

Review Article

Iran's 2024 Hijab and Chastity Law Criminalizes Freedom Through Surveillance and Disciplinary Power

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Abstract

The 2024 Iranian Hijab and Chastity Law is a new frontier in state control and social surveillance mechanisms, meriting close examination against the framework of Foucault's theoretical framework regarding power, discipline, and resistance. The paper focuses on how this law leverages complex technological infrastructure, economic penalties, and institutional enforcement to build an integrated regime of bodily policing and social conformity. Through the perspective of Foucauldian concepts such as the Panopticon, biopower, and governmentality, the paper shows how digital surveillance technologies, AI, and automated enforcement systems transform an old religious authority into a modern control apparatus. The study illustrates that although the law brings about a level of surveillance and regulation never seen before, at the same time, it reveals some critical hidden vulnerabilities of the state. The paper argues that the same intensity of mechanisms of control foments new forms of resistance, from individual acts of defiance to concerted digital activism. Based on elaborate legal analysis and expert opinions, this study concludes that the effort of the law to achieve a form of total control turns out paradoxically to disclose its limitations, as women devise sophisticated strategies of resistance within the systems engineered to constrain them. This paper contributes to understanding how new surveillance technologies remake older power relations and how resistance emerges within a seemingly totalizing control system.

Keywords

Foucault, Surveillance, Biopower, Resistance, Hijab Law, IRAN, Digital Control, Governmentality

1. Introduction

1.1. Historical Background

The history of Iran regarding hijab regulations is confusing and mirrors the political and social evolutions the country went through. Everything was changed by the Islamic Revolution in 1979, which made the hijab compulsory, turning it into a symbol of ideological grounding for the newly born Islamic Republic. This transformation came after a period of relative laxity in dress codes, which had been the case

immediately after the coercive unveiling campaign under Reza Shah Pahlavi in the 1930s. The state introduced moral surveillance and legal mechanisms during the 1980s and 1990s to try and control women's appearances in public as part of its concern with the preservation of social order and religious values.

More recently, women's rights movements have gained momentum in Iran, especially since the murder in police custody of Mahsa (Jina) Amini in September 2022. The

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subsequent uprising-a popular movement- received many descriptions as the first feminist uprising in the region; hence, women and girls continued their defiance against the forced veiling compulsory on them, demanding fundamental changes in government. The government was ruthless in this instance, but the movement also refused to die. They oppose enforced obligatory veiling and advocate for the rights of women.

After the Islamic Revolution, Iran's relationship with hijab regulations has evolved through distinct phases, reflecting broader political and social transformations:

- 1) 1979 Islamic Revolution: Implementation of mandatory hijab
- 2) 1980s-1990s: Introduction of moral surveillance mechanisms
- 3) 2022: Mahsa (Jina) Amini's death and subsequent feminist uprising
- 4) 2024: Implementation of technologically enhanced enforcement [29]

1.2. Hijab and Chastity Law

Regulation structure of the 2024 Hijab and Chastity Law is a high-tech social control device. This legal mechanism reconstitutes public and private spheres of life through the most elaborate surveillance and regulatory control mechanisms. This legal construct that cannot be reduced to legally restrictive dispositifs because these are meant to bring into play quotidian inroads in the everyday life of individuals with more strict ways of keeping under surveillance and coercive measures. With such a law, overall guaranteed CCTV surveillance and digital tracking mechanisms ensure every movement and interaction is under oversight, creating awareness of surveillance everywhere. This constant observation also extends to the digital world regarding social media activity and online behaviors being scrutinized as ways to maintain regulatory compliance. Furthermore, institutional reporting systems bring all aspects of society-institutional education, healthcare, and public services-under the state's regimen of discipline to ensure that conformity is monitored and maintained in all spheres of life. The analysis is on the role of the law that goes beyond mere prohibitions and is representational of a complex system of social engineering devised to ensure compliance by citizens through constant surveillance, economic penalties, and assertion of state power over the conduct and identity of the individual [18].

