values) and the French concept of laicite (secularism) as being supposedly superior to Islamic traditions and values. Participant 13 had also stated that the French Government should have had discussions, consultations or even dialogue with representatives of the Muslim community in France before the implementation of the burqa ban legislation. According to Participant 13, a common ground may have been reached between the French Government and Muslims in France on the issue of the Islamic face-veil if there were to be a dialogue.

These views by Etzioni (2013) and some of this study's participants reflect the need for more constructive dialogue between the West and the Islamic world on the issues confronting the world today. These issues include the rising cases of acts of Islamic terrorism and other issues which affect the relationship between the West and the Islamic world. Such kinds of constructive dialogues will go a long way in solving some of the problems created by acts of terrorism committed by religious extremists, especially Islamic extremists.

Consequently, I am recommending that the West should engage more in dialogue with members of the Islamic community as one means of solving the problem of Islamic terrorism. Additionally, as suggested by Etzioni (2013), I also recommend that leaders of the West should have more tolerance for non-Western values and civilizations. Western leaders should understand that putting Western values above and superior to the values of other civilizations could sometimes lead to clashes or conflicts between Western and non-Western civilizations.

In view of the above, I am also recommending that Western leaders heed the advice of Etzioni (2013) who urged them to move closer to "moral parity" with other civilizations instead of "moral superiority." Moral parity will ensure that public policies and laws which basically undermine the values of non-Western civilizations are not formulated. I understand that many Muslim countries, if not all, have laws which basically have no tolerance for Western values. Consequently, I am also recommending that Muslim countries also be more tolerant to non-Islamic values. But the responsibility of ensuring that there is this tolerance of one another's values lies more with the West because of the dependence of many Muslim countries on the West for security and economic activities.

Recommendations for Further Studies

This study was focused on finding the answer to a research question that sought to know whether or not any correlation exists between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. The study participants consisted of 12 Muslim women and 11 Muslim men, making it a total of 23 participants. Twenty two out of these

twenty three participants all declared that there is no correlation between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. One of the reasons they gave for this declaration is the fact that wearing the burqa by Muslim women is not compulsory in Islam. Another reason the participants gave is that wearing the burqa is not a universally accepted practice among all Muslims.

However, the participants also stated that wearing the burqa is an integral component of the Islamic civilization. Therefore, the participants considered its ban by a Western country (France) as an act which undermines and challenges Islamic traditions. A significant thing about their responses is that even the participants from France who do not feel the burqa ban adversely affected Muslims in France also agreed that the ban undermines Islam. This is because of their conviction that the burqa is still a practice that is associated with Islam as a religion. Some of the participants stated that such actions by a Western country do have the potential to raise tensions between Muslims and the French Government. Consequently, I am recommending that there should be further research on the implications that some public and foreign policies pursued by Western countries could have on Islamic terrorism.

Research would also be needed on the role of Islamophobia in the formulation of the law that bans the burqa in France. There are suggestions in some quarters that the law may have been formulated in order to check the rise in Islamic symbols in France. For example, Ahmed (2013) observed that governments in Europe have this strong belief that the large numbers of Muslim immigrants from North Africa into Europe threatens "Western ideals and cultural values" (p. 266). Consequently, governments in Europe

seem eager to be taking actions aimed at halting this "threat." There should be further research to study and determine if the law that bans the burqa in France was enacted because of this perceived fear of the rise of Islam in France. This research should also focus on determining the actual threat that Muslims and Islam pose to European ideals and cultural values.

Additionally, this particular research should also be expanded to include research on the long term implications certain domestic and foreign policies of some Western countries. Some of these policies include the banning of minarets in Mosques in Switzerland and the French Act No. 2010-1192 of 11 October 2010. This research should study and find out whether these types of legislations are what are need to check this supposed rise of Islam in Europe or whether they end up exacerbating tensions between the Islamic world and countries in Europe. Research in this domain should also focus on the studying the long term effects of such continued tensions between some Muslims and some Western countries.

Researcher's Reflections

My objective for conducting this study was to determine whether or not the law which bans the burqa in France has any effect on increased acts of Islamic terrorism. In this study, I had the intention of learning and gaining insights about the burqa and Islamic terrorism from Muslims who constituted the study's participants. One important revelation from the study's data collection process was the strong desire that Muslims have to defend Islam and distance themselves from violence. It was evident to me that

Muslims do have serious concerns about the bad press Islam and Muslims have been
having lately.

The participants, who are all Muslims, are conscious of the fact that Islam and
Muslims have suffered significant negative publicity lately. This is primarily because of
cases of terrorism and violence associated with individuals who subscribe to the Islamic
religion. Some examples include the violence and beheadings committed by members of
the organization which calls itself The Islamic State. Others are the massacres carried out
by Islamic terrorist organizations such as Al Shabab and Boko Haram. The study's
participants seemed very interested in this study because many of them, if not all, saw
this as an opportunity to discuss and talk about the real ideals of Islam.

The responses, comments, and the data revealed that moderate Muslims have this
strong desire to promote Islam as a religion of peace. I noticed the pain the participants
felt about the violence being committed by people who claim to be guided by the Islamic
religion. I also noticed the genuine desire by the participants to promote peaceful
coexistence among all the religions of the world. In fact, one of the participants invited
me to a dinner where he reiterated that Muslims are peaceful people.

