A House of Mirrors: Representations of Veiling in Modern Turkey

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Chapter 1: The Black Flag of Backwardness: The Veil in the 1950s and '60s

…the religious fanatic has retreated, but his black flag still flies in the form of the chador. This cover, which has nothing to do with neither religion nor morals, must be removed from the pristine face of the Turkish woman.
-*Cumhuriyet*, a Turkish daily newspaper, 1960

The 1950s and 60s are an inconspicuous period in the history of Turkey's veiling issue. Situated between two mammoth events, World War II and the definitive emergence of Islamist political parties in the 1970s, scholars often regard it as a less relevant because incidents of discrimination against veiled students are very few compared to the 1980s. Islamic identity during this period was generally understood as a political issue (i.e. the threat posed by the Islamic political parties), and the activities of the underground Muslim brotherhoods.[1] Sociologist Nilüfer Göle acknowledges the '50s and '60s as important decades because of the massive migration of rural peasants to the cities, pointing out that the veiled students of the 1980s emerged largely from this social milieu. With the exception of Cihan Akta , however, scholars have tended to focus on the political and sociological dimensions of the veiling issue, piggy-backing off of established historiography, while conducting little research using primary documents. This is likely the reason why two important events in the history of the veiling issue, the Struggle Against the Chador campaign and Hatice Babacan's expulsion from the Ankara University Faculty of Theology are overlooked in the historical analyses of the major publications. Yet these events and the representation of the veil in the media from this period are important because they reveal how veiling operated as a symbol of the anti-modern in the consciousness of secular, urban Turks in the early decades of the Republic. The Struggle Against the Chador Campaign and Hatice Babacan's Expulsion are particularly important examples of the Kemalist authorities' method of guiding Turkey's cultural development in a top-down fashion.

The Foundations of Turkish Secularism

The establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1928 and the proceeding cultural revolution redefined Turkish society's relationship with Islam. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the national leader from the establishment of the Republic to his death in 1938, led a

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[1] Mango, Andrew, *The Turks Today* (New York: Overlook, 2004), 40.

campaign to both distance Turkey from an Ottoman past rooted in Islam as well as several Near Eastern traditions and transform this new country into a Western-style, secular republic. Atatürk chose to adopt the French model of secularism known as *laicism*, in which the realms of religion and government are not separate, rather the state controls religion by co-opting religious institutions, making them into departments or subdivisions of the bureaucracy. Thus, during the cultural revolution Atatürk brought the educated religious leaders (*ulema*) into the fold of the government as employees.[2] In addition, Atatürk closed down the country's main seminary in Istanbul, required the Muslim call to prayer to be read in Turkish rather than Arabic, and issued laws pressuring Turks to wear Western clothing.[3]

These dramatic reforms took place under the auspices of a strict single-party government. Atatürk briefly experimented with a 'tame' opposition party in 1930, but the elections proved too disorderly, exposing the volatility of Turkish society at the time. Atatürk, therefore, chose to terminate the experiment, leaving his country in the care the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (CHP), or "Republican People's Party," meant to guide Turkey's development according to the vision of his revolution.[4]

Menderes and the Millitary Coup

With Atatürk's death in 1938 smet nönü, a hero of the war of Independence and Atatürk's right-hand man, inherited the presidency and maintained a stance of neutrality for Turkey during World War II. Though smet nönü used tight governmental controls to keep the CHP in power during the war, demands from both the leftist intelligentsia and the democratic Western bloc motivated Inönü to allow the formation of the Demokrat Party in 1945. nönü's archrival, Celal Bayar, formed the party along with a charismatic politician from the Aegean region, Adnan Menderes. Together, they managed to win a majority of seats in the 1950 election, leaving the Republican Peoples' Party ousted from the seat of power for the first time ever. It is said that when the results came in, the military offered to intervene and restore nönü and the Republicans' position. nönü declined the offer, choosing magnanimously to allow democracy to run its course.[5]

The public strongly supported the Demokrat Party throughout their first three-year term. At beginning of their second term, however, economic hardships brought by the Korean War such as a rise in commodity prices along with poor harvests diminished the Menderes government's popularity. With time the administration felt it necessary to take oppressive measures to survive the increasing agitation by the CHP, which sought to capitalize on the DP's bruised popularity. In 1953, for instance, the DP requisitioned all of the CHP's material assets, handing them over to the treasury.[6] The Demokrat party also became restrictive toward the press. In 1955 the bombing of the house in Salonika,

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[2] Jäschke, Gotthard, *Yeni Türkiye'de slamcılık* (Ankara, Bilgi Yayınevi, 1972), 40-42. Cited in Özdalga, 21.
[3] Lewis, Bernard, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 408.
[4] Zürcher, Erik, *Turkey: A Modern History* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 184-186.
[5] Mango, 39-45.
[6] Zürcher, 233.

Greece in which Atatürk was born sparked rioting on the part of Turkish nationalists against Greeks living in Turkey. The DP government blamed Communists for the attack, and shut down left-wing publications and made arrests, which led to further rioting. Though these events severely compromised the Democrat Party's ability to maintain law and order, Menderes managed to maintain his position through political maneuvering[7] and even managed to win a third election in 1957. The DP's majority had been diminished, however, so the administration took more authoritarian measures to consolidate its power. At on point, an economic crisis gave the CHP a chance to rally support, but the DP squelched riots and demonstrations and set up commissions to investigate the opposition for subversion. In 1959 Menderes attempted to censor the press and suspend all political activity altogether. This sparked massive demonstrations by both students and military cadets.

At this point the military decided that it was through looking on at these developments. On May 27, 1960 General Cemal Gürsel launched a military coup, ousting Menderes from the premiership, dissolving the parliament, and closing the Demokrat Party. Gürsel and his junta established the National Unity Committee, which governedTurkey for a little over a year until a new constitution was approved in July of 1961 and general elections held the following October. [8] This propelled the CHP back into power, reinstalling Ismet Inönü as prime minister with General Gürsel as president.[9] The generals showed Menderes no mercy, sentencing him to death by hanging. The official reason for the execution was Menderes' attempt to silence the parliament, though historian Andrew Mango argues that the real reason was that the military feared the political threat that his popularity and charisma may have become.[10]

The Representation of Menderes in the Press

Menderes was a populist who challenged the social elites created by the revolution. The established press was hostile to Menderes and the Demokrat Party from the outset, and through their spin, tried to place in him in total opposition to Kemalism. The press of the day often depicted Adnan Menderes as a populist leader who used religion as a tool to win support for his party. While some came to see the DP as the more progressive of the two major parties because of its liberal attitude toward religion,[11] the DP upset hard-line secularists by making legislative changes that appeared to reverse achievements of the Kemalist revolution. Within one month of the Demokrat's victory, for instance, the DP had pushed through legislation allowing the call to prayer to be read in Arabic again. The constitutional language was returned to the original Ottoman Turkish, instead of the "pure" Turkish variety that had been expunged of Arabic and Persian words. The DP also deprived the CHP of property it had accumulated during its nearly twenty years in power including "People's Rooms" and "People's Houses" built during the heyday of Atatürk's revolution in the 1930s as devices to spread the gospel of

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[7] A cabinet reshuffling and the resignation of his Minister of the Interior.
[8] Mango, 52.
[9] Ibid., 59.
[10] Ibid., 54.
[11] Richard Tapper, et al., *Ça da Türkiye'de slam: Din, Siyaset, Edebiyat ve Laik Devlet* (stanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1991), 16.

modernity to rural, under-developed Anatolia. The Democrat Party was, in fact, only burying a project that had been left for dead, neglected and deprived of funds by the People's Republican Party for years.[12] Regardless, this move along with the other reforms earned Menderes and the Democrat Party the label of religious sympathizers.

Though Menderes' party gained this reputation, in actuality it did not form its base of support from religious groups nor did it serve as the sole impetus for an Islamic revival. The CHP had also courted the pious vote in order to compete with the Demokrats in the early part of the multi-party period, reinstating religious instruction in schools in 1949 and reopening the Ankara University Faculty of Theology, which Atatürk had closed during his administration.[13] The Republicans had also allowed formerly closed sacred tombs to be reopened, and had begun to give support to pilgrimages to Mecca.[14] Additionally, the fact that in elections the DP's greatest electoral victories were in the most developed, educated areas demonstrates that it did not get all of its support from religious villagers. Regardless, The Demokrat Party took steps to deflect accusations of being too soft on religion by making public displays of devotion to Atatürk. In 1953, they moved the deceased leader's body to the enormous mausoleum, *Anıtkabir*, in Ankara. When members of an underground Muslim brotherhood began to mutilate busts of Atatürk, the Democrats passed a law making acts that insult Atatürk's memory a crime.[15]

Another reason why Menderes got such a bad reputation was because the popular daily newspapers *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet,* loyal to The Republican People's Party, were hostile toward the Demokrat Party from the beginning. This animosity only intensified as Menderes set restrictions on the media during times of political turmoil in the 1950s. Thus, they were of great help to the CHP in their efforts to spin Menderes as a religious sympathizer. Though the Demokrat Party had its own voice boxes, daily papers more or less in agreement with the CHP and the Kemalist elites dominated the popular media.

The Veil as an Allegory of the Anti-Modern

A thorough survey of the Turkish press in the 1950s and '60s was not possible for this study. Based on the evidence obtained from secondary sources, however, it seems that the secular media played a significant role in the imagining of the veil as a symbol of provinciality, backwardness and women's oppression; though it is not possible to determine to what degree the press influenced or merely reflected this view. Though the Demokrat Party had its own voice boxes, daily papers more or less in agreement with the CHP and the Kemalist elites dominated the popular media. Islamist publications that challenged the mainstream press did not appear until the launching of *Sabah* (Morning) and *lim ve Sanat* (Science and Art) in the late 1960s.[16] As Bernard Lewis points out, even the religious publications of this period were largely apologetic, seeking to reconcile

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[12] Mango, 48.
[13] Ibid., 43.
[14] Toprak, Binnaz, *Islam and Political Development* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 77-78. Cited in Tapper, 16.
[15] Mango, 45-46.
[16] Mardin, erif, "Türk Tarihinde Nak ibendi Tarikatı," Tapper, 88.

the religious institutions with the Kemalist state.[17] Moreover, Cihan Akta shows in her book *Appearance, Dress and Power* that the Islamic press at of the day agreed with restrictions that discouraged women's veiling.[18]

Islam, Anatolian people, and veiling were favorite subjects for cartoonists who published their work in the mainstream press during this period. In fact, more than enough caricatures relevant to this study were easily found dispersed throughout two books of cartoon compilations. The chador, the black ensemble that covers a woman from head to toe, serves a double function in many of the cartoons, representing the literal fact of women covering for religious purposes, yet also standing in for what Kemalists of the time perceived as a backward mentality that encouraged such a practice. The following selections were produced and published during a period when the mechanization of agriculture and the failing village economies brought a mass of provincial Turks into the metropolises, drawing the urbane Turks' attention to disparity of wealth, education, and opportunity between the cities and the countryside. Many cartoonists blame provincial Islam for the failure of the Kemalist civilizing mission. Orhan Enes, for instance, published a cartoon depicting a man muddling along gloomily, carrying a flashlight that projects a beam of darkness (see Figure 1).[19] The man's round beard, cap, cummerbund, and baggy trousers symbolize the overlapping identities of Islam and rural origins.[20]

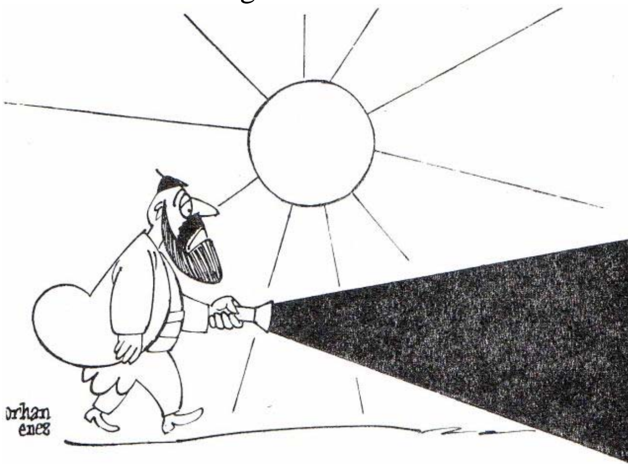

Figure 1

The man seems unimpressed by the sunlight, preferring darkness to the enlightenment taking place all around him. In another example, Turhan Selçuk portrayed a group of people lined up as if they were going to take a portrait (see Figure 2).[21] The women are huddled together in the center, all wearing chadors. Again, the men wear the peaked cap, round beards, cummerbund and baggy trousers typical of Anatolian peasants. The caption reads: "Nothing new on the Eastern frontier."