1.3. The 2024 Law: Structure and Mechanisms, Core Provisions

1.3.1. Financial Penalties

- 1) Fine equals 20 months' average salary, making it financially devastating for most families
- 2) Repeat violations may lead to increased penalties

1.3.2. Mandatory Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Surveillance

- 1) Required installation in all public spaces
- 2) Connected to central monitoring systems
- 3) Real-time violation detection

1.3.3. Public Service Access Restrictions

- 1) Limited access to government services
- 2) Restricted use of public transportation
- 3) Constrained access to social services
- 4) Potential denial of healthcare services

1.3.4. Institutional Enforcement

- 1) Mandatory reporting of violations
- 2) Required compliance checks
- 3) Implementation of dress code policies
- 4) Staff training for enforcement

1.3.5. Criminalization of "Immodest" Clothing

- 1) Legal penalties for promoting non-compliant dress
- 2) Punishment for businesses selling "inappropriate" clothing
- 3) Sanctions against social media content promoting alternative dress

1.3.6. Enforcement Architecture

a. Technological Infrastructure

Integrated CCTV: Nationwide network of connected cameras

Facial Recognition: AI-powered identification systems

Digital Tracking: Movement monitoring through digital IDs

Social Media: Monitoring of online behavior and posts

Algorithmic Detection: Automated systems identifying violations

b. Economic Control

Employment: Job access tied to compliance

Education: School/university admission restrictions

Professional Growth: Career advancement linked to adherence

Banking: Financial service access dependent on compliance

c. Institutional Framework

Education: Schools must enforce and report violations

Healthcare: Medical facilities are required to check compliance

Government: Coordinated enforcement across agencies

Community: Neighborhood reporting systems and local monitoring [18]

2. Surveillance and Bodily Autonomy: The Panopticon of Hijab and Chastity Laws in Iran

The enforcement of hijab and chastity regulations in Iran is

one of the great embodiments of Foucault's idea of the Panopticon, whereby surveillance becomes an inward method of control. The iterations of these regulations in 2024 represent a complex technological and social structure that goes far beyond forcing a dress code and thus creates an all-inclusive system of bodily and social discipline aimed at undermining women's personal autonomy.

The technological infrastructure underlying these laws is all-inclusive and multidimensional. It includes state-sponsored surveillance: massive surveillance cameras, digital identification systems, and active morality police. A social panopticon takes shape in the community-based reporting and social media monitoring of those institutionalized social credit systems that penalize non-compliance. Facial recognition technologies, digital movement tracking, and algorithmic reporting mechanisms come together for an all-pervasive surveillance network. That the system seeks to regulate not just outward appearance but innermost thoughts, to commandeer women's bodies for spaces of political and social negotiation [5].

The power of these laws lies not in constant direct punishment but in the creation of a psychological environment where:

- 1) Women internalize the potential for observation;
- 2) Self-censorship becomes a default mode of existence;
- 3) The bodily presentation becomes a constant negotiation of safety and social acceptance.

The surveillance mechanism operates by:

- 1) Creating a perpetual state of potential observation;
- 2) Transforming public spaces into sites of constant negotiation;
- 3) Inducing self-regulation through the threat of social and legal consequences.

The 2024 hijab and chastity laws in Iran exemplify a modern digital Panopticon, whereby surveillance goes beyond physical observation, an internal mechanism of control that reaches deep into social realms. The system creates a condition of constant potential scrutiny, which seeks to control outward appearances and the psychology of personal expression and bodily autonomy.

It is not the utter transparency that gives this form of surveillance its real power but how it generates self-regulating subjects who internalize the mechanisms of control, making the social space one of continuous negotiation and potential discipline [9, 13].

3. Disciplinary Power: Beyond Physical Control

Therefore, the hijab law, as part of the legal landscape of Iran in 2024, is an embedded symptom of disciplinary power, moving far beyond an imposition based merely on dress code into an overarching mechanism of social control. The law operates through economic and social pressures intertwined

within complex ways of institutional pressures, transmuting women's bodily self into a site of contention by state power. Instead of relying on physical coercion, the regime constructs an apparatus of multiple layers that ensures obedience is affected through subtle, pervasive means.

