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Kemalism in the Periphery: Anti-Veiling Campaigns and State-Society Relations in 1930s Turkey

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Kemalism in the Periphery: Anti-Veiling Campaigns and State-Society Relations in 1930s Turkey

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Prof. dr. Berteke Waaldijk (Universiteit Utrecht)

In memory of my grandmother, Fatma Gazalci
Anneannem Fatma Gazalci'nin anısına...

Kemalism in the Periphery:
Anti-Veiling Campaigns and State-Society Relations in 1930s Turkey

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Cover photo: A woman and her daughters in Antalya, 1933.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2. The Debate on Women’s Veiling and the Anti-Veiling Campaigns before the 1930s	22
I. The Ottoman Legacy	22
II. Kemalist Vision of Women’s Modernization and the Question of Veiling.....	30
III. Republic’s First Dress Reform: The Hat Law of 1925	37
IV. Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the 1920s: a Weak Attempt at Changing Women’s Dress.....	47
V. Conclusion.....	59
Chapter 3. Contextualizing the Anti-Veiling Campaigns of the 1930s: An Overview	61
I. Turkey in the 1930s	61
II. Women’s Modernization and Un/Veiling in the 1930s.....	71
III. Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the 1930s.....	77
III.a. Timing.....	77
III.b. Scope, Content and Discourse	83
III.c. The Legal Framework.....	90
IV. Conclusion	98
Chapter 4. Negotiating Kemalism: The Local Elite in the Anti-Veiling Campaigns of the 1930s	100
I. Defining the Local Elite in the Turkish Context.....	100
II. Between Hesitation and Intervention: Ankara on the Anti-Veiling Campaigns.....	112
III. Anti-Veiling Campaigns and the Role of the Local Elite	124
IV. Conclusion	155

Chapter 5. Popular Resistance and Women's Agency	159
I. Diversifying the Local: Multiple Actors, Multiple Voices.....	159
II. Popular Resistance to Anti-Veiling Campaigns	161
III. How to Approach Women's Agency	171
IV. Women in the Anti-Veiling Campaigns	178
IV.a. Incompliance, resistance, selective adaptation	178
IV.b. Compliance, support, participation.....	193
V. Conclusion.....	203
 Chapter 6. Reflections on the Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World.....	 206
I. The Turkish Case in a Larger Context.....	206
II. The Arab World, the Caucasus and Central Asia.....	214
III. Iran, Albania and Turkey: Some Comparative Remarks	228
IV. Conclusion	251
 Chapter 7. Conclusions	 257
 Appendix	 269
Bibliography	278
Samenvatting	303
Curriculum Vitae	308

List of Illustrations

- Figure 2.1.** A postcard from the Second Constitutional Period showing a group of women in black *çarşafs* in Istanbul.
Source: Sacit Kutlu, *Didar-ı Hürriyet: Kartpostallarla İkinci Meşrutiyet (1908-1913)*, Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008. 27
- Figure 2.2.** A colored image of a group of women in “modernized” *çarşafs*, Istanbul, early 1920s.
Source: The film *Istanbul Do/Redo/Undo: Waters, Streets, Faces* by Nezih Erdoğan. 30
- Figure 2.3.** A page from the journal *Resimli Ay*, showing fashionable models of *çarşaf* and headdress in the 1920s. *Resimli Ay*, 1924. 36
- Figure 3.1.** A propaganda poster of the RPP in mid-1930s.
Source: Lilo Linke, *Allah Dethroned: A Journey through Modern Turkey*, London: Constable & Co LTD, 1937. 71
- Figure 3.2.** Women in *peştamal* veil at a local market in Sivas in mid-1930s.
Source: Lilo Linke, *Allah Dethroned: A Journey through Modern Turkey*, London: Constable & Co LTD, 1937. 77
- Figure 3.3.** A clip from a local newspaper. *Yeni Mersin*, 1 July 1934. .. 88
- Figure 3.4.** A clip from a Bursa newspaper, reporting the meeting of the city council. *Hakkın Sesi*, Bursa, 3 February 1935. 95
- Figure 5.1.** Letter sent by the governor of Konya to the Ministry of Interior. TNPA 13216-7/1, 5 November 1935. 170
- Figure 5.2.** Women at a sewing course in 1930s Hacı Bektaş, Nevşehir.
Source: *Cumhuriyet'in Aile Albümleri*, Feride Çiçekoğlu and Oya Baydar (eds.), Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998. 196

- Figure 5.3.** Women at the Develi branch of the Airplane Association, Kayseri, 1930s.
Source: *75 Yılda Değişen Yaşam, Değişen İnsan: Cumhuriyet Modaları*, Derya Özkan and Oya Baydar (eds.), Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998. 202
- Figure 6.1.** Afghan students who were sent to Istanbul for education, 1928.
Source: Yaiha Baiza, *Education in Afghanistan: Developments, Influences and Legacies since 1901*, London: Routledge, 2013. 209
- Figure 6.2.** A photograph of Nazira Zayn al-Din, appeared as the frontispiece of her book.
Source: Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000. . 220
- Figure 6.3.** A clip from Turkish national newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, showing “modern” Iranian women watching a sports game. *Cumhuriyet*, 25 November 1935. 238
- Figure 6.4.** A clip from a local newspaper in Konya, announcing the banning of the *peçe* in Albania, with an illustration of King Zog. *Babalık*, 20 March 1937. 241

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My grandmother, Fatma Gazalcı, passed away in 2009 in our hometown, Güney, in the province of Denizli, where she had spent her entire life. Her biggest regret was that her parents did not send her to school and so she remained illiterate. She would always watch us with admiration while we read, and try to follow the latest news if we grandchildren were willing to read her favorite newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, aloud to her. She always wore the local *peştamal* veil when going out; but, at the same time, never saw it as contradictory to be a devoted supporter of “Atatürk’s party.” Thus, she was a living indication of the many complexities of the Kemalist experience. Her constant advice to us was to read and read more. How I wish she was here to see that I took her advice very seriously and wrote with the inspiration she and her fellow women of Güney have given to me. This thesis is dedicated to her loving memory.

Chapter 1

Introduction

One summary day in the early 2000s, in my mother's hometown Güney, a small district in the province of Denizli in Turkey's Aegean region, I was sitting in the garden of our house and listening to the conversation between my grandmother and her niece, who was only two years younger than her. My grandmother's niece complained about the regular pain she had in her leg, saying that she had been suffering from it since the day she fell down and injured her leg while trying to escape from a gendarmerie soldier when she was a teenager. My grandmother seemed to know the incident and showed no significant reaction; it would pass as a small detail in their conversation had I not intervened and asked the reason why she had to run away from the soldier. She answered that the gendarmerie had tried to stop her in the street because she was wearing the local *peştamal* veil.¹ "The *peştamal* was banned in Güney those days," she said, referring to the late 1930s and early 1940s; but nevertheless, her father would not allow her to go out without wearing it.

I was surprised. To me, the *peştamal* was an ordinary, local cloth; I have known it as the main outdoor veil of women in Güney since my childhood. In fact, it was still common among older women at the time of this conversation; my grandmother, her niece and other women from their generation would wear it while going out. Why would the *peştamal* be banned? Who banned it and how? If it was banned, and if this ban was put into practice by force to the extent that the gendarmerie was employed in its implementation, then how did the *peştamal* survive this ban for decades? More striking, perhaps, was that in the literature on early Republican Turkey, it has been argued that although the Kemalist single-party regime (1923-1945) celebrated a new, "modern" Turkish woman and thus generally "discouraged"

¹ *Peştamal* is a local fabric veil that has been used especially by rural women. Its color and pattern are different in different regions. In Güney, for example, it is composed of two rectangular pieces of cloth: a black and white plaid veil to cover the head and the upper body, and a red cloth with black stripes on it to be wrapped around the waist to cover the lower body.

veiling, there was no direct state intervention on women's clothing. The standard comparison was with the aggressive attitude of the regime in changing men's clothing: while there was a law banning the wearing of the fez and other traditional men's headgears, there was no law banning women's veils. In all major works on the period, we had read that women's clothing was not regulated by the state, apart from the clothing of those women who were state officials. How could one understand this gap between the literature and the real life experiences of ordinary people in the periphery of the country?

This anecdote and the questions it raised continued to occupy my mind as I read more about the single-party era. As the formative years of the Turkish Republic, this period has been analyzed as an era of authoritarian modernization, characterized by some very radical reforms that were formulated by the ruling elite and imposed on the society in a top-down manner. Usually characterized as "modernization from above," the Kemalist experience has been studied through a state-centered approach, preoccupied with the high politics of the political elite. As a result, the historiography of early republican Turkey has been heavily built on the analysis of the intellectual inspirations, ideological underpinnings and the political discourse of the regime elite, particularly placing Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his vision, ideas and "projects" at the center. The tendency to analyze a process dominated and shaped by Mustafa Kemal and the elites within his close political circle was not limited to those works that follow the Kemalist interpretations of the era. Studies that were critical of such interpretations also focus primarily on the doings of the regime as they could be followed in Ankara, and thus predominantly confined to the sphere of political history.²

The change in the theoretical frameworks through which the single-party era has been analyzed since the 1960s could hardly make a difference in terms of shifting the focus away from the state and the elite. Major works on modern Ottoman/Turkish history were written following the assumptions of modernization theory.³ In the narratives of the modernization process built on

² Gavin D. Brockett, "Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923-38," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34(4), October 1998, pp. 44-66. See also Gavin D. Brockett, "Revisiting the Turkish Revolution, 1923-1938: Secular Reform and Religious 'Reaction'," *History Compass* 4(6), 2006, pp. 1060-1072.

³ On the main assumptions of the modernization theory, see Wolfgang Knöbl, "Theories that Won't Pass Away: The Never-ending Story of Modernization Theory," in *Handbook of Historical Sociology*, Gerard Delanty and Engin F. Işın (eds.), London: Sage Publications, 2003, pp. 96-107.

this theory, the state appears as an autonomous institution controlled by the modernizing elite and it is seen as the main agent of social change. Prominent scholars of modern Turkey, such as Bernard Lewis and Niyazi Berkes, whose works remain among the best accounts of Ottoman/Turkish modernization, tend to present the republican state as the driving force in the formation of a modern Turkish society, which is a process seen as the logical result of the modernizing efforts put forward by the Kemalist modernizers' Ottoman antecedents.⁴ Another set of works, framed by what comes to be called "the strong state approach," also continued, even reinforced, this central place of the state in modern Turkish history.⁵ Accordingly, the Turkish state was a strong state, a polity with a strong state tradition historically inherited from the Ottoman Empire. This state tradition is defined by Özbudun in the following way: "a strong and centralized state, reasonably effective by the standards of its day, highly autonomous of societal forces, and occupying a central and highly valued place in Ottoman political culture."⁶ Within this framework, the society appears as weak and predominantly passive or unimportant compared to this highly autonomous strong state. Even those approaches that were more sociologically oriented and emerged as a critique of the modernization school, such as the center-periphery analysis of Şerif Mardin, did not go beyond this dualism and, actually, contributed to the reproduction of the state-society dichotomy.⁷ Although the social actors, "the periphery," was given more agency in this analysis, the distinction between the state and society as fixed entities positioned in opposition to each other remained intact and the Kemalist reforms were largely analyzed based on the ideology of the elite. For example, Mardin claimed that "the meaning of

⁴ See Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961; Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, Montreal: McGill University Press, 1998[1964]. See also Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of the Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1958.

⁵ For a classical example of this approach, see Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, Beverley: Eothen Press, 1985.

⁶ Ergun Özbudun, "The Continuing Ottoman Legacy and the State Tradition in the Middle East," in *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, L. Carl Brown (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, pp. 133-157.

⁷ See Şerif Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?," *Daedalus* 102(1), Winter 1973, pp. 169-190. For more on the center-periphery analysis, see the first section of Chapter 4. For a detailed critique of the center-periphery approach, see Fethi Açıkel, "Entegratif Toplum ve Muarızları: 'Merkez-Çevre' Paradigması Üzerine Eleştirel Notlar," *Toplum ve Bilim* 105, 2006, pp. 30-69; Suavi Aydın, "Paradigmada Tarihsel Yorumun Sınırları: Merkez-çevre Temellendirmeleri Üzerinden Düşünceler," *Toplum ve Bilim* 105, 2006, pp. 70-95; and Menderes Çınar, "Kültürel Yabancılaşma Tezi Üzerine," *Toplum ve Bilim* 105, 2006, pp. 153-165.

[Kemalist] laicism as a project is best highlighted not by a description of its practice but by its relation to the primordial goals of the republican regime.”⁸ In fact, approaching state-society relations in oppositional terms, the center-periphery analysis differed from the classical analysis of the Kemalist regime in emphasizing its failure in transforming the society based on a secular ideology. In other words, the authoritarian Kemalist state had failed to change the predominantly conservative society through its radical secular reforms, as the Muslim identity had remained strong and returned to fulfill the vacuum created by the single-party regime.⁹

The predominance of the state-centered and elite-centered perspectives, and the salience of state-society dichotomy in the literature have important implications. I argue that the dominant theoretical frameworks in the study of the single-party era briefly outlined above fail to reveal the complexity of the socio-historical reality on the ground. They underestimate the readiness of the state actors to negotiate and compromise with the dominant practices and structures in the society, and the tendency of the societal actors to tackle the reform processes in various and quite creative ways. In the literature, the role of non-state elite actors in the society, such as religious leaders or local notables, are either largely neglected or incorporated into the analysis as forces of “traditional” opposition.¹⁰ The Kemalist regime is portrayed as completely detached and alienated from the “people” (*halk*), imagined to be composed of uneducated, highly religious and conservative, poor masses. Within this rigid dichotomy, the regime vs. the *halk*, there is little

⁸ Şerif Mardin, “Religion and Secularism in Turkey,” in *Atatürk: Founder of A Modern State*, Ali Kazancıgil and Ergun Özbudun (eds.), London: C. Hurst & Co., 1981, pp. 191-219. For Mardin, these goals were, first, to find a new principle of social cohesion for Turkish society in order to replace Islam, and second, to devise a means of raising social consciousness.

⁹ See Şerif Mardin, *Din ve İdeoloji*, İstanbul: İletişim, 1992. For an article explaining the resurgence of political Islam in the 1980s based on this line of thinking, see Fuat Keyman, “Modernity, Secularism and Islam: The Case of Turkey,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 24(2), 2007, pp. 215-234.

¹⁰ This is in fact quite a prevalent assumption in the studies dominated by the modernization paradigm, since the history of non-Western countries has been seen as a struggle between the forces of modernity and tradition. For a critique of this assumption in the case of the Middle East, see Stephanie Cronin, “Introduction,” in *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2008, pp. 1-22. In the case of Turkey, exceptional here are the works by İsmail Beşikçi that focus on the relationship of the state with the Kurdish notables without falling into the trap of such established dichotomies. See his *Doğu Anadolu’nun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik ve Etnik Temeller*, İstanbul: E Yayınları, 1969; *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası’nın Tüzüğü (1927) ve Kürt Sorunu*, Ankara: Komal Yayınevi, 1979; and *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası’nın Programı (1931) ve Kürt Sorunu*, İstanbul: Belge, 1991.

room to acknowledge the multiplicity of actors and discourses in all levels, and the complexity of their interactions. The role lower-level elites played in the way the regime functioned, for example, does not receive enough attention, and the fact that a considerable number of people were involved in Kemalist policies, supported them and shaped them in critical ways is overlooked.¹¹ The non-elite groups and subordinated sectors of the society, namely, the experiences of the ordinary people, have almost been totally ignored. The field of social history of modern Turkey, particularly of the single-party era, is much poorer compared to the field of political history.¹² This has resulted in an unbalanced analysis: we know a great deal about the visions of the Kemalist elite, their ideological tenets and motivations, and the main frameworks of the reforms and policies formulated by them, but we know little about how these reforms and policies were implemented, how the main political and ideological parameters drawn in Ankara traveled to the provinces and translated into the daily mechanisms and conducts of the state, and how they entered the everyday life of ordinary citizens and were consumed by the individuals and communities. In other words, “the meeting ground of the fact and fiction” in Kemalist modernization, the encounter and interaction between the power of the modernizing state, and the limits of and myths about that power remain largely unexamined.¹³

These questions can be addressed by a change in our perspective, in theoretical frameworks and conceptual tools we use to understand state-society relations. In this direction, one can draw upon ideas and inspirations from a number of theoretical and methodological debates. One of them is the theoretical break put forward by the critical historiography of the “history from below” school and the subaltern studies. Emerging out of a critical engagement with Marxist conceptual categories of social history and a

¹¹ Zürcher briefly touches on the lack of the attention in literature on the those educated sectors of the society who in fact supported the regime: “the Kemalist leadership did inspire a great many people – mostly writers, teachers, doctors and other professionals and students – with its vision of a modern, secular, independent Turkey. These people, who saw themselves as an elite, with a mission to guide their ignorant compatriots, often worked very hard and with great personal sacrifice for their ideals. This ‘noblesse oblige’ attitude of the Kemalist elite is something that modern revisionist writers of the right and the left tend to overlook.” Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2004[1993], p. 181.

¹² Brockett, 2006; Touraj Atabaki, “Introduction,” in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society, and the State in Turkey and Iran*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), London: I. B. Tauris, 2007, pp. xiii-xvi.

¹³ Joel Migdal, “Finding the Meeting Ground of Fact and Fiction: Some Reflections on Turkish Modernization,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds.), Seattle: Washington University Press, 1997, pp. 252-260.

Gramscian intellectual agenda, both came as a challenge against traditional elitist perspectives, emphasizing the agency of the subaltern classes and the historical experience of the common people.¹⁴ The call for grassroots by the “history from below” tradition aimed at bringing back the common people, especially the working class, as actors of their own history.¹⁵ Likewise, in addressing the history of postcolonial South Asia, subalternist historians aimed to “rectify the elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work in this particular field.”¹⁶ In addition to the critique of elite-centered narratives, another major contribution of the subaltern studies school was their challenge to Eurocentrism, which opened the way to investigate the non-Western pathways to modernity and to rewrite the history of the modernization process in non-Western societies by analyzing the politics and agency of the societal actors.¹⁷

Another theoretical source for drawing an alternative understanding of state-society interaction can be derived from the literature on relational sociology.¹⁸ In this approach, critical concepts of social theory, such as power and agency, are redefined as concepts referring to a relationship. Therefore, agency cannot be separable from the dynamics of situations. The situatedness of agency within the structure should not be ignored; agency and structure reproduce and transform one another through this interaction. Accordingly, structure cannot be equated with constraint only; “it is always both constraining and enabling.”¹⁹ This also necessitates a redefinition of the state in a relational manner, and more specifically, a rethinking of the state-society divide. Recently flourishing literature on the anthropology of the state and the theoretical approaches behind it can be quite helpful in this regard. These

¹⁴ Vinayak Chaturverdi, “Introduction” in *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, Vinayak Chaturverdi (ed.), London: Verso, 2000, pp. vii-xix. For classical examples of these approaches, see Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1963; Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983; Sumit Sarkar, *Popular Movements and Middle-class Leadership in Late Colonial India*, Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi, 1984; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal 1890-1940*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

¹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *On History*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997, pp. 201-227.

¹⁶ Ranajit Guha, “Preface,” in *Subaltern Studies I*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. vii.

¹⁷ See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

¹⁸ Mustafa Emirbayer, “Manifesto for a Relational Sociology,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 103(2), 1997, pp. 281-317.

¹⁹ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, p. 25.

approaches, derive from theorists like Gramsci and Foucault and formulated by scholars like Philip Abrams and Timothy Mitchell, seek to go beyond the understanding of the state as a clearly bounded, autonomous institution that is distinct from the society. Rather, they try to “reconceptualize the state *within* other institutional forms through which social relations are lived.”²⁰ In this understanding, the state-society boundary is not a fixed, but an elusive one. This, however, does not mean to erase the distinction altogether, nor it means to conceptualize the state as a pure social construct. “The state cannot be dismissed as an abstraction or ideological construct and passed over in favor of more real, material realities.”²¹ Rather, it means that it is necessary to revise the dominant understanding of the state-society relations in oppositional terms, and as a unidirectional interaction, formed and dominated by the state.

Anthropological perspectives to state-society relations contribute also to our understanding of how people perceive the state through their own experience of encounter with the state in their localities. The interaction between the state officials and common people in local contexts is essential to understanding how the state manifests itself in everyday life. This reminds us the significance of the micro in studying the macro; the critical role that “the micropolitics of state work,” namely, how the state operates in daily lives and plays a role in the making of larger processes. It also suggests that it is this encounter in the local context through which people create their own means to cope with these larger processes. As Sharma and Gupta suggest,

Everyday statist encounters not only shape people’s imagination of what the state is and how it is demarcated, but also enable people to devise strategies of resistance to this imagined state. Those who are subjects or targets of state programs, and thus ‘outside’ bureaucracies, learn to use the very same techniques that lower-level state agents use to sabotage official mandates and orders.²²

In grasping the strategies of common people in tackling the state, James Scott’s conception of the “everyday forms of resistance” can be illuminating. According to Scott, the most significant difference of everyday

²⁰ Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, “Introduction: Rethinking Theories of the State in an Age of Globalization,” in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (eds.), Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, pp. 1-41.

²¹ Timothy Mitchell, “Society, Economy, and the State Effect,” in *State/Culture: State Formation after the Cultural Turn*, G. Steinmetz (ed.), Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999, pp. 76-97.

²² Sharma and Gupta, 2006, p. 17.

resistance is “its implicit disavowal of public and symbolic goals” and its avoidance of direct confrontation with the authority, interested largely in immediate, de facto gains.²³ Everyday forms of resistance are shaped by the form of control and domination. In other words, each form of control is likely “to generate its own distinctive form of quiet resistance and counterappropriation.” By the same token, different ways in which the societal actors respond to control and domination bring along different state policies in response. The crucial point is that whatever the response, the resistance of the common people changes or narrows the policy options available to the state.²⁴ Therefore, it is this interplay that determines the outcome of state-society interaction, and of the processes that are shaped by this interaction.

Perhaps Joel Migdal’s state-in-society approach is one that most directly deals with the question of how to understand state-society relations beyond a dichotomous view. Having emerged as a part of the Weberian literature on state and state-society relations, the state-in-society approach shares the assumptions regarding the analytical separation of state and society and the significance of states as agents of change.²⁵ However, it diverges from the state-oriented approaches in critical ways and thus offers valuable insights to maintain a more balanced perspective in analyzing state-society interaction and social change. One of the main pillars of this balanced perspective is an understanding of state as an agent situated in a certain social setting (thus “state-in-society”) and susceptible to the influence of social forces. In other words, the state-in-society approach is a critique of seeing state as the fulcrum of the process of domination and change, as a force capable of shaping people’s lives entirely.²⁶ In contrast, it maintains that state is by no means the only force that matters, and not even the central one: “societies affect states as much as, or possibly more than, states affect societies.”²⁷ In this sense, state autonomy and effectiveness are always constrained, and even in countries

²³ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Resistance*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985, p. 33. See also Jim Scott, “Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance,” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13(2), 1986, pp. 5-35.

²⁴ Scott, 1985, p. 36.

²⁵ Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue, “Introduction: developing a state-in-society perspective,” in *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World*, Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 1-6.

²⁶ Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 7-8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

with authoritarian regimes, the reach of state is more limited than it is usually assumed.

The concept of a state's "autonomy" is often an illusion and helps explain very little; a state's apparent disconnectedness from social groups turns out to be associated in some cases with "strength" (as in some rapidly industrializing countries) and in other cases with "weakness" (as in several African countries). We suggest instead that a state's relative effectiveness is a function of the varied forms in which state-society relations are interwoven.²⁸

As an implication of such an understanding of state, the second pillar of state-in-society approach is an emphasis on the process of interaction between the state and social forces, "on the ongoing struggles among shifting coalitions over the rules for daily behavior."²⁹ This implies a change in focus, from the center of state power to periphery, from the peak institutions of the state to its diffuse parts. Rather than clear-cut boundaries, the state-in-society approach sees blurred and constantly changing boundaries between the state and the society, and it is in the study of these boundaries, these junctures of encounter, conflict, negotiation and compromise we can better evaluate the state power and its effectiveness, and the power of the societal dynamics and the extent of social change. In such an analysis, just like the state, the social forces are also contingent on empirical conditions.³⁰ The state and the society are mutually transformative, and, thus, the outcome of their interaction is rarely predictable. By referring to Scott's analysis of the failures of state plans in *Seeing Like a State*, Migdal claims that "state policy implementation and the outcomes in society have ended up quite different from the state's original blueprints. Even the boldest state plans, as Scott has demonstrated in his discussion of the designs of modernism, can turn into disastrous follies."³¹ This is why the state-in-society approach suggests that in order to understand the processes of domination and change, we should analyze the "practices" of the state while also recognizing the "image" of the state, that is, "a clearly bounded, unified organization that can be spoken of singular terms." In other

²⁸ Migdal, Kohli and Shue, 1994, p. 3.

²⁹ Migdal, 2001, p. 11.

³⁰ Migdal, Kohli and Shue, 1994, p. 3.

³¹ Migdal, 2001, p. 12. See also James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. Migdal also draws on de Certeau's analyses. See Micheal de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

words, the state is also composed of “the practices of a heap of loosely connected parts and fragments, frequently with ill-defined boundaries between them and other groupings inside and outside the official state borders and often promoting conflicting sets of rules with one another and with ‘official’ law.”³²

Migdal’s state-in-society approach proved particularly inspiring for studying authoritarian regimes and developing countries. It has also been noted in some recent studies as being useful for analyzing the Turkish case.³³ In fact, Migdal himself commented on the Turkish experience of modernization.³⁴ He indicated that to understand the social transformation initiated by the Kemalist regime, one should look at the “effects” of the modernity project and these effects “can be found not in an examination of elites and their institutions exclusively, nor in a focus solely on the poor or marginal groups of society, but on those physical and social spaces the two intersect.”³⁵

Recently, a new body of literature on modern Turkey, which is inspired by these theoretical insights and turns the focus away from Ankara and the central elite, has begun to flourish. Diverse in their focus, methods and sources, these works nevertheless share a similar perspective. Though in varying degrees, they are all concerned about examining the dynamics of the state-society relations, restoring the agency of people as social actors, and looking at the everyday politics of modernization as a relational process. Meeker’s anthropological work, for instance, ascertained the ways in which the Turkish state was embedded in the local society and how this embeddedness remained basically intact in transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic.³⁶ New sources were analyzed to shed more light on the mechanisms through which the agents of the state encountered the society. For example, in his article on the petitions received by the secretary-general of the Republican People’s Party (RPP), the party that ruled Turkey for two decades until the transition to multi-party system in 1945, Akin analyzed these documents to understand “the intricate web of discursive and

³² Migdal, 2001, p. 22.

³³ For a recent study that draws on Migdal’s approach and looks at the gap between what the state planned to achieve and what it actually could achieve in the Kurdish provinces in early republic, see Senem Aslan, “Everyday Forms of State Power and the Kurds in the Early Turkish Republic,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43(1), February 2011, pp. 75-93.

³⁴ See Migdal, 1997.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 253-254.

³⁶ Michael Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

practical interactions between people and representatives of state and party power.”³⁷ Brockett looked at the provincial newspapers that were published immediately after the beginning of multi-party politics in 1945 to understand how the larger sectors of the society raised their voice through print media and how they challenged and negotiated the parameters of the national identity envisioned by the single-party regime in the previous era.³⁸ Studies that focus on the implementation process of a particular reform enlarged our understanding of the gap between the visions and plans of the Kemalist elite in introducing that reform on the one hand, and what had actually happened in practice when the “plan” was confronted by the micro mechanisms of interaction and negotiation between the forces of the state and the society, on the other.³⁹

Drawing on the theoretical insights stemming from studies on social history, the anthropology of the state, state-society relations, everyday life and subordinated groups, and particularly, from Migdal’s state-in-society approach, this thesis is a part of and contributes to this recently flourishing body of literature on the Turkish Republic. In general terms, it is a study of state-society relations in 1930s Turkey, aiming to understand the ways in which the Kemalist policies and reforms were received, interpreted, negotiated, compromised and/or resisted by various actors in the provinces. It looks at the spaces/fields where these actors interacted, and how these interactions drew and redrew, and thus contested and blurred the boundaries that are supposed to clearly separate the state and the society. The argument is that through an analysis of these spaces of interaction, it is possible to reveal a better understanding of the actors, dynamics and complexities of the social change experienced under the Kemalist single-party regime. The space/field this study focuses on to address these questions is the regulation of women’s clothing, namely, the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s.

³⁷ For example, see Yiğit Akın, “Reconsidering State, Party and Society in Early Republican Turkey: Politics of Petitioning,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39, 2007, pp. 435-457. For another article on the petitions, see Alexandros Lamprou, “CHP Genel Sekreterliği Makamına’: 30’lu ve 40’lı Yıllarda Halkevleri’yle İlgili CHP’ye Gönderilen Şikayet ve Dilek Mektupları Hakkında Kısa Bir Söz,” *Kebikeç* 23, 2007, pp. 381-392.

³⁸ Gavin D. Brockett, *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk: Provincial Newspapers and the Negotiation of a Muslim National Identity*, Austin: Texas University Press, 2011.

³⁹ For example, see Meltem Türköz, “The Social Life of the State’s Fantasy: Memories and Documents on Turkey’s Surname Law,” unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2004; Senem Aslan, “‘Citizen Speak Turkish!’ A Nation in the Making,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 13(2), 2007, pp. 245-272.

The focus of the study: Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the 1930s

Like other modernizing regimes, for the Kemalists, the importance of clothing primarily originated in the power it had on shaping identities in the public sphere. As Alev Çınar argues, clothing can be considered as “one of the most powerful tools for the display of identities due to its temporally and spatially proliferative quality,”⁴⁰ and this quality was what concerned the Kemalist regime the most, in terms of both controlling and regulating the society and transforming it into a modern, civilized nation. The Hat Law in 1925 was perhaps the most apparent and earliest manifestation of this Kemalist concern. Regulating men’s clothing only, the law nevertheless made it explicit that one fundamental aspect of the Kemalist project of building a secular nation state was to create new, “modern” subjects who would transform the public sphere into a modern domain through their very existence. Unlike its determined will to directly intervene in men’s headgear, however, the Kemalist regime was more hesitant and reluctant to apply the same approach to women’s veiling and clothing.

The main strategy Ankara followed regarding the issue of unveiling was to transfer the matter to the local level and to encourage the local administrative bodies and their actors to deal with it. In other words, despite the fact that there was no law or decree banning women’s veiling country-wide, there were anti-veiling campaigns organized at the local level that were clearly encouraged by Ankara, but in some cases, could also stem from the local elite’s own initiatives. Thus, there was state intervention on women’s clothing in the early Turkish Republic, but it was local in character, shaped and implemented mainly by the local actors. Given the complicated involvement of Ankara in the process and its reluctant attitude swaying between promoting local efforts and limiting them, combined with the diversity of the attitudes and reactions of the local elite and the larger societal actors, the process at the local level was in fact quite complex. The local character of the anti-veiling campaigns and the lack of solid and consistent policy guidelines allowed space for discussions, negotiations and local variations, which, in the end, resulted in a complex and less radical

⁴⁰ Alev Çınar, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places and Time*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005, p. 57. For a discussion on the anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey as a means to reshape the urban space under the republican regime, see Sevgi Adak, “Women in the Post-Ottoman Public Sphere: Anti-Veiling Campaigns and the Reshaping of the Urban Space in Early Republican Turkey,” in *Women and the City, Women in the City: A Gendered Perspective on Ottoman Urban History*, Nazan Maksudyan (ed.), New York: Berghahn, 2014, pp. 36-67.

transformation of women's clothing in the provinces. Moreover, although Europeanization of women's dress was the ideal, the anti-veiling campaigns mainly aimed at the removal of the *peçe* (face veil) and the *çarşaf*,⁴¹ and certain local equivalents of the *çarşaf*, such as the *peştamal*. The covering of the hair was never openly targeted. This limited scope of the campaigns provided certain room for women's selective adaptation, and created possibilities of maintaining the existing dress norms, except for the use of the *peçe*, the *çarşaf*, and the *peştamal*.

Since veiling encompassed the whole system of seclusion of women,⁴² unveiling entailed a direct state intervention both in deeply-rooted gender codes and the private concerns of the people. As such, the example of anti-veiling campaigns offers a very rich terrain to explore the attitudes, strategies, and actions of the central state actors, local elites, and ordinary people, and the ways in which they interacted and negotiated. One additional opportunity the study of the anti-veiling campaigns provides is to see how deeply gendered these interactions and negotiations were. In other words, the analysis of the anti-veiling campaigns support the argument that the gender aspect of the social change initiated by the state elite cannot be treated as a chapter separate from other processes. As Kandiyoti emphasized, women-related issues were in fact part of an ideological terrain where broader questions, such as modernity, secularism or cultural identity were discussed, and as such, they functioned as "boundary markers" for all actors.⁴³ The transformation of the gender regime appears as a field where one can observe the intersection and conflict of various discourses. Likewise, any political discourse or debate on social change had connotations for women's social position, and for gender relations.

However, the number of studies on the anti-veiling campaigns in early republican Turkey is very limited. In fact, as stated above, even the knowledge

⁴¹ The *çarşaf* is a full-body cover. It is similar to the Iranian *chador*, but it is either gathered at the waist or in two pieces, consisting of a long and loose skirt covering the lower body, and a veil covering the upper part of the body and the head. It is usually black, but it can be in other colors as well. Although very rare, there were even patterned ones. Although it was common to wear the *çarşaf* together with the *peçe*, the *peçe* was not a standard part of the *çarşaf*.

⁴² Beth Baron, "Unveiling in Early Twentieth century Egypt: Practical and Symbolic Considerations," *Middle Eastern Studies* 25(3), July 1989, pp. 370-386.

⁴³ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Women, Islam, and the State: A Comparative Approach," in *Comparing Muslim Societies: Knowledge and the State in a World Civilization*, Juan R. I. Cole (ed.), Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992, p. 246. See also Lila Abu-Lughod, "Feminist Longings and Postcolonial Conditions," in Lila Abu-Lughod (ed.), *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 7.

of state intervention in women's veiling during the single-party era was lacking in the literature until quite recently. The first scholarly work that mentioned local bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* issued by a number of municipalities and provincial councils was Bernard Caporal's doctoral dissertation entitled "La Femme turque à travers le kémalisme et le postkémalisme (1919-1970)," which was translated into Turkish and published in 1982.⁴⁴ Caporal, however, did not discuss these bans in any detail except for listing the dates and places of the bans he could locate.⁴⁵ This short note mentioned by Caporal remained largely unnoticed until women's headscarf became an issue in Turkish universities and was transformed into a matter of political controversy in the public debates in the 1980s. Those women who faced the headscarf ban in the universities became increasingly politicized. Religious women intellectuals, in particular, began to search for the historical grounds on which women's veiling came to be linked to political debates on modernity, secularism and the public sphere in Turkey. One of those women, Cihan Aktaş, published a detailed account of the history of state intervention in clothing in the Ottoman/Turkish context based on secondary sources, in which she cited Caporal on the local bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, complemented with a few oral historical accounts.⁴⁶ In the first major scholarly works that were published on the headscarf issue and Islamic women's identity in the early 1990s, a discussion on the question of state intervention in women's veiling in the early republic was still missing, apart from the emphasis on the Kemalist project of creating a modern and national Turkish womanhood.⁴⁷

A short but important article by Metin Çapa in *Toplumsal Tarih* provided the first account of the banning of the *peçe* in Trabzon in 1926.⁴⁸ Another article by Hakkı Uyar enlarged Çapa's analysis of this early banning of the *peçe* in Trabzon, and established that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had in fact

⁴⁴ Bernard Caporal, *Kemalizmde ve Kemalizm Sonrasında Türk Kadını (1919-1970)*, Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1982.

⁴⁵ Caporal provides the following list of cities where there was a ban: Rize, Mersin, Trabzon, Bodrum, Adana, Antalya, Sungurlu, Zile, Konya, Afyon, Maraş, Antakya, and Hatay. Caporal's source for this list was Sabine Dirk's book, *La Famille Musulmane Turque* published in Paris in 1969.

⁴⁶ Cihan Aktaş, *Tanzimat'tan 12 Mart'a Kılık-Kıyafet ve İktidar*, İstanbul: Kapı, 2006[1989].

⁴⁷ See, for example, Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem: Medeniyet ve Örtünme*, İstanbul: Metis, 1991 and Aynur İlyasoğlu, *Örtülü Kimlik*, İstanbul: Metis, 1994. Göle's book appeared in English in 1996 and translated into several other languages. See Nilüfer Göle, *Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.

⁴⁸ Mesut Çapa, "Giyim Kuşamda Medeni Kıyafetlerin Benimsenmesi ve Trabzon Örneği," *Toplumsal Tarih* 30, June 1996, pp. 22-28.

became an issue in Turkey in the mid-1930s by referring to the discussion held at the RPP general congress in May 1935.⁴⁹ This was a discussion on whether to enact a law banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* countrywide.⁵⁰ Uyar had encountered a number of news items on the banning of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in some provinces in the 1930s in a few local newspapers during his dissertation research about the provincial branches of the RPP.⁵¹ His notes based on these news items provided brief yet significant information, especially on the banning of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in Trabzon in 1936. Uyar's article was also encouraging for further research, since it showed that more information on the anti-veiling campaigns in 1930s Turkey could be uncovered by consulting the provincial newspapers of the time, which were sources that had been largely neglected in the literature until then.

The opening of the Prime Ministry Republican Archives (*Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi*) was a major development contributing to the emergence of a new body of literature drawing on the rich documents made available to researchers working on the early Turkish republic.⁵² The first article that benefited from this advantage and used a few documents from the archive of the RPP on the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s was Kemal Yakut's article.⁵³ Yakut also referred to a compilation of police documents that was published by the General Directorate of Security (*Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü*) on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1998.⁵⁴ Based on these few documents, more information was revealed on the anti-veiling campaigns in provinces other than Trabzon, such as Afyon, Maraş and Yozgat. In particular, the police documents published in the compilation, although composed of only a very limited number of examples from an apparently very rich archive that was closed to researchers,

⁴⁹ Hakkı Uyar, "Çarşaf, Peçe ve Kafes Üzerine Bazı Notlar," *Toplumsal Tarih* 33, September 1996, pp. 6-11.

⁵⁰ This discussion is analyzed at length in Chapter 4.

⁵¹ Uyar's dissertation was first published as a book in 1998 and remains one of the major works of reference on the RPP. See Hakkı Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, İstanbul: Boyut, 2012.

⁵² Prime Ministry General Directorate of State Archives (*Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü*) was established in 1984 as part of a new law on the organization of the Prime Ministry. The general directorate is composed of three main departments: Documentation, Ottoman Archives and Republican Archives.

⁵³ Kemal Yakut, "Tek Parti Döneminde Peçe ve Çarşaf," *Tarih ve Toplum* 220, April 2002, pp. 23-32.

⁵⁴ See *Cumhuriyetin 75. Yıldönümünde Polis Arşiv Belgeleriyle Gerçekler: 150'likler, Kubilay Olayı, Çarşaf-Peçe-Peştamalla Örtünme Sorunu*, Ankara: Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü Araştırma, Planlama ve Koordinasyon Daire Başkanlığı, 1998.

provided a hint of the involvement of Ankara in the process, as it included one circular about the issue by the Minister of Interior Şükrü Kaya addressed to all governors and general inspectors.

These three short but important articles published in Turkish did not receive the attention they deserved in subsequent scholarly works. Although they were able to reveal only a few examples of anti-veiling campaigns and discussed them very briefly, they were crucial contributions to the literature since they established that there was in fact state intervention in women's clothing in the early republican era, albeit at the local level. They also provided some significant insights as to how research on the anti-veiling campaigns could be enlarged. Following these insights, Hale Yılmaz devoted a chapter on the regulation of women's clothing in the early republic in her dissertation, which has recently been published as a book.⁵⁵ The chapter discusses the unveiling campaigns with a focus on their social and cultural implications as experienced in the everyday lives of women and men. Yılmaz's work is an important contribution, since it brings the anti-veiling campaigns into the English-written literature on early Turkish republic and expands the discussion on them based on new documents from police archives and oral historical accounts. Her own interview with a woman from an educated, middle class family in Trabzon, combined with recently published accounts from other provinces, allow us to hear the voices of people who had lived through the anti-veiling campaigns and how they recall that experience.⁵⁶ Most recently, an edited volume by Stephanie Cronin brought together examples of fresh and critical research on the anti-veiling campaigns in the Muslim world.⁵⁷ Three chapters in this volume, written by Libal, Metinsoy

⁵⁵ See Hale Yılmaz, "Reform, Social Change and State-Society Encounters in Early Republican Turkey," unpublished PhD dissertation, The University of Utah, 2006. For the book published based on the dissertation, see Hale Yılmaz, *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey, 1923-1945*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013.

⁵⁶ For the narrative of Yılmaz's informant from Trabzon, Meliha Tanyeli, see *ibid.*, pp. 107-116. Other oral historical accounts Yılmaz incorporates into her discussion are from recent ethnographical and oral historical works. See Sevil Atauz, "Cumhuriyet'in İlk Yıllarında Gaziantep'te Gündelik Yaşamın Dönüşümü: Bir Sözlü Tarih Çalışması," in *Bilanço 1923-1998, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin 75 Yılına Toplu Bakış Uluslararası Kongresi Cilt 1: Siyaset, Kültür, Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Zeynep Rona (ed.), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999, pp. 217-229; Arzu Öztürkmen, "Remembering through Material Culture: Local Knowledge of Past Communities in a Turkish Black Sea Town," *Middle Eastern Studies* 39(2), April 2003, pp. 179-193; and Arzu Öztürkmen, "Rethinking Regionalism: Memory of Change in a Turkish Black Sea Town," *East European Quarterly* 39(1), March 2005, pp. 47-62.

⁵⁷ Stephanie Cronin (ed.), *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, London: Routledge, 2014.

and myself, are devoted to the Turkish case and discuss the anti-veiling campaigns from different angles by using a rich variety of sources, including the police archives and the memoirs.⁵⁸

This study is the first monograph on the anti-veiling campaigns in the early Turkish Republic. It aims to go beyond an analysis of these campaigns based on the discourse and strategies of the high-level state actors. Such an elite-centered analysis has in fact shaped much of the literature on clothing change in the Middle East. As Tapper and Ingham indicate, approaches to dress and clothing change in the region have been focusing exclusively on the role of political or religious authorities. According to this approach, the impetus for clothing change comes only from above and inevitably and automatically change social and cultural identities in the way the imposer of the change/reform imagined.⁵⁹ This thesis rather examines them as they were implemented through concrete policies and actions at the local level, and shaped as a result of the interaction of various actors and positions. Its contribution to the existing literature on the anti-veiling campaigns in early republican period is two-fold. First, it presents a detailed trajectory of the debates on and attempts at women's unveiling in Turkey starting from the late Ottoman Empire onwards, discusses the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s separately as weak but significant attempts creating certain patterns for later campaigns, and focuses on what I call the main wave of anti-veiling campaigns in the mid-1930s, by contextualizing them as part of a new phase the Kemalist regime entered in the 1930s. Thus this study gives the most comprehensive account of the anti-veiling campaigns in the early Turkish republic, analyzing the general political discourse behind them and looking at the legal and institutional mechanisms through which they were formulated and implemented. It provides a snapshot of the campaigns in all aspects and as a general reform experience. By drawing upon a large survey of provinces,

⁵⁸ See Kathryn Libal, "From Face Veil to Cloche Hat: The Backward Ottoman versus New Turkish Woman in Urban Public Discourse," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 39-58; Sevgi Adak, "Anti-Veiling Campaigns and the local elites in Turkey of the 1930s: A View from the Periphery," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 59-85; and Murat Metinsoy, "Everyday Resistance to Unveiling and Flexible Secularism in Early Republican Turkey," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 86-117.

⁵⁹ Nancy Lindisfarne-Tapper and Bruce Ingham, "Approaches to the Study of Dress in the Middle East," in Nancy Lindisfarne-Tapper and Bruce Ingham (eds.), *Languages of Dress in the Middle East*, London: Curzon Press, 1997, pp. 14-15.

this study clearly demonstrates that unlike Yılmaz's claim that bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were more common in the Western provinces and in the coastal and border cities, the anti-veiling campaigns were a country-wide phenomena with no specific regional concentration.⁶⁰

Second, while looking at the main characteristics of the anti-veiling campaigns across the provinces and analyzing them as a wide-spread reform process, at the same time, this study digs deeper into the local context. With a strong emphasis on the significance of studying the local, it analyzes the campaigns within the complexities of their local settings and politics. However, digging into the local context does not mean focusing on a small number of cases. This study does not claim that it discusses a particular anti-veiling campaign in all its details, for example. Nor does it aim at such an exhaustive analysis. In other words, this is not a study of the local as micro history. Rather, it delves into the local to see the micro dynamics of the campaigns across various cases, and examines them within common conceptual frameworks such as resistance and agency. Two of these conceptual frameworks, in particular, through which I examine the anti-veiling campaigns, the concept of the local elite and women's agency, set this study's analysis of the campaigns aside from other studies.

This two-fold focus of the study, the general discursive, legal and institutional framework within which the anti-veiling campaigns were shaped and implemented country-wide, on the one hand, and the micro dynamics of this process at the local level, on the other, was possible based on a selection of diverse sources. First, this study is the first study that makes extensive use of the local newspapers for the study of the anti-veiling campaigns. Twelve local newspapers from eight provinces, Adana, Antalya, Bursa, Izmir, İçel, Kars, Konya and Trabzon, were analyzed.⁶¹ This not only provided a very rich and new body of information to see the details of the situation at the local level, but also to draw the most comprehensive map of the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s existing in the literature so far.⁶² Second, like Yılmaz and Metinsoy, I use documents from the state and the police archives, some of which are new to the literature. The correspondence between the provinces and the Ministry of Interior proved to be specifically helpful in discussing the role of the local elites. Third, this study also uses American and British consular reports, most of which are revealed for the first time. The British

⁶⁰ See Yılmaz, 2013, p. 102.

⁶¹ For the list of these newspapers, see the bibliography.

⁶² The list of the local bans that I could locate is provided in the Appendix.

consular reports, in particular, were extremely helpful to enrich the analysis of the local context, since they provided very rare observations of the situation at the local level, which could be compared and contrasted with the reports coming from Turkish state sources in the provinces. In fact, it is the combination of these three different sources of information, the local newspapers, the Turkish state and police documents and the consular reports that provided a very rich lens to get a general picture of the patterns of interaction between actors in various levels while at the same time to dig into the local to see the complexity and diversity in the periphery of the country.

The Plan of the Study

The thesis is composed of five main chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on the debates on women's un/veiling and attempts of anti-veiling campaigns before the 1930s. The chapter first begins with a discussion on the Ottoman legacy, showing that the debate on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* goes back to the 19th century and originates from questions of modernization, progress and women's roles in the context of a rapidly changing Ottoman society. It draws connections between the Kemalist state's attempts at unveiling and the initiations of the Ottoman state to intervene in women's clothing. The chapter then looks at the initial years of the Turkish Republic, early Kemalist vision of women's clothing and modernization, the Hat Law of 1925, and the question of how the regime's intervention to male clothing was linked to the question of women's veiling. A number of anti-veiling campaigns that were initiated at the local level in the second half of the 1920s are discussed in detail. They are analyzed within the context of a general discourse and campaign on the modernization of dress that the Hat Law of 1925 triggered. The chapter concludes by discussing the patterns and mechanisms these early attempts at women's unveiling set for the following anti-veiling campaigns in the next decade.

Chapter 3 discusses the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s as the main wave of women's unveiling and situates them within the broader context of 1930s Turkey. Following a discussion of the 1930s as a turn to a more authoritarian Kemalist regime, eager to penetrate into the society and to increase its control over the economic, social and cultural domains, the chapter looks at the anti-veiling campaigns as one of the reforms that characterized this turn from the mid-1930s onwards. It analyzes the increasing stigmatization of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as "uncivilized" clothing as part of women's becoming particularly active actors of the social and political life in

the 1930s and a greater emphasis on their “emancipation” given by the regime in order to incorporate them as agents of modernization. In the third section, the anti-veiling campaigns are analyzed as a country-wide, general phenomenon by detailed discussions on three main questions: why did the main wave of the anti-veiling campaigns begin in the mid-1930s, more specifically, in 1934? What were their scope, content and political discourse? And on which legal bases were they organized and implemented? Overall, chapter 3 provides a macro picture of 1930s Turkey as a new phase of the Kemalist regime, and of the anti-veiling campaigns as an important country-wide reform shaped as part of this phase.

Chapter 4 turns the focus to the local and looks particularly at the role the local elites played in the anti-veiling campaigns. It first discusses the place of the local in the literature on the single-party era in Turkey and claims that the local should be brought into the picture in order to better understand the dynamics and outcomes of the modernization process as experienced in the provinces. The first section provides a working definition of the concept of local elite and examines how to utilize this concept in order to see the diversity of actors at the local level. The second section outlines the position of Ankara on the anti-veiling campaigns. It shows the gradual increase in Ankara’s tendency to intervene in the local context and control the situation in the provinces while at the same time remaining hesitant to intervene in people’s lives “too much” in the issue of un/veiling. This, in a sense, ambivalent position of the central elites on the anti-veiling campaigns, it is argued, helped to widen the space of action for the local elites. The third section focuses on this space of action and looks at the various ways in which the local elites influenced the shaping and the implementation of the anti-veiling campaigns. It shows that as a composite group, the attitudes of the local elites were diverse and their tackling of the question of women’s unveiling ranged from “being more royalist than the king” to openly resisting it. While some local elites envisioned themselves as the agents of change in the provinces, others just pretended that they were. State officials seemed more supportive in the reform processes, but those local elites who were natives of the provinces they resided could also act quite actively in the shaping of the campaigns.

Chapter 5 discusses the questions of resistance and agency in the anti-veiling campaigns. It continues to focus on the local context, but turns to the attitudes and reactions of the ordinary people with the contention that the importance of the local cannot be fully highlighted by looking at how the local elites negotiated Kemalism. It claims that the local should be diversified, since

the local elites were part of a matrix of actors and power struggles where the societal forces also played a crucial role. The chapter discusses the reactions of non-elite actors, defined as popular resistance, and the extent to which this resistance could influence the shaping of the anti-veiling campaigns. Then, the chapter specifically focuses on reactions of women as the primary target of the campaigns. As a much less visible group, largely neglected in the conventional historiography, women are situated as “visible” actors whose agency could not be reduced to the dichotomy of passive compliance and open resistance. One aim of Chapter 5 is to also engage in a critical dialogue with the feminist literature on the Kemalist regime. It emphasizes the complex ways in which women became subjects of the Kemalist modernization and how this contributed to women’s visibility and participation in the public life.

Chapter 6 locates the Turkish anti-veiling campaigns within the greater map of the Muslim world in terms of the debates on and attempts at changing women’s clothing during the inter-war period. It discusses the Turkish experience of unveiling together with other experiences of state-initiated campaigns for women’s unveiling and deals with the question of how these experiences informed and influenced each other. It contends that general common trends and discourses on issues of women and the modernization of their clothing can be traced across the Muslim world. However, the way these issues were handled differed quite significantly. While the cases of the Arab countries, Afghanistan and Muslim countries under the Soviet rule are also discussed, it is claimed that three cases, Albania, Iran and Turkey, differ from the other examples and should be analyzed comparatively. A separate section attempts at such a comparative discussion with the aim of understanding the Turkish anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s more vividly.

Chapter 2

The Debate on Women's Veiling and the Anti-Veiling Campaigns before the 1930s

“Yandan yırtmaç çarşaflar
Görünüyor tombul bacaklar
Kapanın şeytan postallar
Bayılıyor size gören esnaflar”⁶³

I. The Ottoman Legacy

Women's clothing has been a matter of intense debate in Turkey since the Ottoman period. The Ottoman state issued various directives and regulations to control women's dress, and, especially, to monitor Muslim women's loyalty to Islamic dress codes, by intervening in the length of veils or thickness of the fabric used for them. The color, size and form of women's dress were all subject to state regulation. As Quataert emphasizes, these regulations were part of a long tradition of Ottoman clothing laws that aimed at extending state control over society and disciplining the behavior of its subjects.⁶⁴ In the 18th century, for example, when upper class Ottoman women began to wear fancy *feraces*, the Ottoman state had to impose some restrictions on *ferace* styles, especially banning tight models and thin fabrics due to pressure from the ulema.⁶⁵ Regulations demanding modesty in women's clothes, and, above all,

⁶³ An anonymous song criticizing modernized *çarşaflar* that had a vent, and asking women to cover themselves properly in order not to attract the *esnaf* (tradesmen). The song is claimed to be from the last years of the Ottoman era, circa 1915-1918. Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Türk Giyim Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü*, İstanbul: Sümerbank Kültür Yayınları, 1969, p. 9.

⁶⁴ Donald Quataert, “Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29(3), 1997, pp. 403-425.

⁶⁵ Aktaş, 2006, p. 54; Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, İstanbul: Metis, 2011[1994], p. 247. The *ferace* is a long mantle, a full coat with wide arms and body, and skirts to the floor, worn by Ottoman women as outdoor clothing. The *ferace* changed significantly, especially in the 19th century. Its form and color diversified and it turned into a long overcoat-like outdoor dress by the end of the empire. See Koçu, 1969, pp. 108-111. For more on the Ottoman women's attire in the 19th century, see Melek Sevüktekin Apak, Filiz Onat Gündüz and Fatma Öztürk Eray, *Osmanlı Dönemi Kadın Giyimleri*, Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1997. See also Nora Şeni, “Fashion and Women's Clothing in the Satirical Press of İstanbul at the

admonishing Muslim women against imitating Christian women or European styles, were on the rise with the increasing influence of the West in the 19th century.⁶⁶ This increase was related to the ongoing change in women's social role and dress since the Tanzimat era, and particularly, to the tendency of the upper class Ottoman women in urban areas to follow and adopt European fashions, notably after the Crimean War.⁶⁷

Women's clothing and attire had become a central issue, a locus of struggle for the supporters of various political positions by the late 19th century.⁶⁸ In the 1870s, a set of regulations concerning women's dress, prohibiting the use of transparent face veils and light-colored *feraces* were issued.⁶⁹ This was also a period when the *çarşaf* increasingly replaced the *ferace* as Ottoman women's outdoor attire.⁷⁰ However, in 1881, Sultan

End of the 19th Century," in *Women in Modern Turkish Society*, Şirin Tekeli (ed.), London: Zed Books, 1995, pp. 25-45.

⁶⁶ It should be underlined that it is not always clear to what extent these regulations were applicable or were intended to be applied in the entire Ottoman land. In other words, given the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of the Ottoman society, which spread over many provinces, it is difficult to make generalizations on clothing and clothing change, except for the cases where the Ottoman state issued laws concerning the state officials or the army. Most of the time, the sources are also not clear about the targeted geography of the clothing regulations regarding women's dress. Many of the regulations in the 19th century, for example, seemed to be limited to Istanbul. Reşat Ekrem Koçu indicates that the first regulation that prohibited the Ottoman women from dressing inappropriately (meaning, not properly covered) and fanciful was issued in the 18th century, during the reign of Sultan Ahmet III. This regulation was concerned only with the clothing of the women in Istanbul, for example. Likewise, the regulations in the Hamidian era seem also limited to Istanbul. See Koçu, 1969, p. 8-9.

⁶⁷ Yakut, 2002. See also Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women, The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988 and Fanny Davis, *The Ottoman Lady: A Social History from 1718 to 1918*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1986. Şeni indicates that in its transformed form, elite Ottoman women's outdoor clothing was in fact very similar to that worn by the European women in the late 19th century, and this similarity was criticized by the Ottoman satire of the time. Şeni, 1995, p. 30. For a defense of women's veiling and its compatibility with women's education and participation in social life in one of the first women's journals published during the Tanzimat Era, see Ayşenur Kurtoğlu, "Tanzimat Dönemi İlk Kadın Yayınında Dinin Yer Aşıl Bıçimleri," in *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Kadının Tarihi Dönüşümü*, Yıldız Ramazanoğlu (ed.), Istanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2000, pp. 21-52.

⁶⁸ Şeni indicates that women's covering, together with polygamy, was one of the dominant themes of the modernist literature at the end of the century. Şeni, 1995, p. 27.

⁶⁹ Meral Akkent and Gaby Frager, *Başörtü*, Frankfurt: Dağyeli, 1987, p. 106.

⁷⁰ According to some scholars, the *çarşaf* originated in the Arab provinces, and the first woman that appeared in Istanbul in the *çarşaf* was the wife of the Syrian governor, Suphi Pasha, in the mid-19th century. See Akkent and Frager, 1987, p. 105; Apak et.al., 1997, p. 103; Aktaş, 2006, p. 68-70. It is argued that it was adopted as a reaction to cultural Westernization of 19th century Ottoman society since the *çarşaf* was supposed to provide better veiling compared to the *ferace*.

Abdülhamid II issued a regulation based on the advice of the *Şeyhülislam*, the highest religious office of the Ottoman state, which banned the use of the *çarşaf* in public and crowded places, limited its use to side streets, and urged the police to report women wearing thin face veils and gathering in groups in public places.⁷¹ Regulations on women's clothing continued throughout the reign of Abdülhamid II, but restrictions had little effect, and various kinds of women's outdoor dress continued to coexist in the public space. In 1889, the use of the *ferace* was restricted and allowed only for palace women.⁷² This resulted in an increase in the use of the *çarşaf* especially by urban women. Nevertheless, due to the security concerns of the sultan, who was worried that the *çarşaf* would be used to hide the wearer's identity, it was banned in 1892.⁷³ This ban also proved ineffective and women continued to use the *çarşaf* as a common veil.⁷⁴

The public debate over the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* intensified in the aftermath of the 1908 Constitutional Revolution. In fact, according to the foreign observers, one of the immediate changes the 1908 revolution brought was the decrease in the number of women wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in Istanbul.⁷⁵ The latest trends in European fashion, which came to be associated with progress, were adopted by the elite women.⁷⁶ *Çarşaf* models became

See Muhaddere Taşcıoğlu, *Türk Osmanlı Cemiyetinde Kadının Sosyal Durumu ve Kadın Kıyafetleri*, Ankara: Akın Matbaası, 1958, p. 23.

⁷¹ Akkent and Frager, 1987, p. 106. Women's access to certain public places in Istanbul, such as Beyazıt, Aksaray and the Grand Bazaar was also restricted by the same regulation. It has been argued that in addition to the concern about the misuse of the *çarşaf* to hide the wearer's identity, another reason for the decision of Abdülhamid II to limit the use of the *çarşaf* was his first impression that this black veil resembled the mourning cloths of Christian women. Aktaş, 2006, p. 69.

⁷² Servet Muhtar Alus, "II. Abdülhamid Devrinde Kadın Kıyafetleri," *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası* 2(13), January 1951, pp. 544-547. Koçu argues that this decision proved ineffective. See also Koçu, 1969, p. 9.

⁷³ Akkent and Frager mentions that the sultan had prohibited the use of the *çarşaf* in 1883 as well. See Akkent and Frager, 1987, pp. 106-109.

⁷⁴ Işın argues that although there were strict regulations concerning women's clothing and appearance in public life, the Hamidian era was also a time when women began to participate in the public sphere in an unprecedented manner. Likewise, through fashion journals and newspaper advertisements on women's health, hair styles and cosmetics, women's outdoor clothes and dress models changed significantly in this era. See Ekrem Işın, "Tanzimat, Kadın ve Gündelik Hayat," *Tarih ve Toplum* 51, March 1988, pp. 22-27. See also Palmira Brummet, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, pp. 226-227.

⁷⁵ Caporal, 1982, p. 146. Some women were attacked in Istanbul for not abiding by the religious norms. See Yakut, 2002, pp. 23-24.

⁷⁶ Brummet, 2000, p. 226. However, Brummet also indicates that in the satirical press of the era, this increasing interest in European fashion was severely criticized. She claims that

shorter and more diversified, and began to resemble cloaks.⁷⁷ Continuous warfare in the 1910s also had dramatic effects on the life and public appearance of Ottoman women. Many women began to work in governmental offices, workshops and trades, thereby significantly increasing women's participation in public life.⁷⁸ This created greater room for women's freedom and eased the pressure of seclusion. Further relaxation of women's veiling in the urban centers was criticized by conservatives on the grounds of women's dignity and the duty of the Ottoman state to abide by Islamic regulations.⁷⁹ In 1912, the chief religious official, *Şeyhülislam* Abdurrahman Nesib Efendi, issued a statement declaring that change in the form of women's *çarşaf*s would not be tolerated and women should abide by the Sharia norms regarding clothing. Yakut indicates that while the statement was not effective, similar regulations were attempted by other conservative state officials in the later years and the question of controlling women's veiling continued to be a concern.⁸⁰ Women who adopted more modernized versions of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were severely criticized. There were even attacks on women in the streets of Istanbul.⁸¹ To counter the popular propaganda that the Balkan Wars

"conspicuous consumption was satirized as a weakness to which Ottoman women were particularly prone; their consumption of European styles and the drain on financial resources that it entailed had to be restrained, as did their attraction to *allafranga* lifestyle." Ibid., p. 230.

⁷⁷ There were different *çarşaf* models in use, such as baggy-*çarşaf* (*torba çarşaf*) and cloak-*çarşaf* (*pelerinli çarşaf*). See Apak, et.al., 1997, p. 104. Taşcıoğlu mentions a *çarşaf* type called "tango-*çarşaf*," which was a name used in this era for the Europeanized *çarşaf* models with shorter skirts and cloaks, usually worn together with long gloves. Taşcıoğlu, 1958, p. 53.