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[17] Lewis, 414-416.
[18] Akta , Cihan, *Tanzimat'tan Günümüze Kılık Kıyafet ve ktidar.* (Istanbul: Nehir, 1989), 202.
[19] Balcıo lu, Semih, *50 Yılın Türk Karikatürü* (stanbul: Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1973), 134.
[20] Norton, 165.
[21] Balkenhol, 42.

Figure 2

The characters in the cartoon smile sweetly at the reader, their lives of blissful ignorance undisturbed by any attempt at modernization. The term "frontier" is particularly striking, as it alludes to something wild and untamed, which one could read as another jest at the ineffectiveness of the Kemalist attempts to civilize Anatolia.

In other cartoons the veil—more specifically, the chador—is the focus of criticism. A 1954 cartoon by Turhan Selçuk features a huddled group of chadored women (see Figure 3).[22]

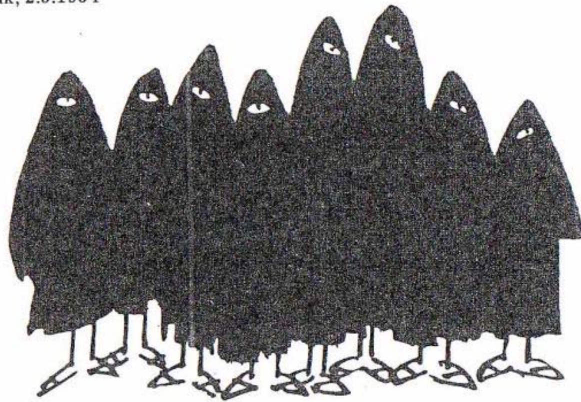


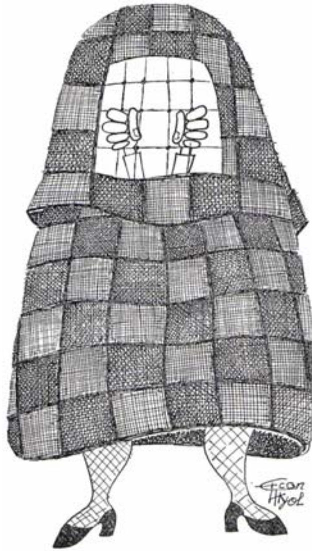
Figure 3

Entitled "The Unknown that is Woman," this cartoon creates an atmosphere of strangeness and mystery around veiled women by giving them an alien-like appearance with cone-shaped heads and only one eye.

By giving the figures only one eye and cone-shaped heads, Selçuk gives them a mysterious alien-like quality. This kind of contortion renders the figures somewhat

[22] Ibid., 25.

incomprehensible and inhuman. It is unlikely that Selçuk meant to say that Anatolian Turks are intrinsically less human; rather, that practices like veiling women in the chador obscures their identities. Using the chador to obscure women's faces seems to have been a popular motif to underscore the oppressive, de-humanizing nature of the outfit. For instance, a cartoon by Can Akyol from this period depicts a stumpy figure in a checkered-patterned chador with two hands clutching at the mesh of bars in the opening through which the face would normally peer out (see Figure 4).[23] In 1957, Mustafa Eremektar rendered a depiction of a beach scene with men and women sunbathing together in bikinis and swim trunks (see Figure 5)[24]. Everyone's attention is drawn to the two men and a woman in at the center of the scene. One of the men declares to his friend in an accent that indicates that he is hardly an urbanite.[25] "As a civilized man, I could never deprive my wife of the sea and sunshine!"



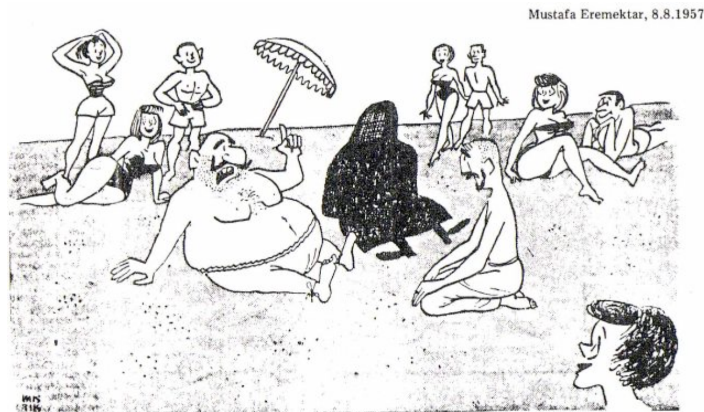


Figure 4 **Figure 5**

The joke, of course, is that his wife sitting on the sand next to her husband is covered head to toe in a chador, while the men have on nothing but swim trunks, implying that Anatolian men are hypocrites who want to take advantage of comforts of modernity such as going to the beach, but not share those comforts with their wives.

So, what is it exactly that the chador denies women? A five-panel cartoon by Ferruh Do an, published in 1956 suggests that the chador denies women the opportunity to express themselves through the culture of beauty and fashion (see Figure 6).[26] A woman preparing to go out in public powders her face at her makeup mirror. She then proceeds to apply lipstick and does a little dance, wiggling her hips playfully before the

[23] Ibid., 49.
[24] Balkenhol, 26. Translation mine.
[25] The fact that the character say "Garım," meaning "wife," instead of the standard pronunciation, "Karım," indicates that he speaks with a provincial dialect, and is thus not from a major city.
[26] Ibid., 24-25.

mirror. When she finally steps out, however, we realize that all of her primping was in vain because she has to cover head to toe in a chador.

Figure 6

This cartoon seems to convey Do an's idea of the heavy-handed attitude of Islam towards women's self-expression; he seems to be saying that deep down all these women really want is to look beautiful, and they would be, too, if they weren't forced to wear that dreadful chador. This implies, of course, that veiling has no spiritual value because the woman herself only wears it because she is forced to do so. This is an important idea that has gained currency in the secular Turkish consciousness, reoccurring in different forms for decades. In 1987, for instance, during a particularly heated point in the debate over the headscarf, the press launched a campaign offering prettier, more fashionable alternatives to the overtly Islamic style of headscarf.[27] These articles emphasized that by revealing the neck and jaw line, these new styles offered enticing fashion possibilities.

Other cartoons ironically position the veil within modern surroundings to highlight the unevenness of Turkey's modernization. A cartoon by Mehmet Polat published in 1963, for instance, depicts a father in a Western suit and fedora hat drawing his little son's attention to a rocket ship making an arc through the night sky. Just as he declares, "Look son, there's a women up in there!" a woman wrapped in a black chador strolls past (see Figure 7).[28] The reader is meant to recognize immediately the ironic juxtaposition of women at the cutting edge of science with the chador—that ultimate symbol of civilization coexisting alongside that ultimate symbol of barbarity—and realize that been unevenly distributed, or ineffectively enforced. In another example, Ferruh Do an portrays a woman in a chador working busily away in an office while a portrait of Atatürk hangs over her head (see Figure 8).[29]

[27] Çınar, Alev, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places, and Time* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2005), 80.
[28] Balkenhol, 23.
[29] Ibid., 27.

Figure 7 **Figure 8**

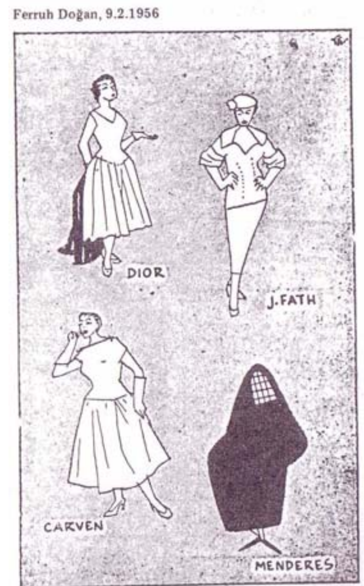


Figure 9

The black figures’ presence in the office, of course, is in outright defiance of Atatürk’s reforms, given the date of publication (1956), there may also be the implication that Menderes’ laxity toward Islam is to blame for this sacrilege. Another of Do an’s pieces, published in 1956, entitled “Samples from fashion designers,” depicts three slim, well coiffed models, dressed in the fashions of the latest designers represent trends in Western culture (see Figure 9). The fourth, however, is a frumpy woman in a black chador labeled “Menderes.” Not only does this cartoon clearly suggest Menderes’ sympathy for religious conservatism, associating the veil with a political threat; the positioning of the chadored figure among the other models symbolizes a stark disconnection from global culture.[30]

The Struggle Against the Chador

Following the coup of 1960, the Kemalist generals saw their opportunity to reverse Menderes’ offensive religious reforms. On July 16th, less than two months following the intervention, *Cumhuriyet* published an interview with Cemal Gürsel, the leader of the operation, entitled “The Prime Minister’s Reforms: The Chador, The Turkish *Qur’an*. In General Gürsel’s own words: his thoughts and his personal story.”

The article focuses on the issue of religious reform, or “the topic on everyone’s minds,” as the interviewer puts it. The reporter asks what the general plans to do about the accusation that Turkey is headed backward in terms of secularization. Gürsel replies

[30] Ibid., 27.

that has appointed professors to write a new, robust constitution constructed along Kemalist lines. "And what about the chador?" asks the reporter. The general explicitly repudiates the black garment:

> The chador is a disgrace to Turkish womanhood…She has the right to present herself, face unblemished, before the world. Throughout history she has given birth to heroes, raised great sons, and sparked great events. Who does she fear that she should hide her face? There is no connection between the chador and female honor[31]. That Turkish women shall not give opportunity to that costume so unsuited to them, that they shall not hide their faces—this is my request .[32]

The next day *Cumhuriyet* published an interview with Colonel Alparlsan Türke [33], who had read broadcast of the conspirators' manifesto, heralding the official success of the military coup. In the interview Türke declared, "They went backward on the issues of religion, dress, and most importantly, intellect," claiming that the Democrat Party had betrayed the secularizing mission as laid down by Atatürk. The interviewer pushed the point of dress: "When you say 'dress' you are referring to the chador, that outfit that gives the Turkish woman such a shameful appearance. Am I correct?" "Have you traveled at all around Anatolia lately?" replied Türke . "Have you seen how the chador has come to spread like a black fire, enveloping the land? [34]" These interviews make apparent the urgency in the generals' minds that something had to be done.

In August of 1960 the state (still under the supervision of the military) took action, using the newspapers whip up excitement for its new Struggle Against the Chador campaign.[35] Refik Tu la, governor of the Istanbul Province, introduced the campaign declaring, "These women in black chadors walking around the cities and towns are destroying Turkey's modern image."[36] *Cumhuriyet* published the following piece to set the mood for the campaign in their column entitled *Criticism of Ourselves*:

> Not the efforts of revolutionary societies, not the announcements of the press, not even the advice of the public official has had any effect: the black chador continues to preserve the position of backward reactionaries as they move to attack. Even in the streets of Istanbul groups of four or five women in chadors walk around like flocks of penguins.
>
> Since the 27th of May the religious fanatic has retreated, yet his flag still flies in the form of the chador. This cover, which has nothing to do with neither religion nor morals, must be removed from the pristine face of the Turkish woman (even for the Turkish woman who doesn't have the economic means to fulfill Atatürk's revolution through dress). If we do not use a firm hand in performing this duty today, who will do it tomorrow? Can we really bear to wait until a distant tomorrow to get rid of this ogre-like costume that disgraces our women before the civilized world?[37]

The campaign was supervised by the Mustafa Kemal society, a state-sponsored organization meant to promote the Kemalist project through charitable activities. The

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[31] The Turkish word, *namus*, used here is important. "Female honor" is a decent translation, but a more precise translation would be family honor attached to female virginity and fidelity within marriage.
[32] "Cemal Gürsel ile görü me," *Cumhuriyet*, 16 July, 1960. Cited in Akta , 228. Translation mine.
[33] "Alparslan Türke ile görü me," *Cumhuriyet*, 17 July 1960, 2. Cited in Akta , 228.
[34] Mango, 57.
[35] The Turkish name of this campaign is *Çar afla Mücadele Haftaları*.
[36] "Ba örtüsünu önce devlet önerdi," *Yeni Aktüel*, July 2005, 34.
[37] "Kendi Kendimizi Tenkid," *Cumhuriyet*, 25 August, 1960, 3. Cited in Akta , 228. Translation mine.

foundation encouraged women to trade in their black chador for dresses, coats, and head scarves. The foundation also encouraged Turkish women of means come to the aid of their less fortunate sisters: "Because not all enlightened women have enough money, some are forced to wear the chador. For this reason we ask you to please bring coats that may be donated to them ."[38] The newspapers *Bugün* and *Seher Vakti* published articles giving advice on how to reconfigure one's covering style in a way that looked more modern. Though it may seem odd that the campaign actually encouraged women to wear headscarves, it is important to remember that during the 1960s, even in Western countries, the culture of head covering, with both men and women wearing some sort of scarf or hat was much more alive than it is today. The foundation promoted headscarves tied loosely under the chin, leaving hair exposed, which would blend inconspicuously into this secular culture of head covering. The way Kemalists likely saw it, this was a way for women from Anatolia meet the standards of modesty demanded by Islam and tradition without looking overtly Islamic. In September the press did a followed-up, showing before and after shots of a young woman named Ülker Aslan, the first being with her chador, and the second being with the coat and scarf donated to her by the Mustafa Kemal Society.