The economic mechanisms of enforcing the hijab law are also crucial, underlining the systemic discrimination against women. Adherence to specified dress codes results in employment, education, and professional advancement discrimination. Job opportunities, university admissions, and career progressions are directly linked with visible compliance with hijab regulations. This economic disciplinary power transforms personal dress into professional currency, making conformity a social expectation and a crucial social and economic survival requirement.

These economic stresses are multiplied through the institutional structures of comprehensive surveillance and normalization. Government agencies, educational institutions, and social organizations are working in concert to create a pervasive monitoring system. Facial recognition technologies, digital tracking, and community-based reporting mechanisms are combined in an environment of possible constant observation. The morality police are only the most visible part of a much larger institutional control system that permeates all public and private life levels.

Technology is the most developed tool of disciplinary power in implementing the hijab law. The digital infrastructure creates an unparalleled level of monitoring and social control. The pervasive use of social media platforms, digital identification systems, and algorithmic tracking has created an all-encompassing panopticon. Women have to navigate these physical and digital spaces, their bodies perpetually exposed to scrutiny that ranges from social media shaming to prosecution. The pervasive role of technology in enforcing the hijab law should raise significant concerns about the extent of surveillance and control, making the audience feel uneasy about the invasion of privacy.

The psychological dimension of the hijab law is profound: women internalize the external pressures, engage in self-surveillance, and regulate themselves constantly. What seems like a matter of personal choice is, in reality, a carefully orchestrated outcome of complex and multilevel influences exerted through institutions and technology. The hijab, therefore, is not just a piece of clothing; it is an involved symbol of negotiation between the person and institutionalized power, where compliance has to be internalized for survival and self-preservation.

This system of power produces certain kinds of subjects—women who learn to navigate complicated social expectations, constantly negotiating the boundaries of personal expression and institutional control. The most effective form of control emerges not through direct prohibition but through creating environments where compliance seems like a personal choice, a form of social and professional self-optimization. The complexity of these power dynamics is

intriguing, if not fascinating, in how it unravels the minute ways control is wielded and negotiated, leaving the audience captivated by the situation's complexity.

Notably, the law generates its own forms of resistance. In their finding of spaces of agency within and against the system of control, women develop subtle strategies of defiance. These acts of minor personal expression, collective solidarities, and individual negotiations are not just acts of resistance but a testament to the resilience of women in the face of societal pressures. They become ways in which resistance to what is seemingly total about disciplinary power becomes possible. The hijab law can be framed, in light of this, as one site of dynamic negotiation between the institutional control and the agentive individual- a fine-grained analysis of how power works in contemporary Iranian society [16, 29, 30].

4. Technological Biopolitics: An Approach to Biopolitical Control

The 2024 Iranian Hijab and Chastity Law represents a strong manifestation of biopolitical control. The law is transformed into a highly articulate technology of governing bodies, specifically female bodies, under constant surveillance and discipline. It fundamentally reformulates the female body into a highly disciplined sphere that dictates exact forms of bodily presentation with laws that criminalize choices related to the human body. In creating a public place in which the physical existence of women is constantly patrolled, the legislation renders the body itself a source of possible legal transgression. Beyond clothing regulation, the law intersects with broader reproductive and social control mechanisms. It reinforces patriarchal structures that limit women's bodily agency, symbolically connecting dress codes to reproductive and social expectations. The hijab law functions as a powerful tool of social engineering, enforcing specific cultural and ideological narratives while reproducing state-sanctioned gender hierarchies.

The female body becomes a literal and metaphorical text of political struggle, with clothing turned into an obligatory form of political expression. Individual bodies are forcibly inscribed with state ideology, and personal choice is criminalized and turned into a political statement. Modern surveillance technologies amplify the disciplinary power of the law, leveraging digital tracking, facial recognition systems, social media monitoring, and networked reporting mechanisms that encourage social policing. This legislative approach illustrates how contemporary legal systems transcend conventional regulation to become sophisticated technologies of power that permeate intimate spaces of personal choice. In rendering individual bodies sites of political contestation, the law produces and reproduces social relations, embodied experiences, and political subjectivities that have profound implications for individual freedom and collective social dynamics [6, 14].