⁷⁸ See Yavuz Selim Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire: Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women (1916-1923)*, Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2005. On the other hand, although the number of women who joined the workforce increased in urban settings, the situation was different for women in rural part of the empire. Emphasizing the shift in textile production from small workshops of Anatolia to workshops and factories in more industrialized urban areas, van Os points to the deteriorating situation of women in Anatolia. See Nicole A.V.M. van Os, "Feminism, Philanthropy and Patriotism: Female Associational Life in the Ottoman Empire," unpublished PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2013, pp. 337-378.

⁷⁹ For a summary of the debate on women's veiling during the Second Constitutional Era, see Yakut, 2002. In this period, the idea of making the *çarşaf* compulsory for women by law was proposed by some in conservative journals like *Sırat-ı Müstakim*. See Caporal, 1982, p. 81.

⁸⁰ Yakut, 2002, p. 24. Lewis mentions that in April 1911, the *Şeyhülislam* issued a warning for all Muslim women, urging them not to wear European dress. See Lewis, 1961, p. 229. In 1919, during the government of Damat Ferit, the idea of issuing a regulation on women's veiling came up. The *Şeyhülislam* of the time, Mustafa Sabri Efendi, suggested that the issue would better be solved by enacting legislation rather than a regulation. See Yakut, 2002, p. 25.

⁸¹ Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhittin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği*, Istanbul: Metis, 2003, pp. 109-110. See also van Os, 2013, p. 220. In 1912, the Ministry of

had been lost because of uncovered women, Mehmet Tahir had to write and publish a small brochure in which he tried to convince the public that these women had made important sacrifices and aided the Ottoman army.⁸²

Reformist male intellectuals, by contrast, emphasized the social harm women's seclusion had inflicted on Ottoman society. They openly condemned women's veiling, especially, the use of the *peçe*, maintaining that it excluded women from social life, prevented them from getting an education, and therefore, impeded their social development. For Abdullah Cevdet, one of the most prominent Unionist and materialist Ottoman intellectuals, for example, the *çarşaf* was one of the reasons for degeneration in Ottoman society. He argued that a woman's veiling was not meant to segregate her from public life, but to protect her dignity.⁸³ Likewise, for another modernist author, Selahaddin Asım, Ottoman women had lost their social function and become sexual objects; women's veiling was one of the reasons for this miserable situation in Ottoman society.⁸⁴ Another advocate of a reform in women's clothing, Kılıçzade Hakkı, pinpointed women's veiling as the reason behind women's ignorance, moral decadence, and the backwardness of the Ottoman state.⁸⁵ It was not reasonable to maintain such a harmful practice in the name of a religious and national tradition.⁸⁶ In his ideal Ottoman society, women would dress as they wished and nobody would interfere in their choice; there would be no state regulation of women's veiling. For Ziya Gökalp, a prominent ideologue of Turkish nationalism in the late Ottoman period, continuation of such an ancient and primitive tradition like veiling was an insult to Turkish women; he asserted that it should be abolished.⁸⁷ Towards

Interior had issued an order that banned those foreigners who published against veiling from the Ottoman Empire. Ibid., p. 221.

⁸² See Mehmet Tahir, *Çarşaf Meselesi*, İstanbul: Sancakciyan Matbaası, 1915.

⁸³ Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1973, pp. 390-391; Caporal, 1982, p. 89.

⁸⁴ Selahaddin Asım, *Türk Kadınlığının Tereddidi yahud Karışmak*, İstanbul: Resimli Kitab Matbaası, n.d. For a more recent edition, see Selahaddin Asım, *Osmanlıda Kadınlığın Durumu*, Metin Martı (ed.), İstanbul: Arba, 1989.

⁸⁵ Kılıçzade Hakkı, "Pek Uyanık Bir Uyku," *İctihad* 55, 21 February 1328[1912]. It is interesting to note that Kılıçzade Hakkı's suggestion for how to reform women's clothing was not to opt for state regulation but for a gradual, moderate change through practice. See Yakut, 2002, p. 24.

⁸⁶ Kılıçzade Hakkı, "Kadın ve Tesettür Meselesi," transcribed and reprinted in "Kılıçzade Hakkı'nın Tesettüre İlan-ı Harbi," *Toplumsal Tarih* 66, June 1999, pp. 34-36.

⁸⁷ Aktaş, 2006, p. 114. In his memoirs, as Ahmet Emin (Yalman) mentions that Gökalp had indeed prepared a pamphlet against veiling, linking it with "primitive social origins." However, the pamphlet was too radical to publish at the time. See Ahmet Emin, *Turkey in the World War*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930.

the end of the empire, the newspaper *İleri*, published by Celal Nuri and Suphi Nuri, well-known Unionists of the era, in particular, became a platform for discussions of women's problems, including the issue of reforming women's clothing.⁸⁸



Figure 2.1. A postcard from the Second Constitutional Period showing a group of women in black *çarşafs*, watching a parade in Istanbul.

Source: Sacit Kutlu, *Didar-ı Hürriyet: Kartpostallarla İkinci Meşrutiyet (1908-1913)*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008.

The subject of women's veiling was also a concern for the Ottoman women's movement.⁸⁹ Although the primary points of struggle for the members of the movement were women's right to education and participation in the public life, they also began to discuss the proper form of women's veiling in the public sphere and what form the "national dress" (*millî kıyafet*) of the Ottoman women should assume.⁹⁰ For many, Ottoman women's veiling

⁸⁸ Zihnioğlu, 2003, pp. 85-88.

⁸⁹ For Ottoman women's movement, see Çakır, 2011. For a discussion on feminism in the Ottoman Empire, see Nicole A.N.M. van Os, "Osmanlı Müslümanlarında Feminizm," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce I: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, Mehmet Ö. Alkan (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim, 2001, pp. 335-347.

⁹⁰ For more on the "national dress" debate in the late Ottoman Empire, see Nicole A.N.M. van Os, "Millî Kıyafet: Ottoman Women and the Nationality of Their Dress," in *The Turks*, vol. 4, Hasan Celal Güzel, C. Cem Oğuz and Osman Karatay (eds.), Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002, pp. 580-592.

was improper; it was in line with neither the Islamic veiling codes nor the necessities of public life.⁹¹ Among the women's journals, the journal *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World) was particularly vocal in advocating a change in women's veiling and in underlining the necessity to define the national dress of Ottoman women.⁹² The journal even voiced the idea of founding an association to nationalize women's dress.⁹³ This idea was not realized, however. Nevertheless, the Association for the Defense of Women's Rights (*Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Nisvan Cemiyeti*), which was one of the women's organizations that flourished during the Second Constitutional Era, declared among its primary goals in its program the reforming of women's clothing, increasing their participation in the workforce and eliminating traditions that had deleterious effects on Ottoman women.⁹⁴ The main target for Ottoman supporters of women's rights was the *peçe* since there was near consensus among the reformists on its non-Turkish character and its negative impact on women's health and social roles; it impeded their participation in the workforce. Reformists criticized the inconsistency in women's veiling: women in Anatolia did not wear the *peçe*, and there was a great deal of variation even among the districts of Istanbul.⁹⁵ It is important to note that one of the concerns these women's journals had in suggesting a reform in women's veiling was the extent to which the reform complied with Islamic norms. The claim that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were not Islamic was used to support the idea that they could be eliminated.⁹⁶ Likewise, women's rights advocates were

⁹¹ One of these women who criticized the social pressure on women regarding veiling was Emine Semiye Hanım. Zihnioglu, 2003, p. 54. For other examples, see Çakır, 2011. In fact, even before this period, there were a few Ottoman women intellectuals, like Fatma Aliye Hanım, who openly criticized the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* and claimed that they were non-Islamic veils adopted from foreign cultures. See Işın, 1988. Fatma Aliye Hanım was also critical of financial burdens of following Western fashion, however. Part of the issue was that these European style clothes were import goods, which made their consumption harmful for national economy. Similar arguments appeared in women's journals of the time, as well. See van Os, 2013, pp. 217-218.

⁹² Aynur Demirdirek, *Osmanlı Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı Arayışının Bir Hikayesi*, Ankara: İmge, 1993, p. 105. It should be underlined, however, the debate on the national dress and the harms of over spending continued during this era as well. In fact, as van Os suggests, "the criticism against expenditures on foreign fashion intensified at times of external military threats and during the long years of war." See van Os, 2013, p. 227.

⁹³ Çakır, 2011, pp. 249-250.

⁹⁴ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler I: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908-1918*, İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1984[1952], pp. 481-482.

⁹⁵ Çakır, 2011, pp. 253-256.

⁹⁶ On the other hand, there was no consensus on the question of veiling in general. In *Kadınlar Dünyası*, for example, there were articles arguing that the disappearance of women's veiling

equally cautious in their criticism of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* so as not to lead the way towards excessive Westernization in women's clothing. Their campaign for a reform in women's dress was shaped within a nationalist framework, one that emphasized national economy, saving, consumption of national goods, and the dangers of following Western fashion to the extreme.⁹⁷

Women's dress in urban settings changed further especially after WWI. The use of the *peçe* decreased, and particularly in Istanbul, more women began to use overcoats or cloaks instead of the *çarşaf*, together with various different models of headscarves.⁹⁸ As in previous decades, these changes went hand in hand with attempts to control women's clothing, and women's veiling continued to be a matter of regulation for the state authorities as well as the subject of an intense debate with wider political implications until the end of the empire.⁹⁹ At the same time, an increasingly important component of the modernist Ottoman elite's political vision was the idea of the "new woman," i.e., the woman who broke with old traditions, participated in the public life, and worked with men to save the nation and the state. As early as 1913, in her novel *Yeni Turan* (The New Turan), Halide Edip, the most important female figure of the Turkish nationalist movement, had imagined this new Turkish woman dressed in an overcoat, her hair covered with a headscarf; she had removed her *peçe* and *çarşaf*.¹⁰⁰

was only a matter of time, but there were also those who argued that women's veiling was a condition of Islam. See Çakır, 2011, pp. 258-259.

⁹⁷ For more on this point, see Çakır, 2011; van Os, 2013. Even the most radical members of the women's movement, like Nezihe Muhiddin, could be critical of the "cultural degeneration" that Westernization had brought, particularly through non-Muslims. See Zihnioglu, 2003, p. 75.

⁹⁸ Akkent and Frager, 1987, p. 186. In 1915, for example, women were allowed to remove the *çarşaf* during the working hours at the government offices. However, the length of the skirts of the women officials was subject to police control. Aktaş, 2006, p. 132

⁹⁹ For an announcement of the Istanbul Police Department in 1917 asking women to avoid wearing shorter skirts, corsets and thin *çarşafs* and a subsequent announcement declaring the previous order null, see Caporal, 1982, pp. 147-148; Graham-Brown, 1988, p. 130. For examples of various statements issued by the office of *Şeyhülislam* between 1912 and 1919 concerning women's loyalty to Islamic veiling, see Yakut, 2002, pp. 24-25.

¹⁰⁰ Taşkıran notes the novel *Yeni Turan* as a reflection of the mental transformation regarding women's roles in the Ottoman society. Tezer Taşkıran, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Kadın Hakları*, Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1973, pp. 59-60.



Figure 2.2. A colored image of a group of women in “modernized” *çarşafs* in early 1920s Istanbul.

Source: The film *İstanbul Do/Redo/Undo: Waters, Streets, Faces* by Nezih Erdoğan.

II. Kemalist Vision of Women’s Modernization and the Question of Veiling

Berktaş argues that although there is a strong continuity between the late Ottoman Empire and the Turkish republic in the emphasis on the “new woman” and her central role in the nationalist agenda, the male elite of the republic had to face, to a much greater degree than did their Ottoman counterparts, the difficult task of reconciling the ideal “national woman” with the ideal “modern woman.”¹⁰¹ In other words, it was difficult to bring together the image of the new Turkish woman as the embodiment of national values and identity, and the new modern woman as the reflection of the Europeanized face of the new state. Especially in the first years of the regime following the War of Independence, the emphasis on the role of women in the war, particularly on the self-sacrifice of the Anatolian women, became the image along the lines of which the new Turkish woman would be envisioned. There was a glorification of the traditional peasant woman of Anatolia as the essence of national womanhood. At the same time, however, women were called into the public sphere to take their part in national development and to play their role as the symbols and carriers of modernization. The issue of women’s

¹⁰¹ Fatmagül Berktaş, “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Feminizm,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce I: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, Mehmet Ö. Alkan (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim, 2001, pp. 348-361.

clothing and outward appearance was perhaps the terrain where this paradox became the most crystallized.

Even in the women's movement inherited by the republic from the empire, which became institutionalized as the Turkish Women's Union (*Türk Kadınlar Birliği*), the emphasis on the "national" was quite strong during the years of transition to the new regime. While the organization backed the republican project of modernization, its supporters were keen not to compromise national identity and morality.¹⁰² The *çarşaf* had acquired new meaning during the national struggle; at the very first protest organized in Istanbul in reaction to the invasion of Izmir by the Greek army in 1919, all women in attendance were wearing black *çarşafs*, even though it had become very rare attire in the capital by then.¹⁰³ In 1923, when asked about her views on women's veiling, Nezihe Muhiddin, the head of the Turkish Women's Union, which was the most active and radical women's organization during the early republic, maintained that women's covers were their national dress and that the *çarşaf* was an obstacle neither to progress nor to women's participation in public life.¹⁰⁴ As Zihnioğlu suggests, this was probably an attitude Muhiddin had adopted in order not to overshadow the primary point of struggle of the union: gaining the political rights of women. However, it reflects the atmosphere at the dawn of the republic regarding women's veiling. Although the founders of the Women's Union appeared in the press in 1923 having removed their face veils, they were all covered, many of them in the *çarşaf*, which was still considered as the national dress of Turkish women. Two delegates who represented Turkey at the congress of the International Alliance of Women in Rome in 1923 also wore this national dress, albeit in its quite modern form, and without the *peçe*.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Zihnioğlu argues that this transition coincides in women's movement with a transition from the ideal "Islamic woman" emphasized by the early Ottoman feminists to the ideal "Turkish woman" of the nationalist feminists. See Zihnioğlu, 2003, pp. 76-77.

¹⁰³ Halide Edip was one of the speakers at the demonstration and she had become a symbol of women's participation in the national struggle in her black *çarşaf*. She was not wearing the *peçe*, however. For more on Halide Edip's political role in this era, see Ayşe Durakbaşı, *Halide Edip: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*, Istanbul: İletişim, 2000; İpek Çalışlar, *Halide Edip: Biyografisine Sığmayan Kadın*, Istanbul: Everest, 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 113.

¹⁰⁵ For a picture of the delegates that appeared in the newspaper *İleri*, see Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 142. For a picture of the founders of the Women's Union in 1923, see *ibid.*, p. 131. Although women were more hesitant to discuss the issue of veiling in 1923, some modernist male intellectuals were more vocal in criticizing it. For example, see Suphi İleri, "Kadınlarımız," *İleri*, 11 February 1339[1923], quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 87-88. A picture of the executive board of

It was, in fact, quite apparent even in the first years that the new regime favored modernization of women's clothing, more particularly, the removal of the *peçe*. Although Mustafa Kemal never directly addressed the issue of unveiling or referred to the necessity of organizing anti-veiling campaigns to change women's dress, it was obvious in a number of his speeches that for him, the general habits of dress widespread among women in Turkey in the early years of the republic did not have a modern and national character.¹⁰⁶ In one of his speeches in Izmir in 1923, having mentioned that the most important aspect of social life that draws foreigners' attention in the cities of Turkey was women's veiling, he emphasized that it should be simple; it should also not be such that it prevents women from participating in public life. For him, this was the type of veiling required by Islam.¹⁰⁷ During his visit to Konya in March 1923, he argued that women's education and participation in public life should be the main concerns, and that the issue of clothing was secondary. He also stated, however, that what had to be taken into consideration in the issue of veiling were both the spirit of the nation and the necessities of the time. Without mentioning the *peçe* or the *çarşaf*, he advised women to abstain from going too far in either direction: meaning to neither veil nor unveil to excess. He also mentioned that the form of veiling assumed should be simplified.¹⁰⁸

It is important to note that in Mustafa Kemal's public speeches, there was no overt censure of covering the hair. In fact, he was critical of women who tried to imitate European women and carried the change in their style to extremes, and urged Turkish women to maintain their modesty.¹⁰⁹ However, his preference, reflected in the way women around him dressed and in the general discourse of the regime on women's modernization, was Turkish women's adaptation to "civilized" norms in every field, including clothing. While the number of these norms governing women's clothing increased over the years, during the early years of the republic, women's emancipation was

the Women's Union published in *Milliyet* shows that many of the members had not only removed their *çarşaf*, but also their headscarves by 1927. See *ibid.*, p. 191; 209.

¹⁰⁶ Price quotes him saying that in Turkish villages women live with men without segregation and that gender segregation and the *peçe* are Arab traditions. See G. Ward Price, *Extra-Special Correspondent*, London: Harrap, 1957, p. 141.

¹⁰⁷ *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1989, p. 85.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91 and p. 154.

¹⁰⁹ Zehra Arat, "Turkish Women and the Republican Reconstruction of Tradition," in *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition, Identity and Power*, Fatma Müge Göçek and Shiva Balaghi (eds.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 62.

very much associated with women revealing their faces to the world. Grace Ellison, a British author who interviewed Mustafa Kemal right before his marriage to Latife Hanım in 1923, quotes him as saying that women would be liberated in a year's time, meaning that they would uncover their face and participate in the public space alongside men.¹¹⁰ Until their divorce in 1925, Latife Hanım, Mustafa Kemal's wife, always appeared in public without the *peçe* and accompanied her husband, which was something extraordinary at the time and a dramatic change for many of her contemporaries, men and women alike.¹¹¹ Most of the news about the couple did not fail to mention that Latife Hanım was without the face veil (*peçesiz olarak*) though she wore the *çarşaf* occasionally and certainly used a headscarf all the time.¹¹² Foreign journalists and correspondents also stressed her difference from the majority of the Turkish women by referring to her removal of the face veil. Isaac Marcossion, an American journalist, for example, describes the moment he met Latife Hanım during his interview with Mustafa Kemal as follows:

A few moments later the most attractive Turkish woman I had yet met entered - I should say glided - into the room. She was of medium height, with a full Oriental face and brilliant dark eyes. Her every movement was grace itself. Although she wore a sort of non-Turkish costume - it was dark blue - she had retained the charming head-dress which is usually worn with the veil and which, according to the old Turkish custom, must completely hide the hair. The veil, however, was absent for Madame Kemal was one of the emancipated ones. Some of her brown tresses peeped out from beneath the beguiling cover.¹¹³

Mustafa Kemal was mainly concerned with gender segregation and women's exclusion from the public sphere, which was the general norm in most parts of the country. In 1923, during their tour in Western Anatolia, he and Latife Hanım had not met a single woman in the places they visited, and so he was relieved when they were welcomed by a group of women, school teachers and wives of a few professionals living in the town, dressed in the *çarşaf* but without the face veil, in Edremit, a small seaside town in the north of Izmir. Mahu Hanım, one of those women and the owner of the house where

¹¹⁰ Grace Ellison, *Ankara'da Bir İngiliz Kadın*, translated by Osman Olcay, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1999, p. 211.

¹¹¹ For more on Latife Hanım, see İpek Çalışlar, *Latife Hanım*, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007.

¹¹² In one occasion, at the funeral of Mustafa Kemal's mother in 1923, she was in a black coat and a black face veil. See Çalışlar, 2007, p. 103.

¹¹³ Issac F. Marcossion, *Turbulent Years*, New York, 1969 [1938], p. 170.

Mustafa Kemal and Latife Hanım stayed in Edremit, remembers Mustafa Kemal thanking her for the only civilized night they had spent during the entire visit; civilized because of the participation of women.¹¹⁴ In the 1920s, even Ankara, the capital of the new republic, was famous as a city with no woman around. Many of the bureaucrats and parliamentarians had not brought their families to the city, and the few women who did come from Istanbul were a source of gossip when they were seen in public places in their Istanbul style *çarşaf*.¹¹⁵ Even some of the leading elite of the new regime seemed to have reservations about women's public visibility and mixed-gender gatherings that were newly emerging in the capital.¹¹⁶

Women's veiling and segregation was such a prevailing practice in the first years of the republic that Latife Hanım's abandonment of the *peçe*, her modern way of dressing, and her appearance at public meetings and accompanying her husband on visits was made an issue by the opposition; her clothing and attitude was an indication of the anti-religious character of the regime that Mustafa Kemal and his followers were trying to establish.¹¹⁷ At the beginning of 1923, one of the opposition groups, the Ottoman Revolutionary Committee of Anatolia (*Anadolu Osmanlı İhtilal Komitesi*), distributed a handout calling Muslims to resist Mustafa Kemal. On the handout, there was a picture showing Latife Hanım sitting with Mustafa Kemal and a few other men at a public meeting, with her hair covered, but her

¹¹⁴ For Mahu Hanım's memoirs see Nazmi Kal, *Atatürk'le Yaşadıklarını Anlattılar*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2001. Mustafa Kemal had also insisted that women sit together with men on the dinner table that night. He mentioned again years later in 1936 how pleased he was the night he spent in Edremit, adding that it was priceless to see women and men together, and incomparable to any of the gifts and compliments he received during the entire visit.

¹¹⁵ Falif Rıfki Atay, *Çankaya*, Istanbul: Bateş Atatürk Dizisi, 1998, p. 353; 386; 410. Istanbul style here refers to more modernized styles of *çarşaf*, which were seen as too loose to appropriately cover the body, and thus were a source of gossip.

¹¹⁶ The acting British Consul in Ankara in 1927, Geoffrey Knox, notes his observations as follows: "even among the leading members of the Government, two of the most outstanding figures, Fevzi Pasha, the sheet anchor of the régime, and Abdul Halik Bey, the present Minister of Finance and one of the most able administrators that Turkey possesses, appear untouched by the prevailing secularism. Fevzi Pasha, a devout and practicing Mussulman, devotes all his attention to his duties and is never seen in the social life of Angora. Abdul Halik Bey is liberal enough to play bridge and tennis and to keep up excellent relations-on neutral ground- with one or two European diplomats, but he clearly shows his disapproval of female emancipation by never appearing at any mixed gathering." See Despatch from Sir G. Clark to Sir Austen Chamberlain, the British Government Foreign Office (hereafter FO) 371/12320, 20 June 1927.

¹¹⁷ Taşcıoğlu notes that the first few years of the republic were not very different from the previous era regarding women's clothing. The *çarşaf* (in its various forms) was the general outdoor dress. Taşcıoğlu, 1958, p. 81.

face uncovered.¹¹⁸ She was the embodiment of the new Turkish woman that Mustafa Kemal's regime aimed to create. The handout implied that Muslims had to resist Mustafa Kemal if they did not want to see their wives and daughters behaving so immorally. Even Latife Hanım's crossing of her legs while sitting was a sign of immorality. During the visit of Mustafa Kemal and Latife Hanım to Adana in March 1923, the *müftü* of Adana issued a public declaration, which was published in the newspapers of the time, assuring that Latife Hanım's accompanying her husband was not contrary to Islam, and that her clothing was in line with Sharia.¹¹⁹ The Adana *müftü*'s statement was probably seen as necessary to prevent public reaction. It was in a way also a declaration that the removal of face veil was not against Islamic dress codes.

On the other hand, the modernization of women's clothing that had begun in the late Ottoman Empire was continuing, even accelerating, under the republic. *Çarşaf* models had already been changed considerably in big cities; cloak-like *çarşafs* with shorter lengths were common, and more modernized forms of covering the hair had become fashionable. In major cities, more women had begun to remove their *peçe*, to replace their *çarşaf* and to wear overcoats instead, and to prefer covering their hair with turbans or with a black rectangle scarf tied at the back of the neck, which was called the *sıkmabaş* style.¹²⁰ The educated and elite segments of the population were the forerunners since they were already adopting European styles in their daily lives even before the republic. The general public's perception of what Atatürk preferred with respect to women's clothing also played a role in women's adoption of modern styles.¹²¹ Female teachers were the vanguard in this regard since the dress code of state officials had been determined by a number of state regulations, one of which banned the use of the *peçe* for school teachers on 15 January 1924.¹²² The existence of a considerable number of women who had already removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf* was also important for legitimizing

¹¹⁸ Çalışlar, 2007, p. 179.

¹¹⁹ Mehmet Önder, *Atatürk'ün Yurt Gezileri*, İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1998, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁰ Caporal, 1982, p. 646; Akkent and Franger, 1987, p. 186. Taşcıoğlu considers these modernized ways of covering the hair as a transition from the *çarşaf* to its total abandonment and adoption of the hat. She states that this transition continued throughout the 1920s and the hat could spread among the urban women only in the 1930s. Taşcıoğlu, 1958, p. 58.

¹²¹ Some women removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf* and adopted an overcoat and a headscarf because they heard that Atatürk had told women to do so. It seems that such rumors were effective in encouraging women to remove their veils. For an example of such an account, see Akkent and Frager, 1987, p. 194.

¹²² Yakut, 2002, p. 26.

the new forms of women's clothing as the modern and national norm, and for consolidating them as symbols of these norms. The press, in particular, played a significant role in promoting new dress norms for men and women alike, publishing the latest trends in Western fashion regularly as a guide for readers.¹²³ Women's journals also had a crucial impact on transforming women's dress and trying to create a national synthesis of Western styles and local traditions, the latter believed to be authentically Turkish. Mixed-gender public meetings became the norm and European style entertainment, such as balls or tea parties, began to characterize the republican social life, especially in big cities. These gatherings created the occasions where unveiled women would appear confidently as the new participants in public life.¹²⁴ Therefore, there had already been a gradual change in women's dress beginning from the early years of the republic. In the 1920s, a more radical change, however, would take place in men's clothing through direct state intervention.

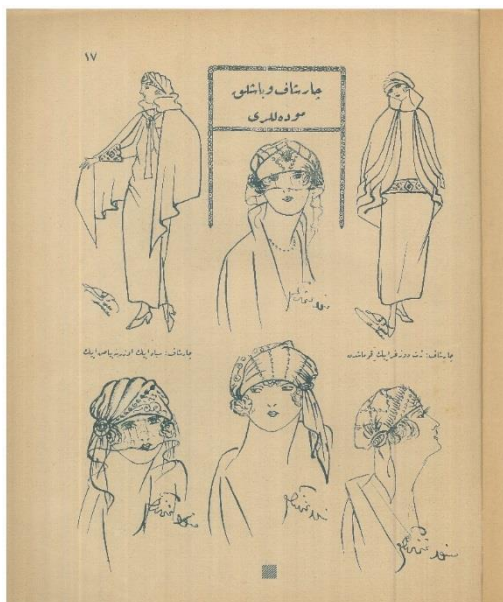


Figure 2.3. A page from the journal *Resimli Ay*, showing fashionable models of *çarşaf* and headdress in the 1920s. The caption reads “*çarşaf* and headdress models.” *Resimli Ay*, April 1924.

¹²³ In 1925, one could even see a picture of a woman in her bathing suit as the cover of a journal. See *Resimli Ay*, v. 7, August 1341 [1925]. For more on the journal's views on women, see Tülay Alim Baran, “*Resimli Ay*’da Kadın,” *Toplumsal Tarih* 63, March 1999, pp. 6-10.

¹²⁴ There was also a debate on such activities like balls as causes of consumerism and over spending. Women in particular were criticized for their addiction to fashion, which was harmful for the national economy. Even the members of the Women's Union supported such critiques. Nezihe Muhiddin, for example, had suggested in one her articles in 1927 that women could wear tuxedos at the balls instead of luxurious dresses. See Zihnioğlu, 2003, pp. 187-188.

III. Republic's First Dress Reform: The Hat Law of 1925

In almost all major studies on early republican Turkey, published both in Turkey and abroad, the introduction of the European hat to replace the Ottoman fez is considered to be one of the most significant, if not the boldest, of Kemalist cultural reforms, and has been widely known as “the” dress reform of the new regime. The debate over the modernization of men’s headgear had in fact begun earlier in the nineteenth century and intensified during the Second Constitutional Period after 1908.¹²⁵ Thus the hat was not a total novelty in the 1920s, at least not for the elite segments of the population. Some Ottoman intellectuals, for example, had proposed a dress reform in the army and argued that all soldiers should wear the modern hat.¹²⁶ However, with the Balkan Wars and World War I, and, especially afterwards, during the occupation of Istanbul and parts of Anatolia, the hat again came to be associated primarily with foreigners, occupiers, and “infidels.”¹²⁷ The fez continued to signify the Muslim-Turkish identity, while the *kalpak*, a black Turkic wool cap wider at the top, would become the symbol of Turkish national struggle, since it was the headgear of the leaders of the resistance movement in Anatolia.¹²⁸

The introduction of the hat as modern men’s headgear came during the visit of Mustafa Kemal to Kastamonu and İnebolu in August 1925. He first arrived in the city of Kastamonu bareheaded, holding a Panama hat, to the surprise of many, and emphasized the importance of modern clothing during

¹²⁵ The hat was criticized by some Ottoman modernists as a symbol of religious reactionism. See Patricia Baker, “The Fez in Turkey: A Symbol of Modernization?,” *Costume* 20, 1986, pp. 72-85.

¹²⁶ See Kılıçzade Hakkı, 1328[1912].

¹²⁷ See Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs 1925*, vol. I: *The Islamic World since the Peace Settlement*, London: Oxford University Press, 1927, p. 74, fnt. 1. See also Orhan Koloğlu, *İslamda Başlık*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1978, pp. 64-65.

¹²⁸ In fact, as a Central Asian headdress, the *kalpak* was already a popular form of headgear among Turkish nationalists in the late Ottoman Empire. Koloğlu mentions that the first attempt in the late Ottoman Empire to change men’s headgear was to replace the fez with *kalpak* and *kabalak* (a khaki cloth cap) in the military. *Kalpak* was especially worn by the officers during ceremonies while *kabalak* was the headgear of all soldiers in war and peace times. See Koloğlu, 1978, pp. 62-63. An idea of introducing the *kalpak* as the national headgear was proposed to the first parliament established by the nationalist movement in Ankara in 1920, but then no action was taken. See Mahmut Goloğlu, *Üçüncü Meşrutiyet (1920)*, Ankara: 1970, pp. 176-177. See also Kemal Zeki Gençosman, *Altın Yıllar*, İstanbul: Hür Yayınları, 1981, p.114. Toynbee argues that the *kalpak* expressed the emphasis of the new Turks on their national identity and historical origins well, but it was not suitable for their equally important desire to become like civilized nations and not to be a peculiar people. See Toynbee, 1927, p. 73.

his meetings with different segments of the population.¹²⁹ Two days later, in his speech at the Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocağı*) in İnebolu,¹³⁰ having characterized the contemporary Turkish dress as neither national nor international, he introduced the hat as civilized headgear and proclaimed it as a necessity of modern life:

My friends, there is no need to seek and revive the costume of Turan. A civilized, international dress is worthy and appropriate for our nation, and we will wear it. Boots or shoes on our feet, trousers on our legs, shirt and tie, jacket and waistcoat – and of course, to complete these, a cover with a brim on our heads. I want to make this clear. This head-covering is called a ‘hat’ (*şapka*).¹³¹

On his return to Ankara on 1 September 1925, those who came to welcome Mustafa Kemal were all wearing a hat. The next day, a governmental decree made it compulsory for state officials to wear the hat.¹³² On 16 October 1925, a group of deputies introduced a bill to the parliament proposing that the hat should be compulsory for state officials, and that all men’s headgear other than the hat, including, of course, the traditional Ottoman fez, should be banned. The reasoning of the bill was that the issue of headgear, though in fact an insignificant matter in itself, had a special importance for the Turkish nation whose aim was to join the family of contemporary civilized nations.¹³³

¹²⁹ Mahmut Goloğlu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi I: Devrimler ve Tepkileri (1924-1930)*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007, pp. 154-155. See also Patrick Kinross, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation*, London: Weinfeld, 1993[1964], pp. 411-417.

¹³⁰ The Turkish Hearths was an association founded in 1912 to promote Turkish nationalism. For more, see Füsün Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)*, İstanbul: İletişim, 1997. See also François Georgeon, “Kemalist Dönemde Türk Ocakları (1923-1932),” in *Osmanlı-Türk Modernleşmesi (1900-1930)*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006.

¹³¹ Quoted in Houcheng Chehabi, “Dress Codes for Men in Turkey and Iran,” in *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher (eds.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2004, p. 214.

¹³² For the text of the decree, see Baker, 1986. In fact, the reform in men’s headgear had started earlier, with the adoption of the German-style service cap in the navy in May 1925. Thus, the reform was indeed first introduced in the army. See Koloğlu, 1978, p. 79. See also Chehabi, 2004, pp. 212-213. On the same day, another governmental decree (*İlmiye Sınıfı ve İlmiye Kisvesi Hakkında Kararname*) banned the wearing of religious dress, vestments or insignia, by people other than those holding a recognized religious office. See Lewis, 1961, p. 269. On 30 November 1925, with a change in the Criminal Law, the wearing of religious garment by unauthorized people without any permission or official authority was sanctioned to three months to one year imprisonment. See also Goloğlu, 2007, pp. 177-181.

¹³³ *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi* [Turkish Grand National Assembly Minute Book], Volume 19, Meeting 14 (25 November 1925), p. 221.

The fez had become a mark to distinguish the Turkish nation from the civilized nations and it was necessary to erase this “identification mark,” and to replace it with the common headgear of all modern nations, the modern hat. Nurettin Pasha, a deputy of Bursa, maintained that the bill was trying to codify what had already been regulated by a governmental decree, so the decree could be lifted.¹³⁴ He also argued that the law’s intention to limit people’s choice of headgear was a violation of the constitution. This proposal received severe criticism in the parliament.¹³⁵ The main argument of the supporters of the bill was that the hat had already been adopted by many in the society. In the end, the law required all state officials and members of the parliament to wear hats, characterized the hat as the general headgear of the Turkish nation and banned the “continuation of any habit that was incompatible with this.” Thus, wearing traditional or local headgears such as the fez was prohibited. Article 3 of the law made the parliament as well as the council of ministers responsible for monitoring the implementation of the law.¹³⁶

The hat reform received substantial societal reaction. According to Halide Edip, among all Kemalist reforms until then, it was the one most seriously opposed.¹³⁷ A number of protests occurred in provinces like Sivas, Malatya, Erzurum, Kayseri, Rize, Giresun, and Maraş.¹³⁸ These protests were

¹³⁴ Nurettin Pasha, known as Sakallı Nurettin Pasha, was one of the army commanders during the Turkish War of Independence. He was elected as the deputy of Bursa as an independent candidate in 1924 by-elections against the candidate of the RPP. He is known particularly for his responsibility in the brutal repression of the Kurdish uprising in 1921 (Koçgiri Rebellion in Dersim), and atrocities against the Greeks in Western Anatolia. See Mete Tunçay, *T.C. 'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992[1981], pp. 117-120.

¹³⁵ Nurettin Pasha was also criticized by the press. He was even declared to be a reactionary, propagating resistance against the revolution. Later, Independence Tribunals also informed the government that Nurettin Pasha’s speeches against the Hat Law at the parliament influenced the mass protests against the hat reform. See Ergün Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri I-II (1920-1927)*, İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988, p. 412.

¹³⁶ Koloğlu argues that holding the parliament responsible was a special character of the Hat Law, since usually council of ministers was responsible for monitoring the laws. Koloğlu, 1978, p. 94.

¹³⁷ Halide Edip, *Turkey Faces West: A Turkish View of Recent Changes and Their Origin*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930, p. 224. Halide Edip also claims that the way the hat reform was put into practice was not Western, and “the opposition of individuals among the men in the street, really much more westernized than those who carried the measure through, had a note of wounded self-respect rather than of objection to wearing hats.”

¹³⁸ For a more detailed discussion of the collective resistance against the Hat Law, see Brockett, 1998. See also Goloğlu, 2007; Koloğlu, 1978; Tunçay, 1992; Aybars, 1988, Baker, 1986. Schick suggests that wearing a hat had come to mean to apostatize from Islam, since clothing was a mark that had separated communities and represented communal identities in the Ottoman society (and also in Islamic history). There had been a link between changing one’s

repressed very severely, people who were involved were characterized as reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries by the official discourse and in the press, and many protesters were tried by the Independence Tribunals, which had been established and equipped with enormous powers after the Sheikh Said Rebellion, a Kurdish-Islamic uprising that had emerged and quickly spread in the southeastern provinces of the country at the beginning of the same year.¹³⁹ These trials resulted in the persecution of some people, and in the arrest of many more.¹⁴⁰

The economic aspect of the reform also created social discontent since hats were scarce in the country, and when available, they were very expensive. It was particularly difficult for the poor masses. Because going out bareheaded was considered inappropriate, there were individual instances of nonobservance of the law apart from collective resistance.¹⁴¹ In fact, although the law stated that headgear other than the modern hat was banned, criminal sanctions remained uncertain, as the criminal law had yet to be amended. This did not occur until 1939, when wearing of headgear other than the hat was penalized with up to three months imprisonment.¹⁴² Yet, many people faced police prosecution for continuing to wear turban, fez, or local headgear, not

religion and changing his cloth, and this was influential in people's reactions to the Hat Law. See İrvin Cemil Schick, *Bedeni, Toplumu, Kâinatı Yazmak: İslâm, Cinsiyet ve Kültür Üzerine*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2011, pp. 151-154. See also Baker, 1986. Some of the protestors were in fact opposing the reform because they did not want to become "infidels." One of the modernist journals of the time, *İctihad*, published an article to counter this link in public opinion between changing religion and changing of the headgear, and to argue that the hat was not Christian but originally a Muslim headgear used first by North African Muslims. See Sadık Albayrak, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Batıcılık*, İstanbul: Araştırma Yayınları, 1989, pp. 90-91.

¹³⁹ See Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion: 1880-1925*, Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1989. See also Şaban İba, *1925 Kürt İsyanı ve Kemalist İktidar*, İstanbul: Özgür Üniversite Yayınları, 2011. Apart from the declaration of martial law in the region, the first article of the High Treason Law was also immediately changed to include the use of religion for political purposes as a criminal offense.

¹⁴⁰ For more information, see Aybars, 1988.

¹⁴¹ For example, there were people who did not go out of the house in order not to be seen bareheaded. Koloğlu, 1978, p. 95; Aktaş, 2006, p. 179. Berkes states that there were also some people who left the country because of the Hat Law. Berkes, 1973, p. 485. Küçük mentions that a Bektashi dervish, Selman Cemali Baba, had left Turkey for Albania because he did not want to wear a hat. Hülya Küçük, "Sufi Reactions against the Reforms after Turkey's National Struggle: How a Nightingale Turned into a Crow," in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 123-142. A local newspaper of Ordu was reporting in January 1926 that the municipality should help the children of the poor and the street porters to buy hats. Gençosman, 1981, p. 117. Even the state officials found it difficult to afford a hat and the government accommodated them with a one-year term loan called the "hat advance." Aktaş, 2006, p. 183.

¹⁴² Tunçay, 1992, p. 151.

only in the immediate period after enactment of the law, but continuously (though unsystematically) throughout the single-party era and even later.¹⁴³

One crucial aspect of the Hat Law of 1925 was its timing. It came after the Law on the Maintenance of Order, which was introduced to equip the government with extraordinary powers in order to secure the order that had been shaken by the Sheikh Said Rebellion. Mustafa Kemal himself pointed at the relationship between this law and the hat reform as follows:

We did that [the Hat Law] while the Law for Maintenance of Order was still in force. If it had not been in force we should have done so all the same; but one can say with complete truth that the existence of this law made the thing much easier for us. As a matter of fact, the application of the Law for Maintenance of Order prevented the morale of the nation from being poisoned to a great extent by reactionaries.¹⁴⁴

The Law on the Maintenance of Order shaped the second half of the 1920s in a critical way, significantly increasing the control of the regime over every domain of the social and political life, until its abolition in 1929. This period, sometimes referred as the Period of Maintenance of Order, was the formation period of the Kemalist single-party regime. It is characterized by very important reforms, ranging from secularization of the family law to the adoption of the Latin alphabet. In other words, the growing authoritarianism of the regime paved the way to more radical cultural change, including the modernization of clothing.

There were two other aspects of the hat reform that were particularly relevant to the issue of women's un/veiling. On the one hand, the Hat Law marked a turning point in the public debate on modern and national clothing. The law itself and the public discussion that ensued focused on men's clothing, but they had wider references to the importance of the modernization of the outfit of the nation, and thus with direct implications for women's clothing.¹⁴⁵ Mustafa Kemal himself touched upon the issue of women's veiling during the very same visit to Kastamonu when he introduced the hat. In fact, this was one of the very few occasions where he rather explicitly referred to the form of veiling from which women should abstain. In one of

¹⁴³ Chehabi, 2004, p. 217. See also Baker, 1986.

¹⁴⁴ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk 1927*, Istanbul: Ministry of Education Printing Plant, 1963, pp. 738-739.

¹⁴⁵ Aktaş argues that the Hat Law was linked to the modernization of women's clothing since it represented a different life style where traditional or religious clothing had no place. Aktaş, 2006, pp. 185-188.

his speeches during this visit, he stated that women could uncover their face and see the world around them; there was no harm in this if women were to be inculcated with religious and national morality.¹⁴⁶ In another speech, he mentioned that he had seen some women who were trying to cover their face with a piece of cloth or *peştamal* and turning their back or closing up by sitting on the ground when they came across men in the street. He characterized these acts as strange and primitive and the source of ridicule of the Turkish nation, and said: “Gentlemen, would the mothers and daughters of a civilized nation assume such an absurd and vulgar pose? This is a situation that ridicules our nation. It has to be corrected immediately.”¹⁴⁷

Thus, the Hat Law of 1925, while only touching upon men’s headgear, created a general atmosphere where clothing change became a signifier for the modernization of the new republic and women’s dress was not an exception in this regard. The distinction between “civilized” and “uncivilized” forms of clothing came to occupy public discourse; modern women’s clothing began to appear more frequently in the press. It was only to be expected that women’s veiling would become an issue given this mood that had taken on the tone of a national campaign for modern clothing: the link between the reform of men’s headgear and women’s veils was in the air. The speech of Mustafa Kemal against the face veil during his visit to Kastamonu helped to reinforce this link and forge the idea or perception that, like the fez, women’s veiling was also not approved by the new regime, despite the fact that no open reform agenda or official move in this issue had been put into practice.¹⁴⁸ Some opponents, for example, used this perceived link between the abolition of the fez and the removal of the veil to mobilize people against the Hat Law. In some of the organized reactions to the hat reform, protestors claimed in their propaganda that women’s face would also be uncovered.¹⁴⁹ In Kayseri, for example, a rumor that the government would soon outlaw the veil played a role in reactions against the Hat Law.¹⁵⁰ Oral historical testimonies also indicate that there were rumors in Istanbul that the *çarşaf* had been prohibited, that Atatürk

¹⁴⁶ Caporal, 1982, p. 647.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Zehra Arat, 1995, p. 61. For the whole speech in Turkish, see *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, p. 227.

¹⁴⁸ Later in the 1930s, Tekin Alp would also write in his famous book *Kemalizm* that Atatürk’s speech against the face veil proved enough for many women to remove their *peçe* and adopt modern hat in the 1920s. He would claim that “the fact that the *peçe* and the fez were removed almost at the same time was an indication for women’s march towards liberty together with men.” Tekin Alp, *Kemalizm*, İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Gazete ve Matbaası, 1936, p. 123.

¹⁴⁹ Aybars, 1988, p. 407.

¹⁵⁰ Chehabi, 2004, p. 215; Brockett, 1998, p. 49.

had ordered women to stop wearing it, just like men had been ordered to stop wearing their fez and turban.¹⁵¹ A telegraph of a group of women schoolteachers in Sivas, which was directly sent to the Prime Minister İsmet Pasha in February 1926, perhaps best illustrates how the link between the introduction of the hat and the removal of the veil was perceived and experienced at the local level. The women teachers complained about the rumors created by some men in Sivas who had claimed that the hat would be removed soon and women would have to wear the *çarşaf* again. Women teachers asked the prime minister to see to it that the necessary measures be taken concerning these rumors and those who had spread them.¹⁵²

The hat reform and the way it was applied had serious repercussions among ordinary people concerning women's veiling as well. Many women had removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf* because of such rumors and because of the encouraging atmosphere created by the hat reform to modernize clothing. Afet İnan, for example, argues that it became possible for the women students of the Faculty of Medicine to remove their *çarşaf* only after the inculcations of Mustafa Kemal in his speeches on modern clothing in 1925, and after the enactment of the Hat Law.¹⁵³ On Republic Day in October 1925, following the beginning of the hat reform during Mustafa Kemal's visit, newspapers reported that everybody, including the women teachers, had participated in the celebrations in Ankara with modern hats on their heads. One of those teachers, Mevhide Atıfet Hanım, had criticized the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* after she argued that Turkish women became equal with men under the republic: "The new enlightened mothers of the future are not so naïve a people that they would search for honor, virtue and grace under the *peçe*, under the *çarşaf*. They are confident that honor and purity are to be found in spirit, in manners, deep in essence."¹⁵⁴ The change in women's clothing towards the end of 1925 was so visible, at least in the major cities, that the foreign press also celebrated this

¹⁵¹ Akkent and Frager, 1987, p. 189.

¹⁵² Turkish Republic Prime Ministry Republican Archives (hereafter PMRA) 030.10/104.679.4, 16 February 1926. Having received the copy of the telegraph and the order of the prime minister to take the necessary measures, the minister of interior informed the prime minister a few days later that according to the report of the governor of Sivas, such rumors were told by a certain Nergiszade Boyacı Ahmed and a legal investigation of him had begun. There was also an official request to transfer his case to the Independence Tribunal. The minister of interior also ensured the prime minister that all relevant authorities had been informed accordingly; they had been directed to prevent similar events from happening and to hand people who were involved in similar activities over to legal authorities.

¹⁵³ Quoted in Aktaş, 2006, p. 191.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in Gençosman, 1981, p. 114.

as the liberation of women and their becoming the symbols of modern Turkish life under the new regime.¹⁵⁵

Likewise, the Hat Law could function as a reference point for those who wanted to initiate a similar change in the way women dressed. In fact, as shall be seen in the following section, the first anti-veiling campaigns emerged after the implementation of the hat reform, and some local administrators who organized these campaigns invoked the hat reform as a source of inspiration and legitimacy. It can be argued that the speech about women's dress that Mustafa Kemal delivered within the context of the hat reform probably served to encourage some sectors of the local elite who wanted to lead a change in women's dress similar to the one in men's clothing. The fact that the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s primarily targeted the *peçe* should not appear as a coincidence since Mustafa Kemal's speech could be read as his direct criticism of the segregation of women and, particularly, the covering of their face, thus, the use of the *peçe*. As vanguards of the revolution, some state officials and members of the provincial elite saw themselves in the position of leading the way in their localities for the modernization of women's clothing as well.

On the other hand, the fact that women's veiling remained intact in the official clothing reform of the regime created an ambiguous and ambivalent situation that shaped the anti-veiling campaigns in the years to come. In other words, the Hat Law perhaps had a more significant mark on the transformation of women's clothing in terms of the method that should be followed in such a reform process. The decision of the regime not to outlaw the veil deserves attention in understanding the anti-veiling campaigns in the mid-1920s and afterwards, given the determination of the new regime to modernize clothing (as it was reflected in the Hat Law) and the means it had secured to do so. As stressed by Lewis, "even the great reformer, buttressed as he was by the Law for the Maintenance of Order and the 'independence tribunals,' did not venture to legislate against the veil."¹⁵⁶ The second half of the 1920s was in fact a time of very important and radical reforms in Turkey. Thus, a law banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would not be unthinkable. However, it was deliberately avoided, and never even suggested until the mid-1930s. The determined way the Hat Law was applied and the reactions it received perhaps formed one crucial element shaping the attitude of the

¹⁵⁵ Zihnioğlu states that there were 15 news reporting about Turkish women between June and December in 1925 in *New York Times*. See Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 167; fn.35.

¹⁵⁶ Lewis, 1961, p. 271.

Kemalist regime on the reform of women's clothing, preventing it from outlawing veiling out of fear that it might cause a social reaction even stronger than the one the Hat Law received.¹⁵⁷ This point was in fact underlined by some contemporary observers of the reforms in Turkey. Toynbee, for example, refers to the accounts of Western travelers in Central and East Central Turkey in 1925 and 1926, and quotes them, arguing that "to enforce the emancipation of women in rural districts by the same drastic methods which they had employed in forcing hats upon the men would raise a storm."¹⁵⁸

Therefore, one can argue that the enormous reaction the Hat Law received was one important factor underlying the decision of the Kemalist regime not to outlaw veiling. However, it is also important to note here that this was not the only reason. Falih Rıfkı Atay, a member of Mustafa Kemal's close circle of friends, for example, argues that the president was convinced that women's emancipation would be realized gradually, as a result of education and social transformation, rather than as a byproduct of a law or regulation. He claims that Mustafa Kemal knew from the very beginning that the issue of honor was as central as religion for Turkish society and acted accordingly; this was why there was no article related to women's clothing in the Hat Law.¹⁵⁹ He also claims that although he tried to promote modern life in the cities, Mustafa Kemal did not force peasant women to change and this was perhaps the only issue he favored an evolutionary approach.¹⁶⁰ Having analyzed the reports sent from various consulates in the provinces regarding the social position of women, the British Ambassador in Istanbul, Sir George R. Clark, was also reporting in 1927 along the same lines:

In general the results seem to be such as might be expected when a Muslim country is swung from the extreme repression of women laid down by Islamic Law to the freedom of 20th-century Europe. Still, it is worthy of note that the rulers of modern Turkey have had the wisdom or prudence to allow a considerable measure of liberty to those elements which continue to think the veil and the customs of Islam a necessity.

¹⁵⁷ For a similar argument, see Aktaş, 2006, p. 189.

¹⁵⁸ Toynbee, 1927, p. 77, fnt. 1. Toynbee also quotes them reporting that "while among the menfolk in the villages the working of the new Western leaven was already perceptible, the traditional subordination and effacement of the womenfolk showed no sign of change." Toynbee, 1927, p. 77.

¹⁵⁹ Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Niçin Kurtulmamak*, Istanbul: Varlık, 1953, p. 81. It should be noted, however, that the Kemalist regime did not hesitate to intervene in the religious domain through some quite radical secularization policies.

¹⁶⁰ Atay, 1998, p. 412.

Doubtless they trust to the schools to inculcate in the new generation ideas that will bring in the projected reforms automatically.¹⁶¹

If one reason for the Kemalist decision to not take a radical stance on women's dress was the prudence of the leading elite, the other one was related to the patriarchal concern the regime shared while trying to modernize gender relations. The emphasis on the necessity of remaking the nation's women along modern lines existed side by side with an equally strong emphasis on protecting women's morality, pointing to a process which is characterized by Zehra Arat as the replacement of Islamic patriarchy with a modern one.¹⁶² In other words, reforms were within the "modern-yet-modest" formulation, the patriarchal consensus between the elite and non-elite male actors.¹⁶³ This implied a strategy of initiating a change in women's clothing without so much undermining existing hierarchies and moral codes. The motivation behind understanding unveiling as the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, without for example attacking covering of the hair as such, can be best understood within this framework. However, contrary to what has been generally emphasized in the literature,¹⁶⁴ neither the prudence of the regime nor its patriarchal concerns led to a total abandonment of the idea of regulating women's veiling through official decisions. Such decisions were indeed taken in the 1920s to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, albeit only at the local level and only with the efforts of the provincial elite, lacking a central coordination, and the strength of a law, or even of a general decision or regulation originating from the center. This

¹⁶¹ Despatch N. 384 from Sir G. Clerk to Sir Austen Chamberlain, FO 371/12320, 20 June 1927.

¹⁶² Zehra Arat, "Kemalizm ve Türk Kadını" in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, Ayşe Bertkay Hacımirzaoğlu (ed.), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998, pp. 51-70. See also Zehra F. Arat (ed.), *Deconstructing Images of "the Turkish Woman"*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998. In the Kemalist perception of women's emancipation, women would be part of the public sphere as asexual subjects and their primary role as mothers and house managers would remain intact. For more on this see Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case," *Feminist Studies* 13(2), Summer 1987, pp. 317-339. See also Yeşim Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds.), Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997, pp. 95-112; Ayşe Saktanber, "Kemalist Kadın Hakları Söylemi," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce II: Kemalizm*, Ahmet İnsel (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim, 2001, pp. 323-333.

¹⁶³ Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality: Women, State and Ideology in Contemporary Iran," in *Women, Islam and the State*, Deniz Kandiyoti (ed.), Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 48-76; Fatmagül Bertkay, "Cumhuriyet'in 75 Yıllık Serüvenine Kadınlar Açısından Bakmak" in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, Ayşe Bertkay Hacımirzaoğlu (ed.), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998, pp. 1-11. See also Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Veiled Discourse-Unveiled Bodies," *Feminist Studies*, 19(3), Fall 1993, pp. 487-518.

¹⁶⁴ See, for example, Tunçay, 1992, pp. 150-151.

was precisely what was expected from the local administrators and the state officials: to lead the way and to try to make the ideals of modernization a reality in their localities.¹⁶⁵

IV. Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the 1920s: a Weak Attempt at Changing Women's Dress

On 29 October 1925, the second anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the head of the Turkish Hearth and the Teachers' Union in Trabzon, Mustafa Reşit Bey, addressed the crowd gathered for the celebration of this national holiday. Decorated with laurel leaves and flags, like the other major buildings in the city, the Turkish Hearth was the center of the celebrations in Trabzon town square, and Mustafa Reşit Bey made his speech from the balcony of the building. Underlining the merits of the republican regime compared to its predecessor, which he characterized as the "corrupt" Ottoman regime, he finished his speech with the following statements:

The civilized world has known us as an uncivilized people in bizarre clothing, in baggy trousers and big turbans. But in fact, these are the lands of the most civilized and dignified people in the world. Foreigners would certainly see the true essence of this dignified nation in our contemporary clothing. A thousand thanks and gratitude to the Republic that would carry us to prosperity with the blessings and prosperity of the motherland, and to the great savior who rescued it. Long live the nation; long live the revolution; long live the Republic!¹⁶⁶

Having been born in Trabzon in 1892, educated in Istanbul as a biology teacher, and served as a teacher and mid-level bureaucrat in the Ministry of Education and the General Inspectorships with different capacities in different places throughout his career, Mustafa Reşit Bey was typical of the republican local elite in the provinces. His reference to clothing as the final mark of his speech for the Republic Day in October 1925 was in fact no coincidence. The hat had very recently been introduced as the modern male

¹⁶⁵ Mustafa Kemal in fact touched upon the necessity of a vanguard role played by the state officials in the issue of the modernization of clothing during his visit to Kastamonu, and also afterwards, during the course of the hat reform. See Goloğlu, 2007, p. 161.

¹⁶⁶ Mustafa Reşit Tarakçıoğlu, *Trabzon'un Yakın Tarihi* [1986], reprinted in Hikmet Öksüz and Veyssel Usta (ed.), *Mustafa Reşit Tarakçıoğlu, Hayatı, Hatıratı ve Trabzon'un Yakın Tarihi*, Trabzon: Serander, 2008, p. 199.

headgear by Mustafa Kemal, and the bill to ban all headgear other than the hat countrywide had been proposed to parliament only two weeks earlier, turning the issue of the modernization of clothing into one of the most topical issues in the country. It was thus within such a context that Mustafa Reşit Bey talked of the backwardness of the old clothing in his speech, and tried to promote the idea in Trabzon that modern clothing would fit the Turkish nation and represent its “civilized essence.”

The efforts of the provincial elite in Trabzon to promote modern clothing, in fact, went beyond the support they had given to the regime’s legal reform to change men’s headgear. On 2 October 1925, members of the Turkish Hearth in Trabzon decided at a mixed-gender meeting that women members should remove their *peçes* and *çarşafs*, wear overcoats and hats, and participate in social life.¹⁶⁷ They also decided that male members should wear a hat, following the example of Mustafa Kemal. As the earliest example of an anti-veiling campaign we know in the 1920s,¹⁶⁸ this decision of the Trabzon Turkish Hearth was seen by its members as a natural result of the role of the Turkish Hearth in guiding the people of Trabzon in their adaptation to modern ways and in being good supporters and promoters of the ideals of the revolution.¹⁶⁹ Members also decided to advise women of the city accordingly in private meetings and conversations, and to encourage them to participate in public life.

This local initiative to change women’s clothing in Trabzon was followed by similar attempts in a number of other cities. The mayor of Eskişehir issued a statement in December 1925 calling for the women of the city to remove their *peştamal*. The statement was issued only a few days after the enactment of the Hat Law and was clearly motivated by it:

My dear townsmen, who lead the way in the struggle for civilization as they did in the struggle for liberation.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 200.

¹⁶⁸ An earlier attempt against gender segregation should be mentioned here. In December 1924, the governor of Istanbul issued a circular that removed the curtains dividing men’s and women’s sections on trams, trains and boats. Caporal, 1982, p. 650. Then in 1925, gender segregation was completely abolished on these vehicles. Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 167.

¹⁶⁹ Even before the establishment of the republic, there had been some local elite in Trabzon who supported the idea of adopting Western clothing. See Tirebolulu Hüseyin Arpaslan, *Trabzon İli Laz mı Türk mü?*, Giresun, 1339[1923], quoted in Çapa, 1996. Some ulema members and local notables were trying to counter such arguments and prevent the women of Trabzon to follow Istanbul women in the modernization of clothing by sending petitions to state authorities. See Ebubekir Hazım Tepeyran, *Belgelerle Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları*, Istanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1982, pp. 91-93.

At a time when the last law has spread the hat among the Turkish nation, the time has also come to bring the *peştamal* veiling, which is very uncomely, into line with civilized clothes and civilized views; thus this *peştamal* veiling, which is a very primitive and uncivilized dress, has to end. Instead, dresses worn by a fraction of our women have to prevail. The *peştamal* veils, which look especially grim because of their colors, have to be dyed with simpler and more dignified colors, and transformed into civilized clothing by changing their form. The municipality asks and requests this from our respected people and is confident that this change will be pursued until the beginning of January.¹⁷⁰

The “request” of the mayor of Eskişehir shows not only how strongly the link between the hat reform and the change of women’s clothing was felt at the local level, but also the willingness of the local elite to reach a compromise on existing practices. No penalty was mentioned in the statement in the case of non-compliance. Although a total removal of the *peştamal* was the ideal, the mayor was ready to settle for a few civilizing adaptations, if women were unable to do away with it completely. *Peştamals* were too colorful to look civilized, according to the mayor; they gave the women of Eskişehir a rural and backward appearance at a time of national revival for civilized dress. It is also interesting to note that the mayor was referring to a group of women of Eskişehir whose clothing should set an example for other women. Not mentioning exactly the kind of dress to which he was referring, the mayor probably meant the way some teachers or other state officials dressed in Eskişehir at the time.

Later developments in Eskişehir demonstrate that this initial statement of the mayor was ineffective and did not bring the expected change in women’s clothing. Having seen this, the city council of Eskişehir issued a decree banning the *peçe*, the *peştamal* and the *bohças* women carry while going to the public baths.¹⁷¹ However, it seems that this decree was not or could not be implemented very effectively. Then, in January 1927, the provincial council of Eskişehir (*Vilayet Genel Meclisi*) issued a regulation along the same lines:

¹⁷⁰ Çapa, 1996, p. 24.

¹⁷¹ A *bohça* is a kind of bag created by tying up the crosswise ends of a square cloth. It is used in villages or by the poor more often, and thus has rural connotations. As we understand from the ban, some women in Eskişehir were carrying their clothes and goods to the public bath by making *bohças*, and this must have been a concern for the local authorities because of the rural or “primitive” image they created in the city.

Article 1-It has been decided by the city council to ban in the city center, the *peçe* and the *peştamal* used by some women and to prohibit *bohças* that women carry when they go to the public bath. If there are still people who refuse to comply with the decision, the relevant article of the Law on the General Administration of Provinces will be implemented; that is, based on the minutes handed over by the Committee of Provincial Administration [*Vilayet İdare Heyeti*], they will be fined, from five to twenty-five liras, .

Article 2- In the district capitals of the province, this decision will be applied two months after its declaration.

Article 3- In the villages of the province, this decision will be put into practice six months after its declaration.¹⁷²

All the headmen (*muhtar*) would be informed of the decision of the provincial council by the police in the neighborhoods in the provincial center, and by the gendarme in the district capitals and villages of the province. The headmen would be responsible for notifying the public accordingly, by visiting each house, door by door. The police, the gendarme and the municipal police sergeants (*belediye çavuşları*) would be responsible for implementing the decision. Yakut argues that the decision of the provincial council proved quite effective in the province of Eskişehir, especially in the provincial center.¹⁷³

In the meantime, the scope of the anti-veiling campaign in Trabzon surpassed that of the decision of the members of the Turkish Hearth. A group of members of the Turkish Hearth and the Teachers' Union, organized as "guidance committees" (*irşad heyetleri*), began visiting the districts of the province and the villages, informing people about the reforms of the new regime and its views on civilization and modern clothing.¹⁷⁴ There were also news items and articles in the local newspapers promoting modern dress. Some members of the Trabzon Provincial Council submitted a proposal in

¹⁷² Yakut, 2002, p. 27.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 28. Yakut also mentions that similar anti-veiling campaigns were organized in Bursa and Ordu in the 1920s, but he does not provide any details about the time and content of these campaigns.