The Expulsion of Hatice Babacan

Though universities did not expel veiled students on a large scale until the 1980s, many women who wore headscarves to school were penalized in various ways during the 1960s and '70s. It is important to keep in mind that though the state promoted head scarves tied in a loose, inconspicuous style in 1960, Turks could still identify women who wore headscarves as Islamic symbols. A scarf tightly pinned around the head, for instance, covering the hair, neck and forehead was obviously meant to deliberately communicate religious identity. In 1964 a young woman named Gülten Ataseven was demoted from valedictorian status in her graduation from medical school for her headscarf. Women faculty members who wore headscarves were often dismissed, and female students were often not allowed to attend exams. During this period there were no codified regulations for when the veil was banned or how its wearer should be punished. Rather, the matter was left to the discretion of the universities.

The headscarf incident to receive the most media attention in the 1960s was the expulsion of a young woman named Hatice Babacan from the Ankara University Faculty of Theology. The dean of the faculty's decision to expel Babacan set an important precedent for universities' policies in dealing with veiled students. Presumably, Babacan's style of veiling, with the scarf snuggly framing her face, made her stand out among her classmates (see Figure 10). [39] According to interviews with students involved in the events by

Figure 10

[38] "Çar afla mücadele haftası," *Cumhuriyet,* August, 24 1960. Cited in Akta , 228.

[39] *Yeni Aktüel*, 32.

the daily newspaper *Zaman* from the 1980s, upon arriving with her head covered to her Islamic History class the professor declared that he had not seen a veiled girl in class in all of his 19 years of teaching and that she should either uncover her head or leave.[40] Babacan, insisting that her scarf was a requirement of her faith, refused to uncover and left the classroom. This incident sparked a process of arbitration that ended in Babacan being thrown out of the faculty.[41]

What likely attracted the media's attention to the event was the ensuing boycott of the faculty by some fifty of its students, who refused to go to class and performed hunger strikes outside of the walls of the faculty building. The boycott and the arbitration sparked two months of debate in the media, with the mainstream press giving voice predominantly to the faculty administrators. According to the interviews published in the daily *Zaman*, the directors and some professors had accused Babacan of being encouraged by secret Muslim Brotherhoods to wear her headscarf to class. The daily *Milliyet* printed an article in which the dean of the Theological Faculty claims that the students "were controlled from the outside" in their acts of disrespect, and that they had made alliances by making statements for "some reactionary publications."[42] Indeed, Babacan's expulsion occurred at around the same time that *Sabah* and *lim ve Sanat,* publications established by groups with ties to the underground Nak ibendi order of dervishes.[43] Akta points to these publications as a venue in which veiled women could publish their opinions relating to the veiling, challenging the hegemony of the secular press over coverage of the developments.[44]

The Babacan incident also inspired Muslim authors to write about the virtues of Islam and their frustration with secular institutions like the Faculty of Theology. At one point the administrators, strained under the pressure of the arbitration closed down the entire faculty for one month in the middle of the proceedings to take a holiday and perhaps to contemplate their next move. Poet Sezai Karakoç, fed up with the administrators' reticence, composed the following verse:

> Veiled, finally veiled. And just who has veiled? So that a girl student who dresses according to the dictates of Islam could not enter, The Faculty of Theology has covered itself. It has closed the door. Its door, its chimney, its window it has covered. It has enwrapped itself in the essence of the word "blasphemy."
>
> So that a girl with a covered head won't enter the class, they have put science on hold for a month. It didn't occur to them that hundreds of students' not studying for a month and many professors' not teaching might be worse. It has pulled the quilt over its head and veiled itself. It has covered itself just has it has veiled the truth.[45]

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[40] Akta , 247.
[41] In the Turkish higher education system, "faculty" means "department." Even at the undergraduate level, students study in specific department exclusively. Being expelled from a department is equivalent to being expelled from the university as a whole.
[42] Ibid., 248.
[43] Dervish orders are officially banned by the state, though they still remain active. They tend to opreate primarily on the social and cultural level, but some such as the Nak ibendis align themselves with political parties. The Nak ibendis are known to have conservatively fundamentalist philosophy. See White, Jenny, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2002) 108-110.
[44] Akta , 256.
[45] Karakoç, Sezai, *Sütun* (Fatih Yayınevi 1969), 432-433. Cited in Akta , 250. Translation mine.

Karakoç reprimands the administrators for both their treatment of Babacan also their closure of the faculty. He claims that it is blasphemous to put learning on hold, which in turn implies that Islam encourages learning and science. Essentially, Karakoç seems to use his verse to both express his opinion that Islam is, in fact, progressive, and that he thinks that the faculty administrators have been bad Muslims. His positive conception of Islam and his confrontational tone starkly contrast both secular representations of Islam and the reconciliatory religious press of the day.

Some authors who came out in support of the students made enemies with the secular press, which stood firm in its condemnation of the Babacan. In December of 1968, for instance, *Cumhuriyet* published the following statement by University Women's Association, attacking ule Yüksel enler, a female author who spoke out frequently in defense of veiling:

> The Turkish woman shall not return to the age for which these individuals are yearning. She has embraced her rights, and there will be no turning back now. The author will never find a milieu among the ranks of Turkish women in which to realize her views. When it comes to change through force, the ones who bring innovations to societies through force are always revolutionary forces. This shows that revolutionaries will always be victorious. Under these conditions, there is nothing left but to pity those who nostalgically long for the past.[46]

Thus, the defenders of the Kemalist project, made their stance final.

Though women were expelled from universities for the headscarves during the 1970s, these events received little attention because Turkey was preoccupied with what may be understood as a low intensity civil war between socialists on the left and extreme nationalists on the right. Compelled by Cold War events such as Turkey's involvement in NATO and developments in Cyprus, Socialists performed acts of terrorism to demonstrate their opposition to Turkey's warm relations with the Western bloc. Nationalists responded by forming student militias that fought with leftists By the end of the 1970s the violence had spread beyond the universities and became too intense for the grid-locked government to control, with Nationalists and Socialists killing one another in the streets for offenses as small as reading the wrong newspaper. The violence spread to the countryside by the late 1970s with some 3,000 political killings between 1978 and 1980.[47] Thus, on September 12, 1980 General Kenan Evren took control, leading a coup that dissolved the parliament and installed yet another governing council comprised of military personnel.

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[46] *Cumhuriyet*, December 11, 1968. Cited in Akta , 253. Translation mine.
[47] Mango, 77.

Chapter 2: Politics, Religion, or Something Else…: *The Özal Era and the Disputed Meaning of the Veil*

A synthesis has been realized between the West and Islam. This synthesis has ended the identity crisis of the Turk.
--Turgut Özal from his book, *La Turquie en Europe*[48]

The 1980s was a decade of tremendous change for Turkey. Prime Minister Turgut Özal, elected in 1983, launched what may be considered a second cultural revolution--one that reoriented Turkey's drive to modernity. Yet his new version of the modern was at odds with the institutionalized Kemalist ideology under the protection of the military. He and the President, General Kenan Evren, clashed over many issues, including regulations on the veil in universities and public office, with Özal, a natural liberalist, pushing for the relaxation of the regulation, and Evren holding fast to the principle of secularism. The issue was not merely secularism, however, but also the meaning of the veil itself. As the daughters of rural migrants began to reach college age, many donned the veil, inspired by personal faith, political Islam, or a desire to preserve their identities as children of rural migrants.[49] Regardless of the motivations of the young women who wore the Islamic headscarf during this period, they had to contend with the established understanding of the veil as a symbol of the anti-modern.

The Emergence of Islamism

The reaction to Hatice Babacan's expulsion from the Ankara University Faculty of Theology revealed a surfacing schism in Turkish society. A highly fragmented phenomenon, Islamism emerged in the late 1960s most definitively in countries that had become Westernized such as Egypt, Iran, and Turkey.[50] Islamism a "fundamentalist" movement in the most basic sense of the word; Islamists break with practices and beliefs that have been developed for centuries, returning to scriptures in order to get back its most original or "fundamental" meaning. Scholars point out the significance of mass education and media in making Islamic texts available to the public beyond trained religious scholars (*ulema*), opening the way for interpretation of Islamic sources on an individual basis. Many children of rural migrants therefore, rejected the practices of their parents, who did not have access to such an education, on the grounds that they were not informed by an understanding of scripture. The definition of such fundamental principals

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[48] Cited in Nicole Pope and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey* (New York: Overlook, 1997), 170-171.
[49] The studies of Nilüfer Göle and Elisabeth Özdalga suggest that these are the most basic motives for veiling. In Turkey speculation as to the motives of veiled women is varied, ranging from simple tradition to secret payment from the Iranian government. This study, however, assumes that Göle and Özdalga's studies are valid and that the specific motives of individuals are not entirely knowable.
[50] Göle, Nilüfer, "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter Elites." *The Middle East Journal* 51 (Winter 1997): 47.

varies across the movement, however, as do ideas about how to implement them in practice.[51]

One may also view the Islamist movement as a departure from Muslim tradition in favor of a reinterpretation of Islam informed by the social and political issues in a particular national context. Though pan-Islamic unity is a goal that many Islamists share, they tend to be occupied with different issues depending on their location. As the anthropologist Jenny White points out, however, the movement does have some cohesive tenants such as obligation to authority, communal solidarity, and social justice. Islamism may be seen also as a product of the 20th century debate about the place of Islamic belief and practice in the face of global capitalism, consumerism, and media; many scholars see Islamist discourse as a byproduct of the dissatisfaction with these phenomena within Muslim societies.[52]

It is important here to make a distinction between "Muslim" and "Islamist." The label "Muslim" signals a religious identity, while an "Islamist" is a person with a social consciousness, social agenda or political agenda derived from an Islamic worldview.[53] In other words, while all Islamists are Muslims, not all Muslims share Islamist ideology or take part in Islamist organizations. For instance, many of Turkey's secularist political leaders who oppose Islamism still consider themselves to be pious Muslims. A staunch Kemalist, General Kenan Evren, for example, is famous for facetiously warning a mosque congregation to make sure not to stick the feet in the nose of the worshipper behind them as they prostrate themselves in prayer.[54] One could say that distinction between the category of "Muslim" and that of "Islamist" is that Islamists wish to see Islam play some role in government, whereas non-Islamist Muslims see religion as a private matter and are willing to accept a secularist government.

During the 1970s and '80s, Islamists experienced moderate success on the political scene. In the 1969 Necmettin Erbakan, a German trained engineer, founded the first overtly Islamist political party, the National Order Party, with funding and encouragement from the Nak ibendi_brotherhood. The party was forced to close to a minor intervention by the military into the government. Nevertheless, the party reopened with the new name of National Salvation Party and went on to win forty-eight seats in the general elections of 1973. This was just great enough of a margin to make it impossible for either the right or left wing parties to obtain a majority without forming a coalition with them. Süleyman Demirel, the leader of the right-wing True Path Party refused to join with Erbakan because of a personal animosity. Bülent Ecevit, leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP), on the other hand, seized the opportunity as part of a pragmatic strategy, hoping that Erbakan would use his contacts in Saudi Arabia to drive foreign investment[55]. Though this only lasted for a short period, it was highly ironic for the party founded by Atatürk to be in coalition with the Islamists. The generals closed

[51] See the Appendix for further discussion of Islamic scripture.
[52] White, Jenny, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2002), 23-24.
[53]White, 6. See also Göle, 1997.
[54] Mango, Andrew, *The Turks Today* (New York: Overlook, 2003), 83.
[55] Ibid., 71.

Erbakan's party along with all others following the coup of the 1980s. When the political scene was liberalized a few years later, however, he opened the *Refah* (Welfare) Party, which historian Re at Kasaba refers to as "the standard bearer of anti-Kemalist opposition"[56] for their uncompromising devotion to Islamist ideology. The success of this party was meager in the 1980s; they only rivaled right-wing ultra-nationalists in competition for seat shares.[57]

Turgut Özal and the New Consumer Culture

Apart from abruptly halting the violence between left and right, the 1980 military coup led by General Kenan Evren barred the former party heads from politics, making room for less-established political up-and-comers to achieve positions at the head of government. Turgut Özal, a former World Bank employee, was one such politician. An ambitious man from the provincial town of Malatya, he led the Motherland Party, (ANAP) the only non-military sponsored party allowed by the generals, to claim an overwhelming victory in the first elections in 1983.