The 2024 Hijab and Chastity Law will finally demonstrate

how the law is not a neutral arbiter but an active mechanism of technological biopolitics: a system of management that regulates collective embodiment disciplines reproductive potential, controls social reproduction, and inscribes bodies as political texts. This is the point at which legislation turns starkly into an instrument of comprehensive social control against which the ideas of personal autonomy and individual rights can be eroded [19, 27].

5. Governmentality Framework

The 2024 Hijab Law is a manifestation of governmentality beyond mere disciplinary power. With its inbuilt digital surveillance, economic controls, and social mechanisms, the law develops an intricate apparatus for managing population conduct through diverse, interconnected strategies. It is a governmental rationality that operates not so much through prohibition as through the creation of self-governing subjects who internalize the state's objectives.

The technological underpinning of the law epitomizes modern governmentality in setting up an all-encompassing regime of knowledge production and population management. With artificial intelligence-powered surveillance, digitized tracking, and automated policing, the state devises new methods for monitoring and managing population conduct. These technologies do not work merely to achieve compliance but to set up new knowledge about the population that allows forms of governance to become increasingly sophisticated.

The economic elements of the law-from employment restrictions to financial penalties-are a testament to how modern government manages the market. Such a linkage of economic participation to compliance makes the law exercise indirect governance through individual choices of self-interest rather than state coercion. This is quite an impressive way of managing a population in which the management of individual economic interests will be aligned with state objectives [9, 33].

6. Historical Context with Foucault

Foucault's profound analysis of the Iranian Revolution is a crucial lens through which we can understand the 2024 Hijab and Chstity Law. Exploring this unique form of political spirituality intertwined with religious authority in modern governance is particularly enlightening. The law born out of these dynamics shows a development wherein religious authority is exercised through digital surveillance and automated enforcement systems.

The shift from revolutionary times to the present regime in technological terms shows how the mechanics of power evolve yet stay essentially the same. While Foucault observed how religious authority acted through direct spiritual and social mechanisms during the revolution, the 2024 law illustrates how this authority currently acts through sophisticated technological systems. This evolution shows continuity and

transformation in how power operates in Iranian society.

The present law intertwines religious authority with modern surveillance technology in a way that inchoates the relationship between spiritual and political power that Foucault underlined for revolutionary Iran. The state's use of digital technologies for religious enforcement highlights traditional religious authority's adaptability and modern uses [16, 12, 14, 21].

7. Foucauldian Analysis of Legal Mechanisms

7.1. Power and Disciplinary Mechanisms

Foucault's notion of "disciplinary power" is strikingly applicable here. The hijab and chastity law is a perfect example of what Foucault termed an advanced form of social control in which the legal apparatus becomes a means of normalizing behavior. Power functions not through overt coercion but, instead, through internalized self-regulation, and the result is a system wherein individuals begin to police themselves and each other. This internalized self-regulation leads to a society in which conformity is achieved through personal compliance without overt enforcement [30, 13].

7.2. Panopticism and Surveillance

The digital surveillance aspect of the law directly reflects Foucault's "Panopticon" theory. Technology allows for a perpetual state of potential observation, whereby individuals modify their behavior under the constant threat of being watched. In this system, the mere possibility of surveillance becomes more potent than actual monitoring, creating a pervasive atmosphere of self-discipline. People begin to behave as though they are constantly being observed, which effectively extends the reach of control into everyday life [14, 22].

7.3. Biopower and Body Politics

The law manifests what Foucault termed "biopower," wherein bodies, primarily women's, are directly controlled through legal and technological systems. This regulation of biological and social existence turns the body into a political and ideological negotiation site. Through dress codes and surveillance, the state exercises control over the most intimate aspects of personal life, reducing the human body to an instrument of political power [31].