Since the introduction of the burqa ban law in France, I have consistently
followed events in France since that time. The decision to write on this topic was
informed by the researcher's desire to understand how Muslims feel about the burqa ban
in France. I was also interested in knowing whether this particular public policy in France
has the potential to inadvertently fan the flame of Islamic terrorism. I must admit that the
results and findings of this study were both surprising and educative. This study offered

the researcher an opportunity to understand the mindset of an average moderate Muslim when it comes to topics such as terrorism, jihad, and violence.

An important conclusion which I drew from this study is that Muslims are concerned about the linking of violence and terrorism with Islam and Muslims. This is a situation which the Muslims who participated in this study tried very hard to counter. In fact, the participants were surprised and indeed grateful that a Christian (I am a Christian) chose to write on such a topic which offers Muslims the opportunity to express their views on issues concerning Islamic terrorism. It was evident to me that Muslims, judging from the reactions and responses of the study participants, are very eager to use any forum or opportunity to distance Islam and Muslims from violence, especially acts of terrorism.

This writer must also admit that the manner in which the Muslim participants cooperated with him was indeed commendable. This is quite significant considering that I am a Christian and resides in the United States. This also goes a long way to underscore the fact that Christians, Muslims, and individuals of other religions can actually have meaningful dialogues and discussions on issues that affect our globe today. Such dialogue could contribute in no small manner to tackle some of the problems facing us today, particularly the problem of Islamic terrorism which seems to be on the rise.

Conclusion

In 2010, the French Government introduced a law which bans the burqa in public places in France. I conducted this study with the objective of determining whether or not a correlation exists between this burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic

terrorism. Data were collected through the interview of twenty three research participants who took part in the study. All the participants are Muslims.

Analysis of the responses from the participants did not support a correlation between the burqa ban in France and increased acts of Islamic terrorism. Participants made it clear to me that wearing the burqa by Muslim women is not compulsory in Islam. This, according to them, is because wearing the burqa is not a universally accepted practice among all Muslims in the world. In fact, some participants described the burqa as a mode of dressing that is associated more with Muslims of Arab origin than with the entirety of all Muslims. Additionally, responses from participants also point to a lack of consensus on the actual origin of the burqa and whether Muslim women are required, under Islamic law, to wear the Islamic face-covering for women.

Responses from the study's participants also indicated that there are two schools of thought with different interpretations of what the Koran says about face-covering by Muslim women. These schools of thought are made of mostly Islamic scholars. One school of thought interpreted the chapter in the Koran which talks about the dressing code for women to include covering the face with a burqa. The other school of thought did not include the burqa in its interpretations of what the Koran says about dressing by Muslim women. This is why, as stated by one of the participants, Muslim women are not required or mandated to wear the burqa. The decision to wear the burqa, the participants stated, solely lies on the woman. If it is her choice to wear it, then she is free to do so.

Furthermore, analysis of the answers the participants gave to the questions I asked also affirmed that Muslims do not consider the burqa as a symbol of oppression of

women in Islam. This was quite an interesting finding because even the female participants also shared this same view. This question was asked to get the participants' reactions to the gender equality argument of the French Government. The French Government had argued that one of the reasons for placing the ban on wearing the burqa was to advance gender equality and protect Muslim women from oppression by men. Some French Government officials had said that the burqa symbolizes the oppression of women and the subordinate status of women in Islam. A situation which the officials said would not be welcomed in France.

Another interesting finding from this study is the near general consensus by the participants that the burqa ban in France undermines and challenges Islam. I found this to be hugely significant. Irrespective of the fact that the participants do not consider the burqa compulsory in Islam, they also see it as an important aspect of the Islamic religion. This, as the participants observed, makes its ban by the French Government an action which has the potential to exacerbate tensions between the French Government and Muslims in France. Such tensions could have wider implications for relationship between France and the Islamic world. If such tensions are allowed to rise, it could have implications on acts of Islamic terrorism. This is why I consider this finding hugely significant even though it is not the study's research question. It is important to mention here that while I was writing this chapter 5, a terrorist attack took place in France on January 7, 2015.

Masked gunmen who are Islamic terrorists attacked the premises of a popular French satirical newspaper called "Charlie Hebdo." The gunmen shot dead twelve people

including employees and the editor of the newspaper. Charlie Hebdo newspaper has been

known to make caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. In fact, two days after this attack,

another group of Islamic terrorist attacked and held some people hostage in a French

supermarket called Kosher. Some people also died in this stand-off between the terrorists

and the French police. These terrorist attacks in France do not have any connections with

the French Government's decision to ban the burqa in France. However, the attacks

underscore how tensions between Muslims and some Western societies (France included)

could quickly get out of control and result in terrorist attacks and bloodshed. This is why

the findings of this study would be important aspects of the fight against terrorism.

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Appendix: Sample Interview Questions for Research Participants

The questions below are sample questions. They are subject to change and/or modifications.

1. Do you think the *burqa* ban in France and other European countries (Belgium) is a reflection of a conflict or clash between some countries of the West and the Islamic Religion?

2. What do you think is the overall relationship between Islamic countries and countries of the West?

3. What does the Quran teach about the *burqa* or Islamic face-veil?

4. Do you think Muslim women should cover their faces and bodies in public?

5. Do you think the *burqa* ban in France undermines Islamic beliefs and traditions?

6. If so, does such a ban create a fertile ground for the growth of radical views?

7. Do you think the ban can change your views about the French Government and the West? (Question intended for moderate Muslims).

8. Could the ban trigger further acts of terrorism by Islamic extremist groups?

9. Do you think Muslims face discrimination in France? (Question intended for participants who reside in France).