During his six-year term as Prime Minister, Özal made liberalizing reforms that radically transformed Turkey's economy. The two most prominent accomplishments of his program include lifting the former restrictions on foreign trade and encouraging free enterprise. Özal's goals were ambitious; he sought to make Turkey one of the world's largest and most powerful economies. The following statement made by Özal at the Izmir Economic conference in the early 1990s nicely illustrates his ambitions:

> I tell you that the main objective of Turkey in the next decade is to become one of the world's ten or fifteen most advanced countries. I tell you that Turkey must enter and can enter the league of first-class countries...Together with the new states from the Balkans to Central Asia—states that are Muslim, and mostly Turkish—we can make our power more effective. If we do not make serious mistakes, the twenty-first century will be the century of the Turks and of Turkey.[58]

Just as Hong Kong, Japan and Malaysia adopted this system, spawning their "Asian Tigers," Özal wanted to follow suite by proliferating "Anatolian Tigers" of his own.[59] By removing protections for domestic industries, trimming down the civil service, and offering incentives for entrepreneurs, Özal encouraged trade, foreign investment and free enterprise.

Domestically, Özal strived to move Turkey form a stagnant system of import substitution to a dynamic free market economy. During the 1970s Turks lived quite austerely; many goods were scarce, and high tariffs on imports made consumer products from overseas impossible for the average person to afford. When Turgut Özal lifted these tariffs it set off what historian Erik Zürcher refers to as a "consumer-led boom."[60]

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[56] Kasaba, Re at, "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Sibel Bozdo an and Re at Kasaba, ed. (Seattle: University of Washington, 1997), 16.
[57] Mango, 84.
[58] Ibid., 93.
[59] Ibid., 85.
[60] Zürcher, Erik, *Turkey: A Modern History* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 317.

Özal and his family exemplified a high-flying lifestyle that would be imitated by the new wealth in the form of conspicuous consumption. As historian Andrew Mango explains, Özal's vision echoed that of former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, who had decades earlier sought to import the American dream, imagining a Turkey in which every neighborhood yielded a millionaire. Toward the late 1960s, however, what Mango refers to as a "romantic socialism" became the dominant economic ideology.[61] One may understand Özal's vision both as a revival of this 1950s fantasy and as an endeavor in step with his contemporaries Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, who lit a of beacon of sorts, guiding other nations toward to the system of free enterprise. On the other hand, however, because Özal froze wages and severely downsized the size of the civil service, the purchasing power of Turkish society as a whole declined, and by the end of the 1980s the gap between rich and poor had widened.[62] Despite this somewhat demoralizing drop in the standard of living of the middle class, Turkish society by and large embraced Özal's vision. The fact that even the middle class, whose wages had been cut, went on buying sprees demonstrates the fact that Özal's reforms reached beyond the structures of the economy but into the fabric of society.[63]

Like many of Özal's ventures, this step alarmed General Evren. When Özal's first revised list of imports came out, listing only items that would be prohibited rather than those that would be allowed, General Evren feared that Turks would start to import "all sorts of extravagances."[64] Evren's anxiety over the presence of fancy consumer goods may have been a reaction to the loss of pride in the austere lifestyle that had been a source of national strength and solidarity. The first generation of Republican Turks, having suffered through several wars and decades of the protectionist economy, to some extent seems to have taken pride in making material sacrifices for their country.[65] Özal, on the other hand, believed that the presence of foreign imports on the shelves would strengthen the Turkish work ethic by motivating people to work harder to have the money to buy such goods as well as forcing Turkish manufacturers to improve the quality of their products, which had not yet competed with foreign imports.

Social and cultural changes came as a result of the consumer revolution. Traditionally, respectable careers were in the military or civil service, while more entrepreneurial endeavors were somewhat despised.[66] During Özal's premiership, however, the moneymaking that he and his inner circle exemplified became the ideal of status and respectability. As Anthropologist Yael Navaro-Yashin explains, the entire culture of social status was transformed with the emergence of young, urban professionals. Students began to pursue careers in lucrative fields like business and engineering. *The* aspiration came to be making money, which afforded one the family, house, car, appliances, vacations, and comforts of "successful" living.

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[61] Mango, 86.
[62] White, 42. Zürcher, 321.
[63] Zürcher, 317.
[64] Pope, 174.
[65] See also the argument in Kasaba.
[66] Mango, 86.

The urban landscape, in turn, altered to compliment this new lifestyle. Restaurants, bars, cafes, cinemas, and clothing chains proliferated in the city.[67] Glossy gallerias opened as well, advertising "the modern way of shopping" in contrast to the humble proprietorships of the local bazaar or market (*çar ı*). These were promoted as "the new times," "contemporary," and "up-to-date." This spin proved to be psychologically compelling for many Istanbulites, many of whom came only to browse, to gander at the novelty of it all, knowing they could not afford anything on the shelves. Others came to get a sense of what it felt like "to be in the West" or "to live like a Westerner," in air-conditioned spaces with polished, mirrored surfaces. At first there were only one or two of these gallerias in Istanbul. Over time, however, shopping malls proliferated, becoming a regular part of middle-class Turkish life.[68]

The Struggle to Redefine the Veil

Özal, himself having ties to the underground Nak ibendi brotherhood, had a superb ability to create a synergy between free market capitalism and faith. One of his first acts as prime minister was to push through un-secular legislation such as allowing the operation of interest-free Islamic banking houses. He also allowed Arab princes to purchase summer villas along the Bosphorus in an attempt to sweeten entrepreneurs of the oil rich nations to investment prospects in Turkey—something that Özal and Evren alike were anxious to realize.[69] Evren's willingness to work with Özal here shows that though their religiosity differed, they both had essentially the same goals: to achieve and maintain order and prosperity in Turkey. Özal's tolerance for Islamism, however, which was emerging as a full-blown political movement after having been overshadowed by the Socialist-Nationalist conflict of the 1970s, created problems in his relationship with General-now-President, with the Evren issuing cautions to Özal not to go too far, knowing all too well that Özal was the only man the Western financial institutions would deal with. Well aware that he had the military in check, and hardy by nature, Özal took Evren's disapproval in stride, not hesitating to test the limitations of Evren and the conservative military's tolerance toward innovation The dispute over veiling in universities is an example of this dynamic between Özal and the General.

For two decades the issue of veiling in universities and municipal buildings has been one of the most divisive in Turkish society. The issue is highly complex, having been explored from many a perspective including ethics, feminism, psychology, sociology, religion, etc. The fact that Turkish society is not clearly polarized on the issue makes it all the more complex. Turks at the ideological center may be torn or undecided on the issue, which partially explains the tug of war over the regulations on the veil during the 1980s. Depending on the political atmosphere, the Higher Education Council, a body established by the military government to regulate universities toughened, softened, or dropped these regulations all together in a dizzying cycle. At one point Turgut Özal used the strength of his party's numbers to push a bill lifting the ban through

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[67] Navaro-Yashin,Yael, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 81.
[68] Ibid., 90-91.
[69] Pope, 171.

the parliament, only to see it vetoed by President Evren.[70] In 1989 the council decided to drop the ban altogether and allow individual universities to decide whether or not students could veil. By and large universities allowed students to veil following this decision, though for faculty it was strictly prohibited. Contradictory decisions by two judicial bodies, however, left this a shaky triumph for veiled students, as the Constitutional Court declared veiling in universities unconstitutional on the basis of secularism, while the Council of State declared banning the veil unconstitutional on the basis of individual liberties.[71]

As stated earlier, however, this is not just an issue of indecision over secularism but over the understanding of the veil itself. With the emergence of Islamism many felt an urge to publicly express their new religious consciousness. The daughters of rural migrants to the city popularized an ensemble that reconfigures traditional rural dress to match a fundamentalist reinterpretation of Islamic scripture relating to female modesty.[72] Traditionally, rural women tied their headscarves loosely under the chin or behind the head, revealing the neck and substantial amounts of hair. This new, conservative style, however, uses a longer headscarf, fitted snugly to the head and neck and draped over the shoulders and bosom. It also includes a loose trench coat that renders the curves of the body undistinguishable (see Figure 11).[73] Whereas village dress emphasized utility as well as modesty—with loose trousers and cotton scarves that facilitated hard labor—the new scarf-coat combinations were both urbane and deliberately religious, concealing the skin and the contours of the body.

Figure 11

This overt religious expression through dress offended the sensibilities of secular society, leading to a backlash among secularists. The etymology of the word *türban* exemplifies a fresh attempt by Kemalists to harness and redirect the momentum of this trend. Up until the 1980s the term used to refer the headscarf were *ba örtü* which translates literally as "headcover," defined in the 1955 edition of the Turkish Language Society Dictionary as "covering made of muslin or something such as silk that women wrap round their heads to cover their hair."[74] During the time of the disputes over veiling in universities, however, the concept of *türban* emerged. This term has a three-fold meaning, referring to the headscarf itself, the particular style of wearing the scarf tied

[70] Özdalga, Elisabeth, *The Veiling Issue, Official Secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey* (Richmond: Curzon, 1998), 45.
[71] Ibid., 46.
[72] See the Appendix for further discussion of Islamic scripture.
[73] "Women Workers and Ümraniye Welfare Party Office," borrowed from White, 214.
[74] Norton, John, "Faith and Fashion in Turkey, " in *Languages of Dress in the Middle East* Nancy Tapper and Bruce Ingheim, ed. (Surrey: Curzon, 1997), 167.

behind the head rather than under the chin, and also the more abstract, general phenomenon of veiling. Prior to the disputes over veiling, the word *türban* was used to refer to the fashionable headscarf seen in Parisian fashion shows, and as political scientist Alev Çinar argues, was introduced by authorities because it would be an alternative head cover least associated with Islam. The usage of *türban* seems to have floated for a while, with secular society extending it as more fashionable, modern alternative to the new religious attire in the hope of de-Islamicizing the headscarf.[75] In 1984 when the prohibitions on veiling in universities were softened, only the headscarf tied behind the neck, referred to as the *türban* was allowed, because this was considered to be more "in line with contemporary dress" than the headscarf pinned under the chin.[76] In a statement released by a state court defending their decision to allow the *türban* in universities, an official defined the *türban* as "a modern accessory that a woman may wear in any place or season…Though it is required for men to go bareheaded indoors, there is no demand for such a requirement for women. This is the norm in all civilized countries. A woman who covers her head with the modern *turban* may be found in the classroom.[77] In 1987, at the most heated point of the disputes over the veil in the universities, the media launched a concerted effort reminiscent of the Struggle Against the Chador Campaign to train the public on the proper way that the *türban* to be worn.

NE NEDİR?

Türban, dini amaçla takılmaz

Magazin Servisi — Modacılara göre türban olayında kavram yanlışlığı yapılıyor. Uzmanlar gazetelerde fotoğrafları çıkan üniversiteli kızların türban değil "sıkmabaş" başörtü taktıklarını, türbanın ise dini amaçlı örtünmelerde kullanılamayacağını belirtiyorlar. Başörtüsü saçları tamamıyla örtüp çenenin altında bağlanmakta ya da çarşafı anımsatır tarzda önde çenede tutturulmaktadır. Oysa türbanın amacı yüzü saklamak değil, tamamıyla ortaya çıkarmaktır. Aslında yüzü bu denli ortaya çıkaran türban iddialı bir aksesuardır. Yakışması zordur. Çok muntazam yüz hatları ister. Türban Doğu kökenlidir. Ama Avrupa'da yüzlerce yıldan beri belli başlı bir moda aksesuarı olarak kullanılmaktadır. İpek, kadife, jarse türbanlar, drapelerle usta bir şekilde başa sarılarak tepede ya da yanda bir broşla ya da düğümle tutturulur. Türban yüzü çoğu kez yalnızca bir bordür olarak çevreler. Tepe açıktır, saçlar görünür. Bazen türbanın altından saçlar bırakılır. Bazen saçlar türbanın üstünde bukleler halinde tepeye toplanır. Türbanın dini amacı yoktur. Şık, ama iddialı bir moda aksesuarıdır.