7.4. Knowledge-power Nexus

Foucault argued that knowledge and power are intrinsically linked. The law creates a specific narrative of morality and social order, where legal discourse becomes a mechanism for producing "truth" about acceptable behavior. Technology amplifies this power by providing tools for monitoring and

enforcing these "truths." Thus, the state enforces compliance and shapes social norms and moral perceptions through its legal and technological apparatus [15].

7.5. Resistance and Counter-discourse

While the law attempts to make a totalizing system of control, Foucault also wants to emphasize that power is never total. Resistance emerges from the very systems of power that try to control; thus, counter-narratives and other forms of agency are always possible. People can and do resist these control mechanisms; they contest dominant narratives and assert their own identities and modes of autonomy. This dynamic interplay of control and resistance is part of what underlies both the power and limitations of the law [15, 34].

8. Forms of Resistance

Iranian women have developed various sophisticated forms of resistance against the hijab laws and regulations, and mandatory Hijab, showcasing remarkable resilience and creativity in challenging state control. These resistance strategies range from subtle individual acts of defiance to coordinated collective actions, creating a complex web of opposition that proves difficult for authorities to suppress completely. Individual strategies of non-compliance have become a basic form of everyday resistance. Women use subtle ways, such as wearing their hijabs loose, in bright colors, or showing a small portion of hair, which may seem insignificant but is a substantial personal protest against the system. More often than not, these acts of resistance occur within less policed spaces or at moments of reduced surveillance- the stuff of what resistance theorists call "weapons of the weak." Women have also developed complex practices of avoiding surveillance systems, such as pre-orchestrated movements and calculated use of blind spots in architecture to retain personal freedoms while minimizing risk [8].

As time progressed, collective action grew increasingly sophisticated and challenging to suppress. Groups coordinate flash protests where dozens of women simultaneously shed their hijabs in public areas using encrypted communications to coordinate their efforts. These types of collective actions, though brief in nature, create powerful symbolic challenges to state authority. Women's rights organizations have also developed an underground support network that provides free legal representation, financial support, and safe havens for individuals persecuted under the law. These networks meticulously document violations and penalties, building evidence for future accountability [4].

Digital resistance has emerged as a particularly effective forum for challenging state control. Despite social media surveillance, activists employ sophisticated digital security measures to share information, coordinate actions, and document violations. Virtual private networks (VPNs), encrypted messaging apps, and blockchain technology enable secure

communication and organization. Online communities create and share guides to avoid surveillance, maintain digital privacy, and access restricted services. These digital methods of resistance constantly change to keep themselves ahead of state monitoring systems.

Social solidarity networks are the most potent form of resistance to the law. Beyond hard-core activists, these networks involve teachers, healthcare professionals, small business-people, and many others who discreetly undermine the system's enforcement machinery. Local communities develop their early warning systems about when surveillance activities or morality police are spotted. Professional networks quietly keep opportunities open for non-compliant women, and schools find ways of protecting students from the harshest penalties. These solidarity networks form an important infrastructure of support that helps maintain spaces of relative freedom despite official restrictions. The interplay among these various forms of resistance weaves a resilient ecosystem of opposition that is hard to totally put down by the authorities. Individual acts of defiance are empowered through collective support, and digital means enable better coordination and documentation of resistance. The social solidarity networks provide material support crucial to making sustained resistance possible [28].

9. Paradox of Control: The Law's Intensity Reveals Its Vulnerability

The paradox of control in Iran's 2024 Hijab and Chastity Law unmasks a deep tension between state power and social resistance. The very mechanisms of repression expose the system's intrinsic fragility.