¹⁷⁴ Guidance committees were inculcating the notion, for example, that the hat was not contrary to Islam. Their work was of course not limited to propaganda directed at modern clothing, but also advised against speaking in Greek or encouraged saving. Some of these committees had medical doctors as members, and thus provided free medical care in the villages they visited. Since he was the head of both Trabzon Turkish Hearth and the Teachers' Union, Mustafa Reşit Bey had assured that the members of these two organizations work in coordination in these committees. He himself presided over the visits of some of these committees to the villages. See Öksüz and Usta, 2008.

December 1926 to ban the *peçe*, and to reform women's dress, thereby transforming it into a modern and national form:

The Turkish republic is based on Turkish culture, and its reference is our great Gazi [Mustafa Kemal]. The whole society is a follower of this great guide. Our province is a port of the Orient, its door opening to the West. It is the strongest holder of the Turkish existence. Therefore, it is a requirement of public interest to make a decision about contemporary women's clothing, which is a product of a foreign culture and lacks a national character. We propose a reform of this primitive and non-national clothing, the banning of the *peçe*, and the transforming of the clothing of women, who comprise half of our society, into a national and civilized form. We request an urgent debate on this proposal.¹⁷⁵

The proposal submitted to the provincial council was discussed at a meeting in the Trabzon branch of the Republican People's Party before it was discussed and voted on in the council, which indicates the support and involvement of the local party members in the process.¹⁷⁶ The proposal was accepted unanimously, and the *peçe* was prohibited in Trabzon on 11 December 1926.¹⁷⁷ As the British Consul in Trabzon reports, the edict of the *vilayet* was "threatening the refractory and their nearest male relations with sundry fines and varying terms of imprisonment."¹⁷⁸ The province of Rize soon followed Trabzon; a similar decision banning the *peçe* in the city was made by the provincial council in January 1927.¹⁷⁹

In some of the provinces, decisions of the local authorities to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* seemed to have been influenced by the orientation of the Prime Minister, İsmet Pasha, during his visits to these cities. In Aydın, the provincial council decided to prohibit the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal*, together with some men's clothing, like the *zeybek* attire, which was peculiar to the region, at the beginning of 1927, following the visit of the prime minister. The governor of Aydın later informed the prime minister about the

¹⁷⁵ Çapa, 1996, p. 27. Another proposal was submitted to the provincial council to reform men's clothing and to ban baggy trousers and provincial shirts (*mintan*), which, it was argued in the proposal, were making those who wear them look primitive and "semi-savage." The proposal was accepted and peasant men were given six months to adopt civilized village clothes. Some district municipalities also issued similar regulations. See *ibid*.

¹⁷⁶ Yahut, 2002, p. 27.

¹⁷⁷ Çapa, 1996, p. 27.

¹⁷⁸ Report from Consul Knight to Sir. G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO 371/12320, 12 May 1927. Caporal claims that the police was ordered to take those who continued veiling to the nearest police station. See Caporal, 1982, pp. 648-649

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

decision of the council in a letter in which he referred to the “wish” İsmet Pasha had expressed during his visit concerning the transformation of the clothing of the people of Aydın into a civilized form:

To the Prime Minister of Turkish Republic, His Excellency İsmet Pasha
2.2.1927, Aydın

My honorable pasha,

At its first meeting on the first day of the new year, the general council of the province issued a decision, the copy of which is attached, that the clothing of the people of Aydın, especially that of the women, which you noticed during your visit to Aydın last year, should be transformed into a civilized form. I am proud to inform you that I am striving toward the fulfillment of your wish, and with this opportunity, I request you accept my most special respects.

The Governor of Aydın¹⁸⁰

As the letter of the governor shows, the anti-veiling campaign in Aydın was inspired by the visit of the prime minister and his ideas regarding the clothing of the people in the province. There is no mention in the letter of an order given by the prime minister to ban the veil, or a directive to issue a decision through the provincial council. Thus it remains unclear whether he ordered the governor to initiate a direct ban. However, it is certain that the need to civilize the clothing of the people of the province, or at least the concern of the prime minister that the dress widespread in the city was uncivilized, had been voiced during the conversations between the prime minister and the governor. This demonstrates the role the “wish” the central elite had to civilize women’s clothing and their encouragement of it played in the initiation of the anti-veiling campaigns, and particularly in motivating the local administrators to realize these campaigns so as to gain the approval of Ankara. As it had been in Aydın, the *peçe* was banned by the provincial council of Muğla, also at its meeting following the visit of the Prime Minister İsmet Pasha.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ PMRA 030.10/53.346.6. *Zeybeks* were the irregular militia in the Aegean region of the Ottoman Empire, who fought against the Greek occupation during the Turkish national struggle. The *zeybek* costume was banned in Aydın most probably because it was seen as backward and rural, just like the *peştamal* veil, by the political elite.

¹⁸¹ PMRA 490.01/17.88.1. The date of the meeting is unclear in the document, but as understood from some references, it was most probably in 1926.

With the encouragement coming from Ankara and the motivation of the provincial administrators, the need for the modernization of women's clothing began to be voiced in many cities, and local newspapers were central for this campaign. In the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s, the issue of women's veiling was approached not only as part of the modernization of Turkish society in general, but also as part of the struggle for women's equal rights. The idea that women were emancipated by the new regime was prevalent and this was further strengthened by the momentum created by the campaign of the Women's Union for women's political rights,¹⁸² and especially by the total secularization of the Civil Code in 1926. This idea provided a further support to the local efforts to modernize women's dress. In 1928, a local newspaper in the province of Ordu published an article in which it was argued that Turkish women had been granted all the rights and freedom they needed by the revolution and that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were inappropriate for the new position of the Turkish women.¹⁸³ Enlightened Turkish women had understood this fact, the author argued; they had freed themselves from the meaningless and feudal influence of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. Contemporary civilization would not tolerate women wearing these forms of clothing. In these "historical days," Turkish women had all the right to dress in a modern way, and there was no need for a directive to come from the center for this to happen.

As seen in the last example, the general discourse of these early anti-veiling campaigns in the second half of the 1920s revolved around the distinction between civilized and uncivilized ways of clothing. The logic the political elite, both in the center and the provinces, used was similar to what fueled the opposition to the fez, which had been characterized as Oriental, non-Turkish, and traditional. The *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal* were viewed as rural, backward, and uncivilized. The survival of traditional women's clothes at a time of a national celebration of modernization and women's rights in the discourse of the new regime was seen by many Kemalist elites in the provinces, men and women alike, as a contradiction, as something

¹⁸² In many Anatolian cities, Turkish Hearths were the centers of the campaign for women's political rights, which was initiated by the Turkish Women's Union right after their establishment in 1923. Trabzon Turkish Hearth, for example, also actively supported the campaign by organizing meetings where women members would support the cause for women's right to elect and to be elected. Such meetings also provided opportunities for women to appear in public in modern clothing. See Caporal, 1982, pp. 690-691. See also, Öksüz and Usta, 2008.

¹⁸³ Çapa, 1996, pp. 24-25.

dissonant with the spirit of the time. Removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was perceived as an indispensable part of women's emancipation and their civilized status under the republican regime.

The impact of the efforts and campaigns of the local elite in the 1920s, however, remained limited. Although Mustafa Reşit Bey was confident in his memoirs that new reforms had received no negative reaction from the people of his hometown, Trabzon, and that even the most difficult of the changes, such as the abandoning of gender segregation and women's seclusion, had been adopted quite easily,¹⁸⁴ the reality was in fact quite different. Writing about the political situation in Turkey around the same time the ban was put into practice in Trabzon, Toynbee reported the failure of the anti-veiling campaigns in 1927: "at the time of writing, the Government had been attempting to make the abandonment of the veil obligatory in the Vilayet of Trebizond and in certain other districts, but had been compelled to abandon this experiment owing to the strength of the opposition which it encountered."¹⁸⁵ Having noted the reputation of Trabzon as one of the most "reactionary" cities in Turkey, the British Consul in Trabzon explained the continuation of the old veiling habits by underlining the strategies women used to get around the banning of the *peçe*. According to the consul, the inhabitants of Trabzon were "somewhat easy-going" compared to the other cities in his consular district, Rize and Erzurum, and this was reflected in the way they reacted to the anti-veiling campaign initiated by the local government.¹⁸⁶ Women were almost completely absent in the public life of Trabzon except as teachers and students, but it appears that, according to the account of the consul, in the few instances they appeared in public, women in Trabzon wore the *çarşaf* in a way not requiring the *peçe* to cover their face:

¹⁸⁴ Öksüz and Usta, 2008, pp. 196-197.

¹⁸⁵ Toynbee, 1927, p. 77, fnt.1.

¹⁸⁶ Needless to say, such characterizations of Trabzon as "reactionary" or "easy-going" were subjective readings of the British consul as a foreigner. In fact, as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious port city, Trabzon was still quite cosmopolitan during the early 20th century. However, the ethnic composition changed dramatically after the deportations of Armenians in 1915 and mass expulsion of the Greeks due to the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey as part of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. See Michael Meeker, "The Black Sea Turks: Some Aspects of Their Ethnic and Cultural Background," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2(4), October 1971, pp. 318-345. See also Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, a second anti-veiling campaign was launched in Trabzon in mid-1930s, which faced severe opposition from various segments of the city population.

At all events, being confronted in the present instance with a mere conciliar decree lacking the force of law, they [women of Trabzon] and their men-folk devised a compromise which, from their point of view, proved a complete success. The “*petché*,” or short black veil which fell over the face, was duly discarded, while the “*charshaf*,” as not being a veil in the sense of the decree, was retained in all its amplitude, and serves to protect the features to the exact extent desired by the wearer. Modesty being as much a distinguishing mark of the Trebizond women as jealousy is of their husbands, the situation has, to all intents and purposes, remained the same as before the promulgation of the edict, and with this state of affairs the local authorities have to be satisfied, at least for the present. The few female faces to be seen in the streets are, with very few exceptions, those of either school-mistresses or schoolgirls, who, having been the objects of special legislation, are, of course, in a category apart. The latter, growing up without the traditional restrictions of dress or manners will doubtless never adopt those of their mothers, except possibly in the case of a very few old-fashioned families where the tradition of filial piety is still strong.¹⁸⁷

It seems that while the banning of the *peçe* in Trabzon had some impact, it did not result in the modernization of women’s clothing or a decline in the practice of veiling itself. As the British Consul suggested, the main difference that could be seen was generational due to the impact of modern education and schooling. In another report on the progress of modernization in his consular district, the consul wrote that European-type entertainment and social gatherings were very exceptional in Trabzon, and at such gatherings like balls, only the wives of the officials and officers or schoolgirls could be seen, and the very few Turkish women who danced belonged to the latter group. Despite this very limited progress in eliminating gender segregation and modernizing women’s clothing in Trabzon, he nevertheless noted that the situation of women of Trabzon was still better compared to what it was in other eastern cities, where women’s veiling remained intact: “In my despatch No. 3 of the 12th May I had the honour to report on the almost total absence of modernization with regard to the position of women, and in this respect Trebizond, backward though it be, is ahead of the other eastern vilayets,

¹⁸⁷ Report from Consul Knight to Sir G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO 371/12320, 12 May 1927. Consul Knight also reported that there were no women professionals in Trabzon, except for schoolteachers, a few drudges in the women’s wards of hospitals and two women clerks at the Trabzon post-office. He noted, however, women were to be seen everywhere in the countryside, working the land. In the cigarette factory in Samsun, there were also women workers.

where, at least in the towns, the face is still hidden by the “petché” as completely as if the Ghazi had never been heard of.”¹⁸⁸

In other cities, as well, the change in women’s clothing was primarily visible in the dress of state officials and women of high-status families. The British Consul in Mersin consular region, for example, reported in 1927 that although his district was “old-fashioned and fanatical” in general, there was steady progress in the emancipation of women:

The new type of woman now so familiar in Constantinople, turbaned or hatted and dressed in the modes of Paris, most of whom set a distinctly rapid pace, is making her appearance in Adana and Mersina in the shape of wives and daughters of imported officials or manufacturers and notables who had been abroad. Officials on the spot are also dutifully modernizing their womenfolk.

He noted a livelier social life compared to Trabzon, at least in the city centers of Mersin and Adana, mentioning mixed-gender public places and gatherings among the higher classes for which the harem would seem to have remained in the past. Girls had begun to walk about the town by themselves in Mersin, more Turkish women had started to appear at the public balls, and more of them had learned how to dance, with the daughter of the governor leading the way in this regard.¹⁸⁹ The countrywomen had never worn the veil anyway, and girls who had begun to go to school adopted the modern manners in clothing, as in the case of Trabzon, which would, according to the consul, contribute to the extinction of the veil in the future, despite the fact that it was observed by many women: “a large number of townswomen of the *bourgeoise* class are still heavily veiled or half-veiled, and I understand that the Ghazi is wise enough not to impose any unveiling order in these parts. But the veil is, I think, dying a natural death. Girls growing up will simply not wear it.”¹⁹⁰

Such observations of the foreign diplomats point to a geographical difference in terms of the pace or scope of the change as well.¹⁹¹ Having read

¹⁸⁸ Report from Consul Knight to Sir G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO 371/12320, 12 June 1927.

¹⁸⁹ Report from Consul Chafy to Sir G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO371/12320, 21 May 1927. The consul notes in his report that the governor was so very annoyed at the first public ball in the town that women would or could not dance and he had told the consul personally that his daughter would be the first to dance at the next ball. A Hungarian professional dancer was teaching dancing at houses in both Mersin and Adana.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. See also the Report from Consul Chafy to Sir G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO 371/12320, 27 May 1927.

¹⁹¹ For a detailed discussion on the influence of geographical differences in explaining the multiple transitions of late Ottoman societies to modernity, see Cem Emrence, *Remapping the*

all the reports, the British Ambassador in Istanbul also claimed that larger towns accessible to the sea or the railway were ahead of those in the interior of the country and the countryside in adopting European type manners, clothing, social gatherings, and entertainment.¹⁹² In Izmir, for example, which was one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Turkey, there was a lively social life among the elite, and increasing interest in modern sports, theater and dancing. The acting British Consul underlined the distinctive character of social gatherings as follows: “the real change lies not so much in the closer association of the Turk and the European as in the admission of his women-folk to the revels. Today the shortest skirts and the most powdered face are to be seen on the Turkish lady at these gatherings. It is only at the gaming tables that she has not yet made her appearance in public.”¹⁹³ According to his observation, the veil (meaning, the face veil) had practically disappeared in Izmir, although it was still possible to see it on some older women, in some villages or in remote and poorer suburbs, like Buca and Bornova, which points to an uneven change even within a particular province.¹⁹⁴ Although people in the upper classes and the younger generation, in particular, were prepared to adopt the European clothing, it appears that the ordinary women had removed the face veil, but were more reluctant to a total change in clothing even in a city like Izmir: “modern European headgear is as yet practically unknown to

Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy and the Islamic State, London: I.B. Tauris, 2011. Emrence emphasizes the differences between the coast, the interior and the frontier regions.

¹⁹² Despatch N. 380 from Sir G. Clerk to Sir Austen Chamberlain, FO 371/12320, 20 July 1927. For the British diplomats, the existence of Europeans or non-Muslims living in a town was also a factor influencing the pace of change in women’s clothing. The British Consulate in Edirne (Adrianople), for example, reported along the same lines as the consul of Mersin district that a slow but sure progress in women’s position was occurring in the city, and that the veil had become rare since “the Jewesses of the town (of whom there are many) are always there to set at least a Levantine, if not a European, standard of dress and behavior.” See the Report from Consular Officer, FO 371/12320, 25 May 1927.

¹⁹³ Copy of the Report from Acting Consul in Smyrna, in Despatch N. 380 from Sir G. Clerk, FO 371/12320.

¹⁹⁴ The acting consul also reports, for example, that a large number of women were veiled in the province of Aydın when he visited there the previous holiday, but that the authorities had not interfered: “It appears that there had been considerable traffic in undesirable women in certain cabarets and clubs of Aidin, and the more conservative portion of the population objected to the scenes which took place there. In Sokia [Söke, a district of the province of Aydın], on the other hand, the large garden belonging to the resident manager for the Macandrews and Forbes Company had been recently lent for a garden party for charitable purposes. The whole population of Sohia attended and none of the women was veiled.” See Copy of the Report from Acting Consul in Smyrna, in Despatch N. 384 from Sir G. Clerk, FO 371/12320.

the Turkish women of Smyrna. As a general rule the Turkish costume is little changed except for the omission of the veil. It appears to go against the grain for the Turkish woman to do away with the symbol of the distinction between Moslem and the non-Moslem.”¹⁹⁵

In short, it seems that despite all the campaigns and propaganda, the change in women’s dress in the 1920s was limited to the elite or educated segments of the population. In fact, even among some elites, there was still reluctance to getting used to the “modern” ways, especially regarding women’s clothing and public appearance. One of the most prominent speakers of the Kemalist regime, Falih Rıfkı, expressed this reluctance in 1929 as an impact of yet uneradicated “Oriental” mind and past:

In the houses in which we were born, in the schools in which we studied, in the thoughts, feelings, and customs by which we were raised, in our clothing, our common understandings, and the way that we carry ourselves, from top to bottom, everything has changed. Neither a man nor a generation can emotionally absorb such widespread chaos that has taken place in the past eight to ten years, no matter how much he had every intention of doing so. The wound of being Oriental has encrusted us. There yet exists a scab on our skin. With a vigorous brush of this scab, it can again be infected. We are half humans. Our correct ideas are still fighting against our wrong feelings. We still have a considerable number of brave revolutionaries who won’t let their wives emerge from the *kafes*. The *sarık* that we cast off winds itself around our feet and trips us.¹⁹⁶

Likewise, speaking on Republic Day in October 1928 at the Istanbul branch of the Women’s Union, İffet Halim Hanım pointed to the slow pace of development in the modernization of women’s clothing even in a city like Istanbul:

Our men have put on the hat and understood its benefits in a very short time. It was hoped that after them, our women would also feel the same necessity especially in a place like Istanbul, which is one of the most civilized cities of Turkey. However, unfortunately, the last couple of years have been wasted as a period of stagnancy. An outside eye would see us dressed in complete confusion. Some of us wear overcoats, some of us cover our heads with turbans, some with tulle, and a small number of us wear hats. We can no longer hesitate to choose a way of dressing that is equivalent to the way men do. Those who, I do not know why,

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Falih Rıfkı (Atay), “Bizim Çocuğumuz,” *Çocuk Haftası* 1, 1929, quoted in Libal, 2014.

still continue to hide their faces, still cover their head, should sincerely admit that they do not recognize how much harm they do to themselves because of this unnecessary insistence.¹⁹⁷

V. Conclusion

The question of women's unveiling had been on the agenda of the modernist elite, men and women alike beginning in the late Ottoman Empire. It was particularly shaped by the stigmatization of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as uncivilized clothing, and, hence, focused on their removal. The initial changes in women's dress along these lines had already begun before the establishment of the republic, and locally organized bodies, like the Turkish Hearths, had already created spaces in the provinces for women's greater public participation and for the struggle against gender segregation.¹⁹⁸ The anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s can thus be seen as a continuation of a line of thought in Ottoman/Turkish history that had linked modernization and social development with women's emancipation and with the change of their outfit since the 19th century. On the other hand, they were unprecedented since the provincial elite attempted to directly intervene in women's clothing.

The anti-veiling campaigns in the 1920s were limited in number and remained as local initiatives. Although they stemmed from a much older debate ideologically, they were clearly motivated by the Hat Law of 1925 in terms of timing and as a source of legitimacy. Even though the law only concerned men's headgear, it triggered a public debate on civilized dress, including women's clothing, and the importance of modernizing the outlook of the Turkish nation. Therefore, a campaign for the modernization of clothing of nearly national proportions was waged throughout 1925. Moreover, the attempts to change women's dress by the local elite of some provinces had emerged as part of this general momentum. The uncompromising manner in which the Hat Law was put into practice by the Kemalist regime and the reactions it received led to the tendency to deal with women's clothing not by enacting laws or imposing central decisions, but through propaganda, guidance, and most importantly, by trusting the modernist visions and ambitions of the local elite. As the case of Aydın shows, the central elite also

¹⁹⁷ Gençosman, 1981, pp. 117-118.

¹⁹⁸ Üstel states the role Turkish Hearts played in modernization efforts, and how they were criticized by the conservatives for organizing mixed-gender meetings and women's gatherings. See Üstel, 1997, pp. 137-140. In this sense, it should not be a coincidence that the anti-veiling campaign was first initiated by the Turkish Hearth in Trabzon.

did not hesitate to encourage the provincial administrators to work towards making these visions a reality.

Although limited to a few provinces, the early examples of anti-veiling campaigns in the 1920s created a path that would be followed later. In provinces where there was an outright ban, the campaigns were more limited at first, as was the case with the statement of the mayor of Eskişehir, or the decision of the Trabzon Turkish Hearth. However, they gradually accelerated and were reinforced by the decisions of the local administrative bodies when the initial attempt was unsuccessful. Decisions to ban veiling in the 1920s were mainly made by the provincial councils, which were probably thought to have a more effective legal capacity compared to municipalities based on the Law on the General Administration of Provinces. The early campaigns of the 1920s seem to be more focused on the removal of the *peçe* and elimination of rural clothing peculiar to each province. The aim was to change women's clothing primarily in the provincial centres, although some of the decisions were to be applied in the district capitals and villages as well, as in the case of Eskişehir.

As discussed above, however, early anti-veiling campaigns did not become country-wide phenomena, and in places where they were initiated, they proved largely ineffective. The fact that similar bans were issued in the 1930s by the provincial authorities of the same cities that had initiated a campaign in the 1920s can be seen as an indication of the limited and weak impact of the earlier attempts. The main wave of anti-veiling campaigns would begin in the 1930s, when the Kemalist single-party regime became increasingly authoritarian in every domain following its consolidation of power. Local attempts to eliminate the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and to modernize women's clothing would be applied in a much more comprehensive manner during this main wave, both in terms of content and the scope, and the intensity of the propaganda regarding it.

Chapter 3

Contextualizing the Anti-Veiling Campaigns of the 1930s: An Overview

*“Kadını asırlarca kafes, dam, peçe altına hapsederek
körelttikten sonra uluorta muhakeme yürütiyorlar. ...
Kadın şiir, roman yazar mıymış? Resim yapar
mıymış? ... Yapmamalı imiş; şiiri, güzelliği inceliği
kaybolurmuş. Görüyorsun ya, onu, hâlâ, saksıda çiçek
gibi görmek istiyorlar.”¹⁹⁹*

I. Turkey in the 1930s

Many scholars of early republican Turkey see a change in the character of the Kemalist regime beginning in the 1930s. Mete Tunçay, a prominent historian of the period, argues, for example, that until 1931, it was the formation process for the new regime.²⁰⁰ In his periodization, the year 1931 marks the consolidation of the authoritarian single-party system in Turkey, with the period between 1931 and 1945 being relatively stronger and more compact in political terms. According to him, the consolidation of the regime in 1931 was realized and implicitly declared at the “third” congress of the RPP in 1931,²⁰¹ where the main characteristics and principles of the regime were formulated. These principles constituted the official state ideology known as the Six Arrows.²⁰² The 1931 RPP congress and the party program issued during it were the manifestations of the policies that would shape Turkey in the 1930s.

¹⁹⁹ An excerpt from Şükûfe Nihal’s novel *Çöl Güneşi* (Desert Sun), which began to be published as a serial in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* in 1931 and continued throughout 1932. It was published as a book by the same title in 1933.

²⁰⁰ Tunçay, 1992.

²⁰¹ This was in fact the second congress of the party. The first congress was in 1927, but the RPP referred to this congress as the second congress, “because it retrospectively adopted the congress in Sivas in 1919 as its first, thus emphasizing (false) identification of the RPP with the national liberation movement and monopolizing its heritage.” Zürcher, 2004, p. 175.

²⁰² Tunçay, 1992, p. 308. These six arrows are republicanism, nationalism, populism, secularism, statism and revolutionism. The first four principles were accepted in the previous congress in 1927. The last two, statism and revolutionism, were added at the congress in 1931. These principles were incorporated into the constitution in 1937. For a detailed discussion of these principals as the founding blocks of the Kemalist ideology, see Taha Parla, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmî Kaynakları*, v. 3: *Kemalist Tek-Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP’nin Alın Ok’u*,

It was in fact 1929 when the extraordinary measures taken after the Kurdish/Islamic rebellion of 1925 had come to an end, and the government decided to abolish the Law on the Maintenance of Order. The prime minister İsmet Pasha (İnönü), in his speech at the party meeting, explained this decision of the government by referring to their confidence that a legal and administrative system that would prevent oppositional forces from mobilizing against the regime had been successfully established during the four years the law was in force.²⁰³ He argued that the government succeeded in finding a new type of state based on an understanding of republican citizenship and the separation of religion and state.

Considering İsmet Pasha's speech declaring the end of the emergency period and beginning of a new era in 1929, the periodization offered by Tunçay might sound contradictory at first sight. However, after publicly maintaining that it had abolished all opposition and succeeded in creating a strong, established order, the Kemalist regime suffered two unexpected blows to its self-esteem. The first one was a short experience in 1930 with multi-party system, which turned into a test of confidence and legitimacy for the regime. Established in August 1930 with the encouragement of Mustafa Kemal, the Free Republican Party (FRP) became unexpectedly popular as an opposition party, especially amongst the middle and lower segments of the society, reflecting their discontent with some of the Kemalist reforms instigated up until then.²⁰⁴ As the second attempt to initiate a transition to a multi-party system,²⁰⁵ the FRP was considerably successful in the local elections against the RPP, which represented the regime, Atatürk being its immutable president. The FRP's party meeting in İzmir turned into a protest against the government. This success of the FRP alarmed the regime and drew its attention once again to its inability to spread its ideals to the larger public. Faced with an increasing social support for the FRP, which tended to get out of their control, the ruling elite turned their back on the opposition party

Istanbul: İletişim, 1992. See also Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey: Progress or Order?*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004.

²⁰³ "Başvekil Pş. Hazretlerinin Nutku," *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, 5 March 1929.

²⁰⁴ For a detailed discussion on the Free Republican Party, see Walter F. Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey: The Free Party and its Aftermath*, Leiden: Brill, 1973; Cem Emrence, *99 Günlük Muhalefet Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2006; Cemil Koçak, *Belgelerle İktidar ve Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2006.

²⁰⁵ The establishment of the Progressive Republican Party in 1924 by a group of political elite critical to the Kemalist circle was the first experience of the regime with a multi-party system. For more on the Progressive Republican Party, see Erik Jan Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic: The Progressive Republican Party*, Leiden: Brill, 1991.

shortly after its establishment. The party was closed just three months after it opened. Immediately following its closure, Mustafa Kemal began a three-month-long inspection tour throughout the country. The tour gave him the opportunity to more closely observe the scale of and the reasons for the social discontent, which had risen to the surface during the FRP experience. The tour also gave him the chance to formulate a new road map to institute a stronger regime.²⁰⁶

The second shock was an incident in Menemen, a small town in the province of Izmir, on the Western coast of the country. In December 1930, a small group in Menemen, who called themselves the Army of the Caliphate, attempted to declare an Islamic order against the republican administration.²⁰⁷ The incident was quickly suppressed, but the rioters beheaded a young officer who tried to stop them. Even more traumatic for the regime than this violent act was the indifference or reluctance of the people of Menemen to intervene. Mustafa Kemal had interpreted this reluctance as a tacit support or approval on the part of at least some segments of the population: “the approval shown by some members of the community of Menemen for the savageness displayed by the reactionaries (*mürteciler*) is a source of shame for all patriots and the supporters of republicanism.”²⁰⁸ This reaction of the political authority to the Menemen incident was also due to its crucial difference from the other rebellions that had previously occurred. This incident had occurred in a town of a province in the West, supposedly more developed in terms of urban and economic parameters than those in the Eastern parts of Turkey, and which, therefore, should have been well-integrated into the Kemalist regime and/or easily controlled by it.

This event had such an effect upon the political elite that it initiated a discussion similar to the one raised after the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925. In addition to the ineffectiveness of the reforms that had been carried out thus far, some elite even criticized some of the Westernized practices of the new era, such as the beauty contests, which only served to alienate the majority

²⁰⁶ For more on the tour of Mustafa Kemal in 1930, see the memoirs of Ahmet Hamdi Başar, who attended the tour as his advisor. *Ahmet Hamdi Başar'ın Hatıraları 1: Meşrutiyet, Cumhuriyet ve Tek Parti Dönemi*, Murat Koraltürk (ed.), İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007.

²⁰⁷ For a critical analysis of the Menemen incident, see Umut Azak, “A Reaction to Authoritarian Modernization in Turkey: The Menemen Incident and the Creation and Contestation of a Myth, 1930-31,” in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 143-158.

²⁰⁸ *Vatan*, 28 December 1930, quoted in Tunçay, 1992, p. 293.

from the principles of the state.²⁰⁹ The political elite's perception of the event also revealed its awareness of an existing discontent within society. The president demanded an investigation into the political roots of the event and strict control over the press in addition to the harsh suppression of the rebellions and forced migration of the people in the region who were accused of being involved in the uprising.²¹⁰

The reactions the regime faced in 1930 and the rising discontent within the population were as much the result of the economic failure brought on by the Great Depression, as they were of the national policies and extraordinary measures applied during the second half of the 1920s. In fact, Cem Emrence argues that the effects of the economic crisis on Turkey were one of the primary reasons for the founding of the FRP.²¹¹ As an overwhelmingly agricultural economy exporting agricultural goods, Turkey was hit hard by the crisis, which was felt severely by both the peasantry in the countryside and the merchants and workers in the cities. "Rising social discontent became the undisputed reality," Emrence suggests, which then led the president to try to channel this increasing opposition to a new political party that would work under his control. The program of the opposition party focused on economic issues, following a liberal agenda to counter the effects of the crisis.²¹² With the FRP's elimination from the political scene, Turkey turned towards statism and state-led industrialization as a reaction to the Great Depression.²¹³

This turn towards more state control in the economy had a spillover effect on other segments of the political and social sphere. Önen and Reyhan, for example, indicate that the Provincial Law of 1929, which entailed a

²⁰⁹ Nurşen Mazıcı, "Menemen Olayı'nın Sosyo-kültürel ve Sosyo-ekonomik Analizi," *Toplum ve Bilim* 90, Fall 2001, pp. 131-146.

²¹⁰ Tunçay, 1992, p. 294.

²¹¹ Cem Emrence, "Politics of Discontent in the Midst of the Great Depression: The Free Republican Party of Turkey (1930)," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23, Fall 2000, pp. 31-52.

²¹² This emphasis on fighting the crisis was also voiced explicitly by the president of the FRP, Ali Fethi Bey (Okyar), in his speeches. See *ibid.*

²¹³ For Turkey's search for a new economic policy during the crisis, see İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *1929 Dünya Buhranı ve Türkiye'nin İktisadi Politika Arayışları*, Ankara: ODTÜ İdari İlimler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1977. See also Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye'de Devletçilik*, Ankara: İmge, 2004. Zürcher suggests that this turn was also shaped by the 1931 party congress, where the circle around the prime minister İsmet Pasha, who advocated a strict definition of statism, won out against those who favored a more liberal interpretation, such as Celal Bey (Bayar), the head of the Business Bank (*İş Bankası*). See Erik-Jan Zürcher, "Turkey in the first World Crisis: From Authoritarianism to Totalitarianism," in *Routes into the Abyss: Coping with Crises in the 1930s*, Helmut Konrad and Wolfgang Waderthaler (eds.), Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013, pp. 127-138.

centralist structure in public administration, was directly linked to the economic policy of statism.²¹⁴ Zürcher also argues that having maintained a leading role in the economy, the Turkish state increased its power in every aspect, which marked a different phase in the history of the Kemalist regime beginning with the 1930s. The elimination of all civil society organizations, their incorporation into the party structure, and the merger of the state and party in 1936 were the main components of the political repression that characterized the second phase of Kemalism, and this political repression was linked to the economic policies that emerged as a reaction to the effects of the Great Depression.²¹⁵ The crisis of 1929 deepened the social discontent and paved the way for a mutual loss of trust between the political elite and the majority of the population, combined with the traumatic events of 1930 – the FRP experience and the Menemen incident. Thus, “the authoritarian state that had been in being since 1925 felt a need for total control of every aspect of social life” in the 1930s.²¹⁶

Çağaptay also characterizes the 1930s in a similar way, as “High Kemalism” or “Kemalism par excellence,” by focusing on the ideological components rather than the effects of the Great Depression and the statist policies following it.²¹⁷ According to Çağaptay, Turkey had focused on recovering from a decade of continuous warfare and major reforms of political restructuring in the 1920s. It was only after the establishment of a secular republic that Kemalism turned its attention to matters of ideology and became a more nationalist and authoritarian regime. Bozarslan also differentiates the 1930s from the previous phases of Kemalism by referring to its assuming a relatively compact form as an “autonomous” ideology with the formulation of

²¹⁴ Nizam Önen and Cenk Reyhan, *Mülkten Ülkeye: Türkiye’de Taşra İdaresinin Dönüşümü (1839-1929)*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2011, p. 540.

²¹⁵ As part of this political repression, the passing of a new press law in 1931 should also be mentioned. It gave the government the right to close down any newspaper or journal that published anything contradicting the state policies, and thus resulted in the silencing of all opposition. See Alpay Kabacalı, *Başlangıcından Günümüze Türkiye’de Matbaa, Basın ve Yayın*, İstanbul: Literatür Yayınları, 2000.

²¹⁶ Zürcher, 2013. This urge for greater state control among the political elite was also quite visible at the time, especially during the discussions at the congress of the RPP in May 1931. See C.H.F. *Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları 10-18 Mayıs 1931*, İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931.

²¹⁷ Soner Çağaptay, “Reconfiguring the Turkish Nation in the 1930s,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 8(2), Summer 2002, pp. 67-82.

the Six Arrows.²¹⁸ He argues that compared to a “Janus-like” Kemalism of the 1920s, “which was at the same time nationalist and the bearer of a project of civilization,” Kemalism of the 1930s was transformed into an ideology of a nationalist revolution, creating “an openly and self-consciously anti-liberal and anti-democratic regime.”

Many changes in the 1930s indicate such a turn towards a more authoritarian regime. One was the increasing role of the RPP as an important instrument for spreading the ideology of the state and mobilizing the society. The party was of course there before the 1930s as well, but it was much less active and crucial politically, due to the extraordinary powers of the cabinet based on the Law on the Maintenance of Order between 1925 and 1929.²¹⁹ It became much more active in the first half of the 1930s, especially under Recep Peker, the secretary-general of the party between 1931 and 1936. The party, however, could never turn into an independent institution, and in 1936, it became closely identified with the state apparatus, a process known as the merger of the state and the party in the literature. The first steps towards this merger were taken at the general congress of the RPP in May 1935. In the new regulation of the party that was accepted at the congress, the party and the government were described as two complementary organizations. According to the new regulation, the government was born out of the party and they together constituted a union.²²⁰ The merger was put into practice by a circular of the Prime Minister İnönü in June 1936.²²¹ According to the circular, the Minister of Interior would become the general secretary of the party, the governor of a province would at the same time be the head of the RPP local branch, and the inspector-generals would also monitor the party branches and activities in the region where they served. Although it has been characterized as a merger of the state and the party, it can indeed be seen as a process through which the state took over the party: all those who were in charge at the time as the head of the party branch in the provinces were removed from the office

²¹⁸ Hamit Bozarslan, “Kemalism, westernization and anti-liberalism,” in *Turkey beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities*, Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2006, pp. 28-34.

²¹⁹ Erik-Jan Zürcher, “The Ottoman Legacy of the Kemalist Republic,” in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 95-110.

²²⁰ For the details of the discussion at the congress on the articles of the new party regulation concerning the relationship between the party and the government, see *C.H.P. Dördüncü Büyük Kurultayı Görüşmeleri Tutulgası, 9-16 Mayıs 1935*, Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1935, pp. 99-105.

²²¹ See Cemil Koçak, “Siyasal Tarih (1923-1950),” in *Türkiye Tarihi 4: Çağdaş Türkiye 1908-1980*, Sina Akşin (ed.), İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1997, pp. 84-173.

by the circular and the current governors took over their duty. The secretary general of the party, Recep Peker, was removed from his position three days before the circular.²²² The merger of the state and the party was completed by the incorporation of the Six Arrows into the constitution in 1937, thus making the party principles the main principles of the state.²²³

As part of these policies of centralization and increasing state control, the number of general inspectorships, which were institutions in charge of controlling the affairs of the provinces and organizing the operations of all governmental departments in the general inspection zone, also increased in the 1930s.²²⁴ The First General Inspectorship (*Birinci Umûmî Müfettişlik*) was established in 1927 in the Kurdish provinces in southeast Turkey following the Sheikh Said rebellion. The second one was formed in February 1934 for the Thrace region, followed by the Third General Inspectorship in 1935 in charge of eastern and north-eastern provinces. As part of the policy of the merger of the state apparatus and the party mentioned above, the general inspectors were also the highest inspectors of all the branches of the party organization in their areas, and thus the inspectorships and the RPP were in close contact and relationship. Moreover, in addition to their primary aim of maintaining security and state control in their inspection zone, general inspectorships were also concerned about creating “civilized” cities. According to the law, part of the responsibilities of the general inspectors was to monitor and support the development of their inspection zones, not only in terms of economy, infrastructure or public health, but also in terms of social, cultural and civilizational progress.²²⁵ Such generally defined responsibilities of the inspectors would sometimes lead their heavy involvement in attempts to change social life and manners in their regions. As it will be discussed in the next chapter, some general inspectors played an active role in the implementation of the anti-veiling campaigns within this framework.

In addition to the RPP and the General Inspectorships, one other institution that is particularly important for understanding the policies and nature of the Kemalist regime in the 1930s is the People’s Houses

²²² Peker was in favor of maintaining the relative autonomy of the party from the government and the state. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

²²⁴ For more on the General Inspectorships, see Cemil Koçak, *Umûmî Müfettişlikler (1927-1952)*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2003. See also M. Bülent Varlık (ed.), *Umûmî Müfettişler Toplantı Tutanaqları - 1936*, İstanbul: Dipnot, 2010.

²²⁵ For the text of the governmental decree detailing the entitlements and responsibilities of the general inspectorships, see Koçak, 2003, pp. 303-307.

(*Halkevleri*). Established in 1932 (right after the abolition of the Turkish Hearths) as a cultural organization organically linked to the RPP, the People's Houses aimed primarily at educating the masses and mobilizing people at the local level in accordance with the ideals of the new regime.²²⁶ They were designed to be the major center for meeting and socialization in a particular city, and they would lead the social and cultural life in their localities through their activities and publications, reaching far to the villages by organizing village committees and People's Chambers.²²⁷ The People's Houses were responsible for creating an atmosphere where provincial people could become familiar with elements of modern life, from theater to dancing. It is therefore not surprising that they were heavily involved in initiatives for cultural change, including the anti-veiling campaigns. In fact, as it will be seen in detail in the following chapters, together with the municipalities, these three important institutions and their administrators – the RPP local branches, the inspectors-generals and the People's Houses – played a critical role as the actors of the anti-veiling campaigns in the periphery, and as milieus in which dynamics of the campaigns were shaped.

Besides the mark of these institutions, a second wave of reforms, especially ones targeting cultural and social modernization, took place in Turkey in the 1930s.²²⁸ Western weights and measures were adopted in 1931. The call to prayer (*ezan*), together with other elements of worship, such as the sermons, was Turkified in 1932.²²⁹ The music reform (modernization of Turkish music) and the language reform (purification of Turkish and elimination of words with Persian and Arabic origin) were among the most

²²⁶ For a recent study on People's Houses and their role in the domestication of Kemalist reforms at the local level, see Alexandros Lamprou, "Between Central State and Local Society. The People's Houses Institution and the Domestication of Reform in Turkey (1932-1951)," unpublished PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2009.

²²⁷ Bozdoğan suggests that it was under the patronage of the People's Houses "that villages and peasants became primary objects of the 'civilizing mission' of Kemalism." Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001, pp. 98-99.

²²⁸ As Zürcher suggests, the first wave of reforms included the measures taken in mid-1920s such as the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, the Hat Law of 1925, and the secularization of the penal Code and the civil code in 1926. See Zürcher, 2004, p. 173.

²²⁹ Turkification of the language of worship was also one of the most radical attempts in the beginning of the 1930s that received a considerable reaction. For more information, see Dücane Cündioğlu, *Türkçe Kur'an ve Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi*, Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1998 and his *Bir Siyasi Proje Olarak Türkçe İbadet I*, Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1999. See also Umut Azak, *Islam and Secularism in Turkey: Kemalism, Religion, and the Nation State*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2010.

radical of Kemalist reforms in the 1930s aiming at cultural modernization.²³⁰ The Society for the Study of Turkish History, established in April 1931, and the Society for the Study of Turkish Language, founded in June 1932, both played an active role in launching research and theories in support of Turkish nationalism, which did not remain as academic studies but were included in school curriculum as part of ideological indoctrination.

The year 1934 was particularly significant in terms of the intensity of changes and reforms introduced. The Settlement Law, which entailed the resettlement of thousands of people due to the state alleged security concerns, was enacted in June;²³¹ the Surname Law, which made acquisition of family names mandatory for all citizens, was issued in July;²³² the law on the removal of appellations and titles like *efendi* and *pasha*, and the abolition of all civilian grades, decorations and medals was passed in November. Towards the end of the year, women gained the right to vote and to be elected in parliamentary elections, which was celebrated in the public discourse as the last and most important breakthrough towards women's emancipation.²³³ Another law, usually referred to as the Dress Law (*Kisve Kanunu*) in December prohibited the clergy from wearing their religious garments outside of service. The law included the people of all religions, including Jewish and Christian clergy.²³⁴

²³⁰ These reforms were publicly referred as "revolutions" at the time when they were put into practice (*Musiki İnkılâbı* and *Dil İnkılâbı*). In the 1930s, newspapers were full of articles reporting different developments regarding these revolutions. One important component of the music reform was the banning of the broadcasting of Turkish classical and folk music on radio stations from November 1934 to September 1936. See Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, Ankara: SBF Yayınları, 1980, p. 92. See also Orhan Tekelioğlu, "Modernizing Reforms and Turkish Music in the 1930s," *Turkish Studies* 2(1), 2001, pp. 93-108. For the language reform, see Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

²³¹ The law had an assimilative design, aiming at measures to impose Turkish language and culture on non-Turkish groups, particularly the Kurds. For more on the Settlement Law, see Erol Ülker, "Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 7, 2008. See also Soner Çağaptay, "Kemalist Dönem'de Göç ve İskan Politikaları: Türk Kimliği Üzerine Bir Çalışma," *Toplum ve Bilim* 93, Summer 2002, pp. 218-241.

²³² For more on the Surname Law, see Meltem Türköz, "Surname Narratives and the State-Society Boundary: Memories of Turkey's Family Name Law of 1934," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43(6), 2007, pp. 893-908.

²³³ Women had already gained the right to vote and to be elected in the local elections with the Municipal Law of 1930. Granting of women's political rights was mentioned in the RPP's 1931 program as one of the aims of the party. See Koçak, 1997. In the parliamentary elections of 1935, 18 women deputies were elected to the parliament.

²³⁴ Although this law concerned only the attire of the religious personnel, it is important to note that the anti-veiling campaigns were not the only attempts at the regulation of clothing in the 1930s.

Writing in December 1934, right after the enactment of the Dress Law and at the heyday of the language and music reform, the American ambassador reported his observations of the societal reaction to this sequence of reforms in the following way: “society, meaning the totality of the Turkish population and the foreign element in the country as well, is more bewildered then ever by this latest addition to the astonishing succession of ‘movements’ put under way within the last few weeks.”²³⁵ The acceleration of the reforms in 1934 was also recognized at the local level. In one article published by an Adana newspaper, the author characterized the last months of 1934 as the fastest and most valuable days of the “big Turkish transformation.”²³⁶

In short, the 1930s mark the Kemalist regime’s consolidation as an authoritarian single-party regime. From the beginning of the decade onwards, the Turkish state extended its control over society and increased its interventions in the cultural and social life of its citizens in an unprecedented manner. A series of reforms were put into practice in many areas, from music to language, which aimed at a more determined break with the Ottoman past, and with all habits and norms coded as traditional, uncivilized, false or backward. This was a time when visual expressions of modernization, such as clothing, gained a particular significance reflecting “the progress” brought about by the Kemalist regime. As Bozdoğan puts, “what was unique to the Kemalist program in the 1930s was the inordinate time and energy invested in changing the forms of things and the official production, supervision, and dissemination of a distinctly republican *visual* culture of modernity.”²³⁷ Placed in this larger context, the anti-veiling campaigns thus can be seen as part of the attempts at cultural modernization in the 1930s, a project which gained one of its most symbolic manifestations in the discussions about women’s modernization and emancipation.

²³⁵ Correspondence from Robert P. Skinner to the Secretary of the State in Washington DC, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA) Record Group (hereafter RG) 84 Box. 350: 10/15/3 vol. 703, 5 December 1934.

²³⁶ A. Remzi Yüreğir, “Hızlı Günler,” *Yeni Adana*, 10 December 1934. He mentions the Surname Law, the removal of the traditional titles, women’s gaining of the right to elect and to be elected, the Dress Law for the religious personnel, and the music revolution as the main components of this “fastest phase.”

²³⁷ Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 59. In her book, Bozdoğan provides a discussion on the importance of architecture in the 1930s as a visible expression of the Kemalist revolution.



Figure 3.1. A propaganda poster of the RPP in mid-1930s, showing the “revolution” brought about by the new regime in clothing and marriage.

Source: Lilo Linke, *Allah Dethroned: A Journey through Modern Turkey*, London: Constable & Co LTD, 1937.

II. Women’s Modernization and Un/Veiling in the 1930s

On 14 June 1930, a French journalist’s visit to Istanbul and his article discussing Turkish women’s progress made the headline of the national newspaper *Cumhuriyet*.²³⁸ Reprinting the photographs used by the journalist, photographs that show Turkish women in their old clothing, *Cumhuriyet* quoted what the article had to say about how Turkish women had become modern in a very short time after the establishment of the republic. The indications of this change was the total disappearance of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, except for some old ladies in the remote corners of Istanbul and Ankara, and the increased presence of women in the public sphere. The newspaper celebrated the observations of the French journalist that “the East was totally erased” in Turkey; Turkish women had been freed from the

²³⁸ “Türk Kadını Hakkında Bir Makale,” *Cumhuriyet*, 14 June 1930.

shackles of religion, and they were now living, dressing and marrying exactly like their sisters in the West.

It was quite common in the Turkish newspapers of the 1930s, national and provincial alike, to publish articles from Western newspapers praising the progress of Turkey.²³⁹ Ideas of the European observers on Turkey, their approval and praise were the litmus test used to assess degree of modernization and the success of the republic. European dress codes and habits were a constant reference point. It was a matter of pride when an article published in a Dutch newspaper characterized the dress of the people of Ankara as “clean, orderly and European.”²⁴⁰ The way Westerners approached Turkish women’s appearance was especially important. Since “no single item of clothing has had more influence on Western images of Middle Eastern women than the veil,”²⁴¹ its removal would be the most powerful symbol of social change, both for the Western observers and in the eyes of the Kemalists. In other words, changing Turkish women’s images by emancipating them from the “chains” of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* and bringing them into the public sphere were the best ways of distancing the new republic from its Ottoman and Islamic past, and creating a sense of a break with and triumph over it.²⁴² Among the Turkish upper classes, “you look like a foreigner” was the biggest courtesy a woman could receive.²⁴³

Although these motivations were already guiding Kemalist policies and discourse on women in the 1920s, the stigmatization of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as uncivilized attire grew and more explicitly expressed in public in the 1930s. The propaganda posters of the RPP in the 1930s reflected this stigmatization through women’s images; the contrast between the *peçe* and

²³⁹ For examples of such articles published in provincial newspapers, see “Türk Kadınının Vaziyeti,” *Yeni Asır*, 30 July 1934; “Türk Mücizesi,” *Hakkın Sesi*, 7 November 1935; “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Bayramı,” *Kars*, 26 November 1934.

²⁴⁰ See “Bir Hollanda Gazetesinin Memleketimiz Hakkındaki İntibaları,” *Anadolu*, 6 September 1934

²⁴¹ Graham-Brown, 1988, p. 134. Çınar also indicates that one of the reasons why the female body, especially women’s clothing and public visibility, became a significant means through which the state could display Turkey’s new image as a secular nation-state was the European perceptions of the Ottomans, which were shaped by the Orientalist representations of veiled women hidden behind the harem. See Çınar, 2005, p. 60.

²⁴² Bozdoğan argues that there were two major symbols of the “shift” that the republic represented, the idealized modern Turkish woman (as opposed to the Ottoman harem) and Ankara as a modern capital (as opposed to the capital of the empire, Istanbul). In fact, as powerful visual expressions, modern architecture, modern city and modern woman were closely connected and often identified with one another in the public images and discourses throughout the 1930s. Bozdoğan, 2001, pp. 80-87.

²⁴³ Taşcıoğlu, Ankara, 1958, p. 74.

the *çarşaf* on the one hand, symbolizing the old and backward, and their removal and adoption of modern clothes on the other, symbolizing the new and modern.²⁴⁴ As Bozdoğan underlines,

Among the most canonical photographs of the Kemalist *inkılap* [revolution] are those of unveiled women in educational and professional settings – as students, artists, lawyers, doctors, even aviators. There were also photographs of women in public spaces of parks, sports events, fairs, and national holidays. Images of modern women as inhabitants of modern spaces were preferred propaganda statements.²⁴⁵

In various mediums of popular culture - films, novels, advertisements, women's journals and lifestyle magazines - an ideal image of new Turkish woman in modern attire and outlook was promoted and the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was identified with incorporating modern norms into one's life, with being civilized and becoming part of the new Turkey as modern citizens.²⁴⁶

In addition to women's public visibility and participation in the professional life alongside men, certain idealized characteristics of Turkish women, such as beauty and good manners, were particularly celebrated as part of their roles as representatives of Turkey's modernization. One important occasion where such characteristics were promoted in the 1930s was the national beauty contests, the first of which was organized in 1929 by the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. Having a beauty contest would be an indication that Turkey was as civilized as the other countries that were sending their beauty queens to international beauty competitions and that Turkish women were as beautiful and modern as their counterparts in the West.²⁴⁷ These contests were

²⁴⁴ For an example of these posters, see Lilo Linke, *Allah Dethroned: A Journey through Modern Turkey*, London: Constable & Co LTD, 1937, p. 215. Bozdoğan refers to the propaganda magazine published by the Ministry of Interior for the foreign audience in the 1930s, *La Turque Kemaliste*, where such juxtapositions appear in many different images. Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 63.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 82.

²⁴⁶ For a detailed discussion of one of the most popular magazines in the 1930s, *Yedigün*, which tried to facilitate the norms of modern life among its readers, see Camilla Trud Nereid, "Domesticating Modernity: The Turkish Magazine *Yedigün*, 1933-9," *Journal of Contemporary History* 47(3), 2012, pp. 48-504.

²⁴⁷ A. Holly Shissler, "Beauty Is Nothing to be Ashamed of: Beauty Contests as Tools of Women's Liberation in Early Republican Turkey," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24(1), 2004, pp. 107-122. For an article by the editor of *Cumhuriyet*, Yunus

also an opportunity to stage the new image of Turkish, unveiled and dressed in modern clothing. In fact, many news reports and commentaries published about these contests, in and outside of Turkey, did not fail to make references to the removal of the veil. When she returned to Turkey from the international competition in Paris, the Turkish beauty queen of 1931, Naşide Saffet Hanım, said in an interview that the most frequent question she received was whether Turkish women were wearing the *peçe* or dressed like her. She had assured the international public that Turkey had now adopted European manners; the *peçe* had been removed.²⁴⁸ When Miss Turkey, Keriman Halis Hanım, won the international contest and became Miss World in 1932, this was celebrated as a “national victory” and as the most effective propaganda campaign that Turkey could ever launch at the global level; the whole world had the chance to learn about the new Turkish woman and centuries of harem legends and images of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were finally erased.²⁴⁹ However, beauty contests and such propaganda campaigns were concerned with sending the Turkish public a message as much as they were with conveying the right image in the West. As Shissler suggests, “Turkish beauty queens really did embody a social agenda just by existing.”²⁵⁰ One primary element of this agenda inside the country was to normalize women’s new image; to defame the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as uncivilized attire responsible for Turkey’s backwardness and to promote the adoption of modern clothing.

The emphasis on women’s outward appearance in the 1930s was also related to women’s increasing political mobilization. It is not be a coincidence that the importance of women’s roles in social and political life was underlined in the party program issued at the general RPP congress in 1931.²⁵¹ With the decision to allow women’s participation in the local elections in 1930, women’s membership in the party began to be considered very critical by the regime leadership. As one party document indicates, initially, women’s

Nadi, along the same arguments, see Yunus Nadi, “1931 senesi Türk Güzeli,” *Cumhuriyet*, 21 January 1931.

²⁴⁸ “Türk Güzelinin Zaferi,” *Cumhuriyet*, 8 April 1931. For articles that reprinted the celebrations of Turkish women’s removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the context of the beauty contests in European newspapers, see “Dünya Güzeli ve İtalyan Gazeteleri,” *Cumhuriyet*, 28 August 1932; “Türk Kadınının Zaferi,” *Cumhuriyet*, 3 February 1933.

²⁴⁹ See, for example, “Anlatalım!,” *Cumhuriyet*, 14 February 1932. For Yunus Nadi’s article drawing parallels between the victory of the Turkish national struggle against the Greeks on 30 August 1922, and Keriman Halis’s election as Miss World see, “Büyük Zaferin Zaferleri Silsilesinden...,” *Cumhuriyet*, 31 August 1932.

²⁵⁰ Shissler, 2004, p. 120.

²⁵¹ Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 221.

applications for membership to local party branches were subject to the approval of the party center. The process was simplified in 1930 and the approval of the local branches was seen enough for women's acceptance into the party.²⁵² It is crucial to emphasize, however, that the target of the party was those women who were not state officials, since officials were not allowed to be the members of the party according to the Law on State Officials (*Memurin Kanunu*).²⁵³

As much of the news and articles revealed in the provincial newspapers, however, despite these initial efforts, the level of women's participation in the party as well as in organizations like the People's Houses was still considered low. Women's acquisition of the right to participate in parliamentary elections in 1934, and the upcoming national elections in 1935 were particularly seen as appropriate occasions to reverse this situation. The party center kept sending directives to its local branches to increase women's membership in the party in this period; it was characterized as vital for the success of party activities to secure women's active participation.²⁵⁴ These directives were also published in the provincial newspapers.²⁵⁵ Some local branches of the RPP were trying to mobilize women for party membership by organizing meetings at which women could learn about the party principles and program. The RPP Administration in the province of Kars, for example, published in the provincial newspaper an announcement explaining that according to the party regulations, party members were not allowed to vote for non-member candidates; thus women had to be party members in order to be elected as second voters.²⁵⁶ They organized a meeting specifically for women at the local party branch to explain the party program and to make it easier for women to join the party. In the announcement, the local party administration informed the women of the city that the first phase of the

²⁵² PMRA 490.01/1.4.10 and PMRA 490.01/1.4.20.

²⁵³ Thus, those women who were state officials but applied to be members of the party were denied membership. But it was also mentioned that they were seen as "natural" members of the party anyway. See, Memur bayanların fırkaya kaydedilemeyeceği, PMRA 490.01/1.4.10, 2 September 1930.

²⁵⁴ For example, see *Cumhuriyet Half Fırkası Genel Kâtipliğinin Fırka Teşkilâtına Umumi Tebligatından Halkevlerini ilgilendiren kısım*, cilt 5, *Temmuz 1934 den Birincikânun 1934 sonuna kadar*, Ankara: Ulus Matbabası, 1935, p. 55.

²⁵⁵ See, for example, "Hanımlara bir Salık," *Antalya*, 13 December 1934; "Kadınların Sayılabılığı, Fırka Genel Kâtibi Bay Recep Peker'in Tamimi," *Yeni Asır*, 14 December 1934; "C.H.F. ve Kadınlar," *Antalya*, 20 December 1934; "Kadınlar," *Yeni Adana*, 23 December 1934.

²⁵⁶ "C.H.F. İdare Heyeti Reisliğinden," *Kars*, 17 December 1934. The announcement was published again, on the 20th of December.

general elections (to elect the second voters) was fast approaching and “it was in women’s own interest” to participate in this party meeting. A similar meeting was organized in Izmir by women themselves; more women began to become members of the party and the People’s House in order to show their gratitude for their newly acquired rights.²⁵⁷ Women’s compliance with these calls and applications for membership to the party in various cities were also frequently reported in the provincial newspapers, most probably in order to contribute to further political mobilization of women.²⁵⁸ Some even claimed that the number of women becoming party members was about to exceed the number of male party members in certain cities.²⁵⁹ Women’s active involvement as delegates in the local party congresses and their election as members of the local administrative councils were also publicly celebrated in the newspapers.²⁶⁰

Women’s membership in the party and other political institutions, and their political mobilization would almost automatically imply their removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*; stigmatized as backward, uncivilized and non-Turkish, these veils were the ideological opposites of all the norms that the Kemalist regime was trying to promote. However, despite all the propaganda and efforts to the contrary, the picture was quite different than it was depicted in the article of the French journalist that mentioned at the beginning of this section. The “East” was in fact not erased; the *peçe*, and particularly, the *çarşaf* were still pretty common in Turkey in the mid-1930s. Towards the end of 1934, Mahmut Yesari, a well-known novelist and playwright of the time, complained in his column in *Yedigün* that women were still veiled in some parts of Turkey.²⁶¹ That is why a second wave of anti-veiling campaigns would be organized, this time in a much more militant way compared to the campaigns of the 1920s.

²⁵⁷ “İzmir kadınları üye yazılıyor,” *Yeni Adana*, 12 December 1934; “İzmir kadınları fırkaya üye oluyorlar,” *Halk*, 13 December 1934.

²⁵⁸ See, for example, “Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasının başardığı ve başaracağı işler...,” *Yeni Adana*, 17 December 1934; “Fırkamız Bayanlarımız,” *Antalya*, 3 January 1935; “Gümüşhanede kadınlar C.H.Fıkasına giriyorlar,” *Kars*, 24 January 1935; “Giresunda fırkaya giren kadın üyeler,” *Halk*, 21 January 1935.

²⁵⁹ See, for example, “Gümüşhane bayanları istekle fırkaya yazılıyor,” *Halk*, 21 January 1935; “Gümüşhanede Kadınlar,” *Kars*, 24 January 1935.

²⁶⁰ See, for example, “Halk Fırkasının ocak ve nahiye kongreleri bitti,” *Yeni Adana*, 1 January 1935; “Samsun vilayet umumi meclisinde kadınlar da bulunacak,” *Halk*, 21 January 1935.

²⁶¹ Nereid, 2012, p. 502.



Figure 3.2. Women in *peştamal* veil at a local market in Sivas in mid-1930s.

Source: Lilo Linke, *Allah Dethroned: A Journey through Modern Turkey*, London: Constable & Co LTD, 1937.

III. Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the 1930s

III. a. Timing

The main wave of the anti-veiling campaigns began in mid-1934 and reached its peak in 1935.²⁶² As mentioned above, there were a great many reforms in 1934, but it is hard to explain simply why the anti-veiling campaigns started in 1934. It seems that particularly significant in terms of the timing of the anti-veiling campaigns was women's acquisition of their political rights on 5 December 1934. Although there were anti-veiling campaigns before this date, they increased dramatically in number afterwards. Anti-veiling campaigns spread all over the country in 1935. They often came with references to the prior reforms that had been carried out to elevate women's social status, especially regarding acquisition of political rights.

²⁶² It should be mentioned, however, that *Cumhuriyet* reports the banning of the *çarşaf* in Safranbolu, then a district of the province of Zonguldak, as early as August 1933. See "Safranboluda çarşaf menedildi," *Cumhuriyet*, 21 August 1933. This is the only anti-veiling campaign I could locate that happened before the beginning of a sequence of anti-veiling campaigns that would begin in 1934. That is why I argue that the main wave begins in the year 1934, though it is possible that in a number of cities or towns, there were direct bans or campaigns issued before 1934. The first anti-veiling campaign we see in 1934 is the banning of the *çarşaf* in Giresun in April.

In Turkey, women's struggle to gain their full political rights had begun long before the 1930s. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the pioneering organization in this regard during the republican period was Turkish Women's Union, which was established in 1924 primarily to achieve this goal.²⁶³ While the idea of granting women's political rights had surfaced several times in and outside of the parliament before 1930, particularly during the debates on the changes in the electoral law and in the constitution, women's struggle was able to gain its first concrete achievement with the acceptance of the new Municipal Law of 1930. With this law, women were granted the right to vote and to be elected in local elections. In 1934, with changes in the constitution, women finally gained the right to elect members and to be elected to the parliament. On the day the necessary changes were accepted in the parliament, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü delivered a speech in which he characterized this reform as one of the highest achievements of the Kemalist revolution; the Kemalist revolution would always be known as a revolution of women's liberation.²⁶⁴ According to İnönü, Turkish women, who had acquired their social rights through the Civil Code of 1926, finally found the chance to complement them with political rights, which opened to them the door of public life. In other words, the idea was that the granting of these rights would increase women's participation not only in political life, but also in every sphere of public life, implying that women would join the work force and would appear in public in variety of roles in greater numbers. In fact, as mentioned above, following the law granting women political rights, there was a campaign to increase women's membership to the party. In addition to the party, there appeared also an increase in the organization of special women's sections in the local branches of many associations in the provinces, or in the establishment of new associations by women themselves.²⁶⁵ The idea that this reform would bring women's greater participation in the public life was also promoted in the local newspapers.²⁶⁶ In many provinces, women organized meetings to celebrate their new rights

²⁶³ For a detailed discussion of Turkish women's gaining of their political rights, see Zihnioğlu, 2003.