Figure 12

An excerpt from the January 8, 1987 issue of the daily *Cumhuriyet* entitled "The *türban* cannot be worn for religious purposes" warns women that "experts" have

[75] Çınar, Alev, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places, and Time* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2005), 79.
[76] Özdalga, 42.
[77] Süleyman Do du, *Ba örtüsü*, 90-91. Cited in Akta , Cihan, *Tanzimat'tan Günümüze Kılık Kıyafet ve ktidarII* (Istanbul: Nehir, 1990), 133. Translation mine.

observed many girls wearing the *sıkmaba* , or “tight headed” method of covering that is not considered to be *türban* (see Figure 12). “Those who wear a head cover for religious purposes pin it under the chin…the purpose of the *türban* is not to hide the face, but to accentuate it.” The article then entices women with a challenge, “It is difficult to look good in a *türban*. It demands excellent facial features,” seemingly trying to temp the veiled woman with her own inner desire to be beautiful. The article finishes by reaffirming the modern qualities of the *türban*: “Though the *türban’s* origins are in the East, it has been word for centuries in Europe as a fashion accessory….the *türban* has no religious meaning. It is a chic, compelling fashion accessory.”[78]

As a Cihan Akta points out, however, this interpretation was rejected by much of Turkish society including veiled women themselves. According to her, students who went to class with the *türban* style head covering were very few.[79] In 1989 the Constitutional Court overturned the law allowing the *türban* in universities with the following statement:

> Our girls who live in an environment in which they have been deprived of education and thus, independent thought, are being made to cover under the influence of custom and tradition. However, some educated women who would not bow to the traditions and customs of their environment, cover their heads out of pure spite for our secularist Republican principles and to demonstrate their support for a Republic based on religion. For such women, the head cover has become more than simply a habit, but the symbol of a worldview that is opposed to both women’s freedom and the principles of our Republic.[80]

Thus, the campaign to de-Islamicize the veil failed. The *türban* style of veiling tied behind the head never gained as much popularity among veiled women because it was not seen to be as religiously valid as the style pinned under the chin. The word *türban* eventually settled with its current negative connotation, being used primarily by secularists to refer to the entire phenomenon of veiling. As Nilüfer Göle puts it, "...the label of *türban* represents the hybrid and transgressive nature of Islamism in general and women's participation in the Islamist movement in particular.”[81]

In the midst of this legal tug of war, many veiled university students faced tough choices. Officially, their only two options were to either remove the headscarf or give up school or their jobs. Many students attempted to skirt the regulations by wearing hats or wigs over their veils. Others simply dropped out of school, took up careers as homemakers, stayed at home with their families, or, if possible, studied abroad. Islamist publications became filled with articles expressing feelings of anger and victimization in light of these hardships. Several Islamist publications geared toward women emerged in the mid-1980s including *Kadın ve Aile* (Woman and Family), *Mektup* (Letter) and *Bizim Aile* (Our Family). All of the magazines discuss issues important to Muslim women though *Mektup* stands apart from the other two in the militancy of its rhetoric and

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[78] “Türban dini amaçla takılmaz,” *Cumhuriyet*, 8 January, 1987. Citation and photograph borrowed from Çınar, 80. Translations mine.
[79] Akta , 141.
[80] Cited in Akta , 133-134.
[81] Göle, Nilüfer, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1993), 5-6.

aggressive tone of its writers. The representations of the veil found in *Mektup* exemplify the type of political meaning attached to the veil that most frightened and agitated secularists, intolerantly admonishing women who did not veil while depicting veiled women as fighters in a broader struggle between Islam and the West. Issues of *Mektup* from the 1980s are littered aggressive images such as a veiled woman with a machine held readily at her shoulder were likely meant to invigorate radical Islamists while terrifying secularists.[82]

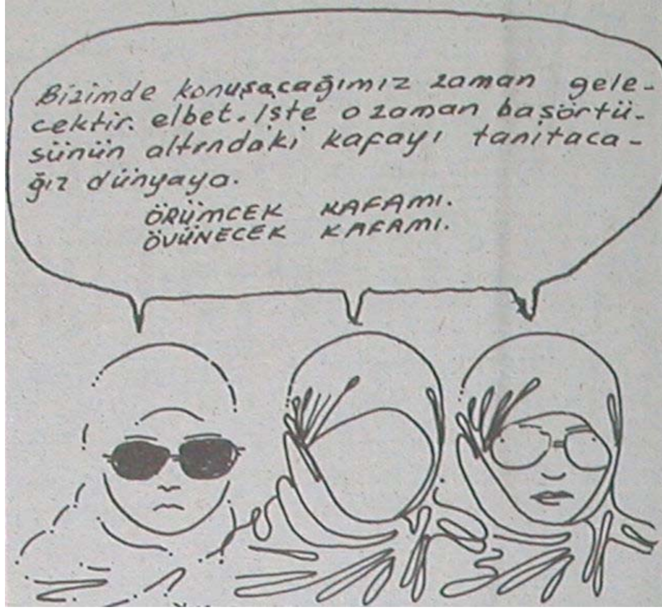

Figure 13

A cartoon drawn presumably in response to the regulations prohibiting veiling in universities, for instance, depicts three veiled women standing and speaking with the union and conformity of soldiers (see Figure 13): "Our time to speak will come," they begin, "and at that time, as you'll see, we will introduce the world to the mind beneath the veil. My 'backward' mind, my 'reactionary' mind." The bitter sarcasm with which the figures echo the insults leveled at veiled women is no less than eerie. Though the radical trend represented by *Mektup* should be viewed as extreme, in the wake of the Iranian Revolution the fear of radical Islamism became palpable in Turkish society. It is likely that representations like those in *Mektup* made it more reasonable for secularists to assume that veiled women were making political statements through their headscarves.

The Islamist Rejection of Fashion

One of the theoretical tenets Islamists is a rather undefined opposition to Western culture on the grounds that it is exploitative and leads Muslims into sin. In fact, according to Islamist narratives of the emergence of fashion in Turkey, it was not something that existed prior to Westernization; it was a part of Westernization[83]. In these narratives, Ottoman men and women simply wore traditional dress, until the period of the *Tanzimat*, or Westernizing reforms, when the Ottomans were struck with a sense of

[82] *Mektup*, April 1989, 8.
[83] Sakallı, Saliha, "Moda Tanzimat'la Ba ladı," *Yeni Bizim Aile*, September, 1992, 18-19.

inferiority to the West with men wearing suits, ties and the fez and women following the Parisian style. From then on, according to Islamist narrators, it has been a steady progression of Turks trying to look more and more Westernized that was momentarily accelerated during the period of Atatürk's reforms with an overt assault on Islamic dress.

Many contributors to these publications argued that fashion is a part of consumer culture that seeks to exploit and spiritually bankrupt women in particular.[84] *Kadın ve Aile* published a special fashion edition in 1986 with articles such as "Fashion is the Cause of Social Disintegration," arguing that fashion is harmful to society because it encourages individual materialism, and "What's Behind Fashion" which claims that the Ottoman national and religious identity were obliterated through the dominance of Western fashion.[85] In her article for *Yeni Bizim Aile* in 1992 contributor Yasemin Güleçyüz uses the tale of "The Emperors New Clothes" as an allegory to demonstrate the threat of consumer culture to Muslims. She accuses the fashion industry of being like the "Deceptive Tailor" of the story who tells the emperor that his invisible clothes are all the rage. Similarly, Güleçyüz warns, the fashion industry convinces people of the inflated value of things that they neither want nor need by telling them that they are trendy. She argues, for instance, that nylons only exist to facilitate the wearing of mini skirts, tying them into her narrative of "The Emperor's New Clothes" by pointing out the fact that they are, literally, invisible pieces of clothing that everyone has been convinced are necessary.

Contributor Ay e Devecio lu's 1991 Article from *Mektup* is fiercer in its assertion that fashion is a form of Western cultural imperialism meant to disintegrate the Muslim way of life. In her piece, entitled "What This Fashion Has Done," Devecio lu paints a scenario in which the Western "kings of fashion" lead Turkish women and girls astray by convincing them the keep up with fashion. She refers to Turks as "the poor victims of the Zionist fashion industry." She portrays them as sheepishly following commands dealt out by the "fashion kings:"

> The fashion kings announced in 1991 that the skirts would be 5 inches higher, and the heels as well. The next day we saw that the skirts had been raised 5 even 10 inches higher. Even if the poor feet will break, they are five inches higher. Let the head of the family (the father) complain, beat his knee[86], beat his head in frustration…What is done is done.

She claims that Turkish women try to outdo the European tourists in dressing scandalously:

> Some European tourists who saw our women walking around in everyday dress exclaimed that while they themselves were models they don't go around dressed so nakedly…Some of our women try to best European women in their achievements. When the European shows the leg, ours shows the calf; when the European shows the calf, ours

[84] Although this study has a limited pool of primary documents from the 1980s to draw upon, a study by Bınark Mutlu and Barı Kılıçbay argues that Islamist women's publications during this period rejected fashion on a theoretical level.

[86] This references a Turkish proverb: "He who does not beat his daughter into obedience will later beat his knee in regret," Pope, 302.

shows the belly, when the European puts on lipstick, ours paint the lips, cheeks, nose, fingernails and even the ears.

She is especially outraged that women with this appearance claim to be Muslims. "If you ask [the women who claim to be Muslims] what's with their outfits, they will say, "We are becoming Westernized, so we adhere to fashion."[87]

The Economics of Veiling

Women taking up the new veiling style often had a difficult time finding clothing both because few stores marketed to them and because of their limited economic means. Because the poor, urban milieu from which most veiled women hailed continued to struggle, no entrepreneurs had put much capital into any business marketing to veiled women. The few available stores were hidden away in obscure alleys away from the main thoroughfares. Because the only head scarves available were smaller squares of cloth more suited to the veiling style that had been characteristic of traditional village life[88], the stores made longer scarves to order for women who wanted to wear the new, conservative style draped over the shoulders and bosom. The colors available from these stores were generally sober dark blues, dark greens, blacks, and browns.[89]

Many women exercised their sewing skills, crafting their own ensembles at home. Issues of *Kaın ve Aile* magazine published during this period all contain notions and foldout pattern inserts to help veiled women make outfits not only for themselves but for their husbands and children as well. The vibrant pattern and bright colors of many of these designs suggest that these women were unsatisfied with the narrow selection of blandly colored coats and scarves offered by the alleyway sewing studios. Two figures featured in a late 1980s *Kadın ve Aile* sewing section illustrate this point (see Figure 14).[90] One wears a *türban* style headscarf and a skirt-blouse ensemble with a wildly colored paisley pattern. The second figure wears a long, lavender veil that matches the rest of the outfit. The waist, sleeves, and bosom are gathered in a style that one might associate with the chic of the late nineteen eighties. The hand drawn figures, seemingly colored make clear the low production values of the magazine.

Figure 14

The End of an Era

The emergence of Islamism in the late 1960s began a process of dragging forth the inherent tension between modernity and tradition from the murky depths of the Turkish project of self-reinvention. In the 1980s conflicts that had been

[87] Decevio lu, Ay e, " u Modanın Ettikleri," *Mektup*, July 1991, 26-27.
[88] White, Jenny, "Islamic Chic," in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, Rowman and Littleield, 1999), 83.
[89] Navaro-Yashin, 82.
[90] "Bayram Günleri Için Giysiler," taken from a late 1980s issue of *Kadın ve Aile*.

submerged for decades became fully exposed as Islamism entered the scene as a full-blown ideology. This said, Özal's quote featured in this chapter's opening epigraph is highly ironic. One cannot deny that during the 1980s Turkey was, in fact, tormented by a crisis of identity, unsure whether it was still in touch with its Islamic heritage—much less ready to fully reject or embrace it. One might chock up Özal's statement to the habit of many politicians to gloss over conflicts, maintaining composure even during the most urgent of crises. This is likely part of it, though it is also important to remember that Özal was a hardy optimist, thus, such statements were simply part of his character. Even throughout the difficult latter years of his premiership, Özal was rarely discouraged by his lack of popularity or the frustrated stallings of his ventures. He died of a heart attack in 1993, never to see the full fruition of the seeds he planted in the 1980s. The transformation of Turkish culture that came into full bloom in the 1990, however, would not have been possible without Özal's initial reforms.

Chapter 3: Modernity Wears White: Fashionable Veiling and Its Interpretations

…we have no intention of using tesettür for the purpose of fashion. Just the opposite, in fact, we intend to use fashion for the agenda of tesettür.
--Mustafa Karaduman, co-owner of Tekbir Apparel, from a 1992 interview in *Yeni Bizim Aile*

The word *tesettür* is a derivation of the Arabic root s-t-r, which has the highly abstract meaning of "cover." It is used to form the word *setr*, which refers to the tenets of modesty outlined in the Qur'an and the Hadith.[91] In Turkey, the word *tesettür* has come to have a both an abstract and a concrete meaning. The abstract or theoretical meaning is roughly equivalent to the more widely used Arabic term *hijab*, which refers to the ideal state of Islamic female modesty. In Arab countries *hijab* refers to both the head scarf itself and the idea that it represents: concealing oneself from strange men for the purpose of self-respect, religious piety, and family honor. In Turkey for some reason *tesettür* seems to represent this concept of modesty as well as any clothing such as head scarves, loose-fitting coats, the chador, skirts, etc. that may be used to fulfill this ideal. It is difficult to identify when the word *tesettür* gained the currency it has today. It doesn't appear to have been used much until the 1980s, the period when women began wearing the ensemble that typifies what is understood as contemporary *tesettür*, a long coat and a headscarf that covers the hair, neck, and possibly the shoulders and bosom (See Figure 10).