However, paradoxically, this heavy regulation of the law represents an ingrained fear of female collective power. Through this extreme surveillance and disciplining, the state expresses the fundamental anxiety that emanates from the potential of transformation inherent in the collective agency of women. Such hyper-regulation is not an indicator of strength but a testimonial to the threat posed by the potentiality of women for social and political mobilization. The legal apparatus simultaneously betrays a tacit recognition of resistance potential. Each increasingly restrictive measure implicitly acknowledges that female resistance is not merely possible but persistent and dynamic. The law becomes one continuous negotiation, where state power and individual agency engage in a complex dialectic of control and subversion. Every regulation creates new spaces for negotiation; every restriction generates alternative forms of resistance. This legislative approach exposes the ongoing social negotiations at the heart of political power. Law is not a static imposition but a fluid process of constant social dialogue, where power is continuously contested, challenged, and redefined. The hijab law becomes a text of social struggle, where individual bodies become sites of political negotiation, resistance,

and transformation. The intensity of the control shows its vulnerability. Such extreme measures of regulation serve only to reveal a fragile state unwittingly. The more wide-reaching the control, the more it recognizes the possibility of resistance. Each legal mechanism becomes, in that sense, an implicit recognition of the power it purports to repress- a contradictory display of both strength and weakness. Foucault's notion of counter-conduct is particularly illuminating in this context. The law does not simply repress; it generates new forms of subject formation and resistance. In the same way that power produces resistance, the hijab and chastity law produces its evasion, negotiation, and reconfiguration modes. Bodies become sites of creative resistance, developing subtle strategies of non-compliance that operate within and against the very systems of control. Instead, these women live under the bondage of this law as active agents in continuous negotiation, subversion, and reimagination of the boundaries of power imposed on them. Ultimately, the law represents a complex choreography of power where control and resistance are intimately intertwined. It shows how technological biopolitics works not as a one-way imposition but as a dynamic, multi-dimensional process of social negotiation in which individual agency continuously challenges and reshapes the boundaries of political power [10, 25, 26].

10. Legal and Human Rights Perspectives

10.1. Constitutional Challenges

The 2024 Hijab and Chastity Law creates significant constitutional problems at the foundation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Essentially, the law violates individual rights on many levels: through an expanded surveillance system into individuals' personal lives, the restriction of freedom of movement, and gender-based discrimination in applying legal protections.

Another critical constitutional concern this law represents is an assault on personal autonomy. In such a manner, it extends state power deep into the core of personal identity, controlling people's appearance choices and self-expression. The control is visible in direct dress regulations and the complex web of economic pressures and service restrictions. Women face limited access to essential services, restricted professional opportunities, and obstacles to education based on their obedience to state-enforced dress codes. The law even reaches into family dynamics, affecting personal religious interpretations and household decision-making processes.

Perhaps most worrying of all is the way the law works to control ideology. It imposes a specific version of religious practice, turning what should be private spiritual decisions into state-mandated behaviors. Educational institutions become places where ideology is enforced, not centers of learning. A ubiquitous surveillance system means one is never

alone, with technology harnessed to mold social behavior along state-approved patterns. This technological infrastructure, economic incentives, and institutional pressures create an advanced system of ideological enforcement.

The cumulative effect of these challenges reveals how the law systematically dismantles constitutional protections. It erodes fundamental principles of individual liberty, equal protection, and religious freedom while undermining privacy rights and economic participation. By linking fundamental rights and services to compliance with ideological mandates, the law transforms constitutional guarantees into conditional privileges, fundamentally altering the relationship between citizen and state. This comprehensive control system extends beyond simple dress codes, fundamentally reshaping the nature of personal and social freedoms in Iranian society [2, 3, 11, 23, 24].

10.2. International Law Violations

International Legal Framework Violations The law potentially breaches multiple international human rights conventions:

- 1) United Nation (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- 2) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- 3) Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The 2024 Iranian Hijab and Chastity Law seriously violates international legal frameworks, mainly established conventions and treaties on human rights. Its provisions counter several international agreements, which gives serious grounds for concern among the international legal community regarding Iran's attitude toward its international obligations and universal human rights standards.

This law flagrantly contravenes the basic principles of CEDAW. Iran is not a party to the Convention, but CEDAW embodies the universally accepted standards concerning women's rights and gender equality. The restrictions that this law imposes on dress and mobility, together with the mechanisms for enforcement, certainly contravene the foundational tenets of CEDAW: non-discrimination and equality before the law. These economic penalties and social restrictions, again on women's behavior and appearance, represent precisely the kind of gender-based discrimination that CEDAW seeks to eliminate [7].