²⁶⁴ *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, term IV, 5th legislative year, vol. 25, meeting 12, 5 December 1934.

²⁶⁵ For example, in Trabzon, leading women of the province had come together to establish a women's section in the Airplane Association. See, "Tayyare Cemiyeti Kadınlar Derneği," *Halk*, 10 December 1934. It seems that the newly established institutions were mainly called "social institutions" with philanthropic aims. See "Samsun kadınları sosyal bir kurum yaptılar," *Halk*, 21 January 1935.

²⁶⁶ For example, see "Kadınlarda Sayılab Seçilecekler," *Halk*, 6 December 1934.

and to send thank you messages to the president, to the prime minister, to the RPP and to the parliament.²⁶⁷

Women's right to elect and to be elected was seen as the final and most important step in the new regime's effort to modernize women. The lack of these rights in many European countries was a constant reference point in underlining the progressive character of this move for Turkish women. Many interpretations of this development, both at the national and local level, emphasized its (supposed/expected) effect of relegating Turkish women's backward image as "hidiers behind the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*" to the pages of history. In other words, news and articles on women's gaining of their political rights usually referred to the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as well; there was a connection between the two in terms of the advancement of women's social status. In fact, Mustafa Kemal himself hinted at a connection between women's political rights and the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in his speech after the granting of these rights:

This decision provides Turkish women with a place in social and political life that is above all nations. From now on, in order to see Turkish women in the *çarşaf*, under the *peçe* and behind the *kafes*, it would be necessary to look at history. Turkish women have gained their civilized place at home and have shown success in business life. Turkish women whose first experience with political life was at the local elections now gained their biggest right with the right to elect and to be elected [to the parliament]. This right, which is lacking in many civilized nations, is now at the hands of Turkish women and they will use it with confidence and merit.²⁶⁸

This connection between the modernization of women's clothing and their political rights was also constantly emphasized in the local newspapers. An article published in a Trabzon newspaper shows how this link was reinforced at the local level: "The news agency notes the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in Muğla. Does the women's right to elect and to be elected to the parliament ... not mean the abolition of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* anyway?"²⁶⁹ Another article in a Kars newspaper celebrated women's political rights as a sign of the universal character of the Turkish revolution; these

²⁶⁷ See, for example, "Trabzon Kadınları Sevinçlerini Büyüklerimize Bildirdiler," *Halk*, 10 December 1934; "Türk Kadınlığının Unutmam'lığı," *Halk*, 10 December 1934; "Kadınların Bayramı," *Halk*, 10 December 1934; "Urla Kadınlarının Sevinci," *Halk*, 24 December 1934.

²⁶⁸ "C.H.F. Grup Kararları," *Yeni Asır*, 6 December 1934. See also "Atatürk Ulusal Savaşında Kadından Saylav Yapacağını Söylemişti," *Yeni Asır*, 16 December 1934.

²⁶⁹ Cevat Alap, "Ayinesi iştir kişinin Lafa bakılmaz," *İkbal*, 13 December 1934.

rights would rescue Turkish women from their ages of imprisonment symbolized by the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *kafes* [lattice].²⁷⁰ Likewise, in his report on the yearly performance of the local party administration of Antalya, which was read at the local party congress, the head of the Antalya party branch pointed to the particular significance of the upcoming national elections because of women's participation and their liberation from centuries-old segregation symbolized by the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*:

The Turkish revolution had found the Turkish woman behind the *kafes* at home, in the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the street and in a servile situation in the family. But now, the Turkish woman is among us, equipped with rights that her sisters lack in the most civilized countries.²⁷¹

Evidently, there was a widespread assumption on the part of the Kemalist elite, at the center and in the periphery, that women's acquisition of political rights meant their increasing participation in public life and, therefore, modernization of their dress. In other words, they assumed a direct link between women's visibility and the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, since they were the ultimate symbols of women's seclusion, the very obstacle to their visibility. Women's participation in the public sphere wearing *peçes* and *çarşafs* was a contradiction; having gained all their rights, modern Turkish women had to be modern in dress as well.

A contemporary observer also hinted at a link between the granting of women's political rights and the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. In fact, while reporting about the change in the election law to include women's suffrage, the American ambassador argued that this change also included an article aiming at the elimination of the veil. Skinner mentioned in his correspondence that he had enquired into the matter at the *Vilayet* (the governor's office), and learned that the article added to the election law about the recognition of the identity of the voter was concerned with women's

²⁷⁰ "Kadınlarımızın sayılay seçimi," *Kars*, 24 December 1934. *Kafes* is a lattice or a window grill, used to enclose windows for privacy. For another example from an Adana newspaper mentioning this connection, see "Türklerde dün ve bugün kadının değeri," *Ak Günler*, 5 January 1935.

²⁷¹ Report of the administrative board presented at the RPP 1934 Congress of the Province of Antalya, PMRA 490.1/618.28.1, 11 December 1934. The provincial chairman of the party also indicated that during the year 1934 the efforts of the party administration in Antalya to increase the number of party members in the city were particularly focused on gaining women as members.

wearing of the face veil. The ambassador interprets this as issuing a legal regulation concerning the use of the *peçe*:

I now have the honor to enclose herewith translations of the laws in this regard, as published in the Official Gazette. Article 3 of Law No. 2598 states: "The ballot of those voters whose person and identity is not discernible at the moment of the casting of the vote shall not be accepted." Inquiry by the Embassy at the Vilayet indicates that this provision aims at the discouraging of the wearing of the veil by women in general and during the elections in particular. Thus, the granting of votes to women is used as another weapon towards the Government's objective of abolishing the veil and the other relics of the Ottoman tradition. Previously the Republican régime has discouraged the use of the veil, but this is the first time that a positive legal measure in this regard has been taken.²⁷²

The wording of the article, as it was correctly translated by the ambassador, did not include any direct reference to the face veil or elimination of the face veil.²⁷³ However, Skinner could be right to suspect that adding of this new article to the election law, while granting women the right to elect, could hardly be a coincidence. In other words, the spirit of the law might have entailed a concern about the veil, even if its wording did not. Ever since the era of Abdülhamid II, there had been an apprehension that the veil could be used to conceal one's identity; so it is likely that this article was shaped by the fear that the veil would be used for a similar purpose during elections. It is debatable, however, whether this can be read as issuing a legal measure against the veil in the way that the American ambassador claims.

Women themselves also drew a similar association between the gaining of political rights and unveiling. As it will be discussed in Chapter 5 in more detail, in celebrations and gatherings women organize in various cities to celebrate their political rights, the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was mentioned as part of women's efforts to be worthy of this reform.²⁷⁴ The petition of *Trabzon İdman Yurdu*, a local youth and sports club in Trabzon, to

²⁷² From Robert P. Skinner to the Secretary of the State in Washington DC, NARA RG 84. Box. 350: 10/15/3 vol. 702, 20 December 1934.

²⁷³ For the full text of the law in Turkish, see *İntihabı Mebusan Kanununun Bazı Maddelerinin Değiştirilmesine ve Kanuna bir Madde İlâvesine Dair Kanun*, Law no. 2598, 11 December 1934.

²⁷⁴ See, for example, "Türk Kadınlığının Kıvancı," *Yeni Asır*, 9 December 1934; "Atatürk Kadınlarımıza Değerli İşler Diliyor, Her Tarafta Kadınlar Kıvanç İçinde," *Yeni Asır*, 11 December 1934.

the city council requesting a ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* also justified this request by referring to women's new rights. Reporting from Trabzon, the local newspaper stated that at the meeting of the club, "it was decided that it is not right for Turkish women to continue wearing the *çarşaf* and the *peçe* at a time when they vote and are elected as deputies and as members of the municipal and provincial councils."²⁷⁵

While trying to understand the timing of the anti-veiling campaigns, another possible connection can be made with Turkey's hosting of the 12th Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship (IAW) in Istanbul in April 1935. This was an important opportunity for the Kemalist regime to display the progress it had achieved in the modernization of Turkish women. As Libal suggests, the congress may have created an additional impetus for women's suffrage, since "having women in parliament when the IAW Congress convened in Istanbul a few months later would contribute to Turkey's image as a 'progressive' and 'modern' country."²⁷⁶ In fact, the American ambassador also drew the connection between the granting of suffrage to women and the holding of the IAW Congress:

It is not at all improbable that impetus was given to these concessions by the fact that on April 18th, next, the Twelfth Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship will meet at Istanbul. Turkey is fond of modernization and of making good show, and women suffrage and eligibility to the Assembly is in step with occidental ideas and should make a favorable impression on the proposed International Congress of Women in Istanbul. Color is lent to these conjectures by the speech of the Prime Minister in which he said that the ballot and eligibility to the chamber were not given to women as favors but as just rights.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ "Trabzon Kadınları da Çarşafı Atıyorlar," *Yeni Asır*, 16 February 1935. Some local newspapers of Trabzon reported that the petition was given by Trabzon Home for Adolescents (*Trabzon Erginler Yurdu*). See "Kadın Peçe ve Çarşafının kaldırılması hakkında erginler yurdu belediye meclisine muracaat ediyor," *Halk*, 11 February 1935. See also "Trabzon Gençliği," *İkbal*, 13 February 1935.

²⁷⁶ Kathryn Libal, "Staging Turkish Women's Emancipation: Istanbul, 1935," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4(1), Winter 2008, pp. 31-52. Libal indicates that an official IAW account claims that the president of the IAW met the mayor of Istanbul before the congress, mentioned about women's suffrage in Turkey and then this conversation was passed on to Mustafa Kemal.

²⁷⁷ Correspondence from Robert P. Skinner to the Secretary of the State in Washington DC, NARA RG. 84 Box. 350: 10/15/3 vol. 702, 11 December 1934.

Likewise, the congress may have also strengthened the aim of removing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, or at least decreasing their use as much as possible, given that unveiling, too, was an equally strong symbol of women's emancipation to be displayed to the delegates coming from all around the world. In fact, references to Turkish women's "liberation" from the veil could be seen in photos, publications and news about the congress and in the reports and press releases of the IAW.²⁷⁸ In her speech at the congress, the head of the Turkish Women's Union, Latife Bekir Hanım, would thank Mustafa Kemal for "rescuing" women and for giving them their political rights by referring to unveiling: "in Turkey, women were called by Atatürk to remove the *çarşaf* and to take their place next to men."²⁷⁹ There was no such public call by Atatürk; but there were anti-veiling campaigns initiated in different cities throughout the year before, as well as, after the congress.²⁸⁰

III. b. Scope, Content and Discourse

It is difficult to determine in exactly how many cities and towns anti-veiling campaigns were initiated.²⁸¹ However, it can safely be argued that anti-veiling campaigns were very widespread in Turkey in the second half of the 1930s. For example, there were also some local attempts to eliminate certain men's clothes, such as baggy trousers, and these were also initiated in the mid-1930s. However, they remained quite few in number and involved only a limited number of provinces.²⁸² The anti-veiling campaigns, on the other hand, were

²⁷⁸ Libal, 2014. Libal mentions that numerous photos were showing Turkish delegates in fashionable Western attire. One of the U.S. delegates, Josephine Schain, argued on a radio program after her return from Turkey that she had seen only two veiled women during her entire trip in the country, which included not only Istanbul but also Ankara and a trip to some Turkish villages near Bursa. See *ibid*.

²⁷⁹ Caporal, 1982, p. 695.

²⁸⁰ It is interesting that Latife Bekir Hanım would refer to a call by Atatürk and thus reinforce a common idea that he called upon women to remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf*. Such statements were in fact contributing to the effectiveness of the campaigns in the 1930s.

²⁸¹ For the list of the cities where there was an outright ban, see Appendix.

²⁸² There was a campaign and a municipal ban against men's traditional baggy trousers, the *şalvar*, in Adana, for example. See "Çaket pantolon," *Akşam*, 10 November 1934; "Adanada yasak edilen kıyafetler," *Cumhuriyet*, 13 December 1934; "Ulusumuza yakışan kılık," *Ak Günler*, 5 Ocak 1935; "Giyim kuşam işleri yabana atılamaz," *Ak Günler*, 5 Ocak 1935. It is important to note that the ban on men's *şalvar* was initiated earlier than the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in Adana. See "Adana Belediyesi peçe çarşafı kaldırıyor," *Halk*, 18 February 1935. Likewise, in Maraş, the baggy trousers of men, known as the *karadon* in the region, was banned by the municipal council. The decision was taken simultaneously with the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. See the letter from the RPP Maraş Administration to RPP Secretariat General, PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 5 November 1935.

countrywide phenomena; they were not geographically specific. Moreover, the existence of an anti-veiling campaign did not seem to be related to ethnic, religious or any other characteristic of the social composition of the city in which it was initiated.²⁸³ To the extent that can be followed from the local newspapers and archival documents, a large number of anti-veiling campaigns resulted in the declaration of outright bans. Although a few of these bans were issued by the provincial councils led by governors, the great majority of them were achieved through city councils, as part of the legal capacity of municipalities.²⁸⁴ In either case, implementation of the bans was mainly in hands of the municipal police (*zabıta*), and as it will be discussed in the next chapters in more detail, women who continued to wear the prohibited veils had to pay fines in some instances.

The content of the bans and actors involved varied in different cities. Some cities only banned the *çarşaf*; others, both the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*; while in yet others, the ban also included the *peştamal* or other local varieties of veil. In Antalya and Erzincan, for example, the ban also included the *kafes*, in addition to the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. The campaigns that included the removal of the *kafes* indicate that the eradication of gender segregation and the elimination of all barriers to women's visibility were among the significant motivations behind the anti-veiling campaigns. In Rize, the city council even asked women to remove their umbrellas, which they were using to conceal themselves.²⁸⁵ In most of the decisions declared, women were given a certain period to adapt to the new norms and advised to replace their *çarşaf* with an overcoat. This period was different in every city, but the general tendency was to grant a shorter time, like a couple of weeks, for the removal of the *peçe*, and a longer one, three to six months, for the *çarşaf*.²⁸⁶ This was probably because the *peçe* was considered easier to remove, since women did not need to replace it with other clothing, unlike the *çarşaf*. It was perhaps also related to the fact that uncovering women's faces was considered to be a more urgent task.

²⁸³ Thus it was possible to see an anti-veiling campaign in any city, from important province capitals to the smallest district capitals. As it will be discussed in the next chapter, such characteristics could affect the shape and end results of the campaign, however.

²⁸⁴ In Erzincan, for example, the ban was issued by a decree of the provincial council.

²⁸⁵ See "Rizede Peçeler ve Çarşafılar Kalkıyor," *Yeni Asır*, 1 March 1935.

²⁸⁶ For example, in Fethiye, a district of the province of Muğla, the city council had provided women with 15 days to remove their *peçe*, while they were given a six months' time for the replacement of their *çarşaf*. See, "Bodrum kent kurultayı Çarşaf ve peçe giyilmesini yasak etti," *Halk*, 13 December 1934.

The process leading to a decision to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* most often began as an initiative of a group of local elites in a certain local institution, supported by a propaganda campaign in the local newspapers, and in most cases, eventually followed with an outright ban. In Aydın, for example, the People's House members began discussing the removal of the *peştamal* veil in early 1934, while the actual ban came a year later.²⁸⁷ Not only in Aydın but in many cities, especially People's Houses and their members played a significant role in the organization of the campaigns. In Siirt, in March 1935, it was at a meeting of the People's House that the decision to remove the *peçe* was first declared.²⁸⁸ In the case of Diyarbakır, for which we lack information whether or not an outright ban on the *peçe* or the *çarşaf* was issued, the anti-veiling campaign also began through the efforts of the members of the People's House, who were all men, as understood from the news. They organized a meeting where they decided to be the first to remove their family members' *peçe* and *çarşaf* so as to be the vanguards of the struggle.²⁸⁹ In some cities, People's House was the center of the meetings held together with other local institutions in order to discuss the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. In Çankırı, for example, "all institutions," including the local party branch, had organized a joint meeting at the People's House and decided to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the city.²⁹⁰

It should be emphasized that in Istanbul and Ankara, the two major cities or the "center" of the country, there was no anti-veiling campaign, at least not a publicly declared one, by either the city council or the initiative of any local institution.²⁹¹ Ankara, the capital of the new republic, was a stage upon which to display the modern face of the Turkish society. Thus, the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was perhaps considered as a given. Similarly, in Istanbul, issuing a ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would have undermined the image of the city as the most cosmopolitan and developed city of the country. In fact, there are indications that propaganda was considered sufficient to initiate a change in women's dress in these cities. At least, this was what was declared by the authorities publicly. The lack of any decision in Istanbul, for instance, became an issue in some newspapers. Rumors emerged that the *peçe*

²⁸⁷ "Aydında peştamal kaldırmağa çalışıyorlar," *Cumhuriyet*, 14 April 1934.

²⁸⁸ "Siirtte peçelerin kaldırılmasına karar verildi," *Halk*, 25 March 1935.

²⁸⁹ "D. Bekir Halkevi üyeleri kendi ailelelerinin çarşaf ve peçelerini kaldırdılar," *Halk*, 24 December 1934; "Diyarbakır kadınları da çarşafı atıyorlar," *Cumhuriyet*, 29 December 1934.

²⁹⁰ "Çankırı'da Peçe Çarşafların Atılması Kararlaştırıldı," *Yeni Asır*, 1 January 1935; "Memleketin her tarafında Çarşaf ve Peçeler kaldırılıyor," *Halk*, 3 January 1935.

²⁹¹ As it will be discussed in the next chapter, the case of İzmir was more complicated.

and the *çarşaf* would also be banned in Istanbul, like in many Anatolian cities, but the governor of the city declared that there was no need for any decision or ban for the enlightened and progressive people of Istanbul; it was expected that women of this advanced city would remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf* by themselves.²⁹² The case of Izmir, on the other hand, was more complicated. Together with Istanbul and Ankara, it can be considered as part of the “center” in terms of its socio-economic composition and relatively more cosmopolitan population. In fact, since there was no visible anti-veiling campaign in the city, it must have been seen as such by its local administrators as well as by the regime as well. However, one letter by the governor of Izmir, Fazlı Güleç, to the Ministry of Interior in 1937 indicates that there was a propaganda campaign behind the scenes to “convince” those women who were wearing the *çarşaf* in the city. In other words, without harming the image of Izmir as a “modern” city by openly organizing an anti-veiling campaign (and thus admitting that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were an issue), the governor had preferred to solve the “problem” ensuring that no report would appear about it in the newspapers.²⁹³

Although local decisions to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* may vary in terms of scope and mechanisms used, one can talk about overarching elements or reference points that were generally used in the propaganda discourse of almost all local campaigns against these veils. One of these references was the removal of any sign of the “old regime.” In many of the decisions banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and also in the commentaries and news reports about the anti-veiling campaigns, these forms of clothing were stigmatized as the remnants of the old regime, the old mentality, and the Ottoman past. In fact, this was a manifestation of a more general strategy of the new regime to rely

²⁹² “İstanbulda da çarşaf çıkarılacak,” *Cumhuriyet*, 4 September 1935. A news report published in a Trabzon newspaper mentioned that there were police centers in some neighborhoods of Istanbul which warned (*tenkid*) women who were living in their area of control against going out with the *çarşaf*. I could not see another source mentioning such a practice, however. See “İstanbul münevver kadınları bu garip örtüyü kendiliğinden atacaktır,” *Halk*, 16 September 1935. Another news report published in an Izmir newspaper indicated the total removal of the *kafes* in Istanbul. No ban or decision by the municipality was mentioned. See “Kafesler Kaldırılıyor...,” *Anadolu*, 21 September 1934.

²⁹³ See the letter from the Governor of İzmir, Fazlı Güleç, to the Minister of Interior, Şükrü Kaya, Turkish National Police Archives (hereafter TNPA) 13216-7/1, 24 November 1937. For more on the case of İzmir, and particularly, on the guidance of the Minister of Interior to the governor, see the following chapter. Given that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* also existed in Istanbul (and even in Ankara), it is possible that although there were no public anti-veiling campaigns in these cities, the local authorities might have engaged in similar activities to prevent, or at least to limit, the use of these veils.

on binary oppositions and comparisons with the Ottoman past. As Libal puts, “the early republican regime relied upon discursive constructions of Ottoman backwardness to legitimize the new national leadership and construct a new Turkish citizen subject,” and this could be widely seen in the discussions on women’s clothing as well.²⁹⁴ In one of the articles published in Trabzon newspaper *Halk* calling upon women to remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf*, the author characterized the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as the only remaining elements that continued to humiliate the Turkish nation; they were the “black stamp of the palace and the sultanate” on the blameless and clean forehead of a generation that was capable of proving its capacity to reach the highest point in the civilized social life.²⁹⁵ In another article, the same author equated women’s use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* with men’s use of the *fes*; like the *fes*, the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were also Ottoman vestiges, and therefore, it was absurd to insist on wearing this kind of clothing in contemporary civilized times.²⁹⁶

Another frequent motive mentioned in the anti-veiling campaigns was the cleansing of the public sphere of anything that was coded as a sign of backwardness, and derived from “uncivilized” modes and behavior. The *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had been seen as signs of backwardness ever since they became an issue of debate, but this discourse reached an unprecedented level during the anti-veiling campaigns of the mid-1930s. In other words, equating the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* with backwardness, and therefore, with being uncivilized, was perhaps the most frequent reference point in the anti-veiling campaigns. At the meeting of a group of women in the province of Muğla in December 1934, for example, the women decided to remove their *çarşaf* by declaring that it was “the sign of backwardness” (*gerilik alameti*).²⁹⁷ In their petition to the city council to issue a ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, members of the youth and sports clubs in Trabzon, led by the Trabzon Home for Adolescents (*Erginler Yurdu*), argued that these old types of clothing were not compatible with the new advanced lifestyle of the Turkish nation, and contrary to the progressive move Turkish women had just started to make.²⁹⁸ In another newspaper in

²⁹⁴ Libal, 2014. Libal presents a detailed discussion on the juxtaposition of old and new especially in popular culture and how it played a role in promoting unveiling.

²⁹⁵ Cemal Rıza, “Peçe ve Çarşaf,” *Halk*, 31 October 1935. See also Cemal Rıza, “Çarşaf,” *Halk*, 12 November 1935.

²⁹⁶ “Peçe ve Çarşaf, Şehrimizin sayın Bayanlarına,” *Halk*, 19 December 1935.

²⁹⁷ “Muğla Kadınları Çarşafını Kaldırıyor,” *Halk*, 31 December 1934.

²⁹⁸ “Kadın Peçe Çarşaflarının kaldırılması hakkında erginler yurdu belediye meclisine muracaat ediyor,” *Halk*, 11 February 1935. See also, “Belediye meclisi gençlerin tekliflerini kabul etti. Bugün mecliste kat’i karar verilecek,” *Halk*, 14 February, 1935.

Trabzon, the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were characterized as the dress of those people who believe in fairies, ghosts and fortune telling, and therefore, incompatible with the revolution, the republic Atatürk had entrusted to the Turkish youth.²⁹⁹



Figure 3.3. A clip from a local newspaper, *Yeni Mersin*, announcing the beginning of the ban on the *çarşaf* in Mersin. The caption reads “Woman is not an ogre. The ban on the *çarşaf* has also begun.” *Yeni Mersin*, 1 July 1934.

The discourse on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was not solely concerned with their symbolic considerations, however. There were also some practical reasons and health concerns, it was underlined, that would make the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* beneficial for women. It would be easier for women

²⁹⁹ “Trabzon Kadınları ve Çarşaf,” *İkbal*, 29 October 1934.

to walk and to move around in the city, for example.³⁰⁰ Women who removed these veils would also see sunlight, and thus they could get the necessary amount of vitamin D. Such health concerns were in fact used as the primary reasons for unveiling in some cities. In Sungurlu, for example, a district of the province of Çorum, the District Health Council (*Sağlık Kurulu*) was directly involved in the decision-making process at the municipality during the anti-veiling campaign.³⁰¹ The anti-veiling campaigns which included the banning of the lattice windows also did so out of deliberate concern for health.³⁰²

As much as it was identified with being new, modern, civilized and healthy, the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was also seen as a sign of a return to the national. In other words, there was also a deliberate effort in the discourse used during the anti-veiling campaigns to promote the idea that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were alien to the essence of Turkish culture. Thus the modern was always reconciled with the national; the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were not *millî* (national), while the modern clothing that was supposed to replace them perfectly was. Moreover, it was also quite frequently emphasized in the press that these veils were not Islamic either. This point was important not only to challenge resistance to the anti-veiling campaigns based on religious reasons but also to respond to a more general and perhaps stronger perception that linked the practice of veiling with morality. In fact, a counter discourse was utilized to break this link: the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in fact highlighted women's sexuality by covering their face and body. Thus they could not be seen as means to protect women's chastity; their use had never helped to eliminate such social ills as adultery, prostitution or sexual harassment. Some even argued that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were contrary to "national morality" and in fact enabled these ills to survive.³⁰³ Those who sought morality and chastity in the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had to see the immoral acts that were in fact being concealed by these veils.³⁰⁴ The "true" moral order would be established once these veils were removed; the anti-veiling campaigns were thus no offense to the male-dominated social structure.

³⁰⁰ Anecdotes were published in the press, for example, depicting the barriers the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* created to women's mobility. For the story of a woman who would fall into the sea while leaving the boat because she was unable to see properly because of the *peçe*, see "Çarşaf ve Peçe Yasak Olacak mı?," *Köroğlu*, 11 April 1934.

³⁰¹ "Sungurluda peçe ve çarşaf kalktı," *Cumhuriyet*, 10 July 1935.

³⁰² See, for example, the anti-veiling campaign in Bursa. "Çarşaf ve peçeden sonra kafes!," *Hakkın Sesi*, 28 January 1935.

³⁰³ For example, see Yusuf Ziya, "Çarşaf," *Cumhuriyet*, 28 June 1932; "Kafesler Kalkacak," *Hakkın Sesi*, 11 February 1935.

³⁰⁴ See "Çarşaf," *Hakkın Sesi*, 30 July 1934.

III. c. The Legal Framework

As shown in the preceding section, in most of the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s, the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were issued by municipalities, more particularly, by a decision of the city councils. This was one important difference between them and the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s, which were predominantly organized by the provincial councils led by governors. As seen in the previous chapter, the provincial council of Eskişehir, for example, banned the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* by referring to the Law on the General Administration of Provinces (*İdare-i Umumiye-i Vilâyat Kanunu*). Enacted in 1913 as the Temporal Law on the General Administration of Provinces (*İdare-i Umumiye-i Vilâyat Kanunu Muvakkati*) and continued to be in force after the establishment of the republic, this law had increased the power of the provincial administrations.³⁰⁵ The principle of decentralization and the separation of functions in provincial administration were in fact confirmed by the Ottoman Constitution of 1876. However, there was also a growing tendency on the part of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) towards a more centralized system. The law in 1913 had brought a two-fold system of provincial administration: “one general, as components of the national apparatus of government, the other special or local, as decentralized administrative entities, with a recognized legal personality.”³⁰⁶ While trying to maintain central authority’s control, it allowed greater space on certain matters to the local administrators. Thus, the law has been interpreted in the literature as a decentralizing move.³⁰⁷ Although governors continued to be the most significant local actors in the republican era, municipalities began to play a more active role, especially in the 1930s.³⁰⁸ The increase in the role the municipalities played in the anti-veiling campaigns should be analyzed as part

³⁰⁵ For more on this law and the process leading towards its enactment, see Önen and Reyhan, 2011, pp. 311-344.

³⁰⁶ Lewis, 1961, p. 391.

³⁰⁷ Zürcher argues that decentralization policies of CUP in 1913-14 were primarily aimed at winning over the Arabs, but they remained only partly successful and could not prevent separatist Arab groups. See Zürcher, 2004, p. 121. Önen and Reyhan also suggest that this law cannot be seen as a retreat from the centralist tendencies of the CUP. It reflects the strategic policy of the Unionists to empower local administrations to a degree that would not harm political centralization. See Önen and Reyhan, 2011, p. 342.

³⁰⁸ For example, some quite excessive governmental decisions can be seen in the 1930s. In Adana, the governor banned wondering around the government building and sitting in front of the stairs for those who did not have anything to do in the office. See “Valimizin yerinde bir yasağı,” *Yeni Adana*, 7 November 1934.

of this general trend and the strengthened position of the municipalities as instruments of modernization.

Until 1930, municipal administration in the new republic was mainly based on the Ottoman municipal laws and regulations, which did not constitute an effective institutional tradition. Municipalities in the Ottoman Empire were weak in terms of both financial capacity and their position vis-à-vis other administrative structures, such as the governors or the *vakıf* system (charitable foundations).³⁰⁹ Perhaps the case of Istanbul was a little different, since the municipal organization, known as the *Şehremaneti* (*Préfecture*) was subject to different legislation, and therefore relatively more effective compared to others. This legal structure changed over time, with major transformations occurring during the Second Constitutional Period. Equally important were the changes in practice, namely, in the actual workings of the municipalities despite the fact that the legal framework remained intact. As Serçe emphasized, based on the case of the Izmir Municipality between 1908 and 1913, practices that were in fact against or outside the scope of the law could become the norm, which had made the legacy of the Ottoman municipal administration more complicated than the legal regulations revealed on paper.³¹⁰

The importance attributed to the municipalities by the new Kemalist regime revealed itself initially in a couple of legal regulations enacted in the first years of the republic. Tekeli characterizes this period (1923-1930) as a preparation period for the restructuring of the municipal administration in the 1930s, despite the fact that these early attempts remained loose and superficial.³¹¹ The first regulation, in February 1924, concerned municipal taxes, reflecting the aim to make municipalities more active by increasing their financial capacities.³¹² Also in February 1924, the Ankara *Şehremaneti* (*Préfecture*) was established; it was modeled on the Istanbul *Şehremaneti* to foster the urban development of the new capital. In March 1924, the Village Law (*Köy Kanunu*) was issued; this law was also concerned with reorganizing

³⁰⁹ For more on municipal administration in the Ottoman Empire, see İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Yerel Yönetim Geleneği*, İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1985.

³¹⁰ Erkan Serçe, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e İzmir'de Belediye (1868-1945)*, İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Yayınları, 1998, p. 15.

³¹¹ İlhan Tekeli, *Cumhuriyetin Belediyecilik Öyküsü (1923-1990)*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2009, pp. 32-42.

³¹² For the full text of the law, see "Belediye Vergi ve Resimleri Kanunu," Law no. 423, 26 February 1924. However, shortly later, some of these financial sources allocated to municipal administrations were again transferred to the central authority. Tekeli, 2009, p. 38.

the municipal administration by clarifying the administrative divisions.³¹³ A few other legal regulations in the 1920s increased the capacity of the municipalities vis-à-vis other institutions, such as the *vakıf* administration. Introduction of the Civil Code in 1926 was one of these regulations, which crystallized the ideal of “modern life” and thus had an important impact on the decisions and workings of the municipalities.³¹⁴

Perhaps the most crucial change in this period was the law regarding the punitive power of the municipalities, *Umur-u Belediyeye Müteallik Ahkam-ı Cezaiye Kanunu*,³¹⁵ which was issued in April 1924 and supported later by the articles regarding the municipal sanctions in the new Criminal Law in 1926.³¹⁶ The law was suggested to the parliament as an urgent need, since the decisions of the municipalities were considered ineffective because they were unable to issue any sanctions.³¹⁷ As Tekeli points out, empowering the municipalities with the right to impose penal sanctions was one major way in which the republican approach to municipal administration was different, since the lack of such a capacity was one of the main reasons for the weakness of municipalities in the Ottoman Empire.³¹⁸ The law entitled the municipalities to impose fines in cases of non-compliance with the municipal decisions and instructions, and to prohibit artisans and merchants from engaging in crafts and trade for up to fifteen days. The sanctions of the municipalities were final,

³¹³ Önen and Reyhan, 2011, p. 461.

³¹⁴ Tekeli, 2009, p. 41.

³¹⁵ For the full text of the law, see “Umur-u Belediyeye Müteallik Ahkam-ı Cezaiye Hakkında Kanun,” Law no. 486, 16 April 1924.

³¹⁶ Tekeli, 2009, p. 39; M. Ali Gökaçtı, *Dünyada ve Türkiye’de Belediyecilik*, İstanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 1996, p. 122.

³¹⁷ For such arguments, see the parliamentary debate on the bill, *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, term II, 2nd legislative year, vol. 8/1, meeting no. 38, 15 April 1924 and meeting no 39, 16 April 1924.

³¹⁸ Tekeli claims that this significantly increased the power of the municipalities on *esnaf* organizations (guilds), which were the center of Unionist opposition to the Kemalist regime in the early years of the republic. In fact, he argues that diminishing the influence of these highly politicized *esnaf* organizations, which were dominated by Unionist groups, was one of the main concerns of the new regime while trying to reform the municipal administration. These Unionist groups had been organized around the municipalities since the Ottoman period and secured their power during the national struggle in this way. However, he does not provide concrete examples that would reveal in more detail the Unionist opposition organized in the municipalities and the guilds. See Tekeli, 2009, p. 36-39. The US consul of the time in Ankara, Maynard B. Barnes, also claimed in one of his reports in 1923 that there was a strong Unionist presence within the RPP as well. For a discussion on this report, see Hakan Özoğlu, *From Caliphate to Secular State: Power Struggle in the Early Turkish Republic*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011, pp. 155-160.

and they were also entitled to imprison those who did not pay the fines.³¹⁹ In 1927, with an amendment in the law, persons fined by the municipalities were given the right of appeal.³²⁰ Empowerment of the municipalities with punitive power contributed to their role in the anti-veiling campaigns only in the 1930s, however, since it was only after the strengthening of the municipal administration with a new legal framework in 1930 that municipalities could become more active actors at the local level.

The new Municipal Law was introduced in April 1930.³²¹ The law was modeled on the French and German municipal laws³²², and aimed at the reorganization of the local administrations in line with the aims of the new regime regarding social modernization and economic development. As Tekeli puts, the Municipal Law of 1930 marked a turning point in terms of the approach of the new regime to municipal administration. This understanding was particularly shaped by the principle of populism (*halkçılık*), which entailed acting “for the people despite the people” (*halka rağmen, halk için*); municipalities would become the agents that would create a civilized life in modern cities, even if this necessitated acting against the will of the people.³²³ In other words, for the leaders of the republic, municipalities were not only concerned with building infrastructure for urban development; they were also promoters and implementers of modern visions of security, order, cleaning, culture and identity. This understanding had found its expression in the inauguration speech of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for the legislative year in November 1935:

It is one of our primary aims that within the Turkish land, all our cities, reaching far to the villages, would become a landscape of prosperity and development (*bayındırlık*). Any place that is home for a Turk will be an exemplary place for health, cleanness, beauty and modern culture.

³¹⁹ The fines were ranging from a hundred *kuruş* to twenty liras and would be issued by the city councils based on the records provided by the municipal police (*zabıta*). Municipalities were entitled to issue a day of imprisonment for every one lira.

³²⁰ See “Umuru belediyeye aid ahkâmı cezaiye hakkındaki 16 nisan 1340 tarih ve 486 numaralı kanunun altıncı ve yedince maddelerini muaddil kanun,” Law no. 959, 17 January 1927.

³²¹ For the full text of the law, see “Belediye Kanunu,” Law no. 1580, 10 April 1930.

³²² Gökaçtı, 1996, p. 127.

³²³ Tekeli, 2009, p. 51. Tekeli also mentions the Law on the Protection of Public Health (*Umumi Hıfzıssıhha Kanunu*) as a complementary law to the Municipal Law of 1930. Tekeli, 2009, p. 7.

In addition to the state institutions, I want the municipalities, which are directly in charge of these tasks, work with this view and thinking.³²⁴

It should be mentioned that although the Municipal Law of 1930 aimed at strengthening the municipalities, it also was a sign of the increasingly authoritarian tendencies of the Kemalist regime, determined to centralize the bureaucratic apparatus and enhance the control of the central authority. In other words, the new law was not designed to expand the autonomy of the local administrations with the aim of sharing the political power. Accordingly, municipal administration was an extension of the central administration, and as such, municipalities would work under the coordination and control of Ankara. Because of these characteristics, Gökaçtı, for example, characterizes the Municipal Law of 1930 as a reflection of the single-party regime's turn towards statism, and argues that municipalities were seen only as useful instruments in the areas of urban development and progress.³²⁵ Thus the law aimed at both increasing the control and regulative power of the central authority over the municipal bodies, and widening the scope of activity and financial capacities of these bodies to penetrate and regulate the daily life in the cities.

In addition, standardizing municipal administration all over the country was also a concern for the Kemalist regime. As Gökaçtı underscores, this standardization was not only secured by the new law, but also by the increased control of the central authority over municipalities, which found its manifestation in the circulars issued for the municipalities by the Ministry of Interior.³²⁶ Through these control mechanisms, campaigns organized on certain matters could quite easily spread and become standard practice. The fact that Ankara was setting the example for the rest of the cities was also a factor contributing to the standardization efforts.³²⁷ These efforts of course rarely guaranteed achieving same results in every city; however, municipalities were envisioned as the bridges that linked the aim of achieving contemporary level of civilization voiced by the central authority to the aim of creating civilized cities at the local level.

³²⁴ See *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, term V, 2nd legislative year, vol. 6, meeting 1, 1 November 1935.

³²⁵ In this sense, Gökaçtı argues that the republican understanding of municipal administration was not very different than the one implied by the Ottoman legacy. See Gökaçtı, 1996, p. 128.

³²⁶ Gökaçtı, 1996, p. 137.

³²⁷ This was particularly visible in urban planning, reorganizing the public space in all cities with boulevards, town squares and Atatürk statues by following Ankara as the model of the new republican city. For more, see Bozdoğan, 2001.



Figure 3.4. A clip from a Bursa newspaper, reporting the meeting of the city council. The caption reads “At the City Council. The city plan and the issues of çarşaf and kafes were discussed.” *Hakkın Sesi*, Bursa, 3 February 1935.

Limited by the laws issued by the central authority as well as by its tight control, municipalities were nevertheless allowed a certain degree of freedom of action. As it was mentioned in the first article of the Municipal Law of 1930, they were defined as entities in charge of organizing and satisfying the common and civilized needs of the city and city dwellers at the local level. Expanding the scope of duties for the municipalities was one of the aims of the law, since the previous law regulating municipal administration was considered inappropriate for the modernizing efforts of the new regime and as an obstacle to progress.³²⁸ The law was quite detailed in specifying the duties of the municipalities, but it was also inclusive in the sense that these duties were framed in general terms, such as insuring the health, welfare and prosperity of the city dwellers. They were entitled to prevent anything that would harm the order, health and peace in the city. The first and second items of Article 19, in particular, entitled the municipalities with the power of enforcing measures to achieve these aims, as well as issuing orders and bans.

³²⁸ Tekeli refers to the Minister of Interior's explanation on why a new municipal law was needed. See Tekeli, 2009, p. 60.

To enable municipalities to perform these newly assigned duties more effectively, the Municipal Law of 1930 also required all municipalities to issue a municipal police regulation (*zabıta talimatnamesi*). The municipal police would be responsible for the enforcement of all decisions of the municipalities, including the municipal bans and fines. With an additional law in May 1930 regulating the punitive powers of municipalities, municipalities were entitled to issue warnings (*tenbihname*) through which the city councils could announce the decisions and bans they issued, and the amount of fines that would be imposed in case of non-compliance.³²⁹ In some of the anti-veiling campaigns, this law was used as a reference point to support the right of the municipalities to issue a ban. In Bergama, for example, a district of the province of Izmir, a committee formed by the city council prepared a new chapter for the municipal police regulation based on this law in order to include the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the regulation and the fines to be imposed in case of non-compliance.³³⁰ As it can be seen in the case of anti-veiling campaigns, municipal warnings indicate that they were used by municipalities as a means to establish a modern urban life. A warning issued by the city council of Ankara, for example, prohibited hanging anything on buildings that would look ugly or throwing garbage onto empty lands.³³¹ Some of these warnings were shaped by circulars from Ankara. As mentioned earlier, these circulars played an important role in standardizing certain acts of municipalities. In April 1936, for example, Minister of Interior Şükrü Kaya sent a circular to all municipalities asking them to take measures to reduce street noise.³³²

The right to appeal the municipal sanctions, however, was an important factor limiting the effective implementation of municipal decisions in practice.³³³ To overcome this limitation, the punitive power of the

³²⁹ Tekeli, 2009, p. 87. For the full text of this law, see “Umuru belediyeye müteallik ahkâmı cezaiye hakkındaki 16 nisan 1340 tarih ve 486 numaralı kanunun bazı maddelerini muadil kanun,” Law no. 1608, 20 May 1930.

³³⁰ Thus, the bans had become part of the municipal police regulation (*zabıta talimatnamesi*). The city council of Bergama also banned *kıvrak*, a local veil. See “Bergama’da Çarşaf, Peçe ve Kıvraklar Kaldırılıyor,” *Anadolu*, 6 December 1934.

³³¹ Tekeli, 2009, p. 87.

³³² Tekeli, 2009, p. 88. The ministry had in fact sent similar circulars before, thus the fight against street noise had been an issue on the agenda of the municipalities for a while. For example, see “Gürültü Mücadelesi,” *Son Posta*, 28 July 1934; “Gürültü,” *Son Posta*, 20 July 1934.

³³³ Tekeli, 2009, p. 89.

municipalities was increased further with an amendment in June 1934.³³⁴ It became mandatory to present a reason for an appeal; appeals not presenting a valid justification would not be accepted. In addition, mayors, deputy-mayors and department heads in the provinces, and mayors in the district capitals were empowered to issue fines (up to five liras in the provinces and three liras in the district capitals) when they themselves witnessed an action contrary to the municipal decisions. These sanctions were irrefutable, thus the amendment severely limited the right of appeal, especially for fines in relatively low amounts. By giving the mayors and other high-level municipal administrators the right to impose sanctions, without the need for a written record or an approval of the municipal committee (*belediye encümeni*), the new law expanded their power considerably. Press reports of the new amendment also emphasized the increasing power of mayors to impose municipal sanctions.³³⁵ A columnist in a provincial newspaper claimed that with the new regulation, it would be easier to ensure that people would perform their duties for the city and the public, and municipalities would be able to fulfill their mission of satisfying the social and civil needs of the cities much more adequately.³³⁶

Thus, by the mid-1930s, first with the 1930 Municipal Law, and then with subsequent laws strengthening their punitive powers, municipalities were empowered and provided with the necessary legal framework entitling them to issue decisions and apply sanctions that would regulate the behavior of the people as part of their aim of creating a “civilized” urban life.³³⁷ Municipalities intervened in daily conduct through their decisions concerning circumstances ranging from spitting in the streets to where to dry the clothes. Anti-veiling campaigns initiated by the city councils should be seen as part of the work of municipalities. The bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* must have been considered as “civilized needs” of people at the local level, as it was formulated in the Municipal Law.

³³⁴ See “Umuru belediyeye müteallik ahkâmı cezaiye hakkındaki kanunu muadil 19-V-1930 tarih ve 1608 sayılı kanunun bazı maddelerini değiştiren ve yeniden madde ekleyen kanun,” Law no. 2575, 15 July 1934.

³³⁵ For example, see “Belediye Cezası,” *Son Posta*, 8 August 1934.

³³⁶ Rıza Atılâ, “Belediye Cezaları,” *Yeni Mersin*, 23 June 1934.

³³⁷ As Tekeli mentions, in promoting “civilized” life, municipalities and People’s Houses mostly acted in coordination; People’s Houses were the places of embodiment for the modern and civilized life style that municipalities were trying to create through their decisions. Tekeli, 2009, p. 52.

IV. Conclusion

Anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s can be analyzed in their entirety only in relation to the consolidation of the Kemalist regime as an authoritarian single-party regime from 1931 onwards. With the severe impact of the Great Depression, Turkey turned towards statist economic policies. The principle of statism, however, marked the policies of the 1930s in all spheres and brought along a repressive atmosphere where the state not only suppressed all elements of opposition or expressions of social discontent, but also tried to transform the society through a radical project of cultural modernization. By initiating reforms that touched the daily manners of ordinary people and by institutions like the People's Houses, the Turkish state increased its penetration in all domains of social life.

In terms of the historical debates on women's rights and social role in Turkey, the anti-veiling campaigns can be seen as a chapter in women's emancipation as it was envisioned, propagated and put into practice by the Kemalist regime. The 1930s witnessed acceleration on the emphasis on women's participation in public life as modern citizens, their political mobilization, and on their significance as the visual representatives of the progress of Turkish society. Removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, stigmatized as backward and uncivilized attire alien to Turkish national culture, came to be perceived as an indispensable part of women's civilized status, and therefore, a *sine qua non* for the image of the new republic as a modern and civilized (read Western) regime.

The main wave of the anti-veiling campaigns began in 1934, a year that was characterized by the intensity of reforms initiated. Especially significant in terms of understanding the timing of the anti-veiling campaigns was women's gaining of their political rights in December 1934. Right after this reform, the anti-veiling campaigns increased in number and spread rapidly all over the country as part of a national propaganda for women's modernization and greater political roles. A large number of these campaigns resulted in the issuing of outright bans. The content of these bans varied in different cities, however, depending on the local dynamics as well as the composition of the actors involved.

A great majority of these bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were issued by the municipal councils. Municipalities were equipped with the necessary legal provisions by the Municipal Law of 1930 and following regulations to act as the agents of modernization at the local level. The existence of this legal capacity, however, did not ensure in practice the compliance of all

municipalities in issuing a decision in a certain matter. In other words, the issuing of the municipal decisions and regulations concerning the behavior and daily conduct of people, albeit made easier with an authoritarian single-party regime in power, was very much depended on the intentions of the municipal administrators, from mayors to the members of the city councils. In fact, the process leading towards the municipal decisions like the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* often involved administrators, groups and actors going beyond the boundaries of the municipal organization. Governors, administrators and members of the local party branches, People's Houses, and local sports clubs and associations could all play a role in initiating and shaping these campaigns. The implementation of the bans was an even more complicated story, determined by the support as well as opposition coming from various local actors. Thus, one has to look at the local level to understand how the anti-veiling campaigns worked in practice, particularly to the role of the local elites and the interplay between the initiatives of the local actors and the efforts of Ankara to control and coordinate the situation in the provinces.

Chapter 4

Negotiating Kemalism: The Local Elite in the Anti-Veiling Campaigns of the 1930s

“The reports of the inspectors who examined the local party branches were reviewed by the General Administrative Committee. The most striking point in the inspecting reports is the negligence and indifference shown by the local party administrators in fulfilling some of the duties that they are obliged to do according to the party regulations; duties that could be achieved simply with a little effort.”³³⁸

I. Defining the Local Elite in the Turkish Context

Despite the fact that Turkish modernization under the Kemalist regime has attracted an enormous attention in social sciences and is frequently used to analyze modernization, social development and authoritarian regimes since the 1950s, the question of how this regime was working in practice, not only through the visible high politics of Ankara but in the provinces, has been left largely unanswered. In classical analyses of the early republican era, Turkey is classified as an “exclusionary single-party regime,” which builds its power on the already existing divisions in the society and uses the party organization to mobilize its political base.³³⁹ In the Turkish case, this division was the division between the Westernized and educated urban classes, on the one hand, and traditional peasant masses, on the other. The RPP had built its power base mainly on the former while trying to “educate” the latter rather than mobilizing them for political participation. Atatürk’s own speeches,

³³⁸ A party circular to the local branches, 1936. See *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi, 1 İkincikanun 1936’dan 10 Haziran 1936 Tarihine Kadar*, vol.8, Ankara: Ulus Matbaası, 1936, p. 13; see also PMRA 490.1 / 3.12.30, quoted in Murat Turan, *CHP’nin Doğu’da Teşkilatlanması*, İstanbul: Libra, 2011, p. 188.

³³⁹ For example, see relevant chapters in *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems*, Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore (eds.), New York: Basic Books, 1970. See also Frederick W. Frey, “Political Development, Power and Communications in Turkey,” in *Communications and Political Development*, Lucian W. Pye (ed.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967, pp. 298-316.

characterizing the party as “a school for the education of the common people” were seen as a basis of this.³⁴⁰ The fact that the RPP was dependent on the dominant classes, despite its populist rhetoric, has frequently been mentioned to point to the anti-democratic and elitist nature of the early republican regime.³⁴¹ Some scholars have characterized early Kemalist Turkey as a “tutelary” system, which built itself on the main cleavage in the society. Initially, it had limited political participation, but did not aim to exclude the subordinated groups forever; as the country modernizes, the system would supposedly move into a more democratic one.³⁴²

One of the main shortcomings of such analyses was the neglect of the local as an important dimension of social and political change in the early republican period. In other words, the local, which has been usually referred as the “periphery,” was associated with the masses, with the peasantry, with the “traditional” sectors of the society, and thus as passive and comparatively less significant part of the analysis. In this line of thinking, the local had become a significant factor in Turkish politics, mainly with the transition to multi-party system in 1946. Although there is a point in this argument since elections did make the participation of the citizens in politics possible through direct voting, and thus the beginning of competitive politics was a major breakthrough, it would be misleading to argue that the local was ineffective and insignificant before the introduction of the multi-party system. In addition, as it was discussed in the introduction, the idea that authoritarian single-party regimes should be analyzed first and foremost by looking at the central politics has been rightly criticized based on new theoretical and empirical research on state and state-society relations.

The neglect of the local is particularly visible in the lack of analyses in the literature on the local elites. Where the political elite in Turkey are concerned, the emphasis is almost exclusively on the elite in the “center,” on

³⁴⁰ See Sabri Sayarı, “Some Notes on the Beginning of Mass Political Participation in Turkey,” in *Political Participation in Turkey*, Engin D. Akarlı (ed.), Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Publications, 1975, pp. 121-133.

³⁴¹ See, for example, Tunçay, 1992.

³⁴² See, for example, Ergun Özbudun, “The nature of the Kemalist Political Regime,” in *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, Ali Kazancıgil and Ergun Özbudun (eds.), London: Hurst&Company, 1997[1981], pp. 79-102. Duverger’s classical analysis of single-party systems and particularly his discussion on the difference of the Turkish case from the fascist and communist single-party regimes have been quite influential in the literature on Turkey and used as a reference point in characterizing the Kemalist regime as a tutelary regime, ultimately aiming to establish a democratic system. See Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*, London: Methuen, 1951.

the members of the high politics and bureaucracy in Ankara. In his classical work, *The Turkish Political Elite*, Frederick W. Frey, for example, focuses on the profile of the members of the parliament between 1920 and 1957.³⁴³ Frey explains this focus by referring to the focal position of the parliament; because there was a high degree of governmental integration in Turkey, “when one examines the social backgrounds of the deputies to the Grand National Assembly, one obtains, *ipso facto*, information on the backgrounds of all the cabinets and ministers, on the formal leadership of the Assembly, and on the top political party leaders as well.”³⁴⁴ In other words, these elite were the key to understanding Turkish politics; the impact of the local could be felt through its influence upon the deputies, conceptualized as “localism” by Frey.³⁴⁵ He acknowledges that these local pressures upon the deputies were present even during the single-party era, but he does not discuss in any detail how these pressures were working or what were the role of the local actors in this period. His analysis of localism is content with touching the increase in the impact of the local actors with the transition to multi-party era: “the opening up of the tutelary developmental system and the inauguration of a Western, multi-party parliamentary structure emphatically increased the representation of local forces, that is, of *local elites*.”³⁴⁶

In a recent study, Ahmet Demirel revives Frey’s analyses and provides a more detailed profile of the members of the parliament during the single-party era based on new sources.³⁴⁷ Since Demirel’s focus is also on the central elite and the elections, the local is included to the degree that it could have an influence on the parliament, which is again measured by localism. He indicates that localism decreases from the second parliament (1923-1927) to the third (1927-1931), from 61.6 % to 47.4%, which signifies a weaker link

³⁴³ Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite*, Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1965.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6. For Frey, one fundamental distinction through which the elite were defined was education. Among the educated class, the Western-educated modernists defeated the *medrese*-trained faction; Kemalist reforms had aimed at ensuring this. See *ibid.*, p. 38-41. Second to education was occupation.

³⁴⁵ Localism was measured by looking at the ties of the deputies with the province they represented. In fact, for the period Frey studies (1920-1957), the overall degree of localism seems to be limited, since only 58% of the deputies were born in a province they represented. This percentage was higher for those members of the parliament who were involved with occupations like agriculture and trade. See *ibid.*, p. 93-94.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

³⁴⁷ Ahmet Demirel, *Tek Partinin İktidarı: Türkiye’de Seçimler ve Siyaset (1923-1946)*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2013.

between the parliament and the local.³⁴⁸ As a very minor incorporation of the local, Demirel also mentions an attempt by the regime leadership to symbolically include the sectors of the society who were not part of the political elite, and by doing so, to limit the increasing tendency in the parliament towards bureaucratization. For instance, in the 1931 elections, the RPP decided to nominate “ordinary” workers and peasants for membership in the parliament and 13 peasants and 10 workers were elected.³⁴⁹

Although Frey’s work provided a significant first contribution and has been frequently cited, this tendency of focusing exclusively on the political elite in the capital has become dominant in the literature at the expense of overlooking the role of local actors and dynamics in the implementation and interpretation of the policies formulated by the “central elite” in Ankara. The reason behind this special focus on the central elite has been the state-centric framework shared by the main approaches to Turkish history and politics, as briefly touched in the introduction. Since the 1950s, the emphasis of the modernization theory on the bureaucracy and elite as the agents of social change has shaped the major studies on Turkey and left an important footprint for the subsequent analyses despite the critiques the theory received.³⁵⁰ In works that followed the strong state approach, the central elites are characterized as an undifferentiated group who perceive the state as vital for holding the community together, while being intolerant and suspicious towards the periphery.³⁵¹ According to this approach, the dichotomy of “strong state vs. weak civil society” has shaped the Ottoman/Turkish polity and the bureaucratic elite achieved almost an unchallenged power under the Kemalist republic.³⁵² In some formulations of this reading, not only that the state emerges as a concept that is above any other actor or notion in the political culture, but also that this “Ottoman/Turkish state” is seen as unique among its contemporaries in many aspects.³⁵³

³⁴⁸ In the fourth parliament (1931-1935), the percentage of deputies who represented their province of birth was 48.9; and in the fifth (1935-1939), it was 33.6. See *ibid.*, p. 149; 203.

³⁴⁹ It is important to mention that these candidates were determined through a very careful examination. The workers and peasants that would be nominated had to be nationalist and loyal to the principles of the regime; they should not be conservative and should be against any form of opposition. These deputies were supposed to maintain their original occupation, their links with their hometown and their “authentic” attire. See *ibid.*, p. 117-122.

³⁵⁰ For example, see Lerner, 1958; Lewis, 1961, and Berkes, 1998.

³⁵¹ See Heper, 1985.

³⁵² See particularly chapter 4 in Heper’s book on the development of bureaucratic transcendentalism. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-97.

³⁵³ For example, Ben-Dor and Akarlı argue that “the concept of state has been kept separate from and cherished above any particular set of rules, regimes, or bureaucrats throughout

Perhaps the most hegemonic approach in Turkish studies in the last forty years, the center-periphery approach, which was first formulated by Şerif Mardin, follows a similar line of analysis with the strong state approach in terms of the emphasis on the center-periphery cleavage as the main cleavage and the confrontation between the state elite and the society.³⁵⁴ However, it is not state-centric in the sense that it incorporates the cultural and social dynamics into the analysis and attributes relatively more power and autonomy to the periphery, to the people excluded by the state ideology, to societal actors.³⁵⁵ According to this approach, the Ottoman *tımar* system and the control of the bureaucratic core of the state over the economy and society were the basis of the centralized order “designed to maintain the state’s authority over the nodal points of society.”³⁵⁶ The challenge to this centralized order had come from the periphery, from the provincial notables in the late Ottoman period. The center-periphery axis then merged with another source of social conflict with the beginning of the modernization efforts in late 18th century. This new conflict resulted in an intra-elite conflict at the beginning, dividing

Turkish history. This seems to have been true on various levels: in an explicit form among elites and intellectuals, and in a more incoherent, implicit form among the masses. Yet the image of State as a benevolent father, *distinct* from the elite, government or the community (as an ethnic-religious-particularistic entity) seems distinctly Turkish and cannot be found in this form elsewhere in the Islamic Middle East.” See Gabriel Ben-Dor and Engin D. Akarlı, “Comparative Perspectives,” in *Political Participation in Turkey*, Engin D. Akarlı (ed.), Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Publications, 1975, pp. 157-162.

³⁵⁴ See Mardin, 1973.

³⁵⁵ Brockett argues that Mardin’s analysis has been an exception to the state-centric analyses and he “has consistently offered a multi-faceted challenge to the assumptions underlying the Kemalist narrative of top-down social transformation and secularization.” Although he is right in differentiating Mardin’s works as they are more sociologically oriented and Mardin himself suggested to focus more on the local, I doubt that the center-periphery analysis “stands out as an essential foundation for the emerging social history” of Turkey, as Brockett suggests. I follow the critiques of the center-periphery approach that I cited in the introduction. For Brockett’s comments on Mardin, see Gavin Brockett, “Introduction: Social History and the Historiography of Modern Turkey,” in *Towards a Social History of Modern Turkey: Essays in Theory and Practice*, Gavin D. Brockett (ed.), Istanbul: Libra, 2011, pp. 13-37. For Mardin’s comments on the importance of the local, see Şerif Mardin, “Projects as Methodology: Some Thoughts on Modern Turkish Social Science,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds.), Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997, pp. 64-80.

³⁵⁶ Mardin, 1973, p. 172. There is a vast literature on the Ottoman *tımar* system, particularly dealing with the question of whether the Ottoman system was feudalism or not. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss this literature. Suffice it to mention that the strong state and center-periphery analyses that dominate the literature on Turkey argue that the Ottoman system was different and not feudal in the Western European sense. This system, it was argued, was efficient, however, in maintaining political stability in the Ottoman/Turkish context since it was the basis of a tradition of centralized statehood. See, for example, Ben-Dor and Akarlı, 1975.

the elite in the center into pro-Western and traditionalist/Islamist camps. As the modernist faction strengthened and dominated the state, Islam had become the element of the culture of the periphery and thus the center-periphery cleavage came to coincide with the pro-Western vs. traditionalist/Islamist divide; this cultural alienation of the masses from the rulers, of the periphery from the center, is a key component in the center-periphery analysis.³⁵⁷

For those who followed this line of analysis, these divisions and tensions between the center and the periphery continued to characterize the social and political structure in republican Turkey. To overcome this challenge, one strategy of the state was to make some concessions to the notables to “facilitate the expression of their interest” and thus to acknowledge “the right of notables to participate in the single-party politics.”³⁵⁸ In fact, works that note the importance of the local by devoting a few paragraphs to explaining the social base of the Kemalist regime have largely emphasized the role of the local notables and their alliance with the central authority. Particularly the party, the RPP, has been described as “having born out of an alliance between the central military-bureaucratic-intellectual élite and local notables.”³⁵⁹ This was especially so for the formative years of the party, owing to the heterogeneous origins of the national movement during the War of Liberation. However, Özbudun suggests that this alliance continued throughout the single-party era despite the predominance of the “state bourgeoisie” and that “local notables also wielded considerable influence particularly at the local level.”³⁶⁰ Although the relationships between the state

³⁵⁷ Mardin, 1973, p. 175. See also Ergun Özbudun, *Türkiye’de Sosyal Değişme ve Siyasal Katılma*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Yayınları, 1975, pp. 19-46. Emphasizing the continuation of this cultural alienation during the republican era, Özbudun argues that those elites who have been in opposition to modernist and secularist elite in the multi-party period and competed with them for power have found the Islamist periphery as a powerful source of votes. In other words, two oppositions were combined: the masses in the periphery and elites in opposition in the center, despite the fact that these oppositional elites (i.e., the leadership of the Democrat Party in the 1950s) were more similar to the central elite in terms of social and economic background. Ibid., p. 29.

³⁵⁸ Engin Deniz Akarlı, “The State as a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon and Political Participation in Turkey,” in *Political Participation in Turkey*, Engin D. Akarlı (ed.), İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Publications, 1975, pp. 135-155. Akarlı sees the Municipal Law of 1930 as one of these concessions given to the local notables. He also claims, mainly by following Mardin’s analyses, “that the notables were more or less effectively incorporated in the system by the 1930s.”

³⁵⁹ Özbudun, 1997, p. 82.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 84. Accordingly, there was an “implicit trade-off” between the center and the local notables. Özbudun argues that the strengthening of the center did not in fact decrease the influence of the notables at the local level, because of the tacit agreement between the two in

and the local notables were far more complex,³⁶¹ this complexity was ignored at the expense of emphasizing the determining role of the central policies. These analyses are also based on the assumption that as long as this alliance with the local notables was intact, there was no problem for the regime to apply its policies and keep its support. More importantly, such analyses reduce the local to the “local notables” to whom, they argue, other local agents were dependent, and thus, both the multiplicity of local actors and the complexity of local politics have been neglected.