In 1992, the major Islamic clothing manufacturers came together to hold the first-ever commercial fair. This was an opportunity for the businesses dealing in Islamic clothing to publicize themselves to a rapidly growing, yet somewhat neglected market: women who wear *tesettür*. This might not seem remarkable unless one keeps in mind the fact that up to that time very few stores had marketed to veiled women. Traditionally,

[91] Denny, Fredrick, *An Introduction to Islam* (Boulder: Prentice Hall, 2005), 100. See the Appendix for further discussion of Islamic scripture.

Figure 15

they had made their clothing at home, as the largest portion of the women donning the veil was from traditional families that had migrated from the villages to the cities during the 1950s and ‘60s. These families were of meager economic means, and lived crowded in the slums that began to swell along the outskirts of the major metropolises. In an interview in the Islamist women’s magazine *Yeni Bizim* Aile, Mustafa Karaduman, co-owner of Tekbir Apparel, mentions setting up shop in alleys before he had the capital to open a proper store.[92] Mustafa Bozdemir, a sponsor of the fair, describes how far along the production of *tesettür* had come:

> For many years people regarded as conservative Muslims couldn’t find apparel to reflect their own thoughts and beliefs. By and large they tried to meet their needs as best they could with the means they had at home. They continued producing their traditional clothing. As the education level and the global outlook of our people began to change and develop, however, then the development of apparel became directed toward faith, and also felt the need to modernize.[93]

This fair was just the beginning—veiled women turned out to be a hungry market. As Anthropologist Yael Navaro-Yashin discovered in interviews with *tesettür* retailers, young Islamist women preferred to shop at the more upscale stores and purchase stylish headscarves and coats. During the 1990s bubbly colors like baby blue, light pink, purple and yellow became fashionable among young veiled women[94]. Before long, companies like Hilye, Setre, Mesture and Tekbir, especially, made it big, marketing their products both domestically and abroad.

It wouldn’t be long before *tesettür* hit the runway. Tekbir Apparel led the way, holding its first show in November 1994, hiring models (who did not normally veil) to display their designs.[95] The models weren’t the only novelty at Tekbir’s show—the designs almost testing the boundaries of Islamic propriety, accentuating waists, hips, and bosoms. At a 1998 show, a model boldly crossed the runway in a full chador colored crimson rather than the traditional, sober black. Some of Tekbir’s designs may be considered impractical and kitschy as well; Japanese kimono *tesettür* ensembles, for instance, were featured in the company’s 1998 collection.[96] The photographs in the *Sabah* article covering the 1994 show illustrate the emphasis on beauty and artistry in Tekbir’s runway designs (see Figure 15).

In 1997 the most successful companies began to release catalogues. One can see the improvement in the quality of production by comparing the advertisements from the

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[92] “Moda tesettürün hizmetinde, ” *Yeni Bizim Aile*, July 1992, 9-11. Translation mine.

[93] “Tesettür-‘92 fuarı bir ihtiyaçtan do du,” *Yeni Bizim Aile,* March 1992, 18-20.

[94] Navaor-Yashin, Yael, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 82-83.

[95] Ibid., 99.

[96] “Tesettür Modası”, *Milliyet*, 23 November, 1998, 5. Cited in Bınark Mutlu and Barı Kılıçbay, *Tüketim Toplumu Ba lamında Türkiye’de Örtünme Prakti i ve Moda li kisi* (Ankara: Konrad Adenaur Vakıfı, 2000), 88.

late 1980s and early 1990s with the catalogues of the late ‘90s (see Figures 16 and 17).[97] The modest rendition of the Altın   ne typifies the promotions in the various women’s magazines during the late ‘80s and early ‘90s.

Figure 16 **Figure 17**

Tekbir, now the leader in the industry, was able to employ a luxurious ambiance for the cover of its catalogue. The other major companies covered in Mutlu and Kılıçbay’s study, Hilye and Setre, follow the same trend. The styles offered within the calatalogues include stylized versions of the classic *tesettür* headscarf-coat ensembles, as well as innovative designs, and extra-fancy wedding outfits.

But *tesettür* as a fashion symbol? It seemed ironic to Islamists and secularists alike. But, as Binark Mutlu and Baris Kiliçbay point out, fashionable *tesettür* signaled something new. For some it signaled a corruption of the original meaning of *tesettür*, for others it was a way out of the former conception of the veil as a symbol of poverty.

The New Muslim Entrepreneurs

Turkish domestic industry has been traditionally organized with industries being centralized in particular localities. For instance, the large automotive manufacturers center their production in Bursa, textile companies in Izmir, etc. These sectors are often led by large families that run the businesses like kingdoms, passing the leadership of the enterprise onto carefully selected heirs.[98] Turkey’s textile industry is especially competitive, with large firms dominating the sector. The incentives provided by Özal’s free market reforms, however, helped entrepreneurs from smaller Anatolian cities, some of whom were strongly religious, climb the economic ladder.[99] As Navaro-Yashin explains, these up-and-coming businessmen used various means to get a leg-up on the more established firms. Many cooperated to form conglomerates selling wide varieties of items from automobiles to snack foods. Many also promoted themselves in ways that appealed to religious sentiments. Some companies would advertise their adherence to

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[97] Borrowed from Mutlu-Kılıçbay, 52-53.
[98] Mango, 145.
[99] White, Jenny, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2002), 44.

Islamic Law through practices such as reserving money for charity (the practice known as *zekat*), or serving meals to employees during Ramadan.[100]

Mustafa Karaduman, co-founder of Tekbir Apparel, was one such entrepreneur. Born in the village of Malatya (the same as Turgut Özal) in 1957, Karaduman was able to move to Istanbul in 1969 with a meager sum of money borrowed from a neighbor. After climbing up through the ranks of the clothing industry, first as an ironer, then as a machinist, then a tailor, Karaduman acquired enough capital to found a sewing studio with his seven brothers in 1978. At first they started out making veils to order like all the other Islamic fashion retailers, but they became innovators when they marketed the first ready-to-wear chador. They were one of the first to mass-produce veils, and the very first to launch a fashion show. Now, Tekbir leads the industry in *tesettür* fashion, having come a long way from a humble studio to chic department store centrally positioned directly across from Benetton in a busy shopping district of Istanbul. Karaduman promotes a mission along with his brand: to show that veiled women can be beautiful and to bring veiling to the world scene.[101]

Karaduman's success has made him a somewhat controversial figure in Turkish society—even among pious Muslims. He professes that his company maintains ethical standards that Muslims view favorably such as refusing to charge interest on loans, paying well above the minimum wage, and promoting the philosophy of veiling along with the products themselves. Regardless, many Muslims are skeptical. Interviewers frequently question Karaduman about the religious legitimacy of his designs as well as the permissibility of using a religious symbol to reap such a profit. Karaduman, like his fellow townsman Özal, is debonair and resilient. He parries the inquiries into opportunities to reaffirm his company's mission to deliver the ideals behind *tesettür* along with the product itself.

Elite Lifestyles

In her work *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey*, anthropologist Jenny White argues that Turgut Özal's reforms allowed the emergence of new lifestyles that defy the traditional conceptualizations of Islamists, Muslim, and secularist such as Islamist yuppies, *nouveaux riches*, and young generation-Xers. All of these new groups that emerge in the 1990s cannot fit into the boxes created for Muslims or Islamists whether it be their social status, material wealth, education, or disregard for ideology.

She narrates a scene in which she and a group of friends bear witness to what she calls "a competitive display of wealth" by a *nouveaux riches* entrepreneur from the provinces. The way White tells it, the man enviously responded to the admiration received by his business partners' elegant home by whisking them off to his compound that included three mansions, which allowed the men and women of the family to live in separate quarters; swimming pool; and view of the Bosphorus, a pricey commodity in Istanbul. The businessman and his wife insisted that they view their collection of what

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[100] Navaro-Yashin, 81.
[101] Navaro-Yashin, 95-96.

they claimed were decorative artifacts from the sultan's palace. The exhibition included not only the items themselves, but also the receipts.

This is an example of how some formerly provincial entrepreneurs made it big in the Islamic conglomerates, and as a result of their success embraced a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption, spending lavishly on signs of social status such as lavish houses, cars, and vacations. The *nouveau riches* are just one example of a new social group that emerged during the 1990s. Another is what White refers to as the "Islamist yuppie", young people who were able to carve out a middleclass lifestyle for themselves by pursuing careers in the lucrative fields of business, engineering and the hard sciences. The Islamic lifestyle became upgraded with the emergence of new groups such as these. Things like high-tech travel clocks that indicate the direction of Mecca, private beaches where well-to-do veiled women can go swimming without being seen, and chic Islamic fashion are all material markers of social status that emerged with the proliferation of these groups.

The Persistence of Stigma

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Council of State relaxed the regulations banning the headscarf from universities. Thus, during much of the 1990s veiled university students enjoyed relative freedom, though faculty and civil servants still had to unveil. The regulations were tightened once again in 1997, however, as result of a conflict between the Kemalist military and the Islamist government. Turkish society was already on-edge because the Islamist politician Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party had gained enough popular support to win a national election, though they shared power with another party within a coalition. In 1997 the military, ever watchful of the Islamists, had run out of patience with Erbakan. On February 28, 1997, following, a stunt performed by his party members[102], the military orchestrated a campaign in which trade unions, universities and employers' organizations demanded the resignation of the Islamist prime minister's cabinet. The military also tried to eliminate political Islam from education, business, and other activities. Businesses suspected of being funded by Islamic organizations were penalized. Recep Tayyip Erdo an, Islamist mayor of Istanbul, lost his position and was imprisoned for ten months for reading a nationalist poem with Islamic overtones. Erbakan's party was forced to close, but reopened under the new name *Fazilet*, or "Virtue" Party.[103]

In April of 1999 Merve Kavakçı, a veiled woman elected to the parliament under the ticket of Necmettin Erbakan's Fazilet Party, caused uproar when she refused to remove her veil for the inauguration ceremony for parliamentarians. Kavakçı was greeted with shouts and admonitions as she approached the podium. She was unable to complete her oath. The coverage of the subsequent hearings over the incident filled front pages for nearly two weeks. Secularists on one hand argued that the veil is in fact not a religious imperative as Merve claimed it to be, and that she must adhere to the traditions

[102] The mayor of an Ankara suburb, a member of the Erbakan's party, invited an Iranian official to join in the festivities Jerusalem Day, a day of protest against the Israeli occupation of Palestine. See Mango, 97.
[103] Mango, 97-98.

of the institution of the parliament. Of course there was no codified rule stating that women may not wear veils into the parliamentary ceremony—only a regulation stating that the dress for both men and women must be appropriate to the traditions of the parliament. It was the way that the government and the public interpreted it—as an affront to secularism—that caused Kavakçı to loose her status as an elected parliamentarian. Her party did not stand behind her, saying that she had made a personal choice. Many suspect that the head of her party, Erbakan had planned the whole thing, though the motives for such a stunt remain obscure. Regardless of the intent, the incident reopened the discussion of the meaning of the veil in relation to secularism, exposing the anxiety of secular Turks over the threat of political Islam.

Incidentally, in the catalogue for Tekbir Giyim's Fall 1999-2000 collection various ensembles were given names reminiscent of the event such as "Merve" and "Fazilet." In an interview published in the monthly *Tempo* in November 1999 Mustafa Karaduman acknowledged the connection between the incident and the names of the designs.[104]

Yenilikçis: The Next Generation of Islamism

Toward the end of the '90s young Islamists became dissatisfied with Erbakan's leadership. The young, upwardly mobile elites of the Fazilet Party broke away in 2001 to form the Justice and Development Party under the leadership of Recep Tayyıp Erdo an, a younger Islamist, who had made a career for himself under Erbakan's tutelage.[105]

Erdo an was born in Kasimpa a, a run-down area of Istanbul populated mostly by rural-urban migrants. His parents themselves were from a town on the Eastern Black Sea coast. Erdo an went to a religious high school, and was a good soccer player. He got offered a space on a professional team, but refused to shave his Islamic beard. He became active in the youth branch of Erbakan's National Salvation Party in the 1970s and a full-time politician in the Refah Party in 1983 .[106] In 1994 Istanbulites, frustrated with the corruption of Nurettin Sözen's administration, elected Erdo an as their mayor. In 2002 his Justice and Development Party won an overwhelming majority, making them the first Islamist party to form a government without having to enter into a coalition. The Justice and Development Party is at least ostensibly more open to non-Sunnis, seems less threatening to democracy, and is more responsible at managing the economy than Erbakan had been.[107]

Erdo an serves as the political head of an emerging cultural movement of younger, hipper Islamists who differentiate themselves from their elders through both lifestyle and dress. They are often referred to as the *Yenilikçis*, or "innovators" because their lifestyle and politics contrast those of Erbakan's old guard. Cartoonist Latif

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[104] Mutlu-Kılıçbay, 24.
[105] Kalaycıo lu, Ersin, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge Across Troubled Lands* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 11.
[106] Mango, 109.
[107] Kalaycioglu, 11. Mango, 96.