The law violates several basic protections guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a signatory, regarding civil and political rights. Surveillance mechanisms in the law infringe upon the right to privacy, and the restrictions of movement and expression under it violate fundamental freedoms of assembly and speech. These economic penalties and service restrictions are an effective coercive system violating the right to work, education, and participation in public life. Automated enforcement systems further raise severe due process and fair trial rights under international law. The law also violates

several provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its pervasive surveillance regime infringes on Article 12's protection against arbitrary privacy and family life interference. The economic sanctions and curtailment of services also overstep on Article 23's right to work and Article 26's right to education. The ideological function of the law's enforcement mechanisms is at odds with Article 18's protection of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion since it enforces one particular religious interpretation through state power [20].

The technological aspects of the law's enforcement raise novel concerns in international human rights law. Using AI-powered surveillance, facial recognition, and automated penalty systems creates new forms of human rights violations not explicitly addressed in existing conventions. These technological enforcement mechanisms violate privacy rights in ways not anticipated by traditional human rights frameworks, creating global precedents that could influence similar legislation. The international community of states has especially pointed out the odious effect of the law on vulnerable groups and minorities. Because of this, the interaction of the restrictions under the law hits women from religious minorities, lower economic classes, and marginalized communities much harder, creating multiple violations of their rights under various international conventions. This increase in existing social inequalities through legal mechanisms raises serious concerns about Iran's compliance with international standards of equal protection and non-discrimination. The law's enforcement mechanisms also contravene international standards on freedom of expression and assembly. By criminalizing not only non-compliance but also the promotion or discussion of alternative dress codes, the law has a chilling effect on public discourse and civil society organizations. This broad suppression of speech and assembly rights contradicts established international legal protections for civil society and public debate. Together, these constitute a significant regression in human rights protection and are bound to pose challenges to the international legal order. The comprehensive approach to technological and social control and institutional pressure through the law sets worrying precedents for similar legislation in other jurisdictions, undermining global standards and protections of human rights [3, 23].

11. Expert Community Comments

Critical analyses by prominent legal scholars and human rights advocates have been part of Iran's 2024 Hijab and Chastity Law, which provided immense insight into the law's aftereffects on civil rights and social stability. Expert comments not only point to the law's immediate influence on women's rights but also its extended effects on Iranian society and the legal framework.

Perhaps most forcefully, Nasrin Sotoudeh, a well-known Iranian human rights lawyer and activist, provides a compelling critique of the security implications of the law. Sotoudeh,

who has a long history of defending women's rights cases and was herself imprisoned for advocating against mandatory hijab laws, says the new legislation undermines public security rather than enhancing it. She added that laws are supposed to protect citizens, while this legislation "robs women of their security on the streets." Her analysis, informed by years of direct engagement with similar cases, underlines how the law transforms public spaces from areas of civic engagement into zones of constant surveillance and potential persecution.

Sedigheh Vasmaghi is a well-respected rights activist and Islamic scholar who offers extraordinary insight by examining the law from a legal and religious perspective. In her joint statement with Sotoudeh, she used the words "shameful" and "medieval" to describe the legislation, contending that it was a significant setback for Iran's penal code. Vasmaghi's analysis is particularly noteworthy given her expertise in Islamic jurisprudence, as she shows how the law runs contrary to modern legal principles and traditional Islamic precepts of personal dignity and religious choice. The spate of responses from the broader legal community of human rights experts has been collectively concerned with the implications of this law. They pinpoint three significant areas of concern: the use of technology for surveillance, the mechanism of economic coercion, and the broader implications for civil society. They say this unique combination creates an unprecedented system of social control that goes far beyond previous hijab regulations. Their combined analysis underlines how the technological mechanisms for enforcing the law primarily represent a dangerous new frontier in state surveillance and control [1, 3].

These expert views collectively show that the 2024 law is about dress code stringency and a paradigm shift in the relationship between state power and the individual's rights. Their analyses show how the sophisticated mechanisms of enforcement and surveillance within the law create new challenges for human rights advocacy and legal defense, requiring innovative approaches toward protecting civil liberties in an increasingly digitized system of state control.