This deficiency has recently begun to be filled by an increasing number of studies that focus on the relationship between the central authority, the local elites and the societal forces in the shaping of state policies at the local level. This increasing interest in the study of the local has become particularly visible in the analysis of the connection between state formation, nationalism and political violence especially during the late Ottoman Empire and transition to the Turkish republic. In *Sorrowful Shores*, Gingeras, for example, points to the need to analyze the role of the central authority not as an exclusive force in these processes, but as one operating within the complexities of local society through the case of the South Marmara region between the Balkan Wars and the establishment of the Turkish republic in 1923.³⁶² Gingeras argues that even after the establishment of the Kemalist regime, there were limitations to Ankara’s control of the provinces and “local officials and provincial populations continued to resist or negotiate the rules laid down by the center.”³⁶³ This was one important factor contributing to the contradictory and ambiguous policies of Ankara towards Albanians and Circassians that remained in the region. In a more recent study, Üngör focuses on the population policies and nationalist homogenization in Eastern Turkey

terms of securing their domains of power. See Ergun Özbudun “Established Revolution versus Unfinished Revolution: Contrasting Patterns of Democratization in Mexico and Turkey,” in *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems*, Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore (eds.), New York: Basic Books, 1970, pp. 380-405. Similarly, Tunçay also notes that the Kemalist elite in the center agreed to the preservation of the privileged position of the local notables as long as they did not oppose the modernization policies of the new regime. Tunçay, 1992, p. 134.

³⁶¹ For a good analysis of this complexity, see Meeker, 2002. For a discussion on the relationship between the state and the Kurdish notables, see Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, London: Zed Books, 1992. See also Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 107-169.

³⁶² Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

between 1913 and 1950, and provides a detailed account of these processes in their local context.³⁶⁴ Üngör's analysis also reveals that the local elites played a critical role in the interpretation and organization of the central orders, and thus their behavior was determinant for the fate of Armenians who were subject to genocidal destruction. Though he does not deal with the question of local elites in detail, his discussion of the Kurdish deportations between 1916 and 1934 also reveals that they had a significant role in the continuation of the social engineering policies in the region from the empire to the republic, since, like the continuity at the level of organizers of these policies, "the local elites too remained largely intact."³⁶⁵ In his analysis of the education policies in the Kurdish region of Turkey, Üngör also mentions that the local elite were not simply implementers of the central policies; "they often take the initiative to propose suggestions."³⁶⁶

Perhaps the most inspiring and informative study for the purpose of this thesis is Michael E. Meeker's analysis of the Ottoman legacy of the Turkish republic based on his ethnographical study of the Eastern Black Sea region, more precisely in the town of Of in the province of Trabzon. Meeker particularly focuses on the striking survival of the local social structures under the new regime, which have continued functioning as formative blocks of the state apparatus in the provinces. In Meeker's analysis, the local elite networks, a complex of non-official elites that were prominent in the imperial system, have played an important role in this continuation; thus the founders of the Turkish republic "were able to rely on an already existing state society" and could support the official provincial administration with non-official social oligarchies. "As they did so, the new national regime came to exhibit a combination of institutional flexibility and rigidity, not wholly unlike what had previously characterized the old imperial regime."³⁶⁷ Meeker shows how the central state could function by entering into alliances with the local elite both in the imperial system and during the republic. He, at the same time, acknowledges that the local elite could oppose the official policies strengthening centralized government, and "when such policies were nonetheless adopted, local elites proved adept at repenetrating and

³⁶⁴ Üngör, 2011.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 167. For a more detailed analysis of the continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish republic in terms of the state apparatus and the bureaucratic cadres, see Zürcher, 2007. Zürcher shows that on the lower levels as well, the new regime could count on the existing organization of provincial administration.

³⁶⁶ Üngör, 2011, p. 187.

³⁶⁷ Meeker, 2002, p. xii.

recolonizing the new state system.”³⁶⁸ Thus, the local elites could accommodate themselves to the transformed state system even after radical revolutionary changes, such as the Kemalist reforms of the early republic.

While discussing the local elite, Meeker’s focus, however, is mainly on the regional social oligarchy, represented by the influential local families. On the one hand, he mentions that these local actors always played a role in provincial administration and public life at the local level. The new regime allowed a certain degree of popular participation in governmental and non-governmental organizations, aimed the incorporation of the native local actors in the new system and the state officials relied on the local elite. In his own words:

Leading individuals from large family groupings had once again become intermediaries between state officials and the local population by the later 1940s. This had come about as state officials of the Kemalist period followed a governmental practice of the imperial period, turning to leading individuals from large groupings for assistance even though this contradicted nationalist ideology and institutions. As a consequence, an imperial state society at the local level had gradually but efficiently reoriented itself to become a national state society at the local level. Leading individuals from large family groupings, the descendants of aghas from agha-families, now appeared as nationalist rather than ottomanist in behavior, speech, and dress.³⁶⁹

On the other hand, Meeker seems to separate the local elite from state officials and administration.³⁷⁰ As the quotation reflects, he argues that these local elites came to dominate the public sphere during the *later* decades of the Turkish republic, once the centralized and radical policies of the early decades were over.³⁷¹ This is why he talks about local elites *repenetrating*, *recolonizing*

³⁶⁸ Ibid., p. xxi.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 297.

³⁷⁰ He in fact reformulates this division in more general terms as “the existence of two separate but interacting orders at the local level: a traditional social system and a modern state system.” Ibid., p. 6.

³⁷¹ Emphasis is mine. For example, Meeker discusses the deposition of the mayor of Of, a district of the province of Trabzon, who was himself an agha and had been the mayor for two decades until his removal from office in 1926 by the newly appointed district governor. Meeker refers to these early years of the republic as a period when “probably as never before, district state officials were able to take a range of actions without first reaching agreement or receiving assistance from local elites.” Ibid., p. 306. These periods are characterized by him as “whenever the state system was strong and the state society was weak.” Ibid., p. 308.

or reinhabiting the new state system *after* the “revolutionary” change.³⁷² He argues that while their legitimacy was undermined for a brief period during the heyday of the Kemalist revolution, the regional social oligarchy revives itself following the transition to multi-party politics in the late 1940s.³⁷³ Thus, despite the fact that he acknowledges and portrays the complexities of local dynamics well, Meeker nevertheless focuses on the influential local families and tends to use a more narrow definition of the local elite.

Other scholars have drawn attention to the significance of “mid-level elites” or “mid-level professionals” in order to understand how the Kemalist ideology was translated into policies and how they were implemented. Chidress, for example, suggests that these mid-level elites were the products of state policies, but they were also their producers. Her research on the members of the *Talim ve Terbiye Heyeti* (Council of Educational Policy), a committee providing assistance to the Ministry of Education, reveals that their role was essential, since they designed, implemented and mediated the Kemalist experience.³⁷⁴ Although such analyses are crucial to seeing that the “Kemalist elite” in Ankara was not monolithic, but multi-leveled and diverse in their vision, the focus is nevertheless exclusively on the educated elite, since the concept of mid-level elite is defined mainly based on people’s education and subsequent career paths. Even in works that also follow these elites in practice in the provinces, this focus on the educated segments, the doctors, teachers, journalists etc., does not change.³⁷⁵ In other words, the local elites in this usage are again limited, this time to civil servants and professionals.

³⁷² Italics are mine. Studies in contemporary provincial elite, however, reveals that those families that had been local notables since the Ottoman periods quickly adapted to the republican system and did not wait to penetrate the local administration until the 1940s. For a discussion on the history of some local notable families in Maraş, Denizli and Muğla with an emphasis on this line of continuity, see Ayşe Durakbaşı, “Taşra Burjuvazisinin Tarihsel Kökenleri,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 118, 2010, pp. 6-38. For the cultural integration of the local notable families to the republican modernization, see Meltem Karadağ, “Taşra Kentlerinde Yaşam Tarzları Alanı: Kültür ve Ayrım,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 118, 2010, pp. 39-58.

³⁷³ For a detailed account, see chapter 10, Meeker, 2002, pp. 318-341.

³⁷⁴ Faith J. Chidress, “Taking Side Roads: Researching Mid-Level Elites as Turkish Social History,” in *Towards a Social History of Modern Turkey: Essays in Theory and Practice*, Gavin D. Brockett (ed.), Istanbul: Libra, 2011, pp. 97-122. See also her “Republican Lessons: Education and the Making of Modern Turkey,” unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Utah, 2001.

³⁷⁵ For Libal’s discussion of the competing visions of the educated elite on population growth, women’s reproduction and children’s rights, see Kathryn Libal, “National Futures: The Child Question in Early Republican Turkey,” unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 2001. See also her “Specifying Turkish Modernity: Gender, Family and Nation-State Making in the Early Republic,” in *Towards a Social History of Modern Turkey: Essays*

In his study of People's Houses, Lamprou uses the concept of local elite in a broader manner.³⁷⁶ He focuses on the Kayseri and Balıkesir People's Houses and looks at these institutions as places where various local actors meet, compete, negotiate and domesticate the policies imposed by the center.³⁷⁷ Lamprou's analysis of the local power networks points to a more diverse group of local elites composed of both native and non-native people. He underlines that in the province centers, these "urban elite" were the people who staff all significant political, financial and social institutions. As he suggests, "local elites, local bureaucrats, but mainly members of the *eşraf* families [merchants and landowners] occupy the local party leadership, the Municipal and Provincial assemblies, the financial and cultural/social institutions of the region (Chambers of Commerce and Industry, City Clubs, various associations)" and they were the "middle men between the state and the rest of the local population."³⁷⁸ In the case of Balıkesir and Kayseri, for example, the local party administrators were largely from the commercial and artisanal segments of the local society. Thus, the differentiation between the natives and the outsiders (appointed state officials), albeit important in many instances,³⁷⁹ does not necessarily need to be rigid; these institutions, as Lamprou shows in detail in the case of People's Houses, could easily turn into a battlefield of power struggle between different local *eşraf* families or among the appointed state officials themselves.³⁸⁰

in *Theory and Practice*, Gavin D. Brockett (ed.), 2011, pp. 81-96. For Brockett's comments on the use of the provincial press to see local editors' critiques of the state policies and the rivalries between these editors and journalists, see his "A View from the Periphery: The provincial Press as a Source for Republican Turkish Social History," in *Towards a Social History of Modern Turkey: Essays in Theory and Practice*, Gavin D. Brockett (ed.), 2011, pp. 123-153.

³⁷⁶ Lamprou, 2009.

³⁷⁷ For a discussion on the provincial RPP branches as places where the local party elite compete for power and negotiate the central policies, see Murat Metinsoy, "Kemalizmin Taşrası: Erken Cumhuriyet Taşrasında Parti, Devlet ve Toplum," *Toplum ve Bilim* 118, 2010, pp. 124-164. See also Turan, 2011.

³⁷⁸ Lamprou, 2009, p. 95.

³⁷⁹ For example, Lamprou's analysis of the texts produced by the local actors about the People's House activities reveals that non-local state officials "appear more outspoken in relation to the place they have been appointed and its population," while those local elites who were natives of the place would be more hesitant. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

³⁸⁰ Durakbaşı also shows that the difference between the local notables and the state officials was not rigid. It was very much possible, in fact not rare, to see some members of a local notable family as local party administrators and state officials. Usually, members of these influential families would become representatives of their province in the parliament as well. See Durakbaşı, 2010.

This study follows a similar line of analysis and suggests that the local elite have to be analyzed by a more inclusive approach. As it has been discussed above, it is not easy to refer to any concise definition of the concept of local elite in the existing literature, since it has been overwhelmingly dominated by the analysis of the central elites and macro level power relations. However, it is crucial to unpack the concept here and explain the working definition used in this study in order to underline more precisely the focus of analysis. I define the concept of local elite as a cluster of actors which is composed of members of the state and party administration at the provincial level, as well as local notables and the prominent members of all local institutions, from the People's Houses to the sport clubs, professional organizations, associations, and the local opinion leaders and leading contributors to the local newspapers. Tekeli suggests that there was an interesting division of labor among the institutions at the local level in the single-party era, and that the urban life and the Kemalist policies of the 1930s and 1940s could only be understood by simultaneously analyzing these institutions and their members that were clustered around the party branch and the municipality in each province.³⁸¹ I argue that this institutional diversity, as well as the diversity among the members of a single institution allowed for competition, conflict and negotiation, regardless of the strength of the ideological unity expected of them by the regime center. Some of the people who occupied these local institutions were appointed officials; but there were a considerable number of people in every city who were locals and were part of this local elite cluster. Simply put, they were the people, including both men and women, who formed the educated and/or high-status groups at the local level, assumed to be or characterized/represented as the "enlightened" segments of the population. This cluster of local elites coincides with a network of power relations at the local level. It is very important to emphasize that they were far from being homogeneous politically; the umbrella of being a "republican" or "supporter of the regime" that was supposed to cover these people was in fact wider than it is usually supposed in the literature on the single-party era. The shape that regime ideals would take in practice at the local level was as much a product of the conflicts and negotiations within these local elites as they were of the central policies. Before elaborating further on

³⁸¹ Tekeli, 2009, p. 52-53. Tekeli points that each institution was specialized and focused on one ideological aspect or targeted social aim (The Red Crescent, the Association of Saving and National Economy, The Airplane Association etc.) and it is critical to note that these duties were assigned to separate institutions, different from the party and the state offices.

this argument through discussing in detail the critical role the local elites played in the case of the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s, it is necessary to outline the position of the central authority on the matter of unveiling.

II. Between Hesitation and Intervention: Ankara on the Anti-Veiling Campaigns

The major character of the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s, as it could be followed from the newspapers of the time, was that they were “local.” It was obvious and publicly known that the regime leadership in Ankara favored “modern” clothing for both men and women in accordance with the modernization brought along by the new republic, but it was not clear whether the state –the president, the government, the party center, or the parliament– would do something concrete about the remaining of the “traditional” veils of women as their main outdoor wear, especially in the provinces. The news about the banning of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in some cities appeared as if they were of local origin, stemming from the vanguard role of provincial administrators as well as from the mobilization of local people to celebrate women’s increasing social status, their political rights and the modernization of the country in general. The fact that news of anti-veiling campaigns coming from the provinces were celebrated in the national newspapers that were almost semi-official publications of the ruling party was a sign of the support of the center for these attempts.³⁸² However, on the surface at least, there was no indication of the direct involvement of the government, or a trace of central action by the party administration.

Given the character of the Kemalist regime and the authoritarian single-party system it had established, it seems logical to assume at the first instance that such important interventions in people’s daily practices would not/could not be possible without the involvement of the central administration. In fact, if we follow the hegemonic state-centric interpretations of the current literature, or the center-periphery analysis emphasizing a coherent, monolithic center, one would expect that anti-veiling campaigns began with an order from Ankara. The aim of this section is to discuss the degree to which these assumptions are correct. Based on the available sources, it will be shown that Ankara was indeed involved in the

³⁸² The national newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, for example, was frequently publishing the bans issued in the provinces.

process, but the character of this involvement was far more complicated than dominant approaches to the Kemalist state would suggest; the way the central government and the party tried to control and coordinate the anti-veiling campaigns was more complex than sending well-formulated, consistent and concrete orders to the provincial administrators. It will be argued that the central administration, especially the Ministry of Interior and the RPP general secretariat, encouraged these local attempts to “modernize” women’s clothing, but the parameters and content of this modernization were not certain. On the one hand, the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were stigmatized, very clearly, as backward and unwanted in official communiqués signed by some very high-ranking administrators; on the other hand, Ankara was quite cautious about intervening in women’s veiling. This ambiguity on the side of Ankara was reflected in its communication with the provincial administrators and party branches; thus its involvement in the process was at times ambivalent, sometimes even inconsistent. However, it also did not hesitate to intervene in the course of the campaigns more actively on certain occasions, especially when some local administrators acted over-zealously or indifferently, as well as in case of opposition and resistance in certain cities.

The first document indicating the Kemalist regime’s involvement is a circular of the Ministry of Interior on 11 August 1934. In this circular, the ministry informed the provinces that the issue of the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal* should not be handled through decisions and orders, and in this important and sensitive matter, the targeted goals should be achieved through encouragement (*teşvik*), inculcation (*telkin*) and propaganda.³⁸³ This circular shows that as early as mid-1934, Ankara had felt the necessity to advise the provinces that the issue of unveiling was an important but sensitive issue, and they should abstain from making decisions and issuing orders on this matter. It also reveals that there were already locally initiated attempts or plans concerning the removal of, or at least decreasing/discouraging, the use of the *peçe*, the *çarşaf*, and the *peştamal*; the circular of the ministry was probably

³⁸³ I have not seen the original circular of the ministry, but its existence and content is mentioned in another circular sent by the ministry to the governor of Ordu. See Copy of the letter of the Minister of Interior to the Province of Ordu dated 14.5.1937, TNPA 13216-7/1, 18 June 1937. In one letter sent by the governor of Çanakkale, the governor mentions a circular sent by Ankara dated 17/2/1934. If this is true, then there should be a circular that was sent by the Ministry of Interior to the provinces even earlier than the one mentioned above. I have not encountered a document dated 17/2/1934. It is also possible that the date was written as 17/2/1934 by mistake in the letter of the governor of Çanakkale and it should refer to the circular of the ministry dated 17/12/1934. For the letter of the governor, see, From the governor of Çanakkale to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 21 March 1936.

aimed at controlling these attempts and keeping them within certain limits. Indeed, as early as August 1933, for example, the newly appointed district governor of Safranbolu, then a district of the province of Zonguldak, had banned the use of the *çarşaf* in the district capital.³⁸⁴ In Giresun, in April 1934, the removal of the *peçe* in the city was proposed to the city council by a council member, doctor Nabi Bey, and the council had unanimously accepted this proposal and had given the necessary authority to the mayor to announce it as a municipal ban.³⁸⁵ Although without an outright ban, it seems that an anti-veiling campaign had already begun during the years 1933 and 1934 in some other cities as well. Newspaper reports mention the removal of the *peçe* or the *çarşaf* by women themselves in Bursa and Kütahya, for example, but without specifying the source of the initiative or actors involved in the campaigns.³⁸⁶

It seems that this first circular of the ministry could not achieve its aim since the Minister of Interior had to send another directive to all provincial governors and general inspectors on 17 December 1934, immediately after the enactment of the law granting women their political rights.³⁸⁷ As it will be discussed in more detail in the next section, this directive was in fact motivated by a letter received by the ministry from the deputy governor of Antalya, asking the opinion of the center on the issue of the use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. It seems that the ministry considered it important to issue a general directive and thus inform all governors and general inspectors about the issue, instead of only replying the deputy governor's letter.

The directive of the ministry begins by mentioning that "it has been understood from communication" that there have been attempts to take various measures in some places to prevent women going out with the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and in some cities, the idea of using the municipal police (*zabıta*) force for this purpose has been considered by some local administrators. This opening sentence implies that in addition to the letter of the deputy governor of Antalya, there were probably other local administrators

³⁸⁴ "Safranboluda çarşaf menedildi," *Cumhuriyet*, 21 August 1933.

³⁸⁵ "Giresun'da peçe kalkıyor," *Cumhuriyet*, 24 April 1934.

³⁸⁶ For the province of Bursa, see "Bursada artık çarşaf giymeyecekler," *Cumhuriyet*, 29 October 1933; for the province of Kütahya, see "Kütahya hanımları ve çarşaf," *Cumhuriyet*, 6 May 1934. A later report from Bursa in July 1934 indicated that local municipalities in the province had begun to implement their decisions regarding the banning of the *çarşaf* and *çarşaf*-like clothes, which means that there were local bans in Bursa already before the initial circular of the ministry. See "Güzel bir karar," *Cumhuriyet*, 28 July 1934.

³⁸⁷ From the Minister of Interior to all provinces and general inspectorships, TNPA 13216-7/1, 17 December 1934.

consulting the ministry and asking the opinion of the center about taking a more forceful plan of action on the issue of unveiling. Having mentioned the existence of such initiatives without indicating any particular city, the directive of the minister continues by inviting the local administrators to be responsible and moderate in dealing with this issue. Seeming content with compliance of women with the modernization efforts in general and concerned that intervention in women's veiling could cause reactions, the interior minister indicates that the governors have to focus on propaganda activities and steer clear of taking extreme measures related to the reforms:

At a time when our women are in fact abiding by the requirements of our revolution, it is necessary to avoid carrying this issue too far by taking some measures that might cause undesirable reactions. The requirements of the revolution should not be enforced by municipal police force, but they should be got accepted through well-administered inculcation. Therefore, it would be suitable to be content with propaganda in the *peçe* and *çarşaf* issue as well.³⁸⁸

In addition to demonstrating that some anti-veiling campaigns did begin as local initiatives, these circulars of the minister of interior are also crucial in clarifying the initial position of the regime on the question of unveiling. It shows that the regime favored a moderate and gradual transformation, with the aim of avoiding "undesirable reactions" on this sensitive issue. On the other hand, the directive quoted above can also be read as an invitation for the local administrators to promote propaganda for unveiling, and thus clearly indicates the involvement, or at least the encouragement, of the center regarding the anti-veiling campaigns. It also demonstrates, however, the will of the central authority to limit the tendency of some local administrators to be more radical in interpreting the regime ideals and putting them into practice. Thus, it points to an ambiguous attitude on the side of Ankara and reflects potential disagreements regarding how to struggle against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* and how to promote "modern" clothing instead.

These disagreements became visible at the 4th General Congress of the RPP in May 1935. The idea of issuing a law banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* country-wide was suggested to the congress by the delegates of the provinces

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

of Muğla and Sivas, triggering a debate on the proper form of action.³⁸⁹ The commission that prepared a report on the suggestion took a negative position, maintaining that in the villages, where two-thirds of the population lived, the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were not used, and in cities, where the rest of the population resided, these veils had been gradually removed without any legislation being needed. The veils, the commission claimed, had survived here and there only because of women's respect for their fathers and husbands. The question was then whether it was necessary to take a measure on this issue; whether this "rotten fruit had to be tore off the branch" by an attempt by the center. Some members of the commission supported the idea that the government should intervene at least to eliminate the *peçe* by adding an article to the Police Law; this was necessary to achieve the targeted change faster.³⁹⁰ In the end, however, the commission unanimously decided that there was no need for legislation, and the progress in this issue should be achieved by a "shortcut action" of the party and party-government institutions (*parti ve parti hükümeti kurumlarının kestirme bir hareketiyle*). The Minister of Interior, Şükrü Kaya, also supported the report of the commission and argued that the "woman revolution" had been viewed as one of the most fundamental principles of the Turkish revolution and thus was followed closely by the government. Approval of the suggestion of the commission on this issue by the general congress would be convenient for the government and it would be considered as an important directive. Having discussed the report of the commission, the general congress too rejected the idea of resorting to general legislation on unveiling, only, however, at the end of an intense debate.

One of the delegates, Hakkı Tarık Us, a well-known journalist, author and a deputy of the province of Giresun, agreed that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* issue should be the issue of the government and the party, but suggested that it should also be reconsidered in the light of the principles mentioned in the new party program accepted two days earlier by the general congress. Here, Us was referring to the "revolutionary" spirit of the party program. He added that the parliament had already issued legislation that equipped the Ministry of Health to organize Health Commissions in the provinces, which were empowered to remove the *kafes*. The question for Us was then why legislation

³⁸⁹ For the details of the discussion on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* issue at the congress, see C.H.P. Dördüncü Büyük Kurultayı Görüşmeleri Tutulgası, 9-16 Mayıs 1935, Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1935.

³⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that even those delegates who were in favor of a general ban made a distinction between the *çarşaf* and the *peçe*, considering the latter completely unacceptable while the former more tolerable. See *ibid.*, p. 144.

to ban the *peçe* was seen as unnecessary while there was a legal basis to remove the *kafes*. The *çarşaf* was a different matter, according to him, one that had economic aspects and perhaps involved fashion-related concerns of women. Us also claimed the necessity of exacting legislation by pointing to the already existing public desire to eliminate this form of dress. He mentioned the decisions already made and implemented by some provincial councils (such as in Trabzon in the 1920s and most recently in Adana) as indicators of this general need and desire; the fact that the provincial councils had felt the necessity to issue such decisions was proof of the spread of this need and desire in the country. Thus, he asserted that these local efforts must be supported by a revolutionary (not evolutionary) attitude on the part of the party, and that this issue should not be left to the course of time. Such a solution would also relieve those provincial councils that had hesitated to issue a decision with the concern that it would not be lawful.

Tarık Us's particular concern was the use of the *peçe* to hide one's identity. As one of the members of the commission, this was the reason for his suggestion to ban the *peçe* by adding an article to the Police Law.³⁹¹ A delegate from Yozgat, Yusuf Duygu, on the other hand, supported the idea that a general dress law was necessary. If the issue was left to the provincial councils or municipalities, some of them might not be willing to deal with it and could use the lack of a law as an excuse for their reluctance or inability.³⁹² Duygu's concern was more about the image these veils represented in the eyes of the foreigners. A woman delegate from Niğde, Naciye Osman Kozbek, also supported the compulsory removal the *peçe*. She argued that this was necessary since Turkish women had been given the right to work alongside men. In addition, she asserted that the *peçe* was a source of problems during the elections, because it could be used by some people to hide their identity, and thus lead to multiple voting by the same voter.³⁹³

Some delegates, however, had opposed the idea of issuing a law on unveiling. Aka Gündüz, for example, another prominent writer and journalist, who was also a member of the commission who prepared the report on the

³⁹¹ Us also claimed that neither women nor men were in favor of these veils, but because of psychological reasons, they would prefer guidance from an authority rather than leading the way themselves. While Us was defending his position, there were other members of the congress who were supporting him by applause. See, *ibid.*, 145-147.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 151. According to the reporting of a local newspaper in Konya, Kozbek was so disappointed the suggestion to issue a law banning the *peçe* was rejected by the congress that she left the meeting right after this decision. See "Bayan Kızdı, Kurultay Salonunu Terkedip Gitti," *Babalık*, 20 May 1935.

suggestion to legislate against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, claimed that there was no issue called the issue of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the Turkish revolution. The Turkish revolution was not a revolution carried out for the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. In response to Us's intervention that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* did exist as a reality, Gündüz insisted that they existed, but this was rather an issue concerning the municipal police (*zabıta meselesidir*). The municipal police and the gendarme could handle this problem; occupying the congress with such a minor issue like the *çarşaf* was not something in line with the ideology of the Turkish revolution.³⁹⁴ Another delegate from İçel, Dr. Muhtar Berker, also argued that a law was unnecessary, but his reasons were different. He claimed that not every task should be achieved by legislation. According to him, the existing laws on the provincial and local administration were enough for the willing authorities to handle this issue.³⁹⁵

The debate on the issue of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* at the general meeting was brought to an end by words of the Minister of Interior, Şükrü Kaya.³⁹⁶ According to Kaya, the congress was gathered to discuss important issues, not to argue whether a piece of black cloth should be removed by a law or by administrative measures. Like Gündüz, Kaya also characterized the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* issue as a minor one, not worthy of any discussion. He said that these veils were foreign to Turkish culture, and in villages, where the majority of the population lived, women's faces were uncovered. A law banning these veils would represent Turkish women as attached to a piece of cloth and thus would depict a negative image. Kaya was certain that as an issue of security, the *peçe* was already properly being handled: nowhere were women voting with the *peçe* on their face, and the faces of all people entering the public places and all sellers at the markets were uncovered. The *çarşaf*, on the other hand, had economic dimensions. Some women were continuing wearing it because of economic difficulties. Thus a gradual approach would be more appropriate on this matter; it should be left to the taste and decisions of women, and the provinces should accomplish this task based on their own necessities, by determining their own ways. A law, however, could put the party in a difficult position.³⁹⁷ Perhaps more persuasively, Kaya had also added that if such a law were needed, the leader of the revolution would have

³⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 148.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 148.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 151-152.

³⁹⁷ Kaya here was again referring to the intention of the regime to avoid reactions, as he mentioned in his circulars to the provinces.

issued it already, referring to the unwillingness of Mustafa Kemal to intervene on this issue.

Kaya's speech could be considered as a relatively moderate one given that he suggested a gradual approach and underlined the importance of women's own decisions, as well as those of the provinces. However, there were also rather critical elements in his speech that may be seen as indications, or at least as possibilities, of a more active attitude on unveiling on the side of Ankara. In other words, in his speech, he had also said things that could be interpreted as contradictory to his remarks on the need of following a gradual approach. He first referred to the need for inculcation and urged the delegates of the congress to promise that they would practice and promote the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in their own circles. Then, he went on to say that the party and the People's Houses should "enlighten" people on this matter. And finally, Kaya ensured the delegates that the government had received the necessary message from the debate that took place in the congress and would act in accordance with this message, administratively and politically. The drift of the congress would inspire the government and the members of the parliament. He would end his speech by saying that "maybe the members of the party congress who will meet four years later would see this issue completely resolved."

The debate at the congress reveals the existence of different positions in the party. The central elite (deputies) as well as the delegates coming from the provinces had diverse opinions on how to struggle against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. The point that there should be a struggle to eliminate these veils, however, was clear and this had an impact on the tone of the directives conveyed by Ankara after the congress. Two months later, on 22 July 1935, the Minister of Interior sent a circular to all governors and inspectors general underlining, very explicitly, the will of the Kemalist revolution to do away with the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* and to provide Turkish women with a civilized social status.³⁹⁸ The language of the circular of the minister was more rigid compared to his previous circulars sent before the congress: he characterized the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as veils originating from "foreign traditions" and "tangled around the head of the Turk by beastly lusts" (*hayvanca ihtirasların Türk başına doladığı*). The circular was sent as a letter directly addressed to the name of the governors and inspectors general. A copy of the circular was

³⁹⁸ From the Minister of Interior to general inspectorships and provinces, TNPA 13216-7/1, 22 July 1935. The hand-written draft of the circular by the interior minister Şükrü Kaya is also contained in the file.

also sent to the Secretariat General of the Presidency, the Prime Ministry, ministries, the Chief of the General Staff, the General Gendarmerie Commandership (*Umum Jandarma Komutanlığı*), and the Directorate General of Provincial Administration, informing these institutions that the governors and the inspectors general were written a letter to take the “appropriate measures” (*münasip tedbirler*) and engage in inculcation for the elimination of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* (*çarşaf ve peçenin ortadan kaldırılması için ... telkinler yapılması*).

What these appropriate measures would be was unclear in the circular of the minister, however. Because, again, he indicated that while the Kemalist revolution was determined to do away with the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, “in the field of social policy, this reform was left to the civilized taste of women and men.” Thanks to this taste, the minister suggested, in the ten years since the establishment of the republic, impressive progress had been achieved. The critical point here is that while he emphasizes that “this reform was left to the taste of people,” he also mentions the contribution of the local administrators, referring to the local attempts to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* since the 1920s. The letter of the minister was in fact praising such attempts:

In achieving this progress, the municipal and provincial councils have had significant influence. However, since these decisions [of the municipal and provincial councils] lacked the power of a law, there have been delays in their application in some places. In fact, at the congress [of the RPP] this year, while discussing the *çarşaf* and the *peçe* issue, critiques were voiced that the *peçe* survives as a bad tradition in some places. It was even suggested to immediately avoid this situation by enacting a law. But trusting the revolutionary and modernist character of the Turkish nation [*Türk milletinin devrimciliğine ve yenileşme hissine güvenerek*], the government suggested that this bad habit could be discouraged in time by propaganda and efforts [*propaganda ve gayretlerle*]. Recent researches and investigations reveal that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* began to disappear almost everywhere; in big cities like Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir, they disappeared completely, and in other places, partially. It is understood that those who come to the big cities from these places [where the *peçe* and *çarşaf* still partially survive], all remove their *çarşaf* and *peçe*, but they embrace them when they return to their hometowns because they fall into the traditions and people’s gossips. It is concluded that this revolution would also be completed with a few encouraging steps.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁹ The hand-written draft is not very different than the final circular, except a few insignificant wording changes. There is only one last sentence in the draft that is not included in the final

Again unclear about what these “encouraging steps” could be, the minister suggests that the state officials must take the lead in this regard: “If everyone [every official] influences his family members and his immediate circle, this issue will then be solved naturally.” The ministry then was content with propaganda and refused the idea of enacting a law on this issue. Once again, Ankara emphasized that the state officials were its “natural hands” in the provinces.⁴⁰⁰ The state had trusted in the personal influence of the state officials in their surroundings. However, the circular of the ministry could neither clarify the appropriate ways of doing propaganda, nor totally ignore the impact the local decisions of the municipal and provincial councils had in the past. Thus, it left the local administrators with a rather ambiguous advice. Both those who want to take an active way and force for a decision by the local councils and those who choose to remain more vigilant and trust in state officials being models for wider masses could find a legitimate point to refer in the letter sent by the minister.

The only point where the circular of the minister urges the provincial administrators to be more cautious about the use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* and allows direct intervention was where these veils created a security concern, i.e., that they were used with the aim of hiding the identity of the user.⁴⁰¹ The minister particularly suggests that women selling stuff in marketplaces with the *peçe* covering their faces, as one could encounter in Istanbul, should be warned first by using an appropriate language, and if they continue to wear the *peçe*, then they can be banned from selling their goods in the market. He also mentions that on occasions related to the issues of security, the police should be watchful about malevolent people, both men and women, in big cities, and for example should make sure that people wearing the *peçe*

version. It is an unfinished sentence crossed out by the minister himself. It reads: “In sum, this *peçe* and *çarşaf* issue [should be handled in a] way worthy of the revolution.” Phrases in brackets are my additions to make a complete sentence and thus could be different. The original Turkish version is the following: “Hülâsa, bu *peçe* ve *çarşaf* meselesinin devrime layık bir şekil
...”

⁴⁰⁰ For a party document characterizing state officials as the “natural hands” of the RPP (*fırkanın tabii uzuvları*) see, Memur bayanların fırkaya kaydedilemeyeceği, PMRA 490.01/1.4.10, 2 September 1930.

⁴⁰¹ This in fact contradicts with what Kaya had argued at the general party congress. He had argued that this security part of the story was already handled, but as it can be seen in the circular, he had still felt the necessity to send directives to local authorities to take appropriate measures.

in this way avoid public places such as steamships, trams, coffee houses and night clubs (*gazino*).⁴⁰²

Following this letter by the Minister of Interior, one and a half months later, on 9 September 1935, the general secretary of the RPP sent a circular to local party administrators.⁴⁰³ The general secretary informed them about the circular sent by the Minister of Interior to the provincial governors and asked them to help the governors on the issue of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. This was an attempt by the party to secure the coordination of the local party administrators with the governors and thus to achieve a unified effort in the provinces. The general secretary also asked the local branches to inform the party center about the situation. Interestingly, on the same day the party secretariat sent the circular to the local party branches, on 9 September 1935, the Ministry of Interior sent its original circular (dated 22 July) to the governor of Denizli again, in order to make sure that he received it.⁴⁰⁴

These circulars certainly paved the way for the acceleration of the anti-veiling campaigns and were read by some local administrators as Ankara's call for action on the issue of unveiling. As it is understood from the replies of some of the local party branches to the circular of the general

⁴⁰² Especially the attempts at theft by people who were using these veils as a way to hide themselves were the major concern, since such attempts had been seen since the Ottoman period. In fact, men hiding their identity by wearing the *çarşaf*, to meet their lovers, or to go to the brothel for example, has been a popular theme especially in comedy movies in Turkey, even in those depicting Turkey of the 1970s. These attempts at theft by using the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, while they really happened on many occasions, seem to be used in the propaganda against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* during the anti-veiling campaigns as well. For news on such attempts based on municipal police reports in the 1930s, see for example "Bir Çarşafı Kadın Hırsızlığı," *Antalya*, 10 January 1935; "Çarşaf Hırsız Tutuldu," *Babalık*, 6 March 1935; "Mersin'i Soymak İstediler," *Yeni Mersin*, 2 July 1934.

⁴⁰³ See the letters from the RPP Yozgat, Muğla, Trabzon and Sinop local party administrations to the RPP Secretariat General, contained in PMRA 490.01/17.88.1. I have not seen the original letter sent by the general secretary of the party, but the response letters of some local party administrators mention that they had received such a circular.

⁴⁰⁴ Apparently, when the circular of the ministry was first sent to the governor of Denizli as a letter to his name, the post office in Denizli forwarded it to the governorship of Samsun, since the governor of Denizli had just been appointed as the governor of Samsun. Having received the circular coming from Denizli post office, the governor of Samsun had informed the ministry that he received the circular, but not as the governor of Denizli but Samsun. Thus the ministry sent another copy to the new governor of Denizli on 9 September 1935. A copy of the relevant correspondence is contained in TNPA 13216-7/1. Whether the fact that this mistake was corrected on the same day the RPP general secretary sent a circular to all local branches was a coincidence is an open question. It is possible that this issue continued to be a topic of correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and the RPP Headquarters between 22nd of July (the date of the circular of the ministry) and 9th of September (the date of the circular of the party center).

secretary of the party, the circular sent to the governors by the ministry of interior (22 July 1935) already triggered an effort on the part of the local elite before the coming of the circular of the party (9 September 1935), and led to joint meetings of the high staff of the governorships with the local party administrators, and in some cases, with the participation of the municipal administrators.⁴⁰⁵ In fact, even before the circular of the Ministry of Interior on 22 July, the impact of the debate on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* at the party congress in May had already been felt at the local level. Local newspapers informed their readers about the discussions held at the party congress, including the one on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*.⁴⁰⁶ Thus, the general public in the provinces had learned that issue of unveiling appeared as a concern in Ankara and was debated at the general congress of the party, even though the idea of handling it through a central legislation was rejected. In addition, since the minister of interior had asked the members of the congress to promise that they would first change the clothing of their own family and circles, this had created a pressure for the delegates of some provinces. A Trabzon newspaper, *İkbal*, mentioned the request that Şükrü Kaya had made to the delegates while reporting about the congress. An editorial addressed all delegates of Trabzon by name to remind them of the promise they made to the interior minister: the issue of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was now a problem of these delegates; they had promised to fight for women's liberation from these veils and they would be ashamed of breaking their promise if they did not do so.⁴⁰⁷

Delegates of some provinces had actually already created an initiative for unveiling right after the congress, without waiting for the following circulars coming from Ankara. In other words, the influence of the debates at the congress in Ankara was felt at the local level, especially among the local elite, through the participating delegates. The delegates of Sinop, for example, had informed all party members in the province about these debates in a party meeting after they returned back from Ankara.⁴⁰⁸ Having listened to the impressions of their delegates about the party congress, some members of the local party branch already suggested that the *çarşaf* should be removed in Sinop. In a general meeting organized at the local party branch *one day before*

⁴⁰⁵ See, for example, the letter from the RPP Yozgat Administration to the RPP Secretariat General, PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 13 November 1935.

⁴⁰⁶ For example, see "Kurultay ne yaptı?," *Ak Günler*, 3 June 1935; "Büyük Kurultayın Toplantısında," *Babalık*, 19 May 1935.

⁴⁰⁷ Cevat Alap, "Görgüler Duygular," *İkbal*, 30 May 1935.

⁴⁰⁸ From the RPP Sinop Administration to the RPP Secretariat General, PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 30 September 1935.

the arrival of the circular of the general secretary of the party dated September 9th, representatives from the party, the governorship and the municipality had come to an agreement that the *çarşaf* should be replaced with overcoats.

Therefore, it should be emphasized that although the circulars issued by the Ministry of Interior and the General Secretariat of the RPP (dated 22 July and 9 September 1935, respectively) were very influential and resulted in an acceleration in the spread of the anti-veiling campaigns in the periphery, these circulars had been sent to the local authorities *after* the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had already been prohibited in some cities, and in some others, *after* an anti-veiling campaign (although without an outright ban yet) had already been initiated. *Even the initial circulars* of the interior minister in 1934, which were less imperious compared to the ones sent after the party congress, came *after* the initiation of campaigns in a number of cities. In other words, the local initiative had been playing a significant role right from the very beginning, and the involvement of the party center and the government accelerated gradually, and, as it will be discussed below, never reached a level that completely determined the process at the local level. Left vague and sometimes even incoherent in terms of the policy guidance of the central authorities, the anti-veiling campaigns were shaped by the local actors and circumstances. Especially the role and attitude of local elite were critical in fashioning the practice of the campaigns.

III. Anti-Veiling Campaigns and the Role of Local Elites

On 23 December 1934, only nineteen days after the enactment of the law granting women's political rights, Cevat Alap, a journalist in *İkbal* newspaper in the province of Trabzon, addressed the local authorities from his column.⁴⁰⁹ As we learn from his article, the governor of Trabzon had recently issued a circular and advised all state officials not to process the petitions of women wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. Alap requested from the authorities that this decision to be turned into a general ban including all public places:

This ban can gradually be expanded to the following: A woman cannot sit in the park wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, cannot enter Güzelhisar Park, cannot come to the movie theatre, and finally, cannot wander in the market or bazaar. If we do not issue such a ban today, the revolution, the regime will, perhaps not today or next year, but soon. The regime,

⁴⁰⁹ Cevat Alap, "Çarşaf, Peçe Artık Yok Olmalıdır," *İkbal*, 23 December 1934.

the revolution, which has given women the right to elect and to be elected, will totally eliminate the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, which are now a sign of being uncivilized, through a law like the one on the dress of the priests and hodjas.⁴¹⁰

It seems that for Alap, both granting women their political rights and the law regulating the clothing of the religious personnel were influential signs that the state could intervene in the dress of women. He supported the decision of the governor that limited the access of women wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* to certain public services, but this was not enough; he was asking for a more forceful intervention. His essay was a call, a local voice, demanding the realization of regime ideals through a local initiative; he invited the local administrators to act *before* the central authority made a concrete move in this issue, without waiting for an order or a central regulation coming from Ankara. This was precisely what was expected by the regime from the local elites: to lead the way in social and cultural modernization. Local administrators, state officials and women in particular, were in a critical position in the eyes of Ankara as agents of change in the provinces. The role of women and the regime's expectations from this role will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. This section focuses on the critical position of the local elite in general and discusses in which ways and through which mechanisms they had a crucial impact on the shaping and implementation of the anti-veiling campaigns. Many local elites had also envisioned themselves in the role of being the agents of reform. For some of them, at least, men and women alike, there was no need for a directive to come from the center for every attempt made in the modernization process.⁴¹¹ Some of the local elites, however, were much less enthusiastic about unveiling, or hesitant, or even reluctant. As this section aims to demonstrate, this diversity of the attitude of the local elite, their different initiatives and strategies, and Ankara's response to these initiatives are essential for understanding the complexity of the anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey of 1930s.

The most apparent initiative of the local elites was the leading role they had in propaganda efforts. Such efforts were especially put into practice by using the local newspapers. Given the difficulties the regime was facing in penetrating society fully through established institutions because of limited state capacity, the local newspapers had gained an important function in the

⁴¹⁰ Alap here refers to the law known as the Dress Law, enacted in December 1934 and prohibited the clergy from wearing their religious dress outside of service.

⁴¹¹ For expressions of similar ideas in local newspapers in the 1920s, see Çapa, 1996.

eyes of the authorities in “convincing and leading” the masses.⁴¹² The provincial administrators also had very limited means at their disposal for propaganda apart from the newspapers; thus the local elite used them as a platform on which they tried to initiate and promote the anti-veiling campaigns at the local level. The propaganda activities of the local elite can be seen as expected, since propaganda was the only concrete advice mentioned in the circulars coming from Ankara. In this sense, their activities were in line with the suggestions of the regime; they were advised to do so. But some local newspapers began to publish articles written by local authors about the need for the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* earlier than the circulars of Ankara.

One crucial character of this propaganda was that although their pro-regime stance was obvious, there was nevertheless an effort to represent the desire for such a reform as a genuinely local one, voiced by the elites of the cities themselves. In other words, most of the local authors and journalists represented the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as a natural end result of the modernization of Turkish society and themselves as the natural agents of this modernization. The language used in local newspapers about the anti-veiling campaigns was a language especially emphasizing the agency of the local. Formulated as “we the new Turkish youth,” “the enlightened people of our city,” “the women of our city” or simply “the people” (of Bursa, of Konya etc.), this self-representation of the local elite had the aim of portraying the initiative as something expected from the historical position of their city as the “vanguard” city, and something their city had to do to be worthy of the revolution or not to fall behind the other cities in this struggle. This idea of being the vanguard city was an argument frequently used by the local elites in mobilizing the public in various cities.⁴¹³ One can refer here to a dual competition simultaneously going on at the local level: there was a struggle among various members of the local elites to be the leading agents of change in their cities; and there was a competition among the cities to be the vanguards regarding the anti-veiling campaigns.

Likewise, introduction of a campaign in a certain province capital soon came to affect the district capitals in that province, creating a snowball

⁴¹² The local party branches, for example, were using local newspapers to inform people about the party program and ideals. For the efforts of the Antalya party branch to use the local newspaper, *Antalya*, for propaganda activities, see 1935 Report of the party inspector Adnan Menderes, deputy of Aydın, PMRA 490.1/618.27.1, 2 December 1935.

⁴¹³ For examples of this kind of propaganda, see “Trabzon kadınları ve çarşaf,” *İkbal*, 29 October 1934; “Halk evinde dün akşamki toplantı,” *Antalya*, 20 December 1934; “Eni konu konuşmalar,” *Halk*, 11 April 1935.

effect and an atmosphere of competition. The way campaigns were reported in provincial newspapers shows how this comparison among the district capitals in a particular province created pressure on district administrations and how they felt the necessity to follow the province capital or other district capitals in banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. *Yeni Mersin*, a newspaper of the province of İçel, for example, was reporting the inability of the district of Tarsus to launch a successful campaign against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* during the year in 1933 despite the fact that there was a “movement” in the district and a general demand among the women.⁴¹⁴ Expected results could not be achieved, because ineffective ways of action were preferred and the matter was not well followed, the newspaper claimed. The support of the district governor and the municipality were mentioned in the news, suggesting that it had become only a formality to issue such a ban in Tarsus. *Yeni Mersin* was “hoping” that Tarsus would follow the example of Mersin, the province capital, soon and celebrating that the *çarşaf* was already prohibited at parks and public places in the district capital. The suggestion of a woman member of the Tarsus municipal council to issue a ban became an item on the agenda of the council only at the beginning of 1935. *Yeni Mersin* was again pushing for a decision so that the women of Tarsus could get rid of this “ogre dress” (*umacı kılık*);⁴¹⁵ it published commentaries inviting the members of the Tarsus municipal council not to buy the arguments of those who claimed that this issue could be solved naturally in the course of time. Rıza Atılâ, a columnist of *Yeni Mersin*, referred to how easily the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had been removed in Mersin. This was a good example for Tarsus; any doubt in this issue would mean that Tarsus had failed to understand the great aims of the revolution.⁴¹⁶

Although the efforts of some local elite to represent the anti-veiling campaigns as genuinely local attempts were part of the propaganda, there were cases where the initiative did in fact originate locally, especially concerning the right way to organize and implement an anti-veiling campaign. One example of such an initiative can be followed in a letter of the deputy governor of Antalya to the Minister of the Interior towards the end of 1934, where he was curious about the opinion of the government and the party on the proper way of struggling against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*.⁴¹⁷ Conveying his opinion

⁴¹⁴ “Çarşafılar Tarsusta da kalkıyor,” *Yeni Mersin*, 16 September 1934.

⁴¹⁵ “Tarsus Belediye M. toplantısı,” *Yeni Mersin*, 4 February 1935.

⁴¹⁶ Rıza Atılâ, “Yeni Çağın Artığı,” *Yeni Mersin*, 4 February 1935.

⁴¹⁷ From the Acting Governor of Antalya Mr. Hamito the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 17 November 1934. The date of the letter appears as 17.11.1934 on the original document.

that the Kemalist revolution attained yet another major achievement by granting women the political rights that they lack in the most civilized nations, he suggested that it would be inappropriate for Turkish women to welcome this achievement by wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. The deputy governor was convinced that these veils were showing Turkish women to foreigners in a primitive condition.⁴¹⁸ More importantly, he argued that it was already proven by “years of struggle” that this issue could not be handled by inculcation. It is crucial here to note that the deputy governor’s characterization of the struggle against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as a struggle of many years refers to a degree of continuation at the local level between the earlier examples of the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1920s and the later ones in the mid-1930s. It also shows that while this struggle had been shaped by propaganda activities until then, some local administrator was convinced that there was need for more effective measures. In fact, at the end of the letter, the deputy governor was asking whether the government had made a decision or was planning to make a decision on the issue. If there was no such decision, he was requesting the permission of the ministry to use the municipal police to prevent women wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* from entering public places such as parks and theaters in Antalya. Women’s gaining of their political rights was a good occasion for issuing such a ban, he suggested.

This letter of the deputy governor of Antalya was *before* the circular of the minister on 17 December 1934, urging the governors not to use the police force and to use propaganda and inculcation only. It was in fact one of the reasons for the minister’s circular. On the same day he issued a circular to all governors and inspectors general on the issue, the minister also replied to the letter of the governor of Antalya separately:

It is not appropriate to prevent women wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* from entering any place, from walking here and there by using the municipal police forces. One should attain this goal only through well-

However, it is highly likely that this was a mistake and it should be 17.12.1934, since in the reply letter of the ministry, the date of the letter by the deputy governor appears as 17 December. It is also logical that the ministry immediately replied to the letter of the deputy governor rather than waiting for a period of one month. See From the Minister of Interior to the Province of Antalya, TNPA 13216-7/1, 17 December 1934.

⁴¹⁸ It is interesting to note that the main concern of the deputy governor about the issue of veiling was the kind of image it represented in the eyes of the foreigners. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, this was in fact a very widespread concern in public discussions throughout the anti-veiling campaigns.

administered inculcation. Therefore, it is also necessary to be content with propaganda in this matter.⁴¹⁹

Showing the determined will of a local administrator to initiate a forceful campaign, the letter of the deputy governor of Antalya also points to the tendency of some of the local actors to solve the issue by taking stronger measures. Despite the warnings of the minister, this tendency continued to guide the actions of some local administrators. This was partly because the circular sent from the Ministry of the Interior was clear about regime's position regarding the use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, but unclear about how to fight them apart from propaganda and state officials' vanguard role. Once these efforts did not work or were found ineffective or insufficient, some local administrators saw themselves in a position to devise a stronger framework of action and could easily go beyond propaganda activities. The case of the province of Ordu is another good example reflecting such tendencies by local administrators.

In Ordu, the fight against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had begun in the 1920s.⁴²⁰ However, these earlier attempts were ineffective and the issue reemerged as a public concern in the province in the occasion of women's acquiring of their political rights in 1934.⁴²¹ As it is understood from a number of documents, there were efforts, including a municipal ban, to eliminate the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the province during the course of 1935.⁴²² These efforts, it seems, also proved unsuccessful, since the governor of Ordu informed the Ministry of Interior on 5 March 1937 that he had banned the *peçe*, the *çarşaf*, and the *peştamal* in Ordu as of 23 April 1937.⁴²³ He indicated in his letter to the ministry that previous decisions and measures taken by some institutions in the province over the years had not been applied effectively. Thus, he, as the governor of the province, had felt the necessity to issue a declaration banning these veils:

⁴¹⁹ From the Minister of Interior to the Province of Antalya, TNPA 13216-7/1, 17 December 1934.

⁴²⁰ See Chapter 2. See also Çapa, 1996; Yakut, 2002.

⁴²¹ See "Türk Kadınığının Kıvancı," *Yeni Asır*, 9 Aralık 1934.

⁴²² The Ministry of Interior received 3 anonymous letters complaining from these efforts in July 1935. See, From the Minister of Interior to the Deputy Governor of Ordu, TNPA 13216-7/1, 29 July 1935.

⁴²³ Copy of the letter of the Governor of Ordu to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 5 March 1937.

In a nation like ours that had taken its place among the advanced nations of the world, it is a national and civic duty for every citizen to acknowledge the civilized rights deserved by women, who had acquired an advanced status and had proved their political capacity. It has been possible for some time [in Ordu] to encounter the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, which certainly do not fit the women of an advanced and civilized nation. In addition, it has also been seen that scarves and umbrellas have been used in unnecessary occasions. Especially the hamam *peştemals* reveal a very ugly scene. The achievements of our generation today are thanks to the loyalty and obedience to the principles, to the regime; and the civilized Turkish regime does not favor such ugly and weird clothes. Every citizen should know well that those who do not follow the revolution, the regime, would be considered as inclined to reactionarism (*irticaa meyyal*); they would be perceived as impaired by this horrible will and tendency (*bu çirkin arzuve temayül*). Those men who use their civilized rights perfectly should respect the civilized rights of their wives; it is a national and legal duty and obligation for them to constrain their wives to follow these [civilized rights/principles] (*riayete icbar eylemeleri*).⁴²⁴

In the declaration, it was also announced that the names and addresses of those who did not abide by the decision would be registered by the municipal police and the police officers in the province capital and district capitals, and by the village governors and members of the council of elders in the villages. These names would be handed over to the highest state authority in every administrative unit and they would be fined, from 5 liras to 25 liras, based on the Law on the Provincial Administration. In addition, petitions of those women who wear these veils would not be issued in the public offices and courts, and the officials who work at these state offices should report such cases to the relevant authority. The declaration also announced that not only the workers themselves but also the owners of the factories and companies would be held responsible from the clothing of the women workers. Since the state offices were a symbol of civilization, the declaration also reminded the state officials to be sensitive regarding the clothing of their wives and related women.

The declaration of the governor of Ordu is one of the most comprehensive declarations in the struggle against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. From the workers at the factories to women in the villages, the governor had attempted at a very ambitious plan of action in the unveiling issue. Particularly

⁴²⁴ Copy of the Declaration on the *Peçe*, the *Çarşaf* and the *Peştamal* ban by the Governor of Ordu, TNPA 13216-7/1, 5 March 1937.

significant was the direct link he established between the wearing of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and its being “reactionary, believing that the use of these veils was a direct form of opposition to the regime. He was probably very proud of this comprehensive plan of action, and informed the Ministry of Interior with the hope of demonstrating his devotion to the principles of the regime as a governor. On the 28 April 1937, five days after the ban on the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal* was put into practice in Ordu, the governor informed the ministry of the application process and the immediate results.⁴²⁵ In his letter, he reported that the ban had been put into effect under the close control of the municipal police, supported by the police and the gendarmerie forces. The ban, he noted, “had been applied with complete success;” there remained no trace of the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* or the *peştamal* in Ordu, and women, including all district capitals and villages of the province, had removed these uncivilized clothes.⁴²⁶

Having received this last letter reporting the results of the ban, the ministry realized that they did not receive the first letter to which the declaration of the governor of Ordu was attached. The ministry had asked the governor to send a copy of the declaration where he explained the content of the ban.⁴²⁷ This shows how closely the center wanted to control the process and know about the details of the anti-veiling campaigns. Having read the copy of the declaration, the Minister of Interior felt the necessity to warn the governor regarding its content. He reminded the governor of the earlier circulars of ministry, urging the local administrators to act responsibly and carefully on the issue of unveiling, and warned him that he had no right to enforce a punishment based on the law mentioned in his declaration, the Law on the Provincial Administration:

I) Your declaration on the ban on the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal* has been analyzed. It is not right to issue a punishment based on the Law on the Provincial Administration and not to process the petitions of women who come to the state offices and courts wearing the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal*, as you announced in your declaration. It has been clearly ordered by a circular no. 3613 dated 11.8.1934 and by a letter directly sent to the governors through the General Police

⁴²⁵ Correspondence from the Governor of Ordu, TNPA 13216-7/1, 28 April 1937.

⁴²⁶ At the end of his letter, the governor also noted that despite the success of the application process of the ban in Ordu, some people who were coming from Ankara were doing propaganda/indoctrination (*telkinat*) which could result in a negative way. What the governor meant by this is unclear and could not be traced in the following correspondence.

⁴²⁷ From the Minister of Interior to the Governorship of Ordu, TNPA 13216-7/1, no date.

Headquarters dated 22.7.1935 that the issue of the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal* was mainly left to the good taste and manners of our women, that it should not be dealt by issuing decisions and orders, that it is necessary to act very carefully on this important and sensitive issue, and that the targeted goals should be achieved through encouragement, inculcation and propaganda. It has been also noted that the families of the state officials should lead the way on this issue through encouragement and propaganda.

II) In order to apply the punitive measures in the article 68 of the Law on the Provincial Administration, it is necessary that your order is based on law; however there is no law that mentions a ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, explicitly or implicitly. Since under a republican administration, every order and declaration should be based on law, and since the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* are not banned by a law, it is completely against the spirit and aim of the law to issue a punishment to those who wear these veils based on the Law on the Provincial Administration.

III) The second article of your declaration is also against the law. Because both the courts and other official departments are obliged to process the appeals of all citizens, regardless of their clothing. However, they can ask those women whose faces are covered to open their faces in order to identify them. But they cannot refuse to issue the petitions of women because they come to the offices wearing the *çarşaf* or the *peştamal*. If they do such an unlawful act, they face an administrative investigation based on regulations.

IV) Because of the reasons explained above, I ask that the punitive measures mentioned in the declaration should not be applied, and this task should be realized in a natural way, through measures suitable to local circumstances and through encouragement and propaganda.⁴²⁸

This harsh letter by the Minister of Interior clearly shows that Ankara was still very hesitant about directly intervening in women's veiling through bans and orders in May 1937. Minister Şükrü Kaya had felt the necessity to underline in his letter, over and over again, that the act of the governor was unlawful. His emphasis on the republican character of the regime and the duty of all state offices to process the requests of the citizens regardless of their dress is particularly remarkable. The Minister could allow leeway for the right to remove women's *peçe* in state offices where there was a need to identify them, but rejected any measure that would ignore women's appeals on the

⁴²⁸ Copy of the letter of the Minister of Interior to the Province of Ordu dated 14.5.1937, TNPA 13216-7/1, 18 June 1937.

basis of their use of the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal*. Most importantly, perhaps, was the reminder that there was no law banning these veils, and thus the governors had no right to issue a punishment based on the Law on the Provincial Administration or any other law.

On the other hand, Ankara certainly knew that there were decisions and orders issued by city councils in other provinces and district capitals, and as far as it can be traced in official documents, it had shown no such forceful opposition against such decisions as it did against the declaration of the governor of Ordu. It seems that to issue a decision as part of the municipal bans based on the legal capacity of the municipalities to maintain order and attain urban development was acceptable or tolerable for Ankara, while an anti-veiling campaigns as ambitious and comprehensive as the one organized in Ordu was not. It is also clear that even if a municipal decision or a ban was declared by a certain city council, Ankara was still reluctant to apply that decision or ban by issuing fines, and was certainly more alert if such decisions were put into practice by the local administrators by using the municipal police or the gendarmerie. In fact, all documents show that Ankara consistently warned the local authorities against the use of force in the unveiling issue. The insistence of the interior minister to stick to encouragement, inculcation, and propaganda should be seen in the light of these concerns. This insistence, however, was vague regarding what the local authorities should understand from “encouragement” or “inculcation” and what measures or tactics should be used to make them a reality. In other words, the local administrators were left alone with the knowledge that, on the one hand, this “task of unveiling” should be realized, but on the other hand, it was not clear how this would be done. The advice of the Minister of Interior to the Governor of Ordu that it should happen “naturally” and through “measures suitable to local circumstances” is emblematic of the attitude of Ankara; the minister had given this advice without hinting at what these measures might be.

In fact, even after the circular of the minister and contrary to his order, some local authorities did use the municipal police to implement the decision to impose a ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. In a few instances, such as in Denizli and Bursa, women who continued to wear the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had to pay fines for not obeying the municipal regulations.⁴²⁹ In some of the

⁴²⁹ Hakkı Uyar, “Tek Parti Döneminde Denizli’de Siyasal Hayat,” in *Uluslararası Denizli ve Çevresi Tarih ve Kültür Sempozyumu: Bildiriler 1*, Ayfer Özçelik et al. (eds.), Denizli: Pamukkale Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Yayınları, 2006, pp. 561-579. Uyar mentions the names of ten women who were fined in November and December 1935. We do not know precisely, however, how many women were fined in the province of Denizli in

notices published in local newspapers concerning the bans, women were warned of the possibility of municipal police intervention in cases of noncompliance.⁴³⁰ In Bergama, a district of the province of Izmir, the city council announced that not only women who did not comply with the decision, but also shop keepers who employed women wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and persons who harassed women wearing “national” attire (national meaning “modern,” unveiled), would be fined.⁴³¹ In some cities, decisions of the city councils to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were put into practice by physically removing women’s veils in the streets by the police or soldiers and by charging the police to patrol in the main streets, checking women’s compliance.⁴³²

There were some among the local elites who tried to complain to the authorities in Ankara about the way the anti-veiling campaign was implemented in their cities. On 30 July 1935, the deputy governor of the province of Kastamonu sent a letter to the Minister of Interior, informing him about the anti-veiling campaign.⁴³³ The deputy governor ensured the ministry that the local authorities had paid the utmost attention to the removal of the uncivilized clothes like the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and at the last meeting of the city council, it was unanimously decided that these veils should be eliminated in the province. He also noted that the decision was immediately put into practice and the police forces were prepared and acting very carefully; the deputy governor was certain that this ugly tradition would fade away in a very short period of time. Almost a month later, the ministry received another letter from a certain state official, the second commissioner Tahsin, through the General Directorate of Security, complaining that in Tosya, a district of the province of Kastamonu, the gendarmerie had forcefully removed some women’s *peçe* and *çarşaf* in the streets after the decision of the district municipal council.⁴³⁴ It was also stated in the complaint letter of the official

total. A news report in a Bursa newspaper mentions that more than a hundred women were fined in a few months by the city council. See “Çarşafılar Kalkıyor,” *Hakkın Sesi*, 10 October 1935.