Demirci playfully comments on this in a cartoon depicting two worshippers approaching the Mosque to pray (see Figure 18).[108] Just as they prepare to leave their shoes at the doorstep (it is forbidden to wear shoes into a mosque) one of them realizes that a bunch of sneakers are already piled up at the door, "Hey let's go somewhere else to pray, this place is obviously full of *Yenilikçi*," meaning that he doesn't want to pray in the same mosque with those youngsters.

Figure 18

Other observers have noticed behavior among younger Islamists that the older generation probably would find inappropriate. The secular media is quick to point out veiled teenagers at rock concerts.[109] Anthropologist Jenny White, when revisiting an Islamist neighborhood notes that the dress is less conservative and that young women secretly wear makeup when they go to parties .[110] This perceived "innovation" in dress and behavior is related to the perceived laxity in religious practice among younger Muslims, a discussion that will be continued in the section *Waning Religiosity?*

The Veil as the Allegory of Hypocrisy

Focusing on how women's fashion has come to represent this new lifestyle, a cartoon below, drawn by the famous artist Turhan Selçuk attempts to expose the new class schism in Islamist society by using veiled women as symbols (see Figure 19).[111]

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[108] Demirci, Latif, *Bugün Devlet Icin Ne Yaptin?* (Istanbul: Yapi Kredi, 2002), 119.
[109] *Milliyet*, 10 August, 2005.
[110] White, 60.
[111] White, 228.

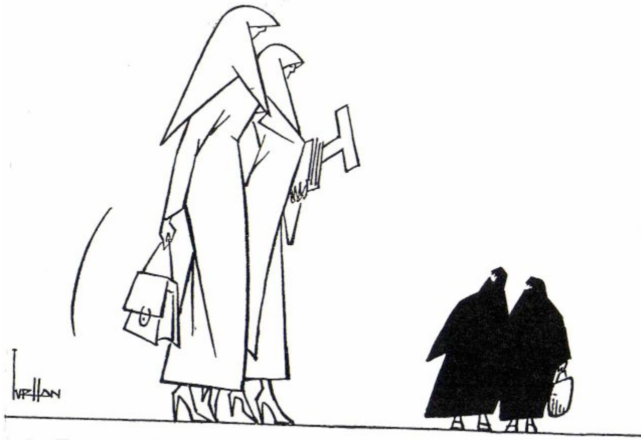

Figure 19

The women in white, meant to represent the new Islamist yuppie class, contrast starkly with their lowly, chador-ed counterparts. The smart handbag, the books, the form-fitting coats and what appears to be an engineering tool—all are meant to symbolize the wealth, opportunity and privilege of the wealthy Islamists. The two frumpy, black figures, who shrink back with a mix of surprise and intimidation, are reminiscent of the figures that the artist produced in the 1950s and 60s. Thus, Selçuk produces an image that comments upon change, the relationship between the old and the new veiled women of Turkish society. Of course, Selçuk's works usually represent the Kemalist view of veiling, so here he is most likely trying to show that Islamist political elites, whose supporters are largely Turkey's urban poor, do not actually identify with that lifestyle themselves. This does not mean that his commentary is totally invalid, however.

This attitude is given voice in a new genre of sensational journalism that appears to have emerged in the late 1990s along with the rise of the Islamist elites. It may be understood as a type of celebrity watching of wealthy Islamists that ranges from being malicious to merely disrespectful. Within this genre, elite veiled women have become representatives of the high flying lifestyle of their social group. In the feature entitled "'The ones with white 'Türk'bans," reporter Aslı Ortaç comments on some of the new trends in veiling, surprised by the chic *tesettür* ensembles that she sees in the wealthy neighborhoods:

> There are intriguing sights in Ni antasi, Etiler, Ortaköy, and Bebek, districts that are being used like runways. They have strappy, chic heels, skin-tight blue jeans…and really beautiful faces, with thin bodies whose curves are in the open for all to see, and a walk like a model on the runway. On their heads they have a *türban* of crisp, white silk. In the wide coats of suburban culture, sneakers bought from the bazaar, and dresses that sweep the ground, they are not at all like "others"… They fully take part in the gusto, the bourgeois image of Istanbul.

The point that that the author seems to find most stunning is the fact that veiled women have access to spaces that had formerly been denied to them such as the pricey store Silk&Cashmire within Istanbul's most expensive fashion mall, Akmerkez, where they can now shop for veils with high priced name brands, Gucci, Dior, Loui Vuitton, etc. The author remarks surprisedly that one can even see these "white *türbans*" in expensive

Istanbul cafes such as Reina, where such a thing would have been unimaginable ten years prior.[112]

The Islamist beach scene has also become an object of the secular media. The author of the "White 'Türk'ban" article notes that another part of this elite lifestyle has been to take summer holiday on a private compound where not everyone can go, putting special emphasis on the exclusivity. There, the women can strip down to bikinis undisturbed by the threat of strange male gazes. This is a privilege reserved for the ultra-elite, however. Since the Özal era the elites of the Arab oil states, for instance, have been coming to Turkey for their vacations. In August of 2005 the newspaper *Milliyet* peeked in on the Saudi royal family as they took their vacations along the Aegean coast. The two princesses exited their plane with their faces uncovered, but upon seeing the reporters, quickly hid beneath their veils. While they were swimming, however, the crew managed to get some shots of them in their bikinis. They published these photos juxtaposed next to the ones of the princesses hiding their faces beneath their veils. *Milliyet* went on to elaborate on the immense entourage of both possessions and personnel, which included a jet, private tents, a yacht, seventy pieces of luggage, fifteen guards, eight advisors, and twenty musicians. Though the Saudi Royal Family is not a member of the Turkish Islamist elite, they are welcomed to come to vacation by the Islamist government, and the media's treatment of them is no different from their treatment of wealthy Turkish Islamists.[113]

Turning away from criticisms of Is1amists' wealth, in 1996 a woman named Fahime ahin became a media darling after coming forward to reveal how the leader of an Islamic mystical order to which she belonged had coerced her into sleeping with him. For the first time a veiled woman was in the spotlight of the secular media, making tearful confessions about her sexual experiences, at that. The media had a field day probing ahin's sex life. The weekly magazine *Aktüel* did a piece on ahin entitled "The Veiled Marilyn Monroe," with the subtitle, "We've Become Peeping Toms as a Nation: Our Eyes Are in Fahime's Bedroom." The cover of the issue featured ahin's head superimposed onto the body of a model in the long trench coat emblematic of *tesettür* posing coquettishly, her skirt blown aside to reveal nyloned legs—a pose reminiscent of Marilyn Monroe (see Figure 20).[114] Not only does this depiction underscore the giddy fascination of the secular media with veiled women, but suggests that the modesty and sexual purity is merely gilding applied by *tesettür*.

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[112] Ortaç, Aslı, "Beyaz 'Türk'banlılar", *Yeni Aktüel*, July 2005, 35-37.
[113] "Çarsafla ba lıyor, bikinilye sürüyor," *Milliyet*, 10 August 2005 1, 4.
[114] Çınar, Alev, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places, and Time* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2005), 92-98.

Figure 120

Figure 21

Another example: Late in 2005 the daily *Milliyet* printed a scandalizing advertisement for its monthly magazine, *Tempo,* with the headline "Sex in Islam" (see figure 21). The sub-headlines are "Twelve-year-old girls married" and "Women who disobey their husbands considered bad Muslims." Finally, "Is a colorful turban an invitation to love?" Bother of these examples seem to represent the persistent idea among secularists that women beneath the veil truly desire to be alluring, if only they would simply let it out. In fact, the media began to probe Fahime ahin, prodding her with inquiries about when should would stop wearing the headscarf, and many were shocked that, when all was said and done, she decided to keep her veil.[115]

Waning Religiosity?

By the late 1990s—with fashion shows, catalogues, department stores—there was no speculating as to whether *tesettür* and fashion would meet because that time had already arrived. Following the boom in the Islamic fashion sector, the questioning seemed to turn to how and why did the *tesettür* come to this compromised position? How is it that the religious and political functions of veiling now shares space with the functions of beauty and art—especially considering the fact that *tesettür* is supposed to be about avoiding personal display?

Of course there are disagreements within the community as to what type of dress is appropriate for Islamic standards. Some, especially types like Emine enliko lu, founder of the radical magazine *Mektup*, for instance, might conceive of the full chador as the only acceptable type of dress for a Muslim woman. This should be viewed as

[115] Çınar, 98.

radical stance, however. Others see no problem sporting ensembles of form-fitting jeans and skirts in a variety of colors as long as the hair and neck are snuggly tucked within a headscarf.

Some Islamists take the new fashionable tesettür to represent a laxity in religious discipline. Kadın ve Aile contributor, Orhan Çeker, for instance, alerts his fellow believers to the evils of consumption in his 1997 piece, "An Invisible Hand Creates Insatiable Need."[116] He is particularly anxious about the class distinction that investing in fashion creates among Muslims. "Just when thinks they have been satisfied, an new design comes out, and people get put in competition with one another," he complains, pointing out that once one's basic needs are met, the remaining income should go to charity. Çeker then takes an authoritative and frustrated tone: "If our people want to call themselves serious, sincere Jihadists then they must escape the catastrophe of materialism." He then references an abstract "good old days" in which people didn't consume as much and the structure of the family was stronger:

> Our community must make an effort to return to our old way of life in which we were "far away" from consumption. If we have no intention of reversing the erosive the impact of a wicked campaign against our traditional family structure then let us not use the sacred word of "Jihadist" and present ourselves as we really are.

Situated within Çeker's text is a photograph of two women in crisp, white veils. This piece was included in a special issue, in which all of the pieces dealt almost exclusively with the relationship between fashion and the Islamic ideal of modesty, making the connections between Çeker's complaints and fashionable tesettür explicit.

Some try to reconcile Islam and fashion. Again in *Kadin ve Aile's* 1997 fashion issue contributor Gülay Pınarba ı defends fashion in a fundamentalist way.[117] She claims that as long as one wears *tesettür* in a way that fulfills the function for it laid down in the *Qur'an* (Surah of the Confederates, Verse 59), which she claims are chastity and modesty, experimenting with various styles and colors is permissible. "Let us not forget that Islam is a religion that encourages art and aesthetic. Several verses of the *Qur'an*, for instance, when describing paradise, put striking emphasis beauty, art and aesthetic," she explains. Mustafa Karaduman is one of the most vocal spokesmen for the hopeful view that *tesettür* can co-opt fashion, and not the other way around. At one point during an interview for *Yeni Bizim Aile* in 1992, he is posed the question as to whether or not he considers bringing together *tesettür* and fashion to be a compromise of Islamic principles. Karaduman gives this response:

> We make [our own designs] from start to finish because we have no other example to work from. …We give priority to the specifications of Islam. These standards are revealed to us in the Qur'an. We are trying to improve upon our designs without straying from these standards. In doing this, we offer every variety of tesettür on the runway. Our models wear alvar. Our models wear coats. We've even sent out models that reveal only their eyes. We've shown that it can be done. As you can see, we have no intention of using tesettür for the purpose of fashion. Just the opposite, in fact, we intend to use

[116] Çeker, Orhan, "Görünmez bir el ihtiyaçları bitirmiyor," *Kadın ve Aile*, November, 1997, 23-24.
[117] Pınarba ı, Gülay, "Tesettür, moda ve slam'da kılık-kıyafet" November, 1997, 30-31.