Iran's new, more severe hijab laws have received widespread condemnation from the international community. The new Law on Protecting the Family through the Promotion of the Culture of Chastity and Hijab extends punitive measures against women and girls aged 12 and above who do not wear hijab, whether in physical spaces or online environments. The law adds to existing sanctions contained in Iran's Islamic Penal Code with significantly harsher punishments, including much more significant fines and imprisonment of as long as 15 years, plus the death penalty, based on charges of "corruption on earth." The new law requires individual enforcement and obliges all citizens, families, and businesses to report infractions. It also implements technological methods of surveillance. Critics further argue that the legislation violates fundamental human rights besides attempting to change educational and cultural values through state-sanctioned propaganda supporting the veil mandate and particular family values. Implementing the law will instill societal paranoia and

impact the vulnerable section more than others, especially youths and social media users. Most troubling is the likelihood of a rise in gender-based violence and discrimination, for which international experts are calling for its immediate repeal. These measures constitute an unprecedented expansion of state control over women's bodily autonomy and personal freedoms in Iran [17, 32].

12. Conclusion

The 2024 Iranian Hijab and Chastity Law is a breaking point in the development of mechanisms of state control, representing a considerable change in how power functions in postmodern society. Our Foucauldian analysis has demonstrated how this law goes beyond older religious and social control modes to become a complex combination of technological surveillance, economic coercion, and institutional power.

First, the comprehensiveness of the control mechanisms introduced by the law, impressing as it does at first sight, actually signals an anxiety of the state to hold its power. The use of artificial intelligence, face-recognition systems, and digital tracking technologies does not signal strength but vulnerability; it tacitly declares that the old methods have failed to bring about compliance. This artillery of technology is not a culmination of state power but an admission of its fragility.

Second, the analysis demonstrates how the law's attempt at total control paradoxically generates new spaces of resistance. Women's responses to the law—ranging from subtle individual acts of defiance to sophisticated collective digital activism—illustrate Foucault's principle that power invariably produces resistance. The emergence of underground networks, encrypted communication systems, and solidarity movements shows how control mechanisms can be appropriated and subverted by the very subjects they aim to regulate.

Thirdly, this law has unintended consequences, making the female body a site of political contestation. Far from rendering them docile, this rigorous regime of bodily autonomy has precipitated a new form of political consciousness. Women have devised innovative strategies of resistance that operate both within and against the system, with remarkable resilience and creativity in challenging state authority.

The implications of this research transcend the immediate context of Iran. As governments worldwide increasingly embrace digital surveillance and automated enforcement systems, lessons learned from the analysis at hand take on broader relevance for a global readership. The law blends religious authority, technological control, and economic coercion in a vital case study about how the modern state endeavors to handle populations and how those citizens resist such management.

This means that going forward, the future of state-citizen relations will be defined less by total control than by contestation and resistance. No doubt, surveillance technologies are

getting sophisticated; resistance, too, is in a constant, evolving stage. These dynamics of power and resistance suggest that in even the deepest structures of domination lies, embedded within, the seed of its potential subversion.

In the end, though the 2024 Hijab and Chastity Law represents an unprecedented attempt at social control through technological means, it also shows how Foucault's insights about power and resistance continue to bear the truth. The law falls into its trap as it creates an ideal surveillance and control system, revealing the limitations of State power and the indomitable nature of human agency. In a world increasingly marked by complex, sophisticated surveillance technologies, this is an important set of insights into how power, control, and resistance dynamics are played out in contemporary society.

This research, therefore, contributes to our knowledge of how contemporary systems of control function and how these can be contested. It indicates that technology can provide new tools for surveillance and regulation but cannot resolve the fundamental dilemma between state power and individual agency. The future will likely see continued evolution in control mechanisms and resistance strategies, maintaining the dynamic interplay that Foucault identified as central to power relations in modern society.

Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
UN	United Nations
USN	Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge
VPN	Virtual Private Network

Author Contributions

Yeganeh Nazem is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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