⁴³⁰ For an example from Trabzon, see “Çarşafların yasağı hakkında Belediye Riyasetinden,” *Halk*, 30 April 1936.

⁴³¹ “Bergama’da Çarşaf, Peçe ve Kıvraklar Kaldırılıyor,” *Anadolu*, 6 December 1934.

⁴³² For example, in Aydın, such actions by the police were reported in a complaint letter. See the telegraph by Dokumacı Ahmet Şevki to president Atatürk, TNPA 13216-7/1, 16 August 1935.

⁴³³ From the deputy governor of Kastamonu to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 30 July 1935.

⁴³⁴ From second commissioner Tahsin to the General Directorate of Security, TNPA 13216-7/1, 21 August 1935.

that because of this, people of the district were offended. Having received this complaint, the Ministry of Interior asked both the governor of Kastamonu and the General Directorate of Gendarmerie to report on the issue.⁴³⁵ The governor of Kastamonu replied by assuring the minister that the decision of the municipality of Tosya had been put into practice with the help of the state officials and enlightened people of the town, and that no action by the municipal police was needed and no complaint had been received. The city council of Tosya, the governor added, had made this general decision regarding the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* based on the circular of the ministry on 22 July 1935. According to the governor, only some prostitutes who are in any way under the control of the municipal police and who continued to wear the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were called to the police station and warned to not to use these uncivilized clothes; no honorable woman was forced by the gendarmerie.⁴³⁶

Such cases imply that Ankara was indeed aware of these actions of the local authorities, and tried to limit and reduce them, but could not get them fully under control. This may hint at the limited capacity of the regime to coordinate the campaigns. It may also suggest that, particularly in cases like the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s, where policy guidelines from the center were loose and ambiguous, disagreements both among the elite in Ankara as well as between Ankara and the provinces tended to come to surface and thus created an ambiguous situation in terms of how to turn a reform ideal into reality. Because of this ambiguity, some local administrators had difficulty trying to promote unveiling while balancing the concerns mentioned by Ankara and the demands stemming from the local environment. The governor of Sinop, for example, asked for the guidance of the Minister of Interior since some members of the local RPP branch and the municipal council of Sinop were insisting on a council decision to ban the *çarşaf*, while the governor was concerned that this would be against the circulars coming from Ankara:

⁴³⁵ From the Ministry of Interior to the Governorship of Kastamonu, TNPA 13216-7/1, 14 September 1935; To the General Directorate of Gendarmerie, TNPA 13216-7/1, 24 September 1935. For another example of a complaint letter, sent from Ödemiş, a district of the province of İzmir, reporting the mistreatment of those women who continued to wear the *çarşaf* by the gendarmerie in 1937. It is also stated in the letter that in Tire, another district center close to Ödemiş, soldiers were tearing and throwing away women's headscarves (*yazma*) that were "no bigger than the palm of your hand." See Yılmaz, 2006, p. 78.

⁴³⁶ From the Governor of Kastamonu to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 17 October 1935.

Having learned from newspapers that in many provinces the *çarşaf* was removed and overcoats were adopted instead, we have received proposals from the local party branch and the municipality that the General Provincial Council should also issue a decision here in order for the *çarşaf* be removed and overcoats be adopted by the public. Based on the circular of the high authority of the ministry, we have been trying to handle this issue through encouragement, inculcation and propaganda instead of issuing decisions and orders, to realize it as a progress emerging out of our women's own willingness; we have not abstained from working towards creating the opportunities for our women to adopt the style and form of clothing that women in big cities had already generally accepted. Although we have achieved some results, the *çarşaf* has not been removed because of the impact of old traditions, and those local women who had come to the municipality wearing overcoats during the last elections have again begun wearing the *çarşaf*. Thus, some [members of the local party branch and the municipal council] are claiming that this issue should be handled by issuing a decision and making the removal of the *çarşaf* compulsory, following the example of the decision the Provincial Council had issued several years ago for the removal of the *peçe*. I am in need of and ready for your guidance regarding the situation and for the meeting of the Provincial Council.⁴³⁷

What seems clear is that the lack of definite guidelines from the central authority on how to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* significantly increased the space of action for the local elite. They were in a position to decide the mechanisms through which people would be mobilized, the methods through which they would be "convinced" or "inculcated," or the social occasions where new forms of dress and gender relations would be promoted. For example, the governor of Maraş organized a meeting for forty-three male state officials from the province of Maraş and nearby provinces whose wives were using the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*.⁴³⁸ He "convinced" these state officials at the meeting that they would make their wives remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and thus be good examples for the rest of the community. Ten days later, he organized a tea and dancing party at the People's House where forty-one of these male state officials participated with their wives having removed

⁴³⁷ From the Governor of Sinop to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 4 March 1935. We lack the information as to the reply of the ministry. However, the city council of Sinop banned the *çarşaf* in September 1935.

⁴³⁸ From the governor of Maraş to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 28 October 1935.

their veils and dressed in “civilized” clothing.⁴³⁹ The news that “native officials” (*yerli memurlar*) of Maraş had kept their promise to the governor and attended the tea party with their unveiled wives even made it to the national newspapers.⁴⁴⁰ As the case of Maraş shows, minor state officials who were locals of the cities in which they were living and working were particularly under pressure from the provincial administrators. They were among the first people who were expected to support the anti-veiling campaigns.

In addition, the members of the city councils, local party branches and People’s Houses were organized to support unveiling. In Antalya, for example, the mobilization to fight against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had in fact been accelerated before the letter of the deputy governor of the city to the interior ministry, and predominantly by the involvement of the local party and People’s House elite. The party branch had organized a tea party on 13 September 1934, specifically to “encourage women to engage in social activities.”⁴⁴¹ At the tea party, the head of the party branch, Şerafettin Bey, gave a speech that explained the duties of the “enlightened” women of Antalya, one of which was to eliminate the “*peçe* and *çarşaf* mentality” symbolizing “backward womanhood” and to encourage and spread civilized clothing.⁴⁴² This first initiative was followed by a meeting at the Antalya People’s House.⁴⁴³ The aim of the meeting was to discuss the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* issue. Three days later, the formation of a committee to fight the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* by the women members of the Antalya People’s House themselves was announced in an Izmir newspaper, with the comment that this fight was seen as necessary since women had to work hand-in-hand with men for the good of the nation.⁴⁴⁴ In Siirt, after the decision of state officials to remove the *peçe*, women who removed their *peçe* were invited, along with

⁴³⁹ Two of the officials who participated the earlier meeting could not come to the party because of family reasons. From the governor of Maraş to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 7 November 1935.

⁴⁴⁰ See “Maraşta çarşaf ve peçe kalkıyor,” *Cumhuriyet*, 9 November 1935.

⁴⁴¹ “Bu akşamki çay,” *Antalya*, 13 September 1934.

⁴⁴² “Fırkamızın çay gecesi,” *Antalya*, 20 September 1934.

⁴⁴³ “Halkevinde dün akşamki toplantı,” *Antalya*, 20 December 1934.

⁴⁴⁴ See “Antalyada Çarşaf ve Peçelerle Mücadele Başladı,” *YeniAsır*, 23 December 1934; “Antalyada kafesler ve çarşaf lar yasak edildi,” *YeniAsır*, 14 February 1935. The city council of Antalya banned the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *kafes* on the 12th of February, 1935. See “Kent Kurultayının Bir Kararı,” *Antalya*, 16 February 1935. According to the decision, all *kafes* had to be removed by the end of February, while for the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, women had time until the end of April. “Antalya Belediyesi de Peçe, Çarşaf ların kaldırılmasına karar verdi,” *Halk*, 14 February 1935.

their husbands, to a special movie screening organized by the People's House. The way found in Çankırı to create a mixed-gender environment in the province where women could participate without the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was to organize a New Year's celebration at the People's House, to which members of the House would all come with their wives and daughters who had removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf*.⁴⁴⁵ In Kayseri, as part of the "war against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*," a tea party would be hosted by the mayor, Nazmi Toker, where the members of the city council would participate with their wives.⁴⁴⁶ In other cities as well, activities that were associated with "modern" social life and expected to increase women's participation in public life begun to be organized more often.⁴⁴⁷

Local elites also played a leading role in organizing efforts to help women to adapt to the new dress codes. In some cities, local institutions and associations, such as the local branches of the Red Crescent, provided poor families with overcoats.⁴⁴⁸ In Trabzon, a special committee was formed with the collaboration of the People's House, the municipality, the Red Crescent, the RPP, and the Chamber of Commerce for the same purpose.⁴⁴⁹ In Maraş, the People's House distributed a hundred and fifty overcoats to poor

⁴⁴⁵ "Çankırıda Peçe Çarşafların Atılması Kararlaştırıldı," *Yeni Asır*, 1 January 1935. The governor of Çankırı was reporting in November 1935 that thanks to the decision of the municipal council, there remained no problem called the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* problem in Çankırı and all women had happily adopted "civilized" clothes. From the governor of Çankırı to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 4 November 1935. However, four years later, the same governor would complain about conservatism and religious fanaticism for the inability of most of women of Çankırı to adopt modern clothing, except for the families of state officials. See Metinsoy, 2014. It is not clear, however, whether the governor meant the survival of the *çarşaf* as the main form of outdoor clothing or women's covering of their head.

⁴⁴⁶ "Kayseride soysallık savaşı," *Cumhuriyet*, 3 December 1934. In Kayseri, the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would be banned in the entire province of Kayseri in September 1935. See *Cumhuriyet*, 16 September 1935. See also Sahir Üzel, "Yüzler açılıp, çarlar çıkarılırken," *Kayseri*, 9 September 1935, quoted in Lamprou, 2009, p. 106.

⁴⁴⁷ For example, in the province of Trabzon, the People's House decided to organize a tea party every two weeks starting from the beginning of December, 1934. See "Çaylı Dans," *Halk*, 10 December 1934. At the end of the first month, the newspaper was reporting that the popularity of the tea parties at the People's House was growing in Trabzon. See "Halkevinin çaylı dansları," *Halk*, 31 December 1934. The members of the Trabzon sport clubs also decided to organize a special night where all members would attend with their family members. See "Erginler yurdunda," *Halk*, 19 March 1936.

⁴⁴⁸ See "Kızılay fakirlere 50 manto dağıttı," *Halk*, 30 April 1936; "Kızılay bugün 150 manto daha dağıtıyor," *Halk*, 4 May 1936; "Kızılay mantoları dağıttı," *Halk*, 11 May 1936. See also PMRA 490.01/17.88.1.

⁴⁴⁹ See "Halkeviçok fakir ailelere Manto yaptıracak," *Halk*, 27 February 1936. See also "C.H. Partisi 100 Manto dağıtacak," *Halk*, 11 May 1936; "Bugün 119 Manto daha dağıtılacak," *Halk*, 1 June 1936.

women.⁴⁵⁰ In Antalya, a similar committee was established under the authority of the provincial council to help those women in need.⁴⁵¹ The committee helped women convert their *çarşaf* into an overcoat, and if this was not possible because of the fabric of the *çarşaf*, to obtain a new one. The head of the committee was the wife of the governor of the city and she led the efforts every day at the party office, where the committee worked. The committee also tried to collect money from charitable donors to help poor women and to support the sewing expenses. In Akşehir, a district of the province of Konya, the tailors were assiduously sewing overcoats while the party inspector visited the city at the peak of the mobilization for the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*.⁴⁵² Similarly, in Soma, a district in the province of Manisa, all tailors were sewing overcoats day and night after the city council banned the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal*.⁴⁵³

In the relatively wide space of action they enjoyed on the issue of anti-veiling campaigns, some local elites tended to follow a more gradual strategy, while trying to convince the center that they had taken all the necessary measures to promote unveiling. For instance, in Çorum, the *peçe* was banned by a municipal decision. In order to remove the *çarşaf*, however, a steadier approach was adopted. Like the governor of Maraş, the governor of Çorum had first tried to mobilize the minor officials who were locals of the province, and given them a certain period of preparation to adopt the new dress codes.⁴⁵⁴ At the end of this period, on 15 September 1935, he organized a meeting at the People's House to which all minor officials were invited with their family members, who had now replaced their *çarşaf* with an overcoat.⁴⁵⁵ In the meantime, having carefully observed the reception of this mobilization by the general public, he then invited the leading members of the local party branch and the municipality to a joint meeting. At the meeting, there were some who argued that because of economic reasons, people should be given six months to remove their *çarşaf*. However, others insisted that this task must be handled sooner, and thus due to these pressures, the municipality banned the use of *çarşaf* as of 29 October 1935, Republic Day. The governor also informed the

⁴⁵⁰ Letter from the RPP Maraş Administration to RPP Secretariat General, PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 10 January 1936.

⁴⁵¹ "Kentimizde kadın kılığı işi bütün hızıyla yürüyor," *Antalya*, 2 May 1935.

⁴⁵² See 1935 Report of Adnan Menderes, deputy of Aydın, PMRA 490.1/618.27.1, 2 December 1935.

⁴⁵³ "Somada çarşaf ve peçe kalktı," *Cumhuriyet*, 10 September 1935.

⁴⁵⁴ From the Governor of Çorum to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 20 August 1935.

⁴⁵⁵ From the Governor of Çorum to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 16 September 1935.

ministry that they had not heard from the district capitals yet, but it should be considered as natural that they would follow the provincial capital on the issue of unveiling. Writing to the Minister of Interior on 22 November 1935, a month after the ban on the *çarşaf* was put into practice, the governor reported that because women were under the influence of a long tradition of conservatism and backward mentality, progress would be achieved gradually:

Since the population of the city of Çorum is small, the moral and traditional principles have acquired special and personal importance. This situation has put women under the pressure of *şekilperestlik* [formalism, excessive adherence to outward appearance] and made it difficult for them to act according to their personal thinking and initiatives. Official intervention and action have been considered necessary and appropriate to fight against these social pressures, and to empower free behavior and personal initiative. And as a result of official control and application, the majority of women could remove their *çarşaf*. However, it is not possible to deny that one can encounter older or poor women wearing the *çarşaf* and thus disobeying the ban in some neighborhoods. It is necessary to consider it just a matter of time that these women would also feel the obligation to comply and adopt the new styles. Village women, who have been using the *çarşaf* in the remote parts of the city and in the markets, are now coming to the city center having removed the *çarşaf*. In the districts of the province, the *peçe* has been removed, but an actual success could not be achieved in the removal of the *çarşaf*. It is no doubt that the initiative in the province center would have an impact over the district capitals. The results of the application, however, could result in adoption of weird forms of clothing. The belief in and insistence on the covering of the head have been playing a major role in the emergence of such results. Without a doubt, gossips that emerge because of quick adaptation to the new forms of clothing would slowly lose their impact, and a normal condition would be settled. Because, a repeated application of something would result in the change of manners, and stability would result in the emergence of tradition.⁴⁵⁶

Thus, the governor was in fact preparing the ground for the acceptance of a slower pace of transformation in the province of Çorum, due to poverty and heavily conservative character of the community. Likewise, the governor of Kırklareli also informed the Minister of Interior and the Inspector General of the Trace Region that all state officials and their families had removed their

⁴⁵⁶ From the Governor of Çorum to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 22 November 1935.

peçe and *çarşaf* in the center of the province, but in the district capitals and villages, only a small number of women could begin wearing overcoats because of poverty.⁴⁵⁷ Although their *peçe* was removed, some of them were continuing to wear the *çarşaf* since it was expensive to get an overcoat. Therefore, the governor added, although this job would be closely observed, it would be managed slowly. There was a similar situation in the province of Sivas. As the governor reported, women of Sivas had easily and happily removed the *peçe* by themselves, while the total removal of the *çarşaf* was more difficult and necessitated further efforts.⁴⁵⁸ It would be managed, the governor claimed, in a short period of time.

This tendency to lower the expectations of Ankara and to be content with gradual change might also be related to the fact that the circulars of Ankara were mainly concerned with and insisted on the modernization of the clothing of the state officials and their families. Thus, in their reports to the center, some local administrators emphasized the adoption of “modern clothing” by the state officials and the success they achieved on this matter, without deliberately mentioning the reaction of the general public or any possible impact this change in the clothing of the officials had on the clothing of the ordinary citizens. The governor of Diyarbakır, a predominantly Kurdish province in the Southeast Turkey, would report, for instance, that the wives and close relatives of the state officials were increasingly removing their *peçe* and *çarşaf*, and beginning to adopt civilized clothing, and that they were happily participating in public meetings with their new clothing.⁴⁵⁹ The report of the governor, however, did not include any information regarding the attitude of the rest of the population of Diyarbakır regarding this significant change.

Some local elite, on the other hand, presented a very positive picture; there was in fact a pretty common tendency among the local elites to represent the anti-veiling campaign in their city as a total success and as an effort that found acceptance from the general public, especially from the women of the

⁴⁵⁷ From the Governor of Kırklareli to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 27 September 1935.

⁴⁵⁸ From the Governor of Sivas to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 3 September 1935.

⁴⁵⁹ From the Governor of Diyarbakır to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 23 August 1935. The anti-veiling campaign in Diyarbakır had begun with an initiative of the members of the People’s House in December 1934. News reports then was claiming that this initiative was celebrated by the women of the city. See “D. Bekir Halkevi üyeleri kendi ailelerinin çarşaf ve peçelerini kaldırdılar,” *Halk*, 24 December 1934. It should be noted that the governor was not mentioning such a compliance by ordinary women, and thus the news were probably exaggerating the situation.

city. This positive image regarding the results of the anti-veiling campaigns was reinforced by the local newspapers as well. “The women happily welcomed the decision of the city council” was a very common expression attached to the news reports about the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. Some local newspapers were clearly taking this to extremes and could claim that the total removal of these veils was achieved overnight. On 1 July 1934, a local newspaper, *Yeni Mersin*, reported the beginning of the *çarşaf* ban in Mersin, informing the readers how easily and happily the new ban had been accepted by the people of the city.⁴⁶⁰ Since the *peçe* ban had begun twenty days earlier than the *çarşaf* ban, the newspaper emphasized that not even a single woman had faced investigation because of noncompliance, and almost half of the women had already removed their *çarşaf* right after the decision of the council, without waiting for the ban to be applied. Claiming that the decision to ban the *peçe* and *çarşaf* had originated from a public demand in the city, whose most significant sign was women’s willingness to remove these veils, the newspaper announced July 1st as the “day of liberty for the women of Mersin.” The next day, only one day after the *çarşaf* ban came into effect, *Yeni Mersin* was announcing the total disappearance of the *çarşaf* in Mersin.⁴⁶¹

Likewise, on 2 May 1935, the local newspaper *Antalya* informed its readers that the campaign against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the city of Antalya was continuing with great success, and that women’s willingness to abide by the decision to remove these veils, despite the financial difficulties, deserved to be appreciated.⁴⁶² The report of the party inspector, Adnan Menderes, on Antalya at the end of 1935 in fact confirmed these accounts given by the newspaper. He indicated in his report that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had been removed in the city quite easily, without any reaction or gossip, and that this could be interpreted as a lack of opposition to the revolution.⁴⁶³ One of the few women members of parliament and a deputy of Antalya, Türkân Baştuğ, also reported on 27 November 1935 that the issue of veiling, “which divides the

⁴⁶⁰ “Kadın Umacı Değildir,” *Yeni Mersin*, 1 July 1934.

⁴⁶¹ “Çarşafı kadına rastlanmıyor,” *Yeni Mersin*, 2 July 1934.

⁴⁶² “Kentimizde kadın kılığı işi bütün hızıyla yürüyor,” *Antalya*, 2 May 1935.

⁴⁶³ 1935 Report of Adnan Menderes, deputy of Aydın, PMRA 490.1/618.27.1, 2 December 1935. For example, in Korkuteli and Serik districts of the province of Antalya, where party inspector Menderes saw no trace of fanaticism or reaction to the revolution, the issue of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was easily settled. He characterized these districts as village-like, small and newly established, and without any tradition of religious reactionaries because of the lack of a *medrese* tradition and the influence of religious hodjas. It seems that in his judgment, these were crucial factors in determining whether the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* could easily be removed in a certain city.

life into two spheres,” had been settled, especially in the city center in Antalya, as well as in some district capitals. She had seen no veiled women in the city center, and women were living a normal life together with men in the public sphere.⁴⁶⁴

Such reports by the party inspectors and deputies indicate the state of the anti-veiling campaigns and the attitudes of local elites; thus, the regime had certain means to monitor what was going on at the local level. However, the inspectors were not specifically asked to report on the issue. In other words, we do not see information on the anti-veiling campaigns in all reports. Rather, many of the governors reported to the Minister of Interior after receiving his circular on 22 June 1935, and almost all of them reported a very positive picture. These reports by the province governors shared a very similar language, usually repeating the exact phrases used in the circulars coming from Ankara while referring to the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. In other words, they were responding to Ankara by using Ankara’s own language. Apart from these very similar introductions, the governors were assuring Ankara that the necessary measures were taken, but they would very rarely explain in detail what these measures were. Nor would they give any detailed report about the application process. Moreover, like some local newspapers, some governors also tended to exaggerate the success of the anti-veiling campaign in their provinces. The governor of Afyon, for example, informed the ministry that a week after the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was put into practice, 90% of the women in Afyon, who until then had used only these veils, complied.⁴⁶⁵ The governor of Giresun reported that the *çarşaf* was banned in the city and women were very happy about this decision and they were in full compliance.⁴⁶⁶ The deputy governor of Balıkesir also reported how easily the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was accepted by the people of the province, and in the liberation day celebrations organized in the province capital on 7 September 1935, there was not even a single woman wearing these veils among the thousands who gathered in the streets and squares.⁴⁶⁷ In Çanakkale, the propaganda efforts were successful, as the governor reported; in the province and district capitals, most of the women had begun wearing

⁴⁶⁴ Report of Türkân Baştuğ, deputy of Antalya, PMRA 490.1/618.28.1, 27 November 1935.

⁴⁶⁵ From the Governor of Afyon to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 13 November 1935.

⁴⁶⁶ From the Governor of Giresun to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 15 September 1936.

⁴⁶⁷ From the Deputy Governor of Balıkesir to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 6 September 1935.

overcoats following the example of the families of the state officials, and in the villages, women had made their own overcoats out of the local clothes.⁴⁶⁸ In Kars, “a little signal” by the governorship of the province was enough to achieve a total success; the *çarşaf* was eliminated altogether without creating any room for gossip or discontent (*sızıltı*), meaning that it created no discussion, opposition and appeared as if it was a natural transformation.⁴⁶⁹

Some governors tended to represent this success as a result of their own constant efforts. The governor of Maraş, for example, continuously sent reports to the Ministry of Interior from the mid-1935 onwards, explaining how his efforts ended up achieving a successful and smooth transformation of women’s clothing in a province like Maraş, which had been impeded by entrenched conservatism. On 13 August 1935, the governor informed the ministry that the women of Maraş were very traditional and the first thing that captured his attention when he was appointed to this province was the *çarşaf* and the thick *peçe* women wore.⁴⁷⁰ Five months later, on 3 January 1936, he reported that all women in the province capital had removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf* thanks to the anti-veiling campaign.⁴⁷¹

As mentioned in the previous section, the General Secretary of the RPP had also asked its local branches to report on the situation regarding the anti-veiling campaigns. Like the governors, the local party administrators rarely mentioned any obstacle, problem or hesitation regarding the process, however.⁴⁷² On 5 November 1935, the head of the party branch in Maraş, for example, informed the general secretary that together with the governor of the city, he had explained the necessity of reforming women’s clothing to the members of the city council and they all happily accepted and signed the decision banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and as had been done everywhere in the country, these veils would be removed in Maraş by January 1st.⁴⁷³ Writing on January 10th about the result of the ban, he reported, like the governor of

⁴⁶⁸ From the Governor of Çanakkale to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 21 March 1936. For more examples of letters from the governors that reported an easy and total acceptance of the new dress codes in their provinces, see TNPA 13216-7/1.

⁴⁶⁹ From the Governor of Kars to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 27 April 1936.

⁴⁷⁰ Letter from the Governor of Maraş to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 13 August 1935.

⁴⁷¹ Report of the Governor of Maraş to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 3 January 1936.

⁴⁷² One common complaint that was mentioned in the reports of the local elites was the reaction of the weavers of the *çarşaf* or the *peştamal* that they would lose their job if the decisions to ban these cloths were applied. For more discussion on this, see the next chapter.

⁴⁷³ PMRA 490.01/17.88.1. The city council of Maraş also banned the use of some of the local men’s clothes.

Maraş, that it had been applied successfully and not even a single woman went onto the streets or into the markets of Maraş wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* anymore, and that the *çarşaf* had been replaced by the overcoat.⁴⁷⁴

However, in Maraş, the effect of the anti-veiling campaign was in fact very limited. In 1936, the party inspector reported that even the leading families of the city seemed to be unwilling to abide by the decision to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, linking this attitude to the same attitude they had developed a decade ago against the hat reform:

No reactionary tendency or counter-revolutionary activity is detected. There are people who are cursing their fellow townsmen for blackening the name of their hometown since they were formerly condemned for their opposition to the hat; but there are also people who think that those who were condemned were ignorant and naïve, and that that movement [against the hat] was overplayed. What is certain is that the people are extremely religious (*koyu bir tassup içinde*) and even the wealthy of today acquired their wealth by appearing religious (*mutassıp görünmekle*). As it was the rich, even the members of the administrative board of the party, who were the last people to wear the hat back then, today, they are still the same rich families who do not remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* because of the same concern [for appearing religious].⁴⁷⁵

According to another report written in 1940, in Maraş, apart from two or three local families, women from families that were supposed to be liberal and young-minded were wearing long overcoats to the heels and carrying umbrellas to hide themselves, day and night. There were even women coming from upper class families who were not going out or were visiting the hamam or their neighbors at night only, regardless of how enlightened these families were.⁴⁷⁶ In 1943, the report of the party inspector mentioned the negative image of the only woman member of the local party administration, Nuriye Bülbül, in the eyes of the religious residents of the city, since she was the first woman to remove the *çarşaf* in Maraş and thus played an important role in the anti-veiling campaign.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁴ From RPP Maraş Administration to RPP Secretariat General, PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 10 January 1936.

⁴⁷⁵ 1936 Report of Şevket Ödül, deputy of Kırklareli, PMRA 490.01/686.328.1, 2 November 1936.

⁴⁷⁶ Copy of the Report of Mitat Aydın, deputy of Trabzon, PMRA 490.01/612.125.2, 12 June 1940. It seems that the *çarşaf* was in fact replaced by the overcoat in Maraş, but the length of the overcoat was a concern.

⁴⁷⁷ Copy of the Report of Mitat Aydın, deputy of Trabzon, PMRA 490.01/273.1091.2, 7 May 1943.

As the documents discussed so far reveal, the Ministry of Interior was the main actor in Ankara that tried to control and monitor the anti-veiling campaigns in the provinces. Accordingly, the main addressee of the circulars of the ministry, the governors, seem quite influential in the process. This is also partly because of their high “visibility” in the archives. Governors were of course the representatives of the central authority and they were appointed administrators who were not natives of the provinces they governed. As such, it can be questioned to what extent they can be seen as “local” actors. However, the examples analyzed above reflect that even these appointed “outsiders” were far from composing a monolithic group that simply acted as transmitters of the central policies. Some of them surpassed the limits drawn by the central orders, others pretended that they fully implemented them. Thus, even if they were at the heart of the state structure, governors had a certain capacity to act as local agents in the provinces. A more complex and diverse picture could be seen regarding the role of the local elite once one looks deeper into the local context. Since the anti-veiling campaigns, at least the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, were initiated by the city councils, municipalities appear as important institutions of negotiation and domestication of reforms. Moreover, the members of the local party administration and the People’s Houses could equally play a role, depending on the way the anti-veiling campaign was organized in a given locality. The city councils, in particular, could host quite diverse actors: natives and non-natives, professionals and merchants, hard liner Kemalists and more hesitant moderates or even conservatives. It was generally the councils where deliberate opposition or unwillingness of some local elites regarding the anti-veiling campaigns surfaced most. There was a struggle within the local elite in some cities on the proper way to approach the unveiling issue.

One main conflict that arose in a number of city councils was over issuing an outright ban, since some members openly resisted this idea. In Alanya, for example, a district of the province of Antalya, there had been a debate among the members of the municipal council on whether the municipality should issue a decision on the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. As the party inspector Adnan Menderes reports, some members of the council rejected the idea by arguing that the municipality should not intervene in this issue and that they had no right to interfere with the feelings of the people.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁸ 1935 Report of the Party Inspector Adnan Menderes, PMRA 490.1/618.27.1, 2 December 1935. The inspection period was three months, August, September and October 1935, during

As a result, the decision of the municipal council of Alanya only mentioned that “the municipality would encourage the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*,” a decision the inspector characterized as vague and meaningless.⁴⁷⁹ A member of the council, Kâmil Kemal, who was also a member of the party administration in Alanya, opposed this decision of the council and attached an annotation. The district governor of Alanya had also intervened in the situation to revise the decision. Although sufficient information concerning the result of this attempt is lacking, it seems that pro-regime members of the city councils played an active role in trying to achieve a strong decision on the issue in council meetings. In cases where they were ineffective or there was reluctance to issue a decision, governors or local party administrators were involved in convincing the council members accordingly. Similarly, in Mersin, some people opposed the idea of banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, arguing that it would be very difficult to apply such a ban and that this issue should be handled by an evolutionary approach.⁴⁸⁰

In some cases, the local elite also debated whether the city councils had indeed the right to make a decision to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. The city council of Bergama settled on forming a committee to investigate the municipal law. Having come to the conclusion that the municipalities had the legal capacity to issue such bans, the city council of Bergama banned the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* eventually.⁴⁸¹ It seems that a similar debate had arisen in the Ereğli district of the province of Konya. In Ereğli, the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were removed by the municipality in April 1935. In August, a Konya newspaper reported that all women in the distinct capital had replaced their *çarşaf* with an overcoat.⁴⁸² The party inspector had visited Ereğli around the same time. In his report in December 1935, while he noted that he did not see any visible opposition to the party in general, he had heard that there were talks in the town, here and there, on whether the municipality had indeed the right to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*.⁴⁸³

which Menderes visited two provinces, Antalya and Konya, and all district capitals in these provinces.

⁴⁷⁹ Because of this reluctance of the city council (in addition to other factors) the inspector reported that there were regressive-minded (*geri kafalı*) people in Alanya, and that the mayor was particularly so with his old and agha mentality (*eski ve ağa kafalı*). See Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ “Mersin’in başardığı iki mühim iş,” *Yeni Mersin*, 18 July 1934.

⁴⁸¹ See “Bergama’da Çarşaf, Peçe ve Kıvraklar Kaldırılıyor,” *Anadolu*, 6 December 1934.

⁴⁸² “İlçe ve şehir haberleri,” *Babalık*, 10 August 1935.

⁴⁸³ 1935 Report of the Party Inspector Adnan Menderes, PMRA 490.1/618.27.1, 2 December 1935.

In the Hadim district of the province of Konya, the opposition came from within the RPP, which is interesting in itself to see that even in the party structure opposing views could exist. The party inspector's report mentioned that the local party president in Hadim had complained about the difficulties he faced in trying to get a decision on the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* because of the opposition coming from the "fanatically-minded" (*sofîta kafalî*) members of the local party administration.⁴⁸⁴ These people who were opponents of unveiling were seemingly supportive of the decision, but when it came to the implementation of the anti-veiling campaign, they would most probably be unwilling to encourage the people of Hadim accordingly and to promote the regime ideals. This example confirms Lamprou's emphasis that as one moves downwards from provincial to sub-provincial level, composition of the party cadres overlaps more with the general social structure; thus it became more probable to see even within the party structure those who could oppose the regime policies or who were at least unwilling to promote them actively.⁴⁸⁵

Another interesting example that shows how the anti-veiling campaigns were in fact shaped by the power struggles among the local elites who occupied different institutions is the case of Seyitgazi, a district of the province of Eskişehir. In Seyitgazi, the municipality had banned the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, but this decision created discontent in the city. As the governor of Eskişehir reported to the Ministry of Interior, the emerging negative propaganda about the municipal ban and this "overcoat incident" did not only include ordinary people, but also the elites, people who were holding a position in the local politics.⁴⁸⁶ Some neighborhood delegates (*mahalle mümessilleri*) wanted to prepare a report requesting that the application of the ban be postponed. Moreover, some members of the city council had held a secret meeting in a certain house, discussing the possibility of organizing a vote of no confidence for the mayor. Ahmet Akalın, a member of the council, had written a notice and had informed the district governorship against

⁴⁸⁴ 1935 Report of the Party Inspector Adnan Menderes, PMRA 490.1/618.27.1, 2 December 1935.

⁴⁸⁵ In his analysis of the party cadres in Kayseri and Balıkesir, Lamprou underlines that the composition of the local party branches differentiates substantially between the upper levels of party structure and lower ones. For example, when party administrative committees are compared in the level of province centers to smaller units, the number of educated professionals decreases while that of farmers, and merchants, and of illiterates or primary school graduates increases. See Lamprou, 2009, p. 68-71.

⁴⁸⁶ Letter from the Governor of Eskişehir to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 7 February 1936.

Mehmet Özdemir, with whom he was at odds. Akalın accused Özdemir of initiating these secret activities. Based on this notice and the secret inspection of the police (*kaza zabıtası*), an investigation was begun. What is very important is that Mehmet Özdemir was not only a member of the city council, but also the president of the Seyitgazi branch of the RPP. In addition, the head of the local branch of the Airplane Association, Mustafa Özdemir, who was probably from the same family, was also among those who were accused. Mehmet Özdemir's brother, a grocer named Veli, was also on the list. Thus, if the accusations were correct, some very important members of the local elite, who were natives of the city, including the head of the local party branch, were part of the "movement" against the anti-veiling campaigns. Even if they were not against it ideologically, they were at least using the social discontent that emerged because of the anti-veiling campaign in the city as an opportunity to challenge the mayor by a vote of no confidence. Although the governor informed the ministry that no "movement" was detected as a result of the secret investigation, a list of thirteen people, including the head of the RPP branch and his relatives, was turned over to the court for further investigation.⁴⁸⁷

Some members of the local elite would inform Ankara if there was reluctance in the application of the anti-veiling campaign in their provinces. They considered this as an opportunity to prove their loyalty to the regime. On 1 June 1936, an official from the 4th Bureau of the Directorate of the Police in Gaziantep, a certain Mr. Yazıcıoğlu, made it known that he was working in his position "with a feeling of pride and with full effort," and he wanted, respectfully, to forward to the General Director of the Police certain information he had received. He reported that there had been talk among the people of the province of Gaziantep about the attitude of the governor regarding the issue of unveiling.⁴⁸⁸ According to the letter of the official, the governor had initially wanted to act firmly and forcefully for the removal of the *çarşaf*, but retreated from this initial attitude due to the threatening letters he had received. The governor, according to the official, had left the people free to make up their own mind on this matter. Having received this letter, the Minister of Interior wrote directly to the governor of Gaziantep, asking whether this information was true and whether he had given the people the

⁴⁸⁷ The governor indicates that he would inform the ministry about the outcome of the trial. Unfortunately, there is no further correspondence in the file regarding the end result of the trial.

⁴⁸⁸ From Mr. Yazıcıoğlu to General Director of the Police Şükrü Sökmensüer, TNPA 13216-7/1, 1 June 1936.

right to decide for themselves. The Minister also demanded an urgent report from the governor about the measures and efforts that were put into practice on this matter in his province.⁴⁸⁹

The letter of the ministry to the governor of Gaziantep shows that the attitude of the central elite in Ankara changed considerably if they sensed a possibility of opposition or reluctance on the side of the local administrators. In such cases, Ankara preferred to act more assertively, favoring direct involvement mainly through pressuring the governors, or by having the inspectors general intervene in the situation. The case of Gaziantep also shows that the disagreements among the local elite and their rivalries for the approval of the center had an impact on the course of the campaigns in a certain province. The case of Trabzon is perhaps one of the best examples illustrating the tensions between local actors. It clearly shows the ways in which the anti-veiling campaigns were shaped at the local level through the struggles and negotiations of the local elite, and how Ankara intervened in these conflicts and competition if their outcomes were not in line of its expectations and if the results of the tensions risked a backlash.

In Trabzon, the anti-veiling campaign first began with propaganda efforts in the local newspapers from October 1934 onwards, followed by a petition of the members of the youth and sports clubs, led by a youth club, the Trabzon Home for Adolescents (*Erginler Yurdu*), to the city council requesting a ban on the use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in February 1935.⁴⁹⁰ Although the petition of the youth club was welcomed by the mayor and presented to the council for discussion, the first decision of the council was to postpone the discussion until the report of the administrative committee (*idare encümeni*) on the appropriateness of the proposal had been received.⁴⁹¹ At the next meeting of the council, however, the issue could not be discussed since

⁴⁸⁹ From the Minister of Interior to the Governor of Gaziantep, TNPA 13216-7/1, 9 June 1936.

⁴⁹⁰ “Kadın Peçe Çarşaflarının kaldırılması hakkında erginler yurdu belediye meclizine muracaatediyor,” *Halk*, 11 February 1935. There were in fact rumors about this initiative even before February. The local newspaper *Halk* was already reporting in January that the city council would be discussing “very important necessities of civilized life” in its next meeting in February. See “Belediyenin Şubat içtimai,” *Halk*, 24 January 1935. A local newspaper in İzmir was reporting that it was *Trabzon İdman Yurdu*, a local youth and sports club in Trabzon, which submitted the petition to the city council. See “Trabzon Kadınları da Çarşafı Atıyorlar,” *Yeni Asır*, 16 February 1935.

⁴⁹¹ Initially, it was expected that this would not take a long time. According to the local newspaper *Halk*, members of the city council who answered their questions about the proposal were certain that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would be removed by a decision of the council. “Belediye meclisi gençlerin teklifini kabul etti. Bugün mecliste kat’i karar verilecek,” *Halk*, 14 February 1935.

there were not enough members present.⁴⁹² In fact, some members of the city council had opposed the idea by arguing that banning of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would be disgraceful for the city.⁴⁹³ The sports clubs had to give the same petition to the provincial council in April 1935, most probably due to the reluctance of the city council and its tendency to postpone the process.⁴⁹⁴ It seems, however, that this move also did not result as expected, since at the April meeting of the provincial council, the issue of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was not on the agenda.⁴⁹⁵ The opposition in the city council continued for a year and the opposing members were able to postpone the talks at the council meetings several times in order to prevent a decision.⁴⁹⁶ Meanwhile, in his reply to the circular sent by the secretary general of the party in October 1935, the head of the local party branch did not mention the council's opposition and indicated that the *peçe* had disappeared in Trabzon and that to remove the *çarşaf*, of which only a few examples remained, he would consult the governor and they would together take the necessary measures.⁴⁹⁷ In fact, the situation was quite different; the *peçe* had not disappeared and the *çarşaf* was still an issue. During this year, Trabzon newspapers published several articles, commentaries and news reports trying to mobilize the people of the city, especially the women, to support the anti-veiling campaign, to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and to pressure the council to obtain a decision. As mentioned earlier, some newspapers particularly tried to use the discussion on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* at the 4th Congress of the RPP in May in order to pressure the members of the local party branch in Trabzon. The caption of the local newspaper *Halk* on the congress was emblematic of this strategy of forcing the Trabzon party elite to act: "Members of the RPP promised to remove the *çarşaf* and the *peçe*."⁴⁹⁸

The turning point to overcoming the resistance, it seems, was indeed the intervention of the local party administration. In October 1935, *Halk*

⁴⁹² "Peçe ve çarşaf meselesinin konuşulması Nisan toplantısına kaldı," *Halk*, 18 February 1935.

⁴⁹³ "Trabzon Gençliği," *İkbal*, 13 February 1935.

⁴⁹⁴ "Çarşaf ve Peçeler," *Halk*, 18 April 1935.

⁴⁹⁵ "Vilayet genel kurumu çalışmasını biterdi," *Halk*, 22 April 1935.

⁴⁹⁶ "Belediye Meclisi," *Halk*, 4 April 1935; "Belediye Meclisi Dağıldı," *Halk*, 16 May 1935; "Belediye Meclisi," *Halk*, 23 September 1935. *Halk* was claiming that opposing members were the older members of the council. Apparently, the administrative committee that was supposed to prepare a report on the proposal had not indeed received the proposal and thus the council could not begin discussing the issue in its meeting in May as well.

⁴⁹⁷ From the head of the RPP Trabzon Administration to the RPP Secretariat General, PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 4 October 1935.

⁴⁹⁸ "C.H.Parti üyeleri Çarşaf ve Peçelerin kaldırılmasına söz verdiler," *Halk*, 20 May 1935.

reported that the administrative council of Trabzon RPP and the party councils of the districts of the province had held a meeting at the local party office and discussed the measures that needed to be taken to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in Trabzon.⁴⁹⁹ Local newspapers reported that a decision by the city council was expected soon.⁵⁰⁰ Yet, opposing delegates managed to postpone the issue at the October and November meetings as well. In the end, with the pressure coming from the local party administration and the governor, the city council of Trabzon banned the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* on 4 February 1936 with a majority decision, declaring May 4th as the day the ban would go into effect.⁵⁰¹ As reported by a local newspaper, an official message about the banning of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, which was prepared by the local RPP administration (*CHP il yön. Kurul başkanlığı*) and cosigned by the provincial authority (*vilayet makamından tevdi edilen*) was approved to be put on the agenda by the city council.⁵⁰² In fact, the provincial council led by the governor was called for a general meeting on the February 1st, just two days before the beginning of the regular meeting of the city council on the 3rd. Local newspapers were already reporting a week before that a decision to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was expected from these meetings.⁵⁰³ Thus, there was clearly an intervention by the local party branch and the governor in the process. This was how a decision to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* by the city council was secured in Trabzon. In fact, in the public declaration of the ban in the local newspapers, it was mentioned that the decision of the city council had been approved by the governorship.⁵⁰⁴ There are indications that the Trabzon RPP administration also followed the process after the declaration of the ban by the city council. It issued a notice for entire party organization in the province of Trabzon and the People's House regarding the necessary measures that should be taken before the enforcement date of the ban.⁵⁰⁵ It was based on this notice that the People's House administrative council decided to

⁴⁹⁹ "Peçe ve Çarşaf Meselesi," *Halk*, 17 October 1935.

⁵⁰⁰ "Peçe ve Çarşaf Urayca Kaldırılıyor," *Halk*, 22 October 1935.

⁵⁰¹ It is crucial to note that the decision was not unanimous; some members still opposed the decision. For the news indicating the pressure of the local party administration on the city council in Trabzon see "Halkevinde Peçe ve Çarşaf mes'elesi görüşüldü," *Halk*, 26 March 1936. For the case of Trabzon, see also Çapa, 1996; Uyar, 1996.

⁵⁰² "Belediye Meclisi Peçe ve Çarşafın kaldırılmasına karar verdi," *Halk*, 6 February 1936.

⁵⁰³ "Vilayet genel meclisi," *Halk*, 27 January 1936.

⁵⁰⁴ "Peçe ve çarşafın yasağı hakkında sayın halkımıza ilan," *Halk*, 10 February 1936. This announcement was reprinted several times until May.

⁵⁰⁵ "C.H. Partısında," *Halk*, 26 March 1936.

organize a general meeting at the house to which people would participate together with their family members.⁵⁰⁶

However, the tension regarding the anti-veiling campaign in the city probably had its reflection in Ankara since the recently appointed inspector general of the region, Tahsin Uzer, took a firm position in controlling the situation and making sure that the aims of the anti-veiling campaign were achieved. Towards the end of February, he mentioned the issue in a speech he delivered at the Trabzon People's House.⁵⁰⁷ Having stressed that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* could not have a place in a civilized Turkey, Uzer urged the audience to support the attempts of the Trabzon youth to change the dress of Trabzon women into a civilized form so that they could become more effective. For him, this was not a matter of showing the face, but a struggle for women to use their social rights. He had also asked members of the audience to convey this request to their sisters and daughters. Uzer's involvement in the process probably had an impact on other local actors and institutions. In fact, the notice of the local party administration mentioned above was probably a consequence of Uzer's pressure, or least, a result of his influence. As the British Pro-Consul in Trabzon informed the British Embassy in Ankara in March 1936, Tahsin Uzer's main aim since his arrival in the city had in fact been to develop a modern social life in Trabzon, and especially to increase women's participation in the social activities organized and encouraged by the inspector general, and hence to fight against women's seclusion.⁵⁰⁸ The inspector had criticized the failure of the Trabzon municipality to initiate a ban on the wearing of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, regretting that the ban had been delayed until May 4th. Inspector General Uzer also added that if he had been in Trabzon at the time he would not have allowed the delay. Thus, Uzer was pressuring for a more effective and aggressive anti-veiling campaign. The Pro-Consul also noted the plan of the inspector general to arrange an evening party to which only those renowned for their religious fanaticism and their wives would be invited.

It seems, however, that the attitude of the inspector general increased the tension rather than alleviating it. A few weeks later, the British Pro-Consul reported to the embassy in Ankara that the reaction against the anti-veiling

⁵⁰⁶ "Halkevinde peçe ve çarşaf meselesi görüşüldü," *Halk*, 26 March 1936. The meeting was hold on the 6th of April. See "Halkevi aileli bir toplantı yapacak," *Halk*, 6 April 1936.

⁵⁰⁷ "Halkevinde İnkılap konferansları," *Halk*, 24 February 1936. See also "Trabzon Gençliği ve müsbet hamlesi," *Halk*, 19 March 1936.

⁵⁰⁸ Memorandum from British Pro-Consul in Trabzon to British Embassy in Ankara, British Government Foreign Office (hereafter FO) 371/20087, 28 March 1936.

campaign had grown in the city and he was informed that the mayor of Trabzon was receiving anonymous letters containing death threats. The wife of the mayor was attacked and other instances of violence also occurred because of the way the anti-veiling campaign was put into practice:

On April 13th the wife of the President of the Municipality was assaulted and injured in the street by a man who tore her dress and underclothes, calling them immoral. The police are now searching for the culprit who, if found, will, it is stated, be punished in an exemplary manner. It is reported that at Palatane [today's Akçaabat, a district of the province of Trabzon S.A.] a man killed a gendarme who according to the regulations obtaining there had forcibly removed his wife's veil. I understand that great animosity prevails locally against the municipality as a result of the decision regarding women's dress, and especially against the Third Inspector General and his staff who, owing to the conduct of most of them, are considered unfitted to the task of civilizing the region, being commonly referred as "a band of debauchees." I am informed that the recent visit of the Fleet to Trebizond and its surroundings was made with the object of cooling the reactionary feelings of the local population and of reminding them that force was behind the authorities.⁵⁰⁹

The case of Trabzon shows that local elites could be part of the opposition to the anti-veiling campaign, and could present a quite open and strong resistance by using their power, as exemplified by the efforts of some members of the Trabzon city council to block the council meetings. It also shows, however, the state reflexes against such resistance and its channels of pressuring opposing views were also strong. In the case of opposition to the anti-veiling campaign, Ankara and all levels of state administration were involved in the process.⁵¹⁰ However, despite this ideological determination and efforts to control and coordinate the campaigns, "undesirable reactions" were not or could not be avoided, as was advised in the circulars of Ankara. The possibility of such tensions might have concerned many local administrators so that, even though a decision was made to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in some cities, its implementation was carried out rather reluctantly. For example, reporting from the Kadınhanı district of the province

⁵⁰⁹ British consul in Trabzon to British Embassy in Ankara, FO371/20087, 16 April 1936.

⁵¹⁰ There are other examples that reflect an active involvement of inspectors general in the anti-veiling campaigns. The Inspectorship General of Trace was also active in controlling and coordinating the governors in his region. See the letter from the vice deputy inspector general of Trace to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 10 August 1935.

of Konya in the fall of 1935, the party inspector indicated that no action had yet been taken on the issue of *peçe* and *çarşaf* despite the existence of a decision to abolish them.⁵¹¹ Thus, both the efforts leading to an anti-veiling campaign and its implementation were complex processes, which were not and could not be determined by the orders of coming from Ankara. Nor they could be shaped only by a particular group of elite, such as state officials, because they were appointed, more powerful or educated. Their similarities and general characteristics notwithstanding, each anti-veiling campaign in 1930s Turkey was shaped by a complex matrix of actors and dynamics on the ground. The attitude of the local elite, which was a composite group in itself, was definitive.

IV. Conclusion

The study of the local has been largely neglected in the analyses on the single-party period in Turkey. If addressed at all, it has mainly been referred to as the periphery, associated either with the local notables or the peasant “masses,” and considered important to the extent that it could “react” to central politics and to the main reforms and policies of the Kemalist regime formulated and imposed by Ankara. When the elite has been analyzed, the focus has been almost completely on the high political and bureaucratic actors, ignoring the critical role the local elite played in interpreting and implementing those reforms and policies. This chapter has discussed in detail this critical role played by the local elite in the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s. The analysis presented here not only supports the recently flourishing literature, which points to the limits of Ankara’s power in controlling the provinces, but also challenges the image of the central Kemalist elite as a monolithic bloc, always consistent and determined in enforcing radical policies.

The close reading of Ankara’s position on the issue of unveiling shows that it was quite moderate at the beginning and careful not to create an open, general movement, an *inkılap* (revolution), for changing women’s clothing as it had so enthusiastically did in many other issues, such as music or language. In the initial circulars sent to the provinces, the Ministry of Interior was hesitant to push for more action for the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, other than using propaganda, fashioning the state officials as role

⁵¹¹ See 1935 Report of Adnan Menderes, deputy of Aydın, PMRA 490.1/618.27.1, 2 December 1935.

models and “encouraging” women to follow these “modern” examples by creating the suitable occasions and opportunities. Thus, although Ankara, especially the Ministry of Interior and the General Secretary of the party, tried to control what the local administrators were doing and to coordinate the local efforts, this involvement was more complex than imposing a well-formulated and consistent reform agenda. The debate on unveiling at the RPP Congress in 1935, which was discussed in detail above, reveals that there were diverse positions in the party, and although there was an agreement that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were not “civilized” attire, there was no consensus on how they should be removed. Ankara’s role increased gradually, with the tone of the circulars sent by the Ministry of Interior changing into a more determined one. The Ministry of Interior became more involved in the anti-veiling campaigns and pressured provincial administrators in certain provinces where there was resistance or indifference shown by some local actors. However, neither the policy of leaving the issue mainly to the local administrators nor the insistence to stick with the propaganda efforts changed. Attempts of certain local administrators to implement the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* by force were consistently opposed by Ankara; but at the same time, these attempts were not or could not be fully controlled. Lacking detailed and solid policy guidance and encouraged to find their own ways to fight against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, the local elite had considerable space for negotiating, interpreting and domesticating the “orders” coming from Ankara and to shape the anti-veiling campaigns at the local level.

Some local elites envisioned themselves as the agents of change in their provinces, and thus were quite active in shaping the anti-veiling campaigns, supporting propaganda efforts and creating various mechanisms to “convince” people to participate in this change. As the example of Antalya showed, local initiation was there right from the beginning; some local actors, men and women alike, did not wait for orders from Ankara for their initiatives to foster modernization. Some administrators also did not hesitate to opt for stronger measures to make sure that their initiatives were successful despite the fact that those measures were not within the “acceptable” limits set by Ankara. Some, on the other hand, tried to follow a gradual strategy, in order to keep the balance between what they understood as Ankara’s expectations and the realities of the local situation. Thus, as the case of the governors of Çorum shows, some local administrators could settle for a slower pace of change in women’s clothing by playing up the existence of poverty or the relatively high level of conservatism in their province, while at the same

making sure that the minimums indicated in Ankara's circulars, such as the compliance of the state officials, were fulfilled.

As the main addressees of the central government, provincial governors of course were in a significant position vis-à-vis Ankara's efforts in coordinating the campaigns at the local level. However, as the discussion above showed, the anti-veiling campaigns were not in the hands of a few local administrators; they were indeed processes in which many actors and institutions were involved, from members of the city councils to the columnists of the major local newspapers. Many of the anti-veiling campaigns had in fact begun not as initiatives of the governors, but of one or two local institutions, which helped them to appear, at least on the surface, more like the collective efforts of various local elite groups. The fact that almost all the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were issued by the city councils put the municipalities in a critical position, which could be abused by those actors who were more reluctant on the unveiling issue, as in the case of Trabzon. The city councils were generally the place where implicit resistance or deliberate opposition to anti-veiling campaigns appeared the most. In fact, the examples analyzed above show that even some governors or local party members, however ideologically loyal they were assumed to be as local agents of the regime, could be quite hesitant in intervening in women's clothing. Thus, it is difficult to make generalizations, associating certain kinds of local actors with certain attitudes. While it is safe to argue that state-appointed actors seemed to be more willing to support the campaigns and the opposing forces usually came from actors who were locals of the places in question, such divisions were not always clear-cut. "Native" supporters of the campaigns could be equally vocal at the city councils or other local institutions. This is why, this chapter suggested that the concept of elite has to be seen in broader manner; it cannot be reduced to local notables or state-appointed provincial administrators.

Taking this diversity of the attitudes of the local elite into consideration and analyzing them by situating them into their place in the complex matrix of power at the local level is essential to understanding the shaping of each anti-veiling campaign in Turkey of the 1930s. However, it is also essential to keep in mind that the local elites had to operate within the complexities of the local society. In other words, the implementation and outcome of the state policies in the provinces were not solely determined by acts and attitudes of the local elite. In fact, when one particularly looks at the cases where the local elites acted more hesitantly or reluctantly in the anti-

veiling campaigns, it becomes clear that they had to face the opposing local forces on the ground and act accordingly. This was why, for example, some local elite tried to avoid issuing an outright ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, while at the same time covering this “choice” by claiming that their city was already very “modern” or that the people of their city were in fact “conscious” regarding revolutionary ideals and necessities of modern life.⁵¹² In effect, the creative ways ordinary people tried to react to the anti-veiling campaigns not only influenced the attitudes and choices of the local elites, but also the outcomes of the campaigns. Resistance shown by male societal actors also made women’s attitudes all the more important, since it was them, at the end of the day, who would make the choice to remove or keep on their *peçe* and *çarşaf*. It is to these questions of popular resistance and women’s agency we now turn.

⁵¹² Such claims were usually expressed in local newspapers. For example, in Akseki, a district of the province of Antalya, no measure was taken on the issue of *peçe* and *çarşaf* because the guidance that would be given in houses and neighborhoods was considered sufficient given that the level of “awareness” concerning this issue among the people of Akseki was quite high. See “Akseki Mektubu,” *Antalya*, 15 August 1935. For another example from Konya, which explains the lack of local activity on the issue of unveiling by referring to the “social maturity” of the women of the city and their will for progress, see A. Evren, “Konya Kadınlığı Uyanıktır,” *Yeni Asır*, 19 December 1934. See also “Peçe ve Çarşaf,” *Babalık*, 20 December 1934.

Chapter 5

Popular Resistance and Women's Agency

*“Trabzon bayanları, çarşafı atalım
Hürriyete, güneşe, hayata kavuşalım...
...
Bu milletin kalmasın noksan hiç bir tarafı,
Atalım göze batan şu karanlık çarşafı...
Duydum ki Türk kadını onu atmış her yerde,
Bizim de karartmasın yüzümüzü bu perde...”⁵¹³*

I. Diversifying the Local: Multiple Actors, Multiple Voices

The previous chapter underscored the importance of looking at the local in order to understand how the Kemalist regime worked in practice. It discussed at length how the policies of Ankara cannot be analyzed by focusing solely on the acts and discourse of the central elite, as has been the case in the literature. In fact, it demonstrated that even a deeper examination of the orders and circulars sent by high authorities in Ankara does not suffice to understand the form the policies took in the provinces, since the local administrators were not passive receivers of these orders. Moreover, by focusing on the “local elite,” a cluster of actors that comprise the power networks at the local level, Chapter 4 suggested that the local elite was a composite group that cannot be reduced to provincial administrators or local notables. Situated in different institutions and positions at the local context, these elites played a significant role in the shaping of the policies of the regime on the ground, as it was shown in detail in the case of the anti-veiling campaigns. In other words, so far, the discussion has focused on introducing the local into the analysis of Kemalist regime in the 1930s, and particularly, on diversifying the concept of “elite” in two senses: to emphasize the equally critical role the local elite played in the shaping of the policies, and the multiplicity of actors that compose the “elite” at the local level.

⁵¹³ An excerpt from a poem written by a woman, Hayriye Ural, entitled “Çarşafı Atalım” (Let’s Throw off the Çarşaf), which was published in a Trabzon newspaper, *Halk* on 30 March 1936.

However, it is crucial to note that the significance of the local cannot be reduced to the attitude of the local elite and the ways in which they negotiated and domesticated the policies of Ankara either. Just like the central authority was one actor operating within the complexities of the local society, the local elites were also surrounded by the same complexities and had to act *in relation* to the attitudes and reactions of ordinary people. It is only through analyzing these relations at the local level, the dynamics between the central authority, the local elites and the societal forces, that we can understand the shaping of the policies and the extent of social change that has come about as a result of these policies. Thus, the local has to be diversified; the role the non-elite actors and subordinated sectors of the society played should also be analyzed so that the multiplicity of the voices at the local level can be addressed. Moreover, women, who are a much less visible group in the conventional literature than men, deserve special attention. This invisibility cuts across the elite-non-elite divide; women's story is rarely told, and when told, the women are not analyzed as the "agents of the narrative."⁵¹⁴ Hence, any attempt to recover the voices of the local also needs to address this deficiency.

This chapter aims to do this in the case of the anti-veiling campaigns. Its focus is twofold. First, it concentrates on non-elite actors at the local level. It discusses popular reactions and resistance to anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s. It will be argued that, generally speaking, people's choice to mainly follow relatively "secure" strategies of resistance confirms Hobsbawm's analysis that the subordinate classes are rather more interested in "working the system... to their minimum disadvantage."⁵¹⁵ The trouble these strategies of resistance created at the local level, particularly for the local authorities who had to deal with them on the ground, also reveals that such resistance was quite effective.⁵¹⁶ However, it will also be demonstrated that the reactions of ordinary people to the anti-veiling campaigns reflect the diversity of responses to the policies of the state, which included circulating rumors, engaging in negative propaganda and sending anonymous complaint letters. In other

⁵¹⁴ Joan Wallach Scott, "Women in History: The Modern Period," *Past & Present* 101, November 1983, pp. 141-157.

⁵¹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, "Peasant and Politics," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 1(1), 1973, pp. 3-22.

⁵¹⁶ James Scott also suggests that "such kinds of resistance are often the most significant and the most effective over the long run." See Scott, 1985, p. xvi. For an analysis of ordinary people's strategy of "working the system" in the Ottoman/Turkish context, see also Necmi Erdoğan, "Devleti 'İdare Etmek': Maduniyet ve Düzenbazlık," *Toplum ve Bilim* 83, Winter 1999/2000, pp. 8-31.

words, people were involved in acts and expressed attitudes that went beyond passive resistance in their everyday experience; they could attempt to challenge, negotiate, and influence the policies of the state.

Second, the chapter focuses on women and discuss their reactions to the anti-veiling campaigns in a separate section. Since the primary concern of the anti-veiling campaigns was women, it becomes all the more important to analyze their role and influence. My aim here is to highlight women's agency in the anti-veiling campaigns, to emphasis their "visibility" and to show their contribution in the shaping of the process at the local level. In doing so, I also aim to demonstrate the space the anti-veiling campaigns created for various forms of women's involvement in the campaigns, and thus the analysis of their agency should go beyond the dichotomy of passive compliance and resistance. The emphasis is on women's roles as subjects of Kemalist modernization in the provinces, rather than its object, and on their capacity to manipulate, adapt, modify and domesticate the new dress codes in complex ways.

II. Popular Resistance to Anti-Veiling Campaigns

As emphasized in the previous chapter, the state-centered and elite-centered approaches prevail in the literature on early republican Turkey. One important outcome of this dominance has been the failure to analyze ordinary people's responses and reactions to the tremendous changes the Kemalist reforms tried to introduce. The experience of the larger masses and their participation in the modernization process have been mostly overlooked. While Brockett focused on the examples of collective action against the secularist reforms of the regime, a few other historians have tried to focus on other means of responses, such as petitions, complaint letters and everyday forms of resistance.⁵¹⁷ In fact, putting well-known rebellions and incidences aside, people largely refrained from organized, mass resistance to Kemalist reforms, and instead opted for comparatively safer and easier strategies, such as putting a protest letter on the door of a mosque or circulating rumors and gossip. In this sense, people in Anatolia conform to Scott's analysis that "the most subordinate classes throughout most of history have rarely been afforded the luxury of open, organized, political activity."⁵¹⁸ In addition, the form of resistance has been

⁵¹⁷ See Brockett, 1998, 2006; Akın, 2007; Lamprou, 2007; Cemil Koçak, *Tek-Parti Döneminde Muhalif Sesler*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2011.