> fashion for the agenda of tesettür. What I mean is that we are making and effort to direct tesettür to the broadest crowd possible.[118]

In other parts of the article he says things like, "we want market the idea of *tesettür* (modesty, piety) along with the clothing."[119] It is tempting to think that in the midst of all of this indecision about the correctness of fashionable veiling that the big fashion companies Karaduman's Tekbir are taking the reigns, defining the appropriate veiling style based on what is chic or hip. It seems this way from the perspective of the smaller *tesettür* retailers, who complained to Navaro-Yashin that they are unable to compete unless they follow the trends set by the larger companies. "We had to reproduce those popularized designs with less cloth so that our prices can still be competitive beside the monopolies' price cuts," complained one sales clerk. "…silk was in fashion last year," he continued, "Then, one of the big companies put the stoned silk models on the market. That is what is in fashion this year. We now have to produce that, too." Mustafa Karaduman addressed these concerns in a quote published in a recent feature on veiling published in the Islamist daily Yeni afak:

> Nowadays many hair salons style the veil in ways that imitate the designs presented at our fashion shows. Along with political pressure, the thing that has had the biggest impact on veiling style has been the diminishing authority of religious leaders…Think that because there is no central religious authority guiding the practice, people just style their veil any way they feel like. Before, loose fitting outfits and large headscarves were in demand, but now no one is interested in those sorts of outfits. Everyone has just begun to veil according to their own thoughts and feelings. If those styles that we made in the beginning still sold, we would still be making them. Even if we did continue to produce the large-sized veils, people would just take them and style them however they like anyhow.[120]

So in his opinion, it is actually the veiled women who guide the trends in veiling through the principle of supply and demand. Gülnur Karpuz, a young woman interviewed in *Yeni Bizim Aile* in 1992, expressed similar thoughts: "Women by nature want to be liked, which causes them to want to look beautiful and unique. Thus, they sacrifice themselves by embracing fashion, which they see a way to satisfy these desires." Tuba Ceyhan, another interviewee, shares this sentiment. "We are the one's keeping the fashion industry alive; we are the ones who are the most vulnerable to all of this business. This is because we use fashion to fulfill our desire to be beautiful."[121]

It is tempting to thing of not just fashionable *tesettür* but the whole phenomenon of Islamists embracing symbols of status that had once defined secular lifestyles as "assimilation." This seems to be what sociologist Nilüfer Göle argues in her 1997 article "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter Elites,"[122] in which she claims that as Islamists achieve socio-economic success, the realization that

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[118] "Moda tesettürün hizmetinde, " *Yeni Bizim Aile*, July 1992, 9-11. Translation mine.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Barbaroso lu, Fatma Karabıyık, "Tesettür defilinde öteki üzerinde ov," *Yeni afak*, 25 November 2005. Obtained online at: http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/diziler/basortu/basortu03.html.
[121] Anonymous, "Genç Kızlarla Ba ba a," September 1992, 32-34.
[122] Göle, Nilüfer, "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter Elites." *The Middle East Journal* 51 (Winter 1997): 46-53.

certain aspects of modernity such as the study of the rational sciences, consumerism, etc. will cause them to naturally become secularized. If by this, Göle means that successful Islamists will consciously make the decision to become secular, realizing that their lifestyle is incompatible with their beliefs, then the documents presented here tell a story that challenges her view. Göle seems to assume that all people act in a purely rational way—as if every person were a philosopher. Meanwhile, Mustafa Karaduman persistently asserts that fashion can work to serve Islam, and women who wear these increasingly chic varieties of *tesettür* still identify themselves as Muslims and/or Islamists. Thus, Göle's argument is rather unconvincing because, as the evidence presented in this chapter shows, many people are simply willing to live with contradictions.

Conclusion

During the 1920s and '30s the Turkish state vigorously attempted to implement the Kemalist project in Anatolia. Yet with the outbreak of the Second World War and the ensuing economic difficulties, programs meant to educate Anatolian Turks such as the People's Houses had to take a backseat to other priorities. During this period cartoonists use the veil as a symbol of the seemingly unsuccessful modernization of the provinces, the backwardness of which was also bleeding into the cities as villagers migrated from the countryside en masse. General Gürsel and Colonel Türke , frustrated by the way that Anatolian women persistantly donned the black chador, demanded action lest the "blemish on the pristine face of the Turkish woman" that was this garment humiliate the Turkish nation before "the civilized world." The then military-run state launched the Struggle Against the Chador campaign, an event that demonstrates the military's function as the protector of the Kemalist project, stepping in to redirect Turkey's cultural development in a top-down fashion when necessary.

Hatice Babacan's expulsion demonstrates how Kemalist elites such as the administrators of the Ankara University Theological Faculty have striven to protect the achievements of Atatürk's revolution by keeping Babacan's scarved head—from their point, of view a symbol of women's oppression and backward religiosity—out of secular schools. During the university disputes of the 1980s Kemalist authorities maintained this position, trying to force women to unveil through regulations banning them from studying in universities and working in public offices. The media helped by portraying these women as victimized, misguided, and degenerate, just as the press had done during Babacan's arbitration in 1968. This type of top-down, somewhat coercive method of directing cultural development seems to have become an institutionalized part of the Kemalist project. Yet the failure of the media campaign to convince women to switch to the *türban*, as a fashionable, de-Islamicized alternative to the veil a shows its resilience as a phenomenon of culture supported by both the ideology of the then burgeoning Islamist movement and the seeds of liberalism planted by Turgut Özal.

Özal's political philosophy, liberal like his economic policy, was in sync with the national mood. As historian Re at Kasaba explains, "By the 1980s…Turkish people had grown suspicious, and downright cynical, about the latest incarnations of the promise of 'enlightened and prosperous tomorrows.' Instead of making further sacrifices for a future that kept eluding them, they were starting to inquire about the histories, institutions, beliefs, identities, and cultures from which they had been forcefully separated."[123] Özal, who publicly advertised his faith, helped to revitalize pride in Turkey's Islamic heritage, while trying also to connect Turkey to the outside world by tearing down the old barriers erected by Kemalists that, while protecting Turkey's domestic industries, had also held back goods and ideas. Historian Andrew Mango credits the overwhelming victory of Özal's Motherland Party in the 1983 to Turkish society's fatigue from austere, the result of decades of economic protectionism that left Turkey struggling domestically and disconnected from the outside world. Özal flung Turkey's doors wide open, allowing for a free exchange of goods and ideas, which then plugged Turkey in to the vast network of the global economy. Minimizing the state's control over the availability of material goods within the country, he empowered the individual consumer to make choices about which items they would own. Thus, the free market democratized the development of culture in Turkey. Though Islamists find the consumer culture incompatible their faith as they have reconceived it, it is beyond a doubt that Islamism both as a cultural and a political movement have benefited from the liberalism that he introduced in Turkish society. The success of Tekbir Apparel in Europe and the Middle East demonstrates how the channel into the consumer culture has afforded the formerly marginalized, provincial Muslims to gain recognition vis-à-vis both the global network of Muslims and consumer culture.

The emergence of new lifestyles such as *yenilikçi*, or "innovationist" Islamism, "Islamist Generation X-ers," Islamist yuppies, and *nouveaux riches* who are less ideological than the generation that supported the Erbakan's Refah party indicates and even greater fragmentation within Turkish society.[124] The social schism occurs along the lines of socio-economic class, with wealthier Islamists making leading a conspicuously luxurious lifestyle that other Islamists find objectionable. Meanwhile, the younger generation does not see embracing symbols of status linked with Westernization as necessarily incompatible with their beliefs. The emergence of *tesettür* fashion in the 1990s testifies to how the de-emphasis of ideology has caused what White calls a blurring of the boundaries between lifestyles of the categories of Islamist and secularist. Simultaneously, the authority over the definition of the veil became detached from Islamist ideology and scattered among these various groups.

The Evasive Modern

The Kemalist ideology of progress does not conceive of modernity as something Western *per se*, rather, they saw it was an absolute, objective reality that constantly

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[123] Kasaba, Resat, "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* Sibel Bozdo an and Re at Kasaba, ed. (Seattle: University of Washington, 1997), 16.
[124] White, Jenny, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2002), 131.

progressed in a linear fashion.[125] They logically deduced that since the West was more successful, they must be further along in the pursuit of the modernity. In the early decades of the twentieth century, modernity also seemed to be inevitable, so there was nothing wrong with helping it along through state-sponsored cultural reforms.

Since the 1980s, however, Turkey has had to confront a new conceptualization of the modern, which some might refer to "post-modernism," which challenges the assumed objectivity of Western modernity. This new vision of progress seeks to replace many of the values that underpin modernity as conceived by Kemalist ideologues with newer ones such as the recognition of diversity on the grounds that all cultures are equally valid and the freedom of the individual above national identity and solidarity. Meanwhile, Turkey, ever taking cues from the West as to how to proceed, reels from the mixed signals that have been a result of this revolution in thought. The very fact that veiled Turkish women filing a claim with the European Human Rights Commission for having been expelled from the university had their claim subsequently denied shows that the West is not decided on how to handle the headscarf issue. In June 2004, the commission ruled that Turkish schools have the right to assert secular principles as they so wish, and the students must accept these rules if they wish to be enrolled.[126] The outcry over the 2004 French ban of the headscarf in public schools from Muslims and non-Muslims alike also reveals the indecision in the West regarding the status of the veil as an issue of human rights. On one hand, many clamor for protection of such symbols of individual religious expression, while others hold to the idea that the headscarf is a symbol of women's oppression.[127]

Conclusion

By looking at the veil's life as a socially constructed symbol, this thesis shows how changes in the representation of the veil in the media result from shifts in the distribution of power over the transformation of culture among various segments of Turkish society. During the 1950s and '60s Kemalist elites tried to de-Islamicize the veil, if not completely erase it, through campaigns and regulations. As groups emerged in the 1980s expressing identities that challenged the Kemalist myth of national homogeneity, the Kemalists' ability to influence culture from the top downward—a trend that became even more pronounced with the rising influence of global consumer culture. By the early 2000s, the power to determine the trajectory of not just the veil, but culture in general had become more democratized, that is, open to a wide variety of actors: consumers, fashion designers, capitalists, Kemalists, Islamist ideologues, Islamist yuppies, gen-Xers, etc. Thus, the house of mirrors, the highly fragmented interpretive landscape that is Turkey's discourse around the veil is a result of the competition among a multiplicity of interpretations that have accumulated throughout the history of the Turkish Republic.

[125] Kasaba, 16-17.
[126] Kalaycıo lu, Ersin, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge Across Troubled Lands* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 173. "Türban bitmedi ba lıyor," *Yeni Aktüel*, July 2005, 38.
[127] "Viewpoints: Europe and the Headscarf," *BBC News*, 10 February, 2004, available online at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3459963.stm

Appendix:

The Scriptural Basis for Veiling

The *Qur'an*, the compilation of what Muslims believe to be revelations made by God through the prophet Muhammad, and the *hadiths*, stories and sayings from the life of Muhammad himself, are the two sources that form the scriptural base of Islam. Followers of Muhammad transmitted thousands of stories about his life, which have been compiled into various collections over centuries. The vastness of the corpus of *hadiths* makes it difficult to locate one story or saying to apply to a specific topic. There are also many disputes throughout the Muslim world about the validity of many *hadiths*. Therefore, this discussion is limited to Qur'anic passages, which are easily accessible. The Qur'an is divided in to chapters called *Surahs* and then further divided into numbered verses. The following Qur'anic passages that are most often referenced as a textual basis for veiling practice.[128]

The Surah of the Light (24), Verse 31:

> And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear there of that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brother or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O you Believers! Turn all together towards Allah, that you may attain Bliss.

The Surah of the Light (24), Verse 60:

> Such elderly women as are past the prospect of marriage, there is no blame on them if they lay aside their (outer) garments, provided they make not a wanton display of their beauty. But it is best for them to be modest, and Allah is One Who sees and knows all things.

The Surah of the Confederates (33), Verses 28 and 29 combined:

> O Prophet! Say to your consorts (women): "If it be that you desire the life of this World, and its glitter, then come! I will provide for your enjoyment and set you free in a handsome manner! But if you seek Allah and his messenger, and the Home of the Hereafter, verily Allah has prepared for the well-doers amongst you a great reward.

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[128] Ali, Abdullah Yusuf (translator), *The Qur'an* (Istanbul: Yazıevi, 2002).

The Surah of the Confederates (33), Verse 59:

> O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad). That is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

These passages may be interpreted in a number of ways. In the tradition of Qur'anic interpretation, however, certain passages become assigned to particular topics. Thus, there is a consensus among Muslims that these verses are *the* passages to reference when it comes to veiling. There is no agreement across the Muslim world as to whether veiling is commanded or merely recommended according to scripture.

The Encyclopedia of Islam defines the Arabic term *hijab* as "[the marker of] the transition from childhood to puberty, and from spinsterhood to marriage…*hijab*, while meaning also the veil itself, refers particularly to an institution."[129] The institution of *hijab* encourages women to meet the goals of modesty as defined by the above Qur'anic passages as well as various *hadiths*. How the ideal of *hijab* should be implemented, however, varies across temporal and geographic contexts.

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