⁵¹⁸ Scott, 1985, p. xv.

closely related to the form of domination, the character of the regime, and people's expectations of retaliation.⁵¹⁹

Popular resistance to women's unveiling in fact predates the organized anti-veiling campaigns of the mid-1930s. Considering the increasing number of women, especially in big cities, who had "modernized" their dress in some way since the late-Ottoman times, combined with the earlier attempts of anti-veiling campaigns in the 1920s, it is predictable that reactions to this transformation would also follow. For example, in 1929, a preacher at the Büyük Mosque in Yozgat, Ethem Hoca, claimed during his sermon that unveiled women (*açık gezen kadınlar*) were prostitutes.⁵²⁰ He was put on trial because of this provocative insult and other "reactionary comments" he made. Apparently, he was also sent to court a year earlier for the same reason.⁵²¹ Such cases of religious-based opposition initiated by preachers or imams in the mosques continued in the 1930s, as well, and usually targeted the secularist policies of the regime, in general, categorized as "opposition to regime" in the official documents. However, in some reports, we see references to specific issues, such as women's unveiling. In May 1935, for example, at the peak of the anti-veiling campaigns all over the country, a certain Sheikh Musa was sent to court in Istanbul for criticizing the republican regime in his sermons. He was preaching against the regime's Westernizing policies, and particularly, its agenda to emancipate women and to remove the *çarşaf*.⁵²² Similarly, on 27 December 1935, in Mersin, a preacher by the name of Hadımlı Ahmet Hoca, told a crowd during his sermon at the Yeni Mosque that unveiled (*açık gezen*) women were shameless, and when they die, their funeral prayer should not be performed. Immediately, an investigation was launched into the case and Ahmet Hoca was arrested. Having heard of the incident, the Prime Ministry had felt the need to warn the Directorate of Religious Affairs. According to the Prime Ministry, the frequency of such

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

⁵²⁰ The circular from the Minister of Interior to the Prime Ministry, PMRA 030.10/102.668.8, 21 February 1929. For the copy of the circular, see Koçak, 2011, p. 232.

⁵²¹ There were other examples where the accused were sent to court more than once for the same crime. In a limited number of cases, we know that those who were convicted received light punishments, like a month of imprisonment. More interestingly, some of these people could continue their positions as preachers or imams. Koçak rightly indicates that such examples show the looseness of the regime rather than its rigidity; it was either considering it unnecessary to issue harsher punishments for these kinds of crimes, or was hesitant to do so. See Koçak, 2011, p. 37-38.

⁵²² Caporal, 1982, p. 249. The news about Sheikh Musa was published in Tan newspaper on 23 May, 1935.

examples demonstrated that the directorate was not careful enough when selecting preachers.⁵²³

In the absence of organized opposition, it seems that the most common way of resistance to anti-veiling campaigns was to engage in negative propaganda about women's unveiling. In addition to the preachers and imams, ordinary people were also involved in such propaganda activities. Rumor was the main way in which people tried to communicate their discontent and to decrease social support for, or at least compliance with, the anti-veiling campaigns.⁵²⁴ In the official communications between Ankara and various local actors in the provinces, as well, the fear of counter propaganda was in fact visible and such activities were usually mentioned as rumor or gossip. The phrases like "there is no negative propaganda" (*menfi propaganda yapılmadığı*), or "the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* have been removed without leaving any opportunity for discontent and gossip" (*hiçbir sızıltı ve dedikoduya meydan bırakmadan*) or "those with harmful ideas and aims were not allowed to act" (*fena fikir ve maksat takip edenlerin bu vasıta ve fenalıklardan istifadelerine meydan ve imkan verilmemiş*) were used by some governors in their reports, for example, probably to assure Ankara that they were successfully handling the threat of resistance.⁵²⁵ In some cases, however, such propaganda activities against the anti-veiling campaigns were reported to Ankara by the local authorities. In the Seyitgazi district of the province of Eskişehir, for example, there were people who attempted to propagandize against the ban of the municipality on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* by spreading the idea that unveiling was immoral and contrary to tradition. This was reported by the district governor of Seyitgazi to the governor of Eskişehir, who then

⁵²³ For all correspondence between the Prime Ministry, the Directorate of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Public Prosecutor of Mersin, see PMRA 030.10/26.151.7. Another imam in Mersin criticized the new image of women and the hat reform in his sermons. "Vay Yobaz," *Köroğlu*, 8 January 1936, quoted in Metinsoy, 2014.

⁵²⁴ Even years after the anti-veiling campaigns, rumors that women would go back to wearing the *çarşaf* or men would remove the modern hat were circulated. It seems that there were expectations or propaganda that there would be retreat from certain reforms of the regime especially after Atatürk's death in November 1938. See Metinsoy, 2014.

⁵²⁵ See, the letter from the Governor of Sivas to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 3 September 1935; the letter from the Governor of Yozgat to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 12 November 1935; and from the Governor of Kars to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 27 April 1936, respectively. As mentioned in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, the governor of İzmir, Fazlı Güleç, also used similar phrases even though there was no open ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the city; nor even was there any visible anti-veiling campaign in İzmir. See Güleç's letter, TPNA 13216-7/1, 24 November 1937.

forwarded the news to the Ministry of Interior.⁵²⁶ Having received the news, the ministry had asked the governor for the identities of those people and what measures had been taken regarding them.⁵²⁷ Apparently, as mentioned in the previous section, the people of Seyitgazi had thought that the decision of the municipality to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would be implemented immediately and by force. Since the majority of them were poor farmer families, many women could not afford to buy an overcoat and thus had to wear men's overcoats. This created disquiet in the city and people begun publicly complaining about the situation. Consequently, the governor sent a letter to the ministry. In it he reported that, as further investigation revealed, people in fact were not engaged in negative propaganda against unveiling, but rather were complaining and gossiping about the immediate implementation of the ban.⁵²⁸ The ban of Seyitgazi municipality advised that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* be replaced by hats and overcoats; the complaints had grown out of the inability of people to obtain this "modern" clothing.

What was interesting about the case of Seyitgazi was that in addition to ordinary people who were accused of making these complaints, there were people who were engaged in the local politics and part of this "movement" (*cereyan*), as characterized in the report of the governor of Eskişehir. As mentioned in the previous chapter, some neighborhood delegates (*mahalle mümessilleri*) and members of the city council were accused of being involved in the opposition to the anti-veiling campaign. Thus, it seems, the public discontent over the implementation of the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* became part of a conflict between groups of local elites. If the accusations were correct, the head of the local party branch was indeed trying to challenge the mayor by a vote of no confidence, and interestingly, he was doing so by being part of, or at least by taking advantage of, the popular resistance that had emerged against the application process of the anti-veiling campaign. In fact, opposition or reluctance shown by some local elite in the course of the anti-veiling campaigns, especially against issuing of outright bans, often coincided with the social discontent already existing in the local community. In other words, while it was possible to encounter examples where some members of the city councils or even local party administrations in some cities

⁵²⁶ Letter from the Governor of Eskişehir to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 22 January 1936.

⁵²⁷ Letter from the Ministry of Interior to the Governor of Eskişehir, TNPA 13216-7/1, 31 January 1936.

⁵²⁸ Letter from the Governor of Eskişehir to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 7 February 1936.

opposed these bans and thus were accused of being “fanatical” by the representatives of Ankara,⁵²⁹ there were also cases, such as Trabzon, where the resistance shown by some local elite in the city council and social resistance shown by ordinary people complemented, and probably, reinforced, each other. Therefore, it is also important to keep in mind that it is not always possible to differentiate resistance by the elite and popular resistance; a native owner of a grocery store could be a member of the city council and could be accused of being part of the same opposition “movement” with an ordinary man complaining about the ban of the municipality, as in the case of Seyitgazi.⁵³⁰

Another form of resistance to anti-veiling campaigns was sending complaint letters to central authorities. These complaint letters could be written by lower-ranking officials who would accuse their superiors for their misconduct during implementation process of the campaigns, as in the case of Tosya district of Kastamonu, or by citizens themselves, as in the case of Ödemiş district of İzmir.⁵³¹ In fact, in the case of Ödemiş, we see a local notable, İsmail Efe, complaining to higher authorities after having already communicated with the local administrators himself. In his letter, İsmail Efe was saying that he had first told the district governor that the representatives in the parliament in Ankara did not have consent for the use of the police force in the issue of unveiling, but the district governor had paid no attention to this.⁵³² Thus, those local actors who were sending complaint letters were convinced that local administrators were acting without the consent of Ankara and thus exceeding their authority; or at least they had the hope that Ankara would not tolerate a forceful removal of women’s veils. The complaint letters

⁵²⁹ Such as the cases of Alanya district of the province of Antalya and Hadim district of the province of Konya. For more on opposition to anti-veiling campaigns by local elites, see Chapter 4.

⁵³⁰ See the letter from the Governor of Eskişehir to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 7 February 1936.

⁵³¹ For the former, see the letter from second commissioner Tahsin to the General Directorate of Security, TNPA 13216-7/1, 21 August 1935. For the latter, see İsmail Efe’s letter dated 18 December 1937, quoted in Yılmaz, 2006, pp. 78-79.

⁵³² İsmail Efe’s letter is addressed to a certain Hamdi Bey, but Yılmaz does not explain the title of Hamdi Bey or his exact position other than stating that he was a high level state official. The interesting case with the letter of İsmail Efe is that he urges Hamdi Bey to let Celal Bey know about the situation. Thus his aim was in fact to reach Celal Bayar, the prime minister. As it is understood from his second letter, İsmail Efe had in fact known Celal Bayar personally, and had discussed this issue with him beforehand. This was how he knew that Ankara was against the use of force in the unveiling issue. For his second letter, see *ibid.*, p. 82. For a more detailed discussion on İsmail Efe’s case, see Chapter 4.

would also contain information about the social discontent such wrongdoings of local administrators created among ordinary people and thus warn Ankara about the possibility of a social reaction or harm in the image of the regime.

One sector of the society that constantly consulted the local authorities or tried to contact Ankara through letters against the anti-veiling campaigns was the weavers of the *çarşaf* or the *peştamal*. Since anti-veiling campaigns directly influenced their trade, the concern of the weavers of the *çarşaf* or *peştamal* was mainly economic. In fact, this group was not limited to the producers of the these veils; in places where the bans included certain men's clothes, those who were employed in weaving the fabric for the manufacture of these clothes also reacted and sent petitions to the authorities.⁵³³ In some cases, weavers tried to influence the authorities in Ankara and limit the impact of the anti-veiling campaign in their localities by reporting all the misconduct in which the local administrators engaged in the implementation process of the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. A certain weaver from Aydın, Dokumacı Ahmet Şevki, for example, even sent a telegraph to president Atatürk, explaining that horrendous instructions (*dehşetli emirler*), which included stationing watchmen in the streets and tearing off the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* of women, had been given by the local administrators to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the province.⁵³⁴ He characterized these acts as a violation of basic individual freedoms and law (*hürriyet şahsiye kanun ayaklar altında çiğnenmektedir*). Dokumacı Ahmet Şevki also informed the president that he reported these acts to the governorship of Aydın. However, the governorship had considered it enough to reply to his complaints by referring to the decision that banned the use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and did not provide a further explanation. He asked the president to see to it that such actions be stopped if they were unlawful. As it is understood from his telegraph, Dokumacı Ahmet Şevki had also sent a telegraph to the president a year earlier, when there had

⁵³³ One interesting case is the case of Maraş, where not only the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, but also the baggy trousers of men, which were locally called *karadon* (literally, black pants), and *aba* (kind of a shirt without arms) were also banned. An owner of a weaving loom that was producing the fabric for *karadon*, Biçuv İbrahim from the Kılıç Ali neighborhood of Maraş, had sent petitions to the governorship, to the municipality, to the local party branch, as well as to the party headquarters in Ankara. The local authorities tried to convince him that he could produce the fabric for the modern trousers that the men of Maraş were now supposed to wear. They were also trying to help these weavers to establish a cooperative in order not to revitalize the craft. See correspondence from RPP Maraş Administration to RPP Secretariat General, PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 24 January 1936.

⁵³⁴ Telegraph from Dokumacı Ahmet Şevki to president Atatürk, TNPA 13216-7/1, 16 August 1935.

been attempts made by the governorship to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. Apparently, this earlier telegraph Şevki sent had an impact, and although it is not clear what they were, certain orders were sent to the governor of Aydın. Thus, Şevki was following the same strategy and applying to the president in order to limit the attempts of the governorship of Aydın.

The governor of Aydın, on the other hand, informed the Ministry of Interior on 17 August, 1935, one day after the telegraph of Dokumacı Ahmet Şevki, that the decision of the city council dated August 9th to ban the *peçe*, the *çarşaf*, and the *peştamal* had been received very well by the people of the province, and that no opposition or difficulty had been faced during the implementation.⁵³⁵ The only opposition was that of a *peştamal* weaver, Şevki, who had informed the governorship that he would be left unemployed if the ban on the *peştamal* was implemented. He was informed that he could continue weaving the *peştamal* cloth to be used at the public baths, the *hamam*. The governor warned the ministry that the same weaver had send a telegraph to the president during the previous attempts at unveiling and managed to get some orders issued (*emir getirttiği*). According to the governor, it was also understood that Şevki would attempt to do the same this time as well. The governor finished his letter to the minister by characterizing Şevki as a person with a very low social status (*içtimai mevkii çok düşük*) and by indicating that they were also taking into consideration that “this guy” could encourage some action on the matter (*bu adamın teşvik eylemesi ihtimali göz önünde tutulmaktadır*), probably referring to the possibility that Şevki could engage in some propaganda activities against the anti-veiling campaign.

As mentioned above, the governor was indeed right in expecting Dokumacı Şevki to send a new telegraph to the president. Apart from the resistance of a *peştamal* weaver and his insistence on directly complaining to the president about the local affairs, the case of Dokumacı Şevki is also interesting in that it reveals how the Ministry of Interior handled such cases. The ministry sent to the governor of Aydın a code (*şifre*) asking for the identity of Ahmet Şevki, whether the signature on the telegraph was true or factitious, and what this guy wanted.⁵³⁶ In other words, the ministry asked that an inquiry

⁵³⁵ Letter from the Governor of Aydın to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 17 August 1935. The decision of the city council was put into practice on the 14th of August, only five days after the decision.

⁵³⁶ Code from the Minister of Interior to the Governorship of Aydın, TNPA 13216-7/1, 26 August 1935. This code was sent as an urgent case and was a supplement to a previous code dated August 23rd, which was less detailed. It seems that some additions were made probably

be made about Ahmet Şevki by the governorship. The governor of Aydın, Salim Günday, responded to the code of the ministry with a detailed explanation of who Ahmet Şevki was and what he wanted.⁵³⁷ According to the report of the governor, Ahmet Şevki was originally from Buldan, and he was mainly an artisan whose job was to weave and sell the *peştamal* garb. He was also known as the husband of a girl from Dinar (*Dinarlı kızın kocası*), since he got married to a “free” girl (*serbest kadın*) from Dinar when he was young. He had no reputable social position among the people and he was a half-wit (*yarım akıllı*). In previous years, when there had been attempts to remove the *peştamal* in Aydın, Şevki again sent “exaggerated” telegraphs and petitions to Atatürk, to the Prime Ministry, and to the ministries, and had managed to postpone the initiative. The governor again rejected Ahmet Şevki’s accusations and assured the ministry that the implementation of the ban was uneventful and not a single woman was fined. Apparently, Ahmet Şevki had tried to encourage opposition against unveiling by showing people the response he received from Atatürk to his telegraph a year earlier. His actions, however, had been ineffectual, according to the governor. No opposition to or complaints about the ban on the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* or the *peştamal* in the province of Aydın had been received, and, having seen this, Ahmet Şevki had changed his attitude.

Unfortunately, there is no information in this correspondence regarding Atatürk’s response to Ahmet Şevki’s telegraph in 1934. It is interesting, however, to note that Atatürk indeed had replied to the complaint he received about anti-veiling campaigns, and apparently, due to his intervention, the campaign that year had been postponed, as it is indicated in the governor’s letter. It is also not certain whether the president received Ahmet Şevki’s telegraph in 1935. It is also interesting to see that the ministry’s reaction to Ahmet Şevki’s constant complaints was quite skeptical, despite the fact that the governor explained the reason behind his opposition to the campaign as being mainly economic. In response to the governor’s letter, the ministry reminded the governor in Aydın that Ahmet Şevki’s intention could very well stem from his reactionary ideas, rather than from his economic concerns.⁵³⁸ In other words, the ministry was not satisfied with governor’s

by the minister or his undersecretary; the owner of the hand-writing in the document is not clear. There is another supplement dated August 24th, all in the same file.

⁵³⁷ From the Governor of Aydın to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 26 August 1935.

⁵³⁸ From the Minister of Interior to the Governor of Aydın, TNPA 13216-7/1, 7 September 1935. In the same file, there is a letter from the undersecretary to the minister, Şükrü Kaya, informing him about the response the governor of Aydın had sent. See, letter from the

explanation and asked him to follow Ahmet Şevki more closely, to send his photograph, and to investigate on whose behalf he was acting and whether he was a member a religious order (*tarikât*). The ministry also urged the governor that necessary measures should be taken to prevent Ahmet Şevki from disturbing “high authorities.” It is evident that the ministry was uncomfortable with Ahmet Şevki’s telegraphs to the president. Having received the additional order, the governor sent another letter after a few weeks, summarizing the results of his investigation:

- 1- Dokumacı Ahmet Şevki’s situation is being closely monitored.
- 2- Based on the investigations so far, although it is understood that he has a poor character and morals and is tainted by his addiction to gambling, no relationship had been detected between him and any religious order. In my opinion, he was provoked by a few backward-minded people on the issue of the *peştamal*, and encouraged by the reply he had received to his telegraph to Atatürk the previous year, he repeated the same initiative this year. He is a worthless person with no position in his own community, and with a tainted past. He has no relationship with the religious orders.
- 3- We are trying to find Ahmet Şevki’s photograph. I respectfully submit that it will be sent as soon as it is obtained.⁵³⁹

The case of Dokumacı Ahmet Şevki of Aydın shows that any attempt at questioning or complaining about the anti-veiling campaigns was associated with a potentially more general ideological opposition to the regime and was thus approached with great suspicion by the Ministry of Interior. A similar reaction of the ministry can be seen in another case as well. On 18 September 1935, the governor of the province of Konya sent a letter to the Ministry of Interior indicating that a certain man named Taşçı Ahmet (Ahmet the stonecutter) from the sub-district (*nahiye*) of Sille had circulated a rumor that a gendarmerie soldier who had been assigned a task in one of the villages was killed because he tried to remove a woman’s *çarşaf*.⁵⁴⁰ Supposedly, he was killed by the brothers of the woman who was attacked. Ahmet had also told

undersecretary of the ministry of interior to the minister of interior Şükrü Kaya, 13216-7/1, 2 September 1935. There is a hand-written note on the letter saying that Ahmet Şevki could possibly have reactionary intentions. This is probably the minister’s own writing. Based on this note, it seems, the ministry has sent a second order to the governor asking for more investigation.

⁵³⁹ From the Governor of Aydın to the Ministry of Interior, 13216-7/1, 1 October 1935.

⁵⁴⁰ From the Governor of Konya to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 18 September 1935.

people of his hometown Silile that a policeman and a gendarmerie were also killed for the same reason in the center of Konya. Having heard about such talk, the governorship had begun an investigation, and as a result, had found out that Ahmet was responsible for them. Upon being questioned, Ahmet said that he had heard about the killings while three men were talking at a coffeehouse in the province center. However, he could not identify the people from whom he had heard the story. His case was sent to the court as the police was of the opinion that he himself had created false stories and helped spread them, even among the little children of Silile. The Ministry of Interior again found the case suspicious and asked the governor of Konya to closely watch Ahmet's situation, to investigate his ethnic origin and whether he had any connections from outside (*hariçle ilgisi olup olmadığının*), and to send Ahmet's picture and fingerprints.⁵⁴¹ Twenty days later, the governor of Konya sent the picture and fingerprints, but assured the ministry that Ahmet was an ignorant man who had not engaged in any anti-regime activity in the past. There was also no information indicating that he had any connections from outside (*hariçle de bir ilgisi işidilmemiştir*).

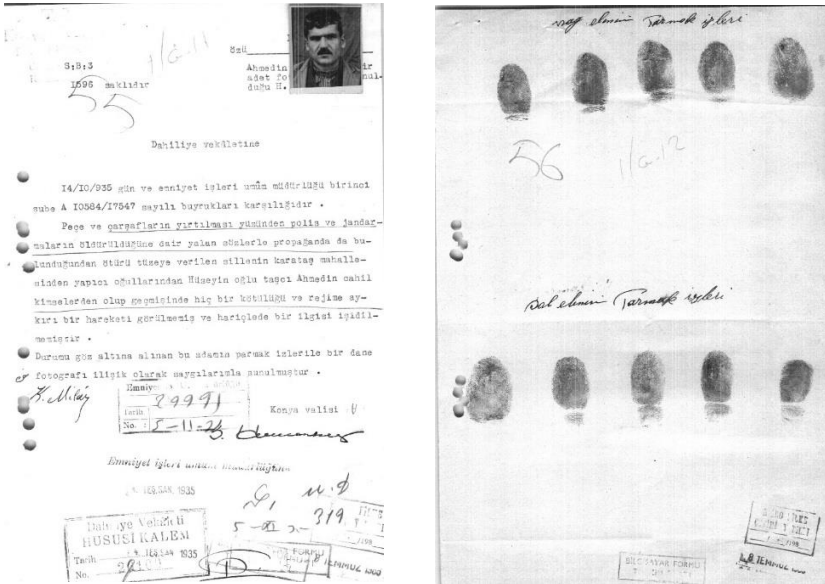


Figure 5.1. Letter sent by the governor of Konya to the Ministry of Interior to which Taşçı Ahmet's picture and fingerprints were attached. TNPA 13216-7/1, 5 November 1935.

⁵⁴¹ From the Ministry of Interior to the Governor of Konya, TNPA 13216-7/1, 14 October 1935.

Based on the existing documents, it is impossible to tell for sure whether the stories told by Taşçı Ahmet about the killing of two gendarmerie soldiers and a policeman in the province of Konya were at all true. However, the killing of or attacks against the gendarmerie, the police officers or the municipal police forces because they intervened in women's clothing during the implementation of the anti-veiling campaigns were in fact not pure construction. In the province of Trabzon, for example, the British Pro-Consul reported that a man had killed a gendarmerie soldier who had forcibly removed his wife's veil in the district capital of Akçaabat.⁵⁴² As discussed in the previous chapter, some local administrators had had a very hard time in handling cases of resistance to the implementation of the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* through the use of police force. The mayor of Trabzon had received anonymous letters threatening his life. His wife was physically attacked in the street and injured.⁵⁴³ Similarly, the governor of Gaziantep was accused of retreating from his initial firm position on the issue of unveiling because he had received threatening letters.⁵⁴⁴ Thus, in addition to attacks against the police forces and soldiers, it seems that sending threatening letters to the local authorities who were seen as responsible for the anti-veiling campaigns, or even targeting their unveiled female family members, were ways some people used to stop the anti-veiling campaigns, or at least to prevent the authorities from using force while implementing the bans.

III. How to approach women's agency

A great deal has been achieved in the last four decades in making women a subject of historical enquiry.⁵⁴⁵ From major historical developments to the histories of ordinary people, "her-story" has begun to be told and thus the conventional historiography, in which women were mainly invisible, has been challenged. Feminist historians, aiming to go beyond simply incorporating women into old schools of social history or writing "her-story" as supplementary to the existing grand narratives, have increasingly begun to use

⁵⁴² Letter from the British Pro-consul in Trabzon to British Embassy in Ankara, FO371/20087, 16 April 1936.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ From Mr. Yazıcıoğlu to General Director of the Police Şükrü Sökmensüer, TNPA 13216-7/1, 1 June 1936.

⁵⁴⁵ For a general discussion on the achievements of feminist historians, see Joan Wallach Scott, "Feminism's History," *Journal of Women's History* 16(2), Summer 2004, pp. 10-29. See also commentaries to Scott's article in the same issue.

gender as an analytic category.⁵⁴⁶ The objective in doing this has been to emphasize that gender is not a separate or complementary topic of analysis but rather a fundamental and essential part of any historical narrative. Studying gender is a method for rewriting history; it consists of not only analyzing men and women in relation to one another, but also studying how gender shapes the structure of social, economic and political authority.⁵⁴⁷ Scott explains this in the following way:

The realization of the radical potential of women's history comes in the writing of narratives that focus on women's experience *and* analyze the ways in which politics construct gender and gender constructs politics. Female agency then becomes not the recounting of great deeds performed by women, but the exposure of the often silent and hidden operations of gender which are nonetheless present and defining forces of politics and political life.⁵⁴⁸

The use of gender as an analytic category, and in relation to that, feminist approaches to women's agency, have been informed by the questions raised about the structuralist analyses of power and domination.⁵⁴⁹ In the feminist understanding of agency, women's choices, behaviors and reactions are not determined by structure (i.e., patriarchy); they have a capacity to act upon their world and "to reinterpret received gender models contextually."⁵⁵⁰

As Najmabadi points out, however, the achievements of feminist history have been geographically uneven.⁵⁵¹ While a longer distance has been

⁵⁴⁶ See Natalie Zemon Davis, "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case," *Feminist Studies* 3(3/4), Spring-Summer 1976, pp. 83-103. See also, Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91(5), December 1986, pp. 1053-1075.

⁵⁴⁷ Scott, 1983, p. 153.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156. For more, see also Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.

⁵⁴⁹ Scott, for example, suggested that an understanding of power as unified, coherent and centralized should be replaced by a Foucauldian understanding of power, which leaves room for human agency. See Joan W. Scott, 1986, p. 1067.

⁵⁵⁰ Azam Torab, "Piety as Gendered Agency: A Study of Jalaseh Ritual Discourse in an Urban Neighborhood in Iran," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2(2), June 1996, pp. 235-252. Torab refers to Inden's discussion on agency in his first chapter. See Ronald B. Inden, *Imagining India*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.

⁵⁵¹ Afsaneh Najmabadi, "From Supplimentarity to Parasitism," *Journal of Women's History* 16(2), Summer 2004, pp. 30-35. Najmabadi also notes the temporal unevenness of the achievements of feminist history. "Much of our success story is located in the present. Feminist re-mapping of the fields of ancient history, even medieval and early modern, is far less developed than modern Euro-America."

covered in European and American history, in Middle Eastern history, less progress has been achieved in introducing women into social history, and gendering history is still a marginal endeavor. Studies about women in modern Middle Eastern history have mainly focused on outlining women's roles in the nationalist movements of the late 19th century and in the modernizing reforms that were put into practice once independence was gained and nation-states were established in the region. In other words, the most popular topic has been the link between nationalism and modernization, and the centrality of the "woman question" in this framework.⁵⁵² While most studies have tried to deal with this question and have focused on what this centrality entailed for women by writing her-story, relatively fewer analyses have attempted to deal with the issue of how gender fundamentally altered the way modernity was imagined and constructed, and how central women's agency was in this construction.⁵⁵³ As Paidar stressed in her work on Iran, any discourse on the question of political and social reorganization of the society, whether the discourse of the political elite or that of other societal actors, has indeed entailed a redefinition of gender relations,⁵⁵⁴ and women were part of this redefinition process. Because portraying Muslim women as submissive and passive receivers of patriarchal male policies and domination has been historically very salient, especially in the West, feminist scholars of the region have paid particular attention to the question of Middle Eastern women's agency. Although an important contribution has been made in this vein, the focus has largely been on women's movements, which were mainly composed of upper-middle class educated women. In other words, understandably, vanguards of feminism and women's rights in major countries of the region were the topic of early works and the emphasis, thus, has remained largely on feminist agency.

Nevertheless, though limited, a wider discussion on women's agency has also emerged in the field of Middle Eastern women's studies and the

⁵⁵² For example, see Kumari Jayawerdana, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, London: Zed Books, 1986; Chadra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Laurdes Torres (eds.), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991; Deniz Kandiyoti (ed.), *Women, Islam and the State*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991; Valentine Moghadam (ed.), *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, London: Zed Books, 1994.

⁵⁵³ For example, see Lila Abu-Lughod (ed.), *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernism in the Middle East*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998. For examples of case studies emphasizing women's agency, see Beth Baron, *The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society and the Press*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994 and Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

⁵⁵⁴ Paidar, 1995, p. 2.

question of how to approach and analyze this agency has received more attention recently. In her ethnographic study of an urban women's mosque movement in Cairo, which has emerged as a part of the Islamic revival in Egypt in recent decades, Saba Mahmood questions the model of agency that "seeks to locate the political and moral autonomy of the subject in the face of power" and argues that such an understanding of agency severely limits our capacity to understand the lives of women who participate in religious movements such as the one she studies.⁵⁵⁵ Although such movements can be seen as male-dominated, it would be misleading, she claims, to explain women's participation in them as false consciousness or internalization of patriarchal norms. By referring to the feminist literature that examines how women use the conceptual and practical resources of various religious traditions to foster their own interests, she suggests that this too should be seen as a site of women's agency.

Here again, Mahmood's suggestion is to go beyond restoring the absent voices of women and showing their roles in the making of history. Moreover, her proposal is to enlarge the existing feminist literature by taking into consideration the instances where women do not engage in an "explicit *feminist* agency," and to "look for expressions and moments of resistance that may suggest a challenge to male domination."⁵⁵⁶ She advocates thinking of agency "not simply as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action that specific relations of *subordination* enable and create."⁵⁵⁷ This is a capacity to act, to the extent that it is possible, to achieve one's interest, choice or self-expression. As regards to women's agency, this capacity refers to women's efforts to shape their own lives in whatever way possible.

There are two important repercussions of such an understanding of agency. First, as Mahmood stresses, it enables one to see power as a set of relations that not only dominates the subject, but also creates possibilities for her. Following Foucauldian analysis and Butler's concept of "subjectivation," Mahmood reminds us that the very conditions and processes that subordinate women can also provide the means through which they become agents. In fact, an increasing number of studies in the field of Ottoman/Turkish women's history have begun to rethink the changing state policies and modernizing

⁵⁵⁵ Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival," *Cultural Anthropology* 16(2), 2001, pp. 202-236.

⁵⁵⁶ Mahmood, 2001, p. 206. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 210. Emphasis in the original.

reforms in this sense. In her study of the politicization of reproduction in the 19th century Ottoman Empire, Gülhan Balsoy, for example, looks at the ways in which policies to discipline the female body, and to regulate and medicalize women's sexuality, which mainly aimed at establishing a legal and medical control over women's lives, enabled women to situate themselves as agents.⁵⁵⁸ Ottoman government's laws and regulations banning abortion, she argues, cannot be read only as signs of absolute state domination over women's bodies. It was also through these laws and regulations that Ottoman women gained legal subjectivity.⁵⁵⁹ Balsoy also reminds us that the state attempts to control female sexuality and body were never without limitations and contentions, and as repressive as they were in many respects, they entailed opportunities for women.⁵⁶⁰ Likewise, the prescriptive books and news discourses on pregnancy and childbirth that emerged in the 19th century "were both empowering and oppressive at the same time."⁵⁶¹ They were drawing new limits and boundaries for women, but also attributing responsibility to them. By analyzing these new milieus of state control and domination over women's bodies and sexuality as part of the pronatalist policies of the 19th century Ottoman state, Balsoy concludes that "in return for bearing the children needed for a prosperous country, women received their share in the promised redefinition of the relationship between the Ottoman state and society."⁵⁶²

Second, such an analysis of women's agency is also giving rise to thinking about women's acts, attitudes, choices and motivations that goes beyond the dichotomy of resistance and subordination.⁵⁶³ In other words, there may be a variety of ways women react to social and political changes that impact their lives, including but not limited to open resistance and full submission. In addition, what seems to be resistance or compliance in the first

⁵⁵⁸ Gülhan Balsoy, *The Politics of Reproduction in Ottoman Society, 1838-1900*, London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013.

⁵⁵⁹ For a similar analysis, see Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Son Döneminde Iskat-ı Cenin Meselesi," *Kebikeç* 13, 2002, pp. 65-88. See also Tuba Demirci and Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Women's Bodies, Demography, and Public Health: Abortion Policy and Perspectives in the Ottoman Empire of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17(3), 2008, pp. 377-420.

⁵⁶⁰ See chapter 3 in Balsoy, 2013, pp. 51-75.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁵⁶³ In fact, Mahmood's analysis departs from Butler's analysis of agency in the last instance, as she thinks that Butler's "theorization of agency (as much as her demonstrations of it) are almost always derived from, and directed at, the articulation of resistance to social norms and the subordinating function of power." Mahmood, 2001, p. 211.

instance may very well not be intended as such by women themselves. Or, even if women's first reaction was compliance, it might not mean submission to domination. On the contrary, it might be one way of, and possibly the most rational/effective tactic for, handling the situation. As Torab underlines, compliance provides security and social recognition for women in certain contexts, and can be turned into an advantage, a source of power. Thus "compliance is often the result of rational assessment of the situation and its viable alternatives. It is not always a matter of simple choice, nor does it automatically entail agreement."⁵⁶⁴ Likewise, there may be instances of "resistance" that are "momentary, fragile and often not even conscious."⁵⁶⁵ Similarly, women may behave such that simultaneous processes of compliance and resistance can be seen. It is imperative to analyze, therefore, women's reactions and attitudes through such a multifaceted conception of agency. This is also necessary to avoid attributing an unchanging essence to women. As Inden notes, we need to keep in mind that "all agents are relatively complex and shifting."⁵⁶⁶ In other words, women do not act in isolation, but in relationship to one another and within the constraints generated by the male-dominated social structure and male agents. Moreover, their actions are subject to change based on the context within which they find themselves.

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the anti-veiling campaigns in early republican Turkey and the ways in which women reacted to them reflect such a multi-layered notion of agency. An important body of literature is available analyzing the impact of the modernizing reforms of the early republic on women and women's changing social status in the society. Feminist scholars of modern Turkey have successfully revealed that although the Kemalist regime had championed a discourse of women's emancipation, women were largely instrumentalized and they were seen mainly as objects of social change rather than as active subjects.⁵⁶⁷ This gendered analysis of

⁵⁶⁴ Torab, 1996, p. 245.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 238.

⁵⁶⁶ Inden, 2000, p. 2.

⁵⁶⁷ For example, see Şirin Tekeli (ed.), *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader*, London: Zed Books, 1994; Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler*, İstanbul: Metis, 1997; Deniz Kandiyoti, "Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds.), Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997, pp. 113-132; Yeşim Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds.), Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997, pp. 95-112; Zehra F. Arat, 1998; and Berktaç, 1998.

Kemalism finds its most salient and famous formulation in Kandiyoti's article summarizing women as "emancipated but unliberated" citizens of the new republic.⁵⁶⁸ It should be underlined that this feminist critique has been essential in decoding the patriarchal nature of the new regime and its reforms as far as the gender roles and women's social positions are concerned.

As Bozdoğan emphasizes, however, this compelling critique "does not alter the progressiveness of the reforms as viewed in their own time, especially by women themselves, who felt empowered by their new rights and new visibility in public life."⁵⁶⁹ In other words, patriarchal and limited as they were, the legal and social reforms introduced by the Kemalist regime significantly *increased* the space and capacity for women's visibility and participation in the public life, as well as for their empowerment in their personal lives. Similar to Najmabadi's analysis of Iranian modernization, one can argue that the Kemalist project of modernity can also be seen as simultaneously regulatory/controlling and empowering for women.⁵⁷⁰ Moreover, some women, at least, were active supporters and even initiators of the Kemalist reforms. This agency of course was not limited to compliance and support. If we turn our attention away from the discourse and reforms of the Kemalist elite at the center and look more at the ways in which policies were implemented at the local level, we can see that women could influence these policies in many different ways. That is to say, although it has been much less appreciated in the literature, women had as much an impact on the shaping and implementation of the Kemalist reforms as they were influenced by them. Especially the policies such as the anti-veiling campaigns, which were mainly local in character and put into practice based on the discussions and negotiations at the local level, allowed even larger space for women's agency. If all the complexities of the campaigns that were discussed in the previous chapters are taken into consideration, one can understand better that there was in fact a wide range of possibilities for the new dress codes to be manipulated in the public sphere and women had the capacity to adapt, modify and/or resist them in various ways. Thus, this chapter suggests that the feminist critique of

⁵⁶⁸ Kandiyoti, 1987.

⁵⁶⁹ Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 82.

⁵⁷⁰ Najmabadi claims that the discourse of domesticity and the idea of serving the state enabled Iranian women to acquire more education and the right to work, and to participate in the public sphere. However, at the same time, these rights were subjected to the agendas of women. See Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernism in the Middle East*, Lila Abu-Lughod (ed.), New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998, pp. 91-125.

early republic has to be revisited and enlarged in order to reflect this complexity of women's reactions and roles in the shaping of the Kemalist experience.

IV. Women in the Anti-Veiling Campaigns

As discussed in detail in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s were much more effective than the earlier attempts to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the 1920s. They were more organized, wide-spread and determined; they more consistently targeted the use of the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and other local veils and replaced them with “modern” clothing through the power of local institutions and actors, including municipalities, members of the local sports clubs, governors and members of teachers' associations. They had a strong impact on the shaping of new gender roles and codes not only in the political sphere, state offices and educational institutions, and the urban space, but also in the daily life of ordinary people, at the heart of gender relations in the private sphere. In this sense, however inconsistent and ambiguous in practice and diverse in discourse they were, it should be underlined that these campaigns nevertheless touched the lives of many women.

This section aims to discuss how women responded to these campaigns and to show the diversity of these responses. As mentioned in the previous section, women's agency is conceptualized here as women's capacity to act and is seen as consisting of more than the dichotomy of resistance and subordination. Thus, dividing the section into two sub-sections only serves to present the discussion in a more organized way rather than to reproduce this dichotomy. The sub-sections and various types of women's reactions they discuss should be read as a continuum or scale of responses women could embrace; while different groups of women in the same city could follow different strategies, negative or positive, to the same anti-veiling campaign, a particular woman could also change her attitude towards veiling or unveiling in time depending on the changing dynamics/conditions around her.

IV.a. Non-compliance, resistance, selective adaptation

Public discourse on anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s, as it was reflected in the local newspapers, overwhelmingly emphasized women's compliance. News reports and articles about the anti-veiling campaigns tended to mention

women's approval of the changes and their willingness to adopt the new clothes. This was partly a result of the propaganda the local newspapers had initiated; they shared a similar language to imply how the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were well-received and enthusiastically supported, particularly by women, by using titles like "women remove their *peçe*" or "women throw off their *çarşaf*". In fact, such reports highlighted women's agency on purpose; it was a strategy, a part of the attempt to present these campaigns as local initiatives, as changes stemming from women's genuine desire to alter their clothing. However, below the surface of this propaganda, there were many ways in which women tried to resist anti-veiling campaigns or at least to limit the influence the campaigns had on their own choices.

One common way women used to resist unveiling was disobedience. There were women who continued to wear the *peçe* or the *çarşaf* in the public sphere despite the existence of open bans in their cities.⁵⁷¹ In Bursa, for example, a local newspaper reported on 10 October 1935 that because of women's disobedience, the municipal police had to apply legal sanctions, and, as a result, over a hundred women were fined for wearing the *peçe* or the *çarşaf* in a few months' time.⁵⁷² It seems, however, that such actions of the municipal police were insufficient to overcome women's disobedience in the city. In the following months, the existence of women who insisted on wearing the *peçe* or the *çarşaf* continued to draw the attention of some local newspapers and some members of the city council in Bursa.⁵⁷³ There were discussions on the implementation process of the ban, and some argued for an even more vigorous enforcement of the council decisions.⁵⁷⁴ Another place where women insisted on wearing the *çarşaf* despite the ban and the threat of

⁵⁷¹ In addition to women's in compliance, there were also worries about men who would use the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* to hide themselves. As mentioned in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, this had been a major concern of the authorities since the Ottoman times. It seems that this continued to be a source of fear during the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s as well. The governor of the province of Elâziz was reporting that although women abided by the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, there could still be harmful people who would wear women's veils and would enter the province for bad purposes. The security forces were watchful for such cases. See the letter from the governor of Elâziz to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 5 November 1935.

⁵⁷² "Çarşafılar Kalkıyor," *Hakkın Sesi*, 10 October 1935. The same newspaper was reporting at the beginning of November that the municipal police had drew up a total of 700 records (*zabıt varakası*) on various matters in the last four months, and some of these records were on the cases of disobedience to the *çarşaf* ban. See "Uray zabıtası dört ay içinde neler yaptı?," *Hakkın Sesi*, 7 November 1935.

⁵⁷³ See "Kendi kendilerini cezalandıranlar...," *Hakkın Sesi*, 30 November 1935 and "Peçeli Kadınlar," *Hakkın Sesi*, 24 December 1935.

⁵⁷⁴ "Dünkü Uray Kurulunda," *Hakkın Sesi*, 15 February 1936.

fine was Sivas. Two sisters who were fined for entering a government office with their black *çarşafs*, did not hesitate to write a letter to Ankara, complaining about the fines issued by the local authorities, arguing that there was no law banning these veils.⁵⁷⁵ In Denizli, there were also women who continued to wear the *peştamal* veil in certain neighborhoods in the provincial center, and in some district centers and villages.⁵⁷⁶ Local newspapers of the city reported some of those women who were fined by publicly listing their names.⁵⁷⁷ Similar news about women who tried to avoid authorities by hiding from them or reports mentioning women's insistence on using the *peçe* or the *çarşaf*, especially in the remote neighborhoods away from city centers, can also be seen in other provinces.⁵⁷⁸ Sometimes, the continued use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in some cities could create reactions in other cities where the bans were implemented. The situation in the big cities, such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, had a particularly great impact on people living in the provinces. The head of the local party branch in Yozgat, Yusuf Duygu, for example, complained that people from Yozgat who travelled to these big cities and saw women there wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were surprised about Yozgat's insistence on unveiling when they returned.⁵⁷⁹ Thus, he indicated to the General Secretary of the RPP that it was critical that these veils be removed

⁵⁷⁵ See Metinsoy, 2014.

⁵⁷⁶ See Uyar, 2006, p. 573.

⁵⁷⁷ Uyar cites two news reports from the newspapers *Denizli* and *Babadağ*, which mention the names of ten women in total from various neighborhoods and towns of Denizli who were fined in November and December 1935: in the province center, a certain Hatice from Kaplanlar neighborhood, Ganime from Eskimüftü neighborhood, and Fatma (the wife of Kalak O. Ömer) from Gerzile village; in the district of Sarayköy, Ayşe from the Hatipoğlu neighborhood, Zeliha from Yeniköy village, Şerife from Bereketler village; in the district of Honaz, Hatice from the Beylerce village, Ayşe from the Irlıganlı village, and Hatice (the wife of İbrahim) from Haydar neighborhood; and Rabia from Şahanlar neighborhood of the district of Acıpayam. See *ibid*, p. 573 and *fnt.* 82.

⁵⁷⁸ For example, for Konya, see "Zaman ilerler ilerlemezden sürükler," *Babalık*, 18 January 1936; for Çorum, see From the Governor of Çorum to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 22 November 1935. As reported by the police, in Adana as well, many women continued to wear the *çarşaf* even after the decision of the city council to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. The date of the report is not stated. See Metinsoy, 2014. In 1939, the governors of the provinces of Tokat and Urfa were also reporting to Ankara that women continued to wear the *çarşaf*. These reports are quoted in Metinsoy, 2014. However, it is not clear in Metinsoy's account whether there were organized anti-veiling campaigns in these two provinces in the 1930s.

⁵⁷⁹ Letter from the Head of Yozgat RPP branch to the Secretariat General of RPP in Ankara, PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 13 November 1935. Yusuf Duygu was one of those delegates who supported a general law banning the use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* at the party congress in May 1935. For more, see Chapter 4.

very rapidly, altogether everywhere, especially in big cities. This consistency was significant in order to prevent rumor and discontent in the periphery.

If women did not or could not challenge the bans by open disobedience, they tried to find other ways to handle them. One way was to minimize, as much as possible, the frequency at which they left their houses. In other words, some women tried to avoid adopting the newly imposed outdoor clothes such as overcoats by remaining in their private spheres. A complaint letter sent from Tosya, a district of the province of Kastamonu, to the General Directorate of Security indicates that the decision of the city council to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was implemented in the district center by using the gendarmerie.⁵⁸⁰ As claimed in the letter, the soldiers forcefully removed some women's *çarşaf* in the middle of the street, leaving them in a very difficult situation.⁵⁸¹ Having seen or heard these instances, women in the district center and in the villages refrained from leaving their houses. Village women who were accustomed to regularly visiting the district center on the day of the city market stopped going to Tosya.⁵⁸² Similarly, in Maraş, there were women who did not step outside their houses for years, as reported by the governor in 1939. Some of them preferred to travel in carriages at night to visit their relatives.⁵⁸³

Another way in which women handled the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was using alternative means to cover themselves. The most noteworthy of these alternative means was to use umbrellas to replace the *peçe*. Women would hide their face with the umbrellas they carried so they could follow the norms of veiling without violating the ban. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the governor of Ordu complained that some women began to carry umbrellas unnecessarily.⁵⁸⁴ Similarly, in Maraş and Kilis, women were using umbrellas day and night to hide themselves.⁵⁸⁵ In Rize, the use of umbrella for

⁵⁸⁰ From second commissioner Tahsin to the General Directorate of Security, TNPA 13216-7/1, 21 August 1935.

⁵⁸¹ The author was claiming that women were left with their "pants" in the middle of the street: ... kadınları "donları ile" sokak ortasında bırakmaktadırlar. Quotation marks in the original letter.

⁵⁸² Similarly, a complaint letter from the Ödemiş district of the province of İzmir was also stating that women could not go out to the market in the city because of the anti-veiling campaign. See Yılmaz, 2006, p. 78.

⁵⁸³ The report of the governor of Maraş dated 23 March 1939 is quoted in *ibid.*, p. 73.

⁵⁸⁴ Copy of the Declaration on the *Peçe*, the *Çarşaf* and the *Peştamal* ban by the Governor of Ordu, TNPA 13216-7/1, 5 March 1937.

⁵⁸⁵ For Maraş, see the copy of the Report of Mitat Aydın, deputy of Trabzon, PMRA 490.01/273.1091.2, 7 May 1943. See also Yılmaz, 2006, p. 73. For Kilis, see "Kiliste Şemsiye Modası," *Son Posta*, 17 December 1935.

veiling purposes reached such a level that the decision of the city council to ban the *peçe* also asked women to not carry umbrellas.⁵⁸⁶ In addition to the use of umbrellas, some different combinations of outdoor attire that would provide women with a middle ground, that is, that would not violate either the bans on the *çarşaf* or the traditional customs, also prevailed. Hence, using long and wide (usually black) headscarves, and preferring overcoats that reached the heels, thus providing a veiling closer to full-body covering, could also be seen as means employed by women to overcome the difficulty the banning of the *çarşaf* had created for them.⁵⁸⁷

One indication of women's reluctance to adopt the new clothes was the frequency of notices published in the newspapers calling on women to abide by the decisions. In Trabzon, for example, where there was also resistance by some male members in the city council against issuing a ban, a lot of women were hesitant to remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf*.⁵⁸⁸ Therefore, several articles and notices were published in the local newspapers to convince women that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were inappropriate customs, not Islamic, and were the major obstacles to women's progress and participation in the social life. The emphasis on the "non-Islamic" character of the *peçe* and *çarşaf* was particularly visible, showing that there was a widespread perception that those women who insisted on wearing these veils were doing so because of religious reasons. There was also a perception that women were reluctant to comply with the necessities of a "modern" social life because of the conservative attitude of the Turkish society in general, or because traditional norms (not necessarily Islamic) were very dominant. Those who stressed this dominance of the traditional norms as the major obstacle before the modernization of women's clothing also referred to the social resistance to women's public visibility in general. The same local newspapers in Trabzon that complained about women who insisted on wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* also complained that women were not active in the public life of the city in general. For example, women were not willing to participate in the activities of the People's House. The inability of the theater section of the Trabzon People's House to stage plays, for example, was directly related to the

⁵⁸⁶ See "Rizede Peçeler ve Çarşafılar Kalkıyor," *Yeni Asır*, 1 March 1935.

⁵⁸⁷ Such preferences by women were also stigmatized as resistance to the anti-veiling campaigns by some local authorities. See Chapter 4.

⁵⁸⁸ There were also complaints that women's insistence on wearing the *çarşaf* would harm the image of Trabzon as a "modern," "progressive" city. For example, see "Eni konu konuşmalar...", *Halk*, 11 April 1935.

disinclination of women to appear on stage.⁵⁸⁹ Even the women teachers in the city were reluctant to participate in such activities.⁵⁹⁰ Having seemed to understand that women were trapped between the traditional norms and the necessities of the “new” life, these male authors would nevertheless not abstain from blaming women for their inability to overcome this difficulty - for not being brave enough to challenge this social pressure. Cemal Rıza, a columnist in *Halk*, addressed the women of Trabzon by saying that it was unacceptable for them to still be reluctant to join the modern social life, and not to be able to get rid of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* after all the progress they had accomplished in other fields:

The revolution has given you the rights you have been denied for centuries. You have gained all the seats you deserve. Is there any point in looking at your rights from behind the *kafes*? You too know, see and enumerate the meaninglessness of bad customs, of useless habits. Why do you not get rid of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*? There is a sun, a life, a light awaiting your new existence that got rid of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*? What difficulty do you see in front of reaching this life, this light as soon as possible?⁵⁹¹

Another common theme in explaining resistance or hesitance of women to removing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was that they were forced by men to continue to wear these veils.⁵⁹² Male authors of the newspapers were especially alert to men’s attitudes regarding unveiling, and did not hesitate to address them directly in their articles: Turkish men would not represent their sisters to the world in a bad way, as backward women;⁵⁹³ and their reluctance (rather than women’s) could be the real reason for the slow pace of progress in unveiling.⁵⁹⁴ There was also propaganda calling on women to be strong vis-

⁵⁸⁹ “Gösterit işleri neden çalışmıyor?” *Halk*, 3 October 1935.

⁵⁹⁰ There were similar complaints in other places as well. The reluctance of women teachers to participate in the plays displayed by the People’s Houses was an issue even in places like Izmir, a relatively more advanced and less conservative province. For a recent and important article on this issue, see Alexandros Lamprou, “Halkevi Sahnesinde ‘Yeni Türk Kadını’: 1930’lu ve 1940’lı yıllarda kadın-erkekli yeniliklerin sahnelenmesi,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 130, 2014, pp. 6-35.

⁵⁹¹ “Peçe ve Çarşaf, Şehrimizin Sayın Bayanlarına,” *Halk*, 19 December 1935. See also “Peçe ve Çarşaf, Şehrimizin Sayın Bayanlarına,” *Halk*, 23 December 1935.

⁵⁹² In fact, the idea that women were wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* because of men was very influential in the official circles as well. This was visible both in the discussions held at the General Congress of the RPP in 1935 and some circulars sent from Ankara. See Chapter 4.

⁵⁹³ “Peçe ve Çarşaf,” *Halk*, 17 October 1935.

⁵⁹⁴ “Trabzon gençliği ve müsbet hamlesi,” *Halk*, 19 March 1936.

à-vis the men who force them to veil. In Trabzon, for example, where women's compliance with the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was low, local newspapers were trying to convince women not to obey their husbands or other closely related men. In an anonymous article, the local newspaper *Halk* was particularly addressing those women who wait until the deadline imposed by the city council to remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf*, warning them to not listen to the men who preach to them to do so.⁵⁹⁵ Women were advised by the newspaper to reply those men in following words:

I am the one who creates the society. The society awaits me. We will get out of this backward veil that slaps our social existence for once and all; we will throw off the *çarşaf* just like you have removed and mangled the fez. Like you, we will adopt civilized clothing. ... Even if it came late, the decision of the municipality has emerged out of our deep desire to be part of the civilized life, out of our long lasting interest in joining society.

Such news reports and comments on them usually did not use incriminating language against women who continued to wear the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. However, there were some examples of a more radical tone that tended to represent especially those women who continued to dress in the black *çarşaf* as reactionaries who opposed the revolutionary ideas of the new regime. Their participation in the public sphere was seen by some as a direct attack on the creation of a civilized, modern public life, which was seen as the first condition for entering the world of civilized nations. In one of his articles emblematic of such a tone, Aka Gündüz, a prominent columnist and play writer of the time, claims that there are three groups of women who continue to wear the *çarşaf*: old women, young women who are forced to wear this veil and young women who willingly insist on wearing it.⁵⁹⁶ Older women who continue to use the *çarşaf* can be excused, according to Gündüz, because it is understandable that they remain loyal to old traditions. It is, however, unacceptable for young women to follow the example of these older women. If they do, Gündüz suggests, this means that they either deliberately oppose the new regime's ideals, or that they are forced to do so. The latter could be excused; but conscious disobedience to the dictates of the civilized life by younger generations, who insist on participating in the public sphere in "uniform-like" *çarşaf* was unacceptable. That is why he argues that one should

⁵⁹⁵ "Çarşafı Atalım," *Halk*, 13 April 1936.

⁵⁹⁶ Aka Gündüz, "Çarşaf Nümayişleri," *Yeni Asır*, 17 July 1934.

be very skeptical about those groups of women who wear black *çarşaf*s in similar styles and wander in the most crowded areas in cities together. For him, this cannot be seen as normal and should be approached as a kind of demonstration; what he calls a “*çarşaf* demonstration” (*çarşaf nümayişi*). He characterizes women who dress in black *çarşaf* as “demonstrators” of a different kind; those who do not protest in usual gatherings or by organizing uprisings, but by simply wandering around in the public sphere with their “silk, chic and black” *çarşaf*. “*Çarşaf* demonstrations” were a clear sign of reaction to the new - to what was civilized and modern. This “black unity,” in his own words, must have been organized and planned by the “backward mind” still alive and waits to be crashed by the forces of the revolution. Aka Gündüz here warns his readers about the possibility of unconventional political demonstrations: demonstrators against the regime should not always need to carry Derviş Mehmet’s flag and shout; they can also use a fashionable, silk, black *çarşaf*.⁵⁹⁷

It is important to note that although Gündüz’s article was originally published in a well-known pro-regime national newspaper, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, it was then reprinted in some local newspapers. Thus, such concerns about women who continue wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* also had local resonance, and this was because of still high visibility of women wearing these veils. In other words, there was awareness that anti-veiling campaigns could remain limited in impact, at least in the short run. In fact, Gündüz’s article was motivated by the same awareness; because these veils were so durable and because many women were reluctant to remove them, he claimed that decisions by local authorities to ban these veils were important, but it would take a long time for these decisions to be publicly accepted as a norm. His aim was to warn the public that some women’s resistance should be taken seriously, and this struggle should continue if Turkey wants to be part of the civilized world. One fear was that Turkey’s image would be harmed because of the visibility of women wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. As explained in Chapter 3, this question of “what the Europeans would think about us” was in fact a major motivation behind the anti-veiling campaigns in general. However, it seems that there was a more particular concern about women’s noncompliance with the anti-veiling campaigns; there was a fear that this noncompliance would be seen as resistance to the regime in the West as well.

⁵⁹⁷ Gündüz refers here to the Menemen incident happened four years ago, an attempt by a small group of Islamists to organize a counter-revolutionary movement. For more, see the short discussion and references cited in Chapter 3.

In fact, an article published in an American newspaper, *Daily Eagle*, had alerted both the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵⁹⁸ As the Turkish Embassy in Washington DC reported, the article claimed that in Kastamonu and in some other Anatolian cities, groups composed of six to eight women would prefer to go out to the streets wearing thick *peçes* and *çarşafs*. This was perceived as a protest against the “modern” clothing that had been introduced by the regime. The article was based on a telegraph the newspaper had received from Ankara. The Ministry of Interior sent a reply to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that such news were fabrications of those who wanted generate or strengthen the idea in the West that Turks were backward-thinking (*geri düşünceli*).⁵⁹⁹ The Ministry of Interior was asked to refute the article.

Although it is hard to find detailed information, there are indications that women’s compliance with the ban on the *peçe* was higher than their compliance with the ban on the *çarşaf*. Some provincial governors indicated in their reports to Ankara a similar tendency; while women had “easily and happily” removed their *peçes*, the *çarşaf* was only “partially” removed as a result of the anti-veiling campaign.⁶⁰⁰ It was probably easier, or more acceptable, or desirable for women to expose their face than to replace their *çarşaf*. The fact that the struggle against the *peçe* had a longer history, and that it was much strongly stigmatized as the “veil” to be removed because of the symbolic meanings attributed to the opening of the face, it can be argued that the removal of the *peçe* began earlier than the removal of head covering or full body covering as provided by the *çarşaf*. It was also probably perceived as more “doable” by the general public compared to the removal of the *çarşaf*. An article in a Trabzon newspaper, for example, complained that while women easily got rid of their *peçe*, the *çarşaf* proved more durable despite all the propaganda against it.⁶⁰¹ Specifically targeting the *çarşaf*, the author claimed that the removal of the *peçe* was in fact more important and symbolic

⁵⁹⁸ Circular from the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 28 October 1935.

⁵⁹⁹ Circular from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TNPA 13216-7/1, 19 November 1935. There is another circular sent from the General Directorate of Security to the General Directorate of Press (Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü) informing the later about the circular sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asking the ministry to refute the article. See the circular from the General Directorate of Security to the General Directorate of Press, TNPA 13216-7/1, 27 November 1935.

⁶⁰⁰ See, for example, the letter from the Governor of Sivas to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 3 September 1935.

⁶⁰¹ “Çarşaf,” *Halk*, 12 November 1935.

to reflect the civilized character of the nation, and the will of Turkish women had succeeded in achieving this task. Yet, although the *çarşaf* was a foreign tradition and thus should be easier to remove according to the author, women of Trabzon were very reluctant to do so.

This reluctance of women cannot, of course, be understood without taking into account the patriarchal and conservative social dynamics by which they were surrounded. In fact, references to social pressures in explaining the unwillingness of women to remove their veils was common in the reports of the local authorities to Ankara, and these cannot be read only as attempts of these actors to create excuses for their inability to enforce a successful anti-veiling campaign in their localities. Especially in less developed or smaller provinces or in places where there was a more homogenous local culture, ethnically or religiously, the conservativeness of the society regarding women's public appearance was a major concern for women in the issue of veiling/unveiling as well. Thus, the strictness of patriarchal social control of women played a key role in their decision to veil or unveil. The governor of Sinop, for example, reported in March 1935 that many of those local women who had removed the *çarşaf* and came to the municipality building with an overcoat during the national elections a month earlier, in February 1935, again switched back to wearing the *çarşaf* due to the influence of old customs.⁶⁰² It seems that the local propaganda regarding the modernization of women's clothing in Sinop had some effect on the women of the city, at least in the beginning, and many women had chosen to unveil only during the elections, perhaps because there was more public attention on them during this first voting process after women gained their political rights in December 1934. Once the elections were over, however, many of them continued to use the *çarşaf* instead of the overcoat. Similarly, in Çorum, the governor attributed women's insistence on wearing the *çarşaf* despite an open ban to the entrenched moral and traditional norms in the province.⁶⁰³ Under such circumstances, he maintained, it was very difficult for women to make up their own minds and adopt new forms of attire at the expense of having to face social pressure and exclusion. The poor and the older women proved

⁶⁰² From the governor of Sinop to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 4 March 1935.

⁶⁰³ From the governor of Çorum to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 22 November 1935. A similar argument was employed by the governor of Maraş. See, the governor of Maraş to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 13 August 1935. The governor of Çankırı was also complaining in 1939 about communal pressure on women and religious fanaticism, which made it very difficult for most of the women of the city to adapt to the new clothing norms. See Metinsoy, 2014.

particularly determined to wear the *çarşaf*. Even in the circulars sent from Ankara to the provinces, this idea that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were surviving in the provinces due to social pressures was salient. As quoted in Chapter 4, the circular of the Minister of Interior on 22 June 1935 claimed that these veils had been totally removed in big cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, but were in use in other provinces because of the power of traditions and because women were afraid of gossip.⁶⁰⁴ In fact, the minister indicated that women living in places where the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were surviving would adopt the overcoat when they visited big towns, but then would go back to wearing the veils when they returned to their hometowns. A contemporary observer also points at how local community pressure influenced women's ability to unveil. In her tour through Eastern Anatolia, Lilo Linke notes the reaction of a woman she met on a train from Malatya to Adana in mid-1935 to the banning of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the city. Having learned the news of the ban, the woman stated that women of Adana were lucky since they did not need to worry about what people would say about them if they removed their *çarşaf*.⁶⁰⁵ The bans, it seems, were making it easier to unveil for those women who would like to unveil but were not able to do so because of the social pressure they were surrounded by.

The extent of pressure the patriarchal and conservative character of the society put on women can also be seen in the harassment and attacks some women faced because they removed their veils. In other words, in addition to labeling, gossiping and exclusion, which would already make women's daily life very difficult and thus hard to bear, women also had to cope with the threat of physical harassment in case of unveiling. In the province of Afyon, for example, women who had removed their *çarşaf* were harassed and assaulted by some men in the streets. As the governor reports, these "malicious men" would make a pass at women, saying "what nice domestic goods we have" (*ne iyi yerli mallarımız varmış*),⁶⁰⁶ or use ruder language words, and even

⁶⁰⁴ From the Minister of Interior to general inspectorships and provinces, TNPA 13216-7/1, 22 July 1935.

⁶⁰⁵ Linke, 1937, p. 231.

⁶⁰⁶ Here, the verbal assault cited in the report of the governor, "what nice domestic goods we have," probably had a double connotation and was also referring to another contemporary campaign to promote the use of "domestic goods." In the aftermath of the Great Depression, the 1930s in Turkey witnessed a national campaign aiming to minimize the effects of the economic crisis by encouraging saving and promoting the use and consumption of domestic products. For this task, a special association, the National Economy and Savings Society (*Milli İktisat ve Tasarruf Cemiyeti*), was established by the support of the regime in December 1929. The association was very organized in the provinces. It established various committees for

physically attack them.⁶⁰⁷ A certain Emine, for example, a 20-year-old woman who was the daughter of Mevlüt and wife of İsmail from the neighborhood of Nurcu in the center of Afyon, was physically harassed by Abdurrahman, son of Ahmet from the Kırkalioğulları family in the Mecidiye neighborhood. Abdurrahman had harassed Emine because she was unveiled when she was passing by the İstasyon Avenue of Afyon with her child on November 12th. He had grabbed Emine's arm and began dragging her down the street. Emine was rescued only by the assistance she received from people around them. Abdurrahman was captured and handed over to the police. As indicated in a subsequent report from the governor, however, he was acquitted of this crime.⁶⁰⁸ Similarly, the decision of the city council of Bergama, a district of the province of İzmir, to ban the *peçe*, the *çarşaf*, and the *peştamal* also included an article indicating that those who would hurt and harm women wearing "national" (meaning "modern") attire would also be fined.⁶⁰⁹ This shows that such acts either happened in Bergama or at least there was a strong concern that they could happen once women unveiled. In order to apply it more effectively, the committee that prepared the ban also proposed to the city council that the chairs placed in front of the coffeehouses should also be removed. These chairs, according to the committee, were occupied by unemployed men (*işi gücü olmayan*), who could harm those women who would pass by in national attire. Having heard of these cases of harassment and attacks against women, Ankara had urged the local authorities to strengthen their measures against such actions, to apprehend immediately those who were involved, and to report on the results of the legal

propaganda purposes, which were active in publishing booklets and posters, and organizing exhibitions, conferences and meetings. The association was particularly active in organizing events during the Savings and Domestic Products Week (*Tasarruf ve Yerli Malı Haftası*), celebrated each year in 12-19 December. For more information, see Doğan Duman, "Milli İktisat ve Tasarruf Cemiyeti," *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1(2), 1992, pp. 127-141. See also Doğan Duman, *Ulusal Ekonominin Yapılanmasında Yerli Malı Haftaları*, İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Yayınları, 2001.

⁶⁰⁷ From the Governor of Afyon to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 13 November 1935.

⁶⁰⁸ From the Governor of Afyon to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 25 May 1936.

⁶⁰⁹ "Bergama'da Çarşaf, Peçe ve Kıvraklar Kaldırılıyor," *Anadolu*, 6 December 1934. Metinsoy claims that in the 1930s, "numerous men who verbally attacked women in the streets were sentenced to imprisonment or a heavy fine" after the Ministry of Justice issued a circular in 1929 ordering the judicial authorities to take legal action against those men who harassed women. Metinsoy, however, does not explain in detail whether these cases of imprisonment or fines were related to women's unveiling. See Metinsoy, 2014.

procedures.⁶¹⁰ It seems that Ankara was concerned that such kinds of events could be used as excuse for open or secret opposition and provocation.

Women also had to confront the pressures coming from the state authorities and various local actors pushing for unveiling. Considering especially the cases where fines were imposed and the municipal police, the police or the gendarmerie were involved in the implementation process of the bans, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that some women were coerced, and probably had to remove their veils even if they did not want to.⁶¹¹ In other words, women were caught between two patriarchal forces. On the one hand, religious concerns, traditional habits, social and family pressures surrounding women certainly played an indispensable role in their attitudes towards unveiling; on the other hand, the pressures coming from the state authorities created yet another obstacle to women trying to realize their own preferences and choices as individuals.

In addition to these factors, economic reasons also had a great impact on women's ability to comply with the new dress codes. Because anti-veiling campaigns promoted the replacement of the *çarşaf* with an overcoat and presenting it as the "modern" outdoor clothing of women, the removal of the *çarşaf* was equated with the adoption of an overcoat, which was unfamiliar to many people in the provinces, in short supply and more expensive than the *çarşaf* or other local body veils, such as the *peştamal*. The *çarşaf* or the *peştamal* had become customary, were locally produced and thus easily available for people. Considering that the majority of the population lived in the rural areas and in poor conditions, acquiring an overcoat was not easy. Some women openly complained about this by writing letters to newspapers and explaining their inability to afford overcoats.⁶¹² In fact, the inability of the poor people to abide by the decisions of the local institutions banning the

⁶¹⁰ For example, see the letter from the Minister of Interior to the Governorship of Afyon, TNPA 13216-7/1, 28 November 1935.

⁶¹¹ In addition to the case of Tosya mentioned above, there were other instances where women were physically attacked. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a complaint letter from Aydın claims that women's *çarşafs* were forcefully removed. Telegraph from Dokumacı Ahmet Şevki to president Atatürk, TNPA 13216-7/1, 16 August 1935.

⁶¹² A woman from Çorum and groups of women from Milas had written to the newspaper, *Köroğlu*. They were not against unveiling but they were complaining that overcoats were very expensive. A group of men from Akseki had also written a letter to the same newspaper indicating that they were unable to afford an overcoat since they were poor people living on bread. This letter was reported in the newspaper with the title "Overcoat or Bread?". See Metinsoy, 2014.

çarşaf was also observed by the authorities.⁶¹³ Thus, the widespread tendency of the local administrators to allow more time for the removal of the *çarşaf* in the decisions was not a coincidence. Poverty also explains why local institutions such as the People's Houses, the Red Crescent, the party branches, and chambers of commerce were mobilized to provide poor women with overcoats. In some cities, the wives of the governors or mayors were personally in charge of these organizations to help poor women to replace their *çarşaf*. As mentioned earlier, in Antalya, for example, a special committee was formed by the provincial council to help poor women and the head of this committee was the wife of the governor.⁶¹⁴ In Trabzon, the wife of the mayor, Emine Kadri Evren, was in charge of the efforts of the Red Crescent to provide poor women with overcoats.⁶¹⁵ In fact, even for these initiatives, it was hard to provide enough overcoats for women in need.⁶¹⁶ They tried to mobilize donors to collect money for the initiative, or to convert women's *çarşafs* into overcoats in cases where the cloth of the *çarşaf* was suitable for such a change.⁶¹⁷ In Çanakkale, for example, village women tried to produce overcoats out of the local cloth they had woven themselves.⁶¹⁸ In places where such initiatives did not exist or could not provide the number of overcoats needed, women had to find other ways to handle the difficult situation in which they found themselves. In Seyitgazi, for example, a district of the province of Eskişehir, the ban on the *çarşaf* was put into practice immediately, thus those women, who could not afford to buy an overcoat but had to go out to work, had to wear men's overcoats and jackets.⁶¹⁹ This "awkward scene" created a reaction in the district. The people of Seyitgazi, the majority of whom were poor farmers, complained that the municipality should have

⁶¹³ For example, see the letter from the governor of Çorum to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 20 August 1935 and the letter from the governor of Kırklareli to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 27 September 1935.

⁶¹⁴ "Kentimizde kadın kılığı işi bütün hızıyla yürüyor," *Antalya*, 2 May 1935.

⁶¹⁵ "Kızılay fakirlere 50 manto dağıttı," *Halk*, 30 April 1936.

⁶¹⁶ In some news reports, this difficulty was implicit in the language. It was emphasized that these institutions will "search for ways" of how to provide the overcoats. See, for example, "Halkevi çok fakir ailelere manto yaptırarak," *Halk*, 27 February 1936. As it can be followed by local newspapers, all initiatives combined, they could provide 319 women with overcoats in Trabzon: 200 by the Red Crescent, 119 by the local party administration. See "Kızılay fakirlere 50 manto dağıttı," *Halk*, 30 April 1936; "Kızılay bugün 150 manto daha dağıtıyor," *Halk*, 4 May 1936; "Bugün 119 Manto daha dağıtılacak," *Halk*, 1 June 1936.

⁶¹⁷ This was the case in Antalya, for example.

⁶¹⁸ Letter from the Governor of Çanakkale to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 21 March 1936.

⁶¹⁹ Letter from the governor of Eskişehir to the Ministry of Interior, TNPA 13216-7/1, 7 February 1936.

postponed the implementation of the ban on the *çarşaf* until the end of harvest season so that people could at least save some money to comply with the new dress codes.

Such examples also point to the various ways in which women in different cities reacted to the clothing change. In other words, the effectiveness and the influence of the anti-veiling campaigns were uneven; depending on the social, cultural and economic factors in different cities, and differences across social classes in a particular city, there were significant variations regarding how women dressed.⁶²⁰ Age would also matter.⁶²¹ Even within the same family, generational differences would play a role; a mother would continue to use some kind of a headscarf, while her daughters could be totally unveiled. Also, a woman who used to veil by wearing the *çarşaf*, could adopt a turban or a hat for some time, but could prefer to use a headscarf as she gets older. Thus, just as in the case of the 1920s, in the 1930s it is rather more appropriate to talk about a coexistence of many forms of veiling and unveiling.⁶²² The *peçe* and the *çarşaf* never totally disappeared, but decreased at least during the campaigns, though perhaps more in some places than others.⁶²³ More “modernized” forms of veiling, ranging from larger headscarves to turbans, became common. In fact, women’s insistence on veiling, more particularly, on covering their hair, whether in a more traditional form or in more modernized, modified forms, clearly influenced the outcome of the anti-veiling campaigns. In other words, the insistence on

⁶²⁰ In fact, even before the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s, these factors already caused a change in women’s clothing. Graham-Brown suggests, for example, that the change in women’s clothing was partly a result of the shift in the meanings attributed to certain dress forms: “In Turkey, in 1890, the wearer of a *yashmak* and a *charchaf* would have been assumed to come from a well-to-do elite family. In 1930, a woman from that class would have been recognizable by the fashionable cut of her dress and coat or suit...” Graham-Brown, 1988, p. 132. *Yashmak* (*yaşmak*) is a veil that was used together with the *ferace*, which consisted of two pieces, a head-veil and a face-veil. It was replaced by the *peçe* with the spread of the *çarşaf*.

⁶²¹ For a similar observation by a contemporary author who underlined the difference between the old generation of women and the new in terms of adopting modern clothing in Istanbul in 1934, see A.E., “Yüzü kapalı gezen kadın,” *Son Posta*, 6 August 1934.

⁶²² For various examples of women’s adaptation to new clothing and their new ways of covering their hair, see Oya Baydar and Feride Çiçekoğlu (eds.), *Cumhuriyet’in Aile Albümleri*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998.

⁶²³ Yılmaz argues that the regional differences can in part be explained by the limits of the RPP penetration in the periphery. Yılmaz, 2006, p. 66. Yılmaz also refers to a report by the governor of the province of Hakkari, where he indicated that the notable native families continued to wear the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* despite the anti-veiling campaign. The governor was pointing at a difference between the civil servants who were natives of the region and those who were not; native ones also continued to wear the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. Ibid., p. 68.

the covering of the hair had an impact on the general public discourse on women's clothing, and also, on the expectations of the Kemalist elite. As mentioned above, even a Kemalist as radical as Gündüz was willing to accept the fact that it would take a long time for the ideals to be internalized by the masses. As a matter of fact, however dominant the image of "modern" Turkish woman was, in the popular press, there was not a total disappearance of women with some forms of head covering, for example.⁶²⁴ In other words, since the co-existence of many forms of women's clothing in practice was undeniable, the tendency of the Kemalists to opt for a more gradual transformation in the matter of modernization of women's dress grew; the "symbolic 'revealing' of the face and body operated within constraints recognized and accepted by authorities prompting dress reform."⁶²⁵ Thus, in addition to the patriarchal concerns of the Kemalist male elite and their fear of "over-Westernization" of Turkish women,⁶²⁶ it was women's insistence on having a say on what they wear that drew the boundaries and limits of the anti-veiling campaigns.

IV.b. Compliance, Support, Participation

It would be misleading to think that women's compliance can be seen as a matter of pure propaganda. Although it is impossible to know the exact percentages, there were in fact many women who removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf*. Likewise, it would also not be true to attribute this compliance of women to the repressiveness of the campaigns and women's fear of the regime or the social pressures. Some women willingly removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf*, having seen anti-veiling campaigns as an opportunity to adopt the new clothes, to relax the rules of seclusion, to follow fashion, or simply because they

⁶²⁴ Libal, 2014.

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Even during the heyday of the anti-veiling campaigns in the mid-1930s, the control over women's sexuality and the obsession with preventing women from being "too much Westernized" were very visible. Various commentaries in local newspapers were warning women to remain loyal to moral codes in the public life. The length of women's skirts, their hair styles or how much make-up they should put were all constant issues of concern. For example, see "Kadın ve Erkek," *Babalık*, 2 December 1934; Orhan Selim, "Çok Boyanıyorsun Kadınım...", *Babalık*, 18 December 1934; "Çok Açılıyorsun Kadınım," *Babalık*, 19 December 1934; "Kız talebeler hakkında verilen güzel kararlar...", *Hakkın Sesi*, 28 February 1936. For more on the patriarchal side of Kemalism and its reflection on the discussions regarding women's clothing, see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. See also Y. Arat, 1997; Z. Arat, 1998; and Nereid, 2012.

thought it was more convenient to do so.⁶²⁷ Since anti-veiling campaigns addressed all women and aimed at achieving a mass movement of change in women's clothing, they also created a chance for individual women, who had the intention or desire to remove these veils, to do so in groups. In other words, it can be argued that those women who were prepared to remove these veils but were afraid or reluctant to do so on their own might have found it easier and more preferable to change their outdoor clothing together with other women and as part of a politically supported and socially propagated local campaign. In fact, although less obviously, such opportunities were available even before the main wave of anti-veiling campaigns had begun in 1934. Women participating in public education or joining the workforce were among the factors that significantly increased their capacity to socialize with unveiling as a norm, or at least to familiarize with the idea that their clothing can change just like their social status. In Tarsus, for example, a local factory distributed over 300 overcoats to women workers in November 1933 so that they could remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf*.⁶²⁸ Some other working women in the town also followed this example and begun wearing an overcoat instead of the *çarşaf*. The public cotton factory in Adana went one step further in 1934 and introduced a standard dress for its 1200 workers, composed of both men and women. As reported in a national newspaper, especially the new elegant dress for women workers, "black dress with a white belt," had emancipated them from the baggy trousers, the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*.⁶²⁹

As briefly discussed in Chapter 3, the beginning of the 1930s witnessed an increasing stigmatization of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as uncivilized attire and the promotion of European dresses as the norm in a number of media, ranging from propaganda posters of the RPP to the various milieus of popular culture. As Shissler argued in the context of beauty contests, the new practices and norms introduced or legitimized under the new regime in the 1930s "shifted the parameters of where women could go

⁶²⁷ Yılmaz indicates based on her sources that "local elites found many of the state-promoted reforms and lifestyles acceptable and desirable." However, it should be underlined that it is hard to generalize this to all local elites since not all of them were "already modernized, urban and educated" to easily adopt the new dress norms. See, Yılmaz, 2006, p. 68. She quotes one of her informants, Meliha Tanyeli, who recalled that women of her family in Trabzon very easily adopted the new dress norms: "Everyone put on a *manto* [overcoat] right away. First they put s headscarf (*eşarp*) above it. Later hats become fashionable." Ibid., p. 69.

⁶²⁸ "Tarsus kadınları," *Cumhuriyet*, 29 November 1933.

⁶²⁹ "Adana Amele Kıyafeti," *Son Posta*, 3 August 1934. It was also stated in the news that male workers were seen quite elegant in public with their new dresses, a blue trouser and a worker's shirt (*işçi gömleği*).

and what they could do;” they entailed a “redefinition of the concept of respectability or honor, *namus*, and an expansion for women of the limits of the social contract.”⁶³⁰ Similarly, the anti-veiling campaigns also enhanced women’s capacity to make choices and expanded the space in which women could realize them. This does not mean that this happened to the same degree everywhere, or that all women enjoyed the advantages of this redefinition equally. However, it should not be overlooked that anti-veiling campaigns and the discourse and propaganda regarding women’s clothing in the press and popular culture significantly contributed to the relaxation of certain social norms, by marking the removal of the veil as “normal,” acceptable and even desirable, by redefining “socially acceptable standards of women’s dress.”⁶³¹

This redefinition was reinforced by the encouragement of the adoption of “new” dresses to replace the *çarşaf* in various ways, the most important of which was the flourishing of the sewing courses for women in the provinces. In other words, women were not only persuaded to remove their “old” clothes, but they were also trained to create their new clothes by learning modern sewing techniques and the latest fashion patterns. Usually called the *Biçki ve Dikiş Yurdu* (literally, Home for Cutting and Sewing), schools that provided sewing courses for women were opened by both private initiative and public institutions like the People’s Houses.⁶³² The opening of such a place in a certain city was usually announced in the local newspapers and included detailed information such as its address or the school from which the head of the course graduated.⁶³³ It was also common for such schools to provide courses on hat making, which would make women’s access to “modern” headwear easier and cheaper. This would be especially emphasized in the ads

⁶³⁰ Shissler, 2004, p. 107.

⁶³¹ Libal, 2014.

⁶³² The idea of training women in sewing goes back to the late Ottoman era. They emerged as part of the debate on the “national dress” as briefly mentioned in Chapter 2. *Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti* (Association for the Advancement of Women) had established first a course center and then a sewing house, which was called *Beyaz Dikiş Yurdu* (White Sewing Home), in Istanbul in 1913. Later, *Malumat-ı Dahiliye İstihlaki Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* (Women’s Organization for the Consumption of Local Products) opened workshops in a few neighborhoods in Istanbul where women were educated as dress makers by using locally produced materials. There were also other organizations, like the *Türk Kadınları Biçki Yurdu* (Turkish Women’s Cutting Home) that organized sewing courses for women. See van Os, 2013, pp. 230-240.

⁶³³ See, for example, “Elçin Biçki ve Dikiş Yurdu,” *Halk*, 6 February 1935; “Münevver bir kızın muvaffakiyeti,” *Hakkın Sesi*, 25 January 1936. One of the sewing courses was called “Modern Family Sewing Course” (*Asri Aile Dikiş Yurdu*) in Trabzon. See “Trabzon Halkevinde Biçki ve Dikiş Sergisi,” *Son Posta*, 1 August 1934.

about sewing courses. These sewing schools also frequently organized fairs, exhibitions, and fashion shows to display the clothes, hats, flowers and other home decoration items they produced for the general public. Always reported on in the local newspapers, such organizations were sometimes hosted by the People's Houses or the party buildings, and attended by the highest local administrators and other leading members of the local society in the provinces.⁶³⁴ In some cities, the contribution of the sewing schools to replacing the *çarşaf* with the overcoat during the anti-veiling campaigns was particularly emphasized. In Trabzon, for example, only a few weeks before the enforcement of the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, the sewing schools were working at higher capacity, day and night, by bringing more women into their workforce.⁶³⁵



Figure 5.2. Women at a sewing course in 1930s Hacı Bektaş, a district in the province of Nevşehir.

Source: *Cumhuriyet'in Aile Albümleri*, Feride Çiçekoğlu and Oya Baydar (eds.), Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998.

⁶³⁴ For example, see “Malatyada Bıçkı ve Dikiş Sergisi,” *Son Posta*, 14 June 1934; “Trabzon Halkevinde Bıçkı ve Dikiş Sergisi,” *Son Posta*, 1 August 1934; “Samsunda Bıçkı ve Dikiş Sergisi,” *Son Posta*, 4 August 1934; “Halkevinde açılan sergi,” *Halk*, 11 July 1935; “Elçin Dikiş Yurdu sergisi açıldı,” *Halk*, 25 June 1936; “Halkevinde Sümer Bıçkı, Dikiş, Nakış yurdu açıldı,” *Halk*, 27 July 1936.

⁶³⁵ “Peçe ve Çarşaf tarihe karıştı,” *Halk*, 23 April 1936.

In addition to the sewing courses offering short-term training for women, seemingly organized predominantly for women in the provinces, a more limited number of women had the chance to acquire a longer education and thus more complex skills in sewing at the Girls' Institutes (*Kız Enstitüleri*). As vocational schools established in 1929 specifically for training girls, these institutes aimed at creating educated, modern and rational housewives.⁶³⁶ One of the main components of this project was equipping women with the knowledge necessary to make their own clothes, and preferably, to help spread them as the norm. Graduates of the institutes would be the role models for all other Turkish women, and through the clothes they created, for sale, for exhibition or for themselves and women around them, they would symbolize the transformation of ordinary Turkish woman under the republic.

Women's positive attitude towards the removal of the *peçe* and *çarşaf* was not limited to their simple compliance with the bans or campaigns initiated by men. There were, in fact, many women, mostly from the local elite families or among state officials, who organized meetings, gave speeches, and supported unveiling by being part the campaigns. Especially local women's associations, women members of other associations and sports clubs or of the local branches of the Red Crescent and the Turkish Airplane Association were actively involved. The Diyarbakır Women's Association, for example, organized a meeting where the head of the association, Behiye Baturay, declared their wish for the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, which, she argued, had no connection with women's honor or Turkish women's dignity.⁶³⁷ Equally, women could act as facilitators and initiators of these campaigns. In fact, one of the earliest examples of an anti-veiling campaign was the decision of a group of women in Bursa on October 29th, Republic Day, in 1933 to remove their *çarşaf* and to declare this publicly in order to inform and encourage other women in the city.⁶³⁸ A similar decision was made by a group of women in Kütahya in May 1934.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁶ Like the sewing courses, the origins of the Girls' Institutes also go back to the late Ottoman Era. For more information on the history of the Girls' Institutes, see Elif Ekin Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği: Kız Enstitülerinin Uzun Tarihi*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2005. See also Fatma Gök, "The Girls' Institutes in the Early Period of the Turkish Republic," in *Education in 'Multicultural' Societies: Turkish and Swedish Perspectives*, Marie Carlson, Annika Rabo and Fatma Gök (eds.), İstanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 2007, pp. 93-105.

⁶³⁷ "Diyarbakır kadınlar derneği...", *İkbal*, 27 January 1935.

⁶³⁸ "Bursada artık çarşaf giymeycekler," *Cumhuriyet*, 29 October 1933.

⁶³⁹ "Kütahya hanımları ve çarşaf," *Cumhuriyet*, 6 May 1934.

Women's role as facilitators or initiators of the anti-veiling campaigns was particularly valid for women who were politically active. As it was briefly discussed in Chapter 3, Turkey in the 1930s witnessed an increase in women's political mobilization. Women's acquisition of the right to participate in the local elections in 1930 was a turning point and their membership in the party began to be promoted by the regime leadership in Ankara. The completion of women's political rights with their participation in the national elections beginning in December 1934 created an even stronger momentum for women's greater involvement in political life, in the party, in provincial and municipal councils, and also in other institutions, like the People's Houses. Although it was promoted by the regime leadership, women's increasing participation in political life clearly widened the space for their participation in the public life in general. In other words, as can be followed from the provincial newspapers, not only did women's membership in the party begin to increase by the beginning of 1935, but their membership in other institutions and associations also grew along with their political mobilization.⁶⁴⁰ Many women willingly became politically and socially active, and they usually participated very enthusiastically and vocally in the institutions they joined. This was especially so in issues related to women, including unveiling. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, in the General Congress of the RPP in May 1935, among those who supported the idea to enact national legislation banning the *peçe* was a women delegate from Niğde, Naciye Osman Kozbek. In fact, in its report on the congress, one local newspaper claimed that it was a women delegate who first submitted a proposal to the congress for such legislation.⁶⁴¹ The newspaper argued that this women delegate had promised her fellow women in her constituency that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would be removed. Some local decisions to ban the use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were in fact made on the basis of the proposals of women members of the local councils. In Mersin, for example, the capital of the province of İçel, Zekiye Hanım, a women member of the city council, submitted a proposal to ban the *çarşaf*.⁶⁴² In Tarsus, a district of the province of İçel, the proposal to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was submitted to the city council again by a women member, Meliha Dağseven.⁶⁴³ In Bursa, the suggestion to have the *kafes* removed from windows was made to the city

⁶⁴⁰ See, for example, "Samsunda Kadınların Toplantısı," *Kars*, 24 Ocak 1935; "Parti Kongrelerinde Kadın Üyeler," *Hakkın Sesi*, 20 October 1935.

⁶⁴¹ "Kurultay ne yaptı," *Ak Günler*, 3 June 1935.

⁶⁴² "Mersin'de çarşafların Men'i İstendi," *Cumhuriyet*, 7 April 1934.

⁶⁴³ "Tarsus Belediye M. Toplantısı," *Yeni Mersin*, 4 February 1935.

council by the deputy mayor, Zehra Hanım, the first women deputy mayor of Turkey.⁶⁴⁴ In Maraş, it was Nuriye Bülbül, the only women member of the local party administration, who was the first woman in the city to remove her *çarşaf*.⁶⁴⁵ In Antalya, a women's committee of the People's House was the forerunner of the anti-veiling campaign.⁶⁴⁶

Women's roles as facilitators and initiators of the anti-veiling campaigns were not limited to a small number of women who were members of the local councils or the People's Houses. Women became the vanguards of the campaigns in relatively higher numbers especially in the context of their acquiring the right to vote and to be elected in December 1934. In gatherings women organized in various cities to celebrate this right, the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was advocated as part of women's efforts to be worthy of this reform. A news report states that in Ordu, for example, women who gathered to celebrate and to send telegram messages to Atatürk and Prime-Minister İnönü indicating their appreciation for having gained this right, decided to no longer wear the *çarşaf*, which they saw as the legacy of the sultanate.⁶⁴⁷ Likewise, in Kilis, about a hundred and fifty women gathered to celebrate their political rights and decided to remove the *peçe*.⁶⁴⁸ In Muğla, a group of women also led the call to organize a campaign to remove the *çarşaf* as part of their decision to be politically more active.⁶⁴⁹ They had gathered to discuss the issue of becoming members of the party, the People's House and other institutions, and to remove their *çarşaf*. In Bor, a district of the province of Niğde, about forty women organized a meeting at the library of the People's House, where they all removed their *peçes* and requested that the veils be kept in the museum. They also asked the municipality to issue a ban on the use of the *peçe* in their city.⁶⁵⁰ At similar meetings in Izmir and Konya, women's speeches drew a direct link between the opening of the doors of public life in the republican regime and their liberation from the social seclusion symbolized by the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*: "The Turkish woman, who, until

⁶⁴⁴ "Belediye Meclisinde," *Hakkın Sesi*, 3 February 1935.

⁶⁴⁵ Mentioned in the Report of Mitat Aydın, deputy of Trabzon, on the province of Maraş, PMRA 490.01/273.1091.2, 7 May 1943.

⁶⁴⁶ "Antalyada Çarşaf ve Peçelerle Mücadele Başladı," *Yeni Asır*, 23 December 1934.

⁶⁴⁷ "Türk Kadınlığının Kıvancı," *Yeni Asır*, 9 Aralık 1934.

⁶⁴⁸ "Atatürk Kadınlarımıza Değerli İşler Dileyor, Her Tarafa Kadınlar Kıvanç İçinde," *Yeni Asır*, 11 December 1934; "Kilis kadınların tezahüratı," *Kars*, 13 December 1934; "Kilis bayanları," *Yeni Adana*, 12 December 1934.

⁶⁴⁹ "Muğla Kadınları Çarşafı Kaldırıyor," *Halk*, 31 December 1934; "Muğla Bayanları," *Yeni Adana*, 30 Aralık 1934.

⁶⁵⁰ "Kadınlar peçelerini müzeye koydular," *Yeni Adana*, 11 Ocak 1935.

yesterday, was supposedly incapable of doing anything else than napping behind her *kafes* and stumbling in her *çarşaf*, has progressed as fast as an eagle in flight in her short life of 11 years.”⁶⁵¹

This equating of the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* with the gaining of women’s political rights continued in subsequent years. It was in fact reinforced by women themselves and used to mobilize other women in the struggle against segregation and veiling. It became for women a milestone that differentiated between a period characterized by women’s segregation and their degraded status in the society, and a new era marked by women’s increasing public visibility and roles.⁶⁵² At a meeting at the Antalya People’s House held to celebrate the first anniversary of the political rights of women, Nihal Güzey pointed to this difference in her speech addressing the Turkish woman:

In days when the women of the advanced nations were living in total freedom, the sultanate had reserved you a space behind the *kafes* and covered your face with a thick and black piece of cloth. It had seen no harm in insulting you by believing that this *kafes* and piece of cloth would be the guardians of your chastity. The Atatürk revolution, on the other hand, could not digest this insult that was deemed worthy of you. It has showed that you are not a slave but a human being that deserves respect worthy of civilized people. It has given you freedom. You have come into existence. You have also lifted and taken away that black cloth on your face that was of use for nothing.⁶⁵³

Women also wrote in the local newspapers to promote unveiling, directly addressing the women of their city. The idea frequently emphasized by women was that they could modernize their dress themselves, without any need for men’s guidance, in conformity with modernization and with the aim of reaching a better position in society. In her poem entitled “Let’s Throw off the *Çarşafs*,” which was published in a local newspaper, Hayriye Ural, a woman from Trabzon, emphasized how Turkish women easily adjusted to the major changes the Kemalist revolution had introduced, and called on them

⁶⁵¹ “Kadınların söylevleri,” *Babalık*, 16 December 1934. For women’s speeches in Izmir, see “İffetî Kara Peçede ve Kafesin Arkasında Arıyan Zihniyet Yıkılmıştır, Bayanlarımızın Heyecanlı Söylevleri,” *Yeni Asır*, 16 December 1934.

⁶⁵² For an article by a women author in a local newspaper emphasizing this historical break, see Melahat Saim, “Türk Kadınının Saylav Seçimi,” *Kars*, 14 January 1935. See also “Türk Kadının Cemiyeteki mevkii,” *Halk*, 26 March 1936.

⁶⁵³ “Aydın Antalya kadınları siyasi haklarını kutluladılar,” *Antalya*, 12 December 1935.

to do the same on the issue of unveiling as well.⁶⁵⁴ In her opinion, it was meaningless for the women of Trabzon to adhere to the meaningless and outdated veil called the *çarşaf* at a time when all archaic beliefs were in fact being eliminated. Having emphasized that the *çarşaf* had nothing to do with religion and had been removed in other cities, she invited the women of Trabzon not to fall behind in bringing about this change.

The discrepancy in terms of veiling (and in fact, in terms of women's social status in general) between Istanbul and Ankara, on the one hand, and Anatolia, on the other, had often been mentioned as a sign of the disadvantaged position of the women living in the periphery of the country, and, thus, the anti-veiling campaign was promoted as an opportunity to fill the gap by women themselves in the periphery. In her article entitled "Let's do away with veiling," Nihal Güzey drew the attention of the women of Antalya to this opportunity:

Why do we [as women of Anatolia] not benefit from the right that our revolution has given to women? Are we still going to continue to wear this dress that does not belong to us at a time we passionately struggle against foreign culture and get rid of the Arab alphabet?⁶⁵⁵

For her, women of Anatolia should also adopt civilized clothing in order to be part of the social life, and "enlightened" women should be the vanguards for them, especially in removing the *peçe* before all else. She also warned these enlightened women against wearing fancy overcoats and hats, since ordinary women were possibly not removing their *çarşaf* because it would be too expensive to replace them with modern clothes. That is why she stressed the necessity of creating options to adopting modern clothes in an affordable manner, one solution of which would be training women to make their own overcoats and hats at free courses. She suggested that these free courses could be organized by People's Houses.

This acceptance of new clothing by a significant number of women was represented as "women's struggle against the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*." These examples, indeed, reflect some women's support for the anti-veiling campaigns. Equally, these examples are also an indication of the regime's satisfaction with the gradual change that this support was supposed to bring in

⁶⁵⁴ Hayriye Ural, "Çarşafı atalım," *Halk*, 30 March 1936. For a similar call written again by a women author, Mürşide Akyol, in the province of Adana, see "Adana'da Türk Kadını," *Ak Günler*, 29 Ekim 1936.

⁶⁵⁵ Nihal Güzey, "Örtünmeden Vazgeçelim," *Antalya*, 10 January 1935.

the future. In the eyes of the Kemalist elite at the center, women's approval and adoption of modern clothing was the most significant precondition of the success, and unlike in other reforms, they were more patient to wait for the ultimate success, trusting in women's agency to spread the reform. Moreover, particularly educated women did not think of these campaigns and the propaganda concerning them as instrumentalization of women. In fact, as presented above, they participated in the campaigns to "modernize" women's clothing, primarily because the clothing change was so thoroughly related to the ideas opposing women's seclusion and supporting their participation in the public life. Thus, for particular groups of women at least, it was an alliance with the regime - an alliance through which they gained the political support for their decades-old struggle against traditional norms and achieved the right to participate in the public sphere as the agents of modernization.



Figure 5.3. Women at the Develi branch of the Airplane Association, the province of Kayseri, 1930s. They are seen wearing overcoats; some with headscarves.

Source: *75 Yılda Değişen Yaşam, Değişen İnsan: Cumhuriyet Modaları*, Derya Özkan and Oya Baydar (eds.), Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998.

V. Conclusion

Despite the fact that there were significant local varieties in terms of both scope and effectiveness, it can be argued that anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s created an important impetus for the change of women's clothing in Turkey. They played a role, at least for a certain period of time and more in some places than others, in the decreasing use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, though they did not result in the total removal of these veils. And although bans were enacted in most of the cities where the campaigns were initiated, and in some places, were in fact imposed strictly, at least for a certain period of time, there was no massive protest or collective action against the anti-veiling campaigns. However, this hardly meant that there was no resistance; both the central authorities in Ankara and the local administrators had hard time dealing with the creative ways in which people responded to the campaigns and the various forms of selective adaptation they underwent. From circulating rumors to sending letters, people's "repertoire of responses" was in fact quite rich.⁶⁵⁶

Perhaps, the way the anti-veiling campaigns were put into practice determined the way people responded. Since the campaigns were mainly local in character and unveiling was not imposed by a central decree or law, the reactions were mostly organized against the local authorities. In some cases, reactions involved both members of local elite and ordinary people, blurring the distinction between elite and popular resistance. The examples discussed above reveal that some people who complained to Ankara about the provincial administrators were of the opinion that they were acting outside the scope of their authority, and even against the will of the center. The case of Aydın, where the president responded to the complaint of a local *peştamal* weaver and sent orders to the local authorities, actually confirms that such an opinion could have some basis. However, as far as the attitude of the Ministry of Interior was concerned, one can argue that any act of questioning or complaining about the campaigns was approached quite suspiciously. Thus, the local administrators had in fact strong backing from Ankara in implementing the anti-veiling campaigns. Yet, as discussed in Chapter 4, this backing had its limitations; Ankara could act quite ambivalently when it came to the use of force by the provincial authorities. In fact, in cases where force was used in the implementation of the anti-veiling campaigns, the resistance

⁶⁵⁶ Brockett, 1998, p. 61.

was stronger; as in cases of Trabzon and Gaziantep, it could even include countering the intervention by the police or the gendarmerie by force, and threatening the authorities.

As the main target of the anti-veiling campaigns, women were in a central position in shaping the process. Between the poles of passive compliance and open resistance, women had various ways of handling this dramatic change. While some women resisted the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* and continued to wear these veils despite the threat of punishment, some others supported the campaigns and even participated in them as initiators or facilitators. Many of them tried to find a kind of middle way through which they could deal with the multiple pressures and difficulties they were facing; the pressure for unveiling as imposed by the anti-veiling campaigns, the social and cultural pressure for keeping the veil as imposed by the local community and/or the family members, and their own preferences. Some of them withdrew from the public life for some time, others tried to veil by using other means, and still others creatively adapted their outdoor clothes by domesticating the new norms. For some of them who were more educated and/or with high social status, not only the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, but also total unveiling was happily welcomed; for some others, this was a more gradual process, a journey from wearing the *çarşaf* to covering their head with a turban or a kind of headscarf, and eventually, to opting for a modern hat. Thus, it is crucial to acknowledge this diversity of women's responses, to take into consideration the various ways through which they involved in the anti-veiling campaigns as agents, and to underline that these responses and agency shaped the process in each locality critically.

In this sense, it is also crucial to revisit the scholarship on women in the early republican era in the light of these analyses. Particularly the examples where women actively participated in the anti-veiling campaigns and promoted them challenge the salient argument that the clothing reforms of the Kemalist regime associated political agency only with men.⁶⁵⁷ Women were not only victims to be liberated; the roles attributed to women were indeed far more complex. It can be argued that one of the goals of the anti-veiling campaigns was to create modern female subjects that would not passively follow the Kemalist male elite, but would actively participate in and further the modernizing reforms, especially at the local level. Thus, like in other state policies, the anti-veiling campaigns entailed regulation and control of women's bodies and choices while at the same time providing opportunities

⁶⁵⁷ For a detailed discussion on this argument, Çınar, 2005, pp. 53-98.

for them to position themselves as agents. This empowering aspect of the Kemalist policies on women should be analyzed alongside their patriarchal and interventionist character.

Chapter 6

Reflections on the Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World

*“Afghanistan, which hitherto had not taken any step to improve women’s condition, is currently taking important steps to educate women and to free them [from traditional bondage]. Aren’t they Muslims? Aren’t they more religious than we? We see that this newly created civilized nation [of Afghanistan], is far ahead of Iran, which has 6000 years of civilized history...”*⁶⁵⁸

I. The Turkish Case in a Larger Context

In her article on unveiling in early 20th century Egypt, Baron indicates that the veil has been “the quintessential metaphor for Middle Eastern women.”⁶⁵⁹ This can in fact be suggested for all Muslim women, including those living outside the Middle East. Although its history did not begin with Islam and it has been a complex and changing issue with multiple aspects that cannot be reduced to the field of religion, the practice of veiling and the wider system of gender seclusion have been overwhelmingly associated with Muslim societies, marking their “difference” from their “Western/modern” counterparts.⁶⁶⁰ When modernization and “catching up with the West” became the primary agenda of the modernist state elites and intellectuals of the Muslim countries, the “woman question” was soon the main issue; everywhere “the

⁶⁵⁸ A quote from an article which was published in a women’s journal, *Jahan-a Zanan* (Women’s World) in Iran in 1921. The journal was published by Fakhr Afaq Parsa, who was one of the leading feminists of the time in Iran. The fifth issue of the journal in which this article was published was suspended, the journal was banned by the government, and Parsa was exiled. Hamideh Sadeghi, *Women and Politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 81.

⁶⁵⁹ Baron, 1989, p. 370.

⁶⁶⁰ For history of veiling in pre-Islamic and Islamic contexts, see Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. For a discussion on the “difference” of European women from Muslim women and how this difference was turned into a terrain of political contestation, see Mohamed Tavakoli-Targhi, “Imagining Western Women: Occidentalism and Euro-Eroticism,” *Radical America* 24, July-September 1990, pp. 72-80.

sphere of women was localized as the sphere of backwardness to be reformed, regenerated and uplifted.”⁶⁶¹ The veil, in particular, was of central concern; its removal would be the most visible metaphor for the social change the modernist elites envisaged. Thus, neither the debate on women’s veiling nor the state’s attempts to “modernize” women’s clothing was unique to Turkey. The Turkish case was part of a wider picture and should be analyzed not only in relation to the influence of the West and its imagination by the Turkish elite, but also, equally, in relation to the experiences of other predominantly Muslim societies. This is essential given the great extent of intellectual and cultural exchange within the Muslim world in the 19th and early 20th centuries. As Cronin has maintained, modernist Muslim elites were primarily influenced by each other. Both travel between the major urban centers of Muslim countries and the accelerated circulation of newspapers and books within the Muslim world were of central importance in this process. Thus “across the Arab, Ottoman and Iranian worlds, across the Caucasus and Central Asia, and among the Muslim communities of the Balkans, reformers, operating within a newly integrated transnational Muslim intellectual environment, identified the same problem of ‘backwardness’ resulting from the same general and specific causes, and proposed the same remedies.”⁶⁶² With these strong historical ties and political parallel in the background, the Kemalist experience, however Western-oriented it was, should be seen in a larger Muslim context; it is crucial to understanding how other experiences of state-led unveiling of women influenced and were influenced by the Kemalist program and practice of unveiling.

The Ottoman modernization under the Young Turks and the subsequent Kemalist reforms introduced under Mustafa Kemal’s leadership inspired other Muslim leaders. King Amanullah of Afghanistan and his Foreign Minister Mahmud Tarzi, a prominent nationalist and modernist

⁶⁶¹ Omnia Shakry, “Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt,” in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, Lila Abu-Lughod (ed.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, pp. 126-170.

⁶⁶² Stephanie Cronin, “Introduction: Coercion or Empowerment? Anti-veiling Campaigns: A Comparative Perspective,” in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 1-36. Najmabadi also underlines the importance of the cultural traffic and cultural hybridization between Iran, the Indian sub-continent and the Ottoman Empire while analyzing the transformation of gender and sexuality in Iran that had begun in the 19th century. For example, she refers to the writings of the Iranian travelogues in the late 19th century who expressed anxiety when they saw unveiled women during their visits in Istanbul, Cairo and the Caucasus. See Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, p. 134.

intellectual and mentor of the Young Afghans, had a special admiration for Mustafa Kemal, for instance.⁶⁶³ The relations between the two countries in the 1920s were based on collaboration in modernization efforts, with Turkey supplying advisors and experts to Afghanistan, and hosting Afghan students, including women, for education.⁶⁶⁴ It was also no surprise that on his way back from his tour of Europe, King Amanullah visited Turkey, as the first head of state to make an official visit to the Turkish Republic.⁶⁶⁵ Similarly, Reza Shah of Iran has been likened to Atatürk in the literature in terms of his authoritarian modernism. It has been argued that he was inspired and encouraged by Turkey's progress under Atatürk's leadership and modelled many of his reforms on the Kemalist experience.⁶⁶⁶ His visit to Turkey in 1934, which lasted a month with visits to all major cities of the country, also influenced Reza Shah, and it has been claimed that he speeded up his efforts for reform immediately after he returned to Iran.⁶⁶⁷

Apart from political leaders, bureaucrats, intellectuals and elite circles in other Muslim countries were also influenced by the developments in Turkey. Some of these people had indeed received their education at an Ottoman institution. The provincial elite that formed the Ottoman ruling-class in the Arab lands before WWI, for example, continued to enjoy power and prestige after the war. Thus, just like the Kemalist cadres in Turkey, their political visions were very much shaped by their Ottoman experience and by the questions of reform and modernization they were exposed to during the

⁶⁶³ Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2012, p. 67. Mahmud Tarzi's family was exiled from Afghanistan in 1881, and moved to Pakistan (then British India), Iraq, Syria, and finally, Turkey. He was fluent in Turkish. He was the father of Queen Soraya, and thus, father-in-law of King Amanullah. After King Amanullah was overthrown in 1929, he again moved to Istanbul and died there in 1933.

⁶⁶⁴ In 1928, 28 female students were sent to Turkey for secondary school education, for example. The girls' travelling to Turkey, having removed their veils, and dressing in European style became an issue of opposition against the king. See Yaiha Baiza, *Education in Afghanistan: Developments, Influences and Legacies since 1901*, London: Routledge, 2013, pp. 79-80.

⁶⁶⁵ King Amanullah then visited Turkey and met Mustafa Kemal again in 1933, after he lost his throne. Andrew Mango, *Atatürk*, London: John Murray, 2004, p. 488.

⁶⁶⁶ For example, see William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, Boulder: Westview Press, 2004, p. 186; Amin Saikal, "Kemalism: Its Influence on Iran and Afghanistan," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 2(2), Winter 1981-1982, pp. 25-32.

⁶⁶⁷ Afshin Marashi, "Performing the Nation: The Shah's Official State visit to Kemalist Turkey, June to July 1934", in *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921-1941*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 103-124.

late empire.⁶⁶⁸ Similarly, the Turkic-speaking modernist Muslim elite of the Russian Empire had particularly strong intellectual and political ties to their Ottoman counterparts. Developments in the Ottoman Empire, and later in Turkey, always attracted special attention in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The influence of Kemalist Turkey was so significant that some Uzbek historians, for example, would argue that in Uzbekistan “the idea of women’s emancipation was carried forward by the example of Turkey.”⁶⁶⁹



Figure 6.1. Afghan students who were sent to Istanbul for education, 1928.
Source: Yaiha Baiza, *Education in Afghanistan: Developments, Influences and Legacies since 1901*, London: Routledge, 2013.

⁶⁶⁸ Clevelenad, 2004, p. 171; William L. Cleveland, “Atatürk Viewed by His Arab Contemporaries: The Opinions of Sati‘ al-Husri and Shakib Arslan,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 2(2), Winter 1981-1982, pp. 15-23. See also Elizabeth Picard, “Suriyeli ve Iraklı Arap Milliyetçiler ve Kemalizm: Yöneşmeler, Perdelemeler ve Etkiler,” in *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İskender Gökarp and François Georgeon (eds.), Istanbul: Arba, 1990, pp. 55-77. For a more detailed analysis of the response of former Ottoman Arab elites to Kemalist Turkey, see William L. Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the Life and Thought of Sati al-Husri*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971. See also his *Islam against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985. For the impact of Ottoman modernization and the Young Turks in the Arab provinces of the empire, see Elie Keduri, *Arabic Political Memoirs and Other Studies*, London: Frank Cass, 1974, pp. 124-161. For the response of exiled Kurdish nationalist elite to Kemalism, see Ahmet Serdar Aktürk, “Imagining Kurdish Identity in Mandatory Syria: Finding a Nation in Exile,” unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Arkansas, 2013.

⁶⁶⁹ Quoted in Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006, p. 178.

Especially inspiring and influential was the Turkish War of Independence. Mustafa Kemal's role as the "savior of Turkey" had contributed immensely to his popularity within and beyond the Muslim world. As Georgeon suggests, Kemalism was seen as part of the revolt of the East against the West, and thus celebrated as a model struggle for liberation from Western imperialism.⁶⁷⁰ Although this admiration suffered a serious backlash among some groups with the abolition of the caliphate by the new regime in Turkey in 1924, and the subsequent reforms involving secularization, the Kemalist modernization experience continued to be a constant reference point, negative or positive, in major political discussions and disputes in the Middle East and beyond.⁶⁷¹ As Cleveland contends, "reforms emanating from Ankara served as a kind of sounding board against which certain Arab spokesmen tested their fundamental beliefs on the issues of cultural identity, social progress, and the means of acquiring a place among the nations."⁶⁷² While the Kemalist reforms like the full secularization of the civil code in 1926 had impacts on the debates on civil code in other Muslim countries,⁶⁷³ the strength of the women's movement in Turkey in the 1920s, particularly the struggle of Turkish Women's Union for suffrage, had a great effect on and encouraged women's activists elsewhere to make similar demands.

The political elite and intellectual circles in Turkey were of course aware of these influences. In fact, Georgeon suggests that Kemalists indeed

⁶⁷⁰ François Georgeon, "Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası (1919-1938): Bazı İşaret Taşları," in *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İskender Gökarp and François Georgeon (eds.), İstanbul: Arba, 1990, pp. 11-53. Georgeon notes that Mustafa Kemal was the most popular person in the Islamic world during 1922 and 1923. He adds, however that in addition to the Turkish example, Japan and Soviet Russia were also inspiring for Muslim societies that were under European colonial influence. For the influence of Turkish War of Independence on Indian Muslims, see Gain Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. On the influence of the Japanese model, see Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

⁶⁷¹ For example, the positive image of Mustafa Kemal in the eyes of Indian Muslims changed dramatically after the abolition of the caliphate. At a meeting of the Khilafat Committee in June 1924, the title "The Sword of Islam" given earlier to Mustafa Kemal was suspended. See Minault, 1982, p. 206. Picard also points to the abolition of the caliphate as a turning point for the changing attitudes of the Arab nationalists vis-à-vis Kemalism. See Picard, 1990, pp. 64-69. Cleveland discusses the reactions of the Arab public opinion to Kemalist secularism, particularly the critique of Shakip Arslan, a prominent Arab intellectual, who accused Kemalists of "the elimination of the very foundations of Islam." See Cleveland, 1981, p. 18.

⁶⁷² Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁷³ For example, Iraqi intellectuals had demanded a similar reform along the Turkish example from the British authorities in the 1920s. Noga Efrati, *Women in Iraq: Past Meets Present*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012, pp. 55-56.

aimed at promoting “new” Turkey, especially in independent and semi-independent Islamic countries.⁶⁷⁴ Although the perception of the Europeans had been the primary mirror in which Kemalists would see and represent themselves, the reflections in other Muslim-majority countries of what was going on in Turkey were also very important. As mentioned in Chapter 3, positive articles, commentaries and news published in Western newspapers about Turkey would be translated into Turkish and widely circulated through both national and local newspapers. The same was valid for the commentaries and news praising Turkey in the press in Middle Eastern countries and beyond. Particularly important was the image of Kemalist Turkey and its influence in Iran and in Arab countries that were former-Ottoman territories. Not only was news about reforms in Turkey translated from Syrian, Egyptian and Iranian newspapers into Turkish and published in national and local newspapers, similar developments in these countries were equally followed and reported in the Turkish press.⁶⁷⁵ In other words, the parallels between Turkey and other Muslim countries in terms of modernization efforts would always be noted and underlined.

One dynamic at play here was the aim to position Turkey, implicitly or explicitly, as “the model country” in the Muslim world.⁶⁷⁶ Starting in the late 1920s, representations of Turkey as the “bridge” between the East and West became widespread in the Turkish press; it was depicted as a reflector, shedding light towards its “less developed” Eastern neighbors.⁶⁷⁷ In Tekin Alp’s *Kemalizm*, the capital Ankara was portrayed as a city in heavenly light

⁶⁷⁴ He argues, however, that for countries under direct European rule, such as Morocco, Kemalists refrain from openly supporting local movements for independence in order not to disturb the European powers. Georgeon, 1990, p. 38-39.

⁶⁷⁵ For examples of news and commentaries in Turkish national and local press on modernization efforts in Iran and reactions to these efforts, see “İran’da teveddüt hareketleri,” *Yeni Adana*, 19 October 1934; “Pers, Persan, Persiyan değil İran, İranlı,” *Yeniyol*, 14 February 1935; “İranda irtica,” *Cumhuriyet*, 23 June 1935; “Meşhedte yeni elbise aleyhine gösteri,” *Kars*, 27 July 1935; “İran kadınları,” *Cumhuriyet*, 25 November 1935; “İran’da inkılap hareketleri,” *Cumhuriyet*, 19 January 1936; “Tehran,” *Cumhuriyet*, 8 October 1936. For translations and news from Egyptian press, see “Mustafa Kemal’in büyük reformları,” *Yeni Adana*, 11 January 1935; Mısır’da Peçe aleyhinde Nazire Zeyneddinin Faaliyetleri”, *Hakkın Sesi*, 6 February 1936; “Mısır kadınlarının tebriği,” *Kars*, 14 February 1935. For Palestine, see “Hürriyetle esaret, an’ane ile serbestî çarpışıyor,” *Cumhuriyet*, 17 February 1937. For Syria and Lebanon, see “Suriyede bey, paşa kalmadı,” *Hakkın Sesi*, 5 February 1936.

⁶⁷⁶ Some would even claim that it was the duty of the Turkish nation to be the example for all nations in the world. For an article claiming this through the rights of Turkish women in a local newspaper in Bursa, see Musa Ateş, “Çarşaf ve Peçeden Sonra Kafes!,” *Hakkın Sesi*, 28 January 1935.

⁶⁷⁷ Georgeon, 1990, p. 40.

(*nur şehri*): “the *kible* for the intellectuals in Egypt, Iran and Afghanistan is not Mecca anymore, but Çankaya. Atatürk is not Emirülmü’minîn (the leader of believers/Muslims) like the Turkish leaders in the Ottoman era; he is a person that inspires Muslims and guides them.”⁶⁷⁸ Such depictions of Kemalist Turkey as the center or the leading country in the Islamic world were not only concerned with promoting Kemalism outside Turkey; they would also support the proud national identity constructed under the new regime and thus reinforce the national image inside the country. Moreover, legitimacy of the reforms in Turkey was strengthened by making references to comparable initiatives in countries that were closest in terms of culture and history. In other words, the aim was also to send the message that Turkey was not alone in the Muslim world in pursuing radical modernization efforts. This was particularly crucial for those reforms that were potentially more risky in terms of fueling social opposition. Changes regarding women and most visible aspects of social life such as clothing were thus among the most significant issues. This was why any development related to them, particularly women’s clothing and veiling, in other Muslim countries would be closely followed by Turkish public opinion and would be highlighted by the Kemalist press.⁶⁷⁹ In fact, some of these developments would be reported in the Turkish press by using a language that would make them sound more significant and widespread than they actually were. For example, the removal by six Syrian women of their veils at a meeting in Damascus would be reported with the caption “women of Damascus have removed the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*.”⁶⁸⁰

Moreover, in reporting the changes in women’s clothing in other countries, Turkish women would be depicted as the forerunners among the Muslim women. Many newspaper articles from Middle Eastern newspapers, and speeches and declarations of women’s associations in other Muslim societies praising Turkish women’s achievements were frequently published

⁶⁷⁸ Alp, 1936, pp. 326-327. *Kible* is an Arabic word meaning direction, referring to the direction Muslims should face for the prayer. It is fixed as the direction of Kabaa in the city of Mecca. Çankaya is the neighborhood where the presidential office and residence are located in Ankara, so here it refers to the place where Atatürk was residing when he was the president. For the French version of Tekin Alp’s book, see *Le Kémalisme*, Paris: Felix Alcan, 1937. On Tekin Alp, see Jacob M. Landau, *Tekinalp: A Turkish Patriot 1883-1961*, Leiden: Netherlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1984.

⁶⁷⁹ For example, see “Arnavutluk Çarşaf ve Peçeleri Yasak Etti,” *Anadolu*, 7 February 1936.

⁶⁸⁰ “Şam kadınları peçe ve çarşafı attılar,” *Cumhuriyet*, 14 April 1936.

in both national and local newspapers in Turkey.⁶⁸¹ The idea that Turkish women's removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was celebrated by Arab women in countries like Egypt and Syria, and this encouraged them to initiate a similar rebellion against "backwardness" is visible in some of these articles translated from Arab newspapers.⁶⁸² In fact, some opponents of unveiling in Arab countries were also directly referring to unveiled Turkish women, since they were setting a negative example. Shakib Arslan, for example, would write numerous articles denouncing the insistence on unveiling in Turkey a sign of moral deprivation.⁶⁸³ So the public interest in what was going on in Turkey was there; but it was exaggerated by the Kemalists to the point that they would link all reforms regarding women in other Muslim countries to the developments in Turkey.⁶⁸⁴ This would also help them to further underline the "necessity" or "significance" of the reforms they wanted to initiate in the country. Even at the local level, this idea that modernization efforts could not be considered as solely national issues because of Turkey's position as the model country in the Muslim World was apparent. For example, during a discussion at the city council of Bursa on the implementation of the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, council member Rıza Yücer would support a firmer implementation by claiming that the removal of these veils would no longer be seen as an inner problem. For him, it was unacceptable that there were still women in Bursa wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* while "even" the women of those countries who were following Turkey in their modernization efforts had already begun to remove them:

In one of our meetings, we decided to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. There is no doubt that this decision is being carried out. However, the issue reached such a point that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* are no longer only the concerns of Turkey. Even those countries like Egypt, Iran and Syria, which consider us as their guide on the road to revolution and civilization and begin to walk on the revolutionary road that we indeed have paved, are prohibiting the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. Under these

⁶⁸¹ For example, see "Mısır Kadınlar Birliği ve Türk Kadını," *Yeni Adana*, 10 January 1935; "Mısır kadınlar birliği başkanının ajans muhabirine beyanatı," *Halk*, 31 January 1935; "Mısır kadınlarının tebriği," *Kars*, 14 February 1935.

⁶⁸² For example see "Mısır'da Peçe aleyhinde Nazire Zeyneddinin Faaliyetleri," *Hakkın Sesi*, 6 February 1936.

⁶⁸³ Cleveland, 1981, p. 19.

⁶⁸⁴ This can be followed in the commentaries published in Turkish newspapers on the reform projects in other Muslim countries. Tekin Alp, for example, would also explain reforms in Pahlavi Iran and Emir Amanullah's Afghanistan by their "copying" of the reforms in Turkey. See Alp, 1936, pp. 329-331.

circumstances, we definitely do not want to still come across women wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in our streets. We should speed up the implementation of our decision. And for example, we should not process the requests of those who have business with the municipality and come here [the city hall] wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*.⁶⁸⁵

The word “even” that Yücer uses explains the degree to which Turkish elites, even those at the local level, internalized the idea that Turkey was (or had to be) more “advanced” compared to other Muslim countries. This was of course subjective at many levels, yet politically useful for Kemalist purposes. In reality, the exchange among the Muslim countries and their influences on each other were never one-sided. While it was correct that Turkey was among the forerunners in the Muslim World in terms of achieving national sovereignty and introducing modernization reforms, this hardly meant that it was the model for others. Rather, it was one among many inspirations and references, which itself was inspired and influenced by other examples. Moreover, in each particular context, the issues of women’s veiling and unveiling were first and foremost discussed as part of much bigger questions such as how to be modern and to be “accepted” as modern in Western eyes. Muslim countries were partly in solidarity and partly in competition in the struggle for modernization, and influenced each other not so much on the stance to take on the question of veiling, but on how to deal with it. In other words, the veil should be removed, this was perceived as something given if one wanted to be modern and look modern; the question was rather how it would be removed.

II. The Arab World, the Caucasus, and Central Asia

While analyzing women’s unveiling in different contexts, it is crucial to take into consideration the scope of these experiences. In other words, the issue of whether unveiling remained as a debate among the intellectuals in the press and thus affected only a limited number of elite women, or turned into a general call for all women is an important dimension to consider. Can we talk about a campaign against veiling if there was no banning of the veil, local or general, for example? How are we to analyze the case of Egypt, where it is highly debatable whether there was even a movement or mobilization for

⁶⁸⁵ “Düinkü Uray Kurulunda,” *Hakkın Sesi*, 15 February 1936.

unveiling, in relation to the case of Turkey, where there were local yet widespread bans on the veil?

Also important is clearly defining what the concepts of veiling and unveiling referred to in each particular context. In other words, just as veiling, unveiling has meant different things in different places, and could acquire different meanings over time in a particular country. The most remarkable difference between the unveiling debate in the Arab world and the one in Iran or Turkey, for example, is that the former was mainly about the removal of the face veil. As Baron underlines, the widespread dispute in early 20th century Egypt was about *al-sufur*, unveiling, which referred to taking off women's face cover, since *al-hijab*, veiling, was a generic term signifying the covering of the face.⁶⁸⁶ In Syria and Lebanon under the French mandate as well, the debate on unveiling was mainly concerned with the removal of the face cover.⁶⁸⁷

In Egypt, the country that perhaps influenced the Arab world the most, while the debate on veiling had begun earlier, some of the urban elite women began to remove their face cover in the early 20th century.⁶⁸⁸ This was a process during which unveiling became a metaphor for Egypt's independence from British rule. Studying the visual representations of the Egyptian nation in the press, Baron indicates that when Egypt began to be depicted as a woman, from the early 1900s onwards, she had no face covering but she was always modest in dress.⁶⁸⁹ Thus, she was not a mirror image of French Marianne, for example; protecting local customs or "national" characteristics

⁶⁸⁶ Baron, 1989, p. 370. This would change, however, when the "return to the veil" movement emerged in the 1970s. Hijab would become to mean the covering of the head. See Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 22. The face veil used by the Egyptian women in early 20th century was a white one originated from Istanbul. Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender and Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, p. 34.

⁶⁸⁷ See Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000, pp. 127-140.

⁶⁸⁸ Non-Muslim Egyptian women begun removing the veil earlier than the Muslim women. As Badran puts, "when in the midst of massive economic and cultural change in Egypt women began to disdain these practices, non-Muslim women were less constrained to uphold the old ways. Moreover, for minority families engaged in commerce and trade with Europeans it became expedient to allow their daughters to break with such "backward" contentions and to project a "modern" aspect. Veiling, which had been a mark of social status, was increasingly becoming a stigma." Badran, 1995, p. 47.

⁶⁸⁹ Beth Baron, "Nationalist Iconography: Egypt as a Woman," in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (eds.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, pp. 105-124.

was always a major concern in the Egyptian modernist and nationalist imagination, as it was for many nationalisms in the wider non-Western context. Towards the 1930s, depicting Egypt as a young woman in European dresses was very common in the cartoons, but she was always with a headscarf. The “new woman” that this image of Egypt was representing was marked by her difference not only in clothing, that is, in her removal of the face veil and adoption of European attire, but also in education and participation in social life.

In addition to secular nationalism, Islamic modernism was also an influential ideology shaping Egyptian discourses of revitalization in the early 20th century. The feminist movement had also legitimized its demands with reference to these two main political agendas. Islamic modernism, in particular, “accorded space for a feminism within the framework of the religious culture and provided a congenial climate for its evolution.”⁶⁹⁰ As a call to reinterpret Islam, Islamic modernism provided Muslim men and women the tools with which to criticize certain prescriptions, such as the face veil, from within an Islamic point of view. While women’s voice was based on their own personal experiences, men’s pro-feminist discourse emerged primarily out of a search to explain their country’s “backwardness” vis-à-vis the West.⁶⁹¹ Just like for the Ottoman/Turkish male elite, for many educated Egyptian men, women’s low position in society appeared as one of the main reasons for their country’s “backwardness.” Qasim Amin, for example, as one of the pioneers of these male elite advocating women’s rights and the author of the much influential *Tahrir al-Mar’ah* (The Liberation of the Women), had called for an end to face veil in addition to other signs of women’s seclusion and suppression, such as polygyny, based on the argument that these practices were not Islamic.⁶⁹² The editor of the newspaper *al-Sufur* (Unveiling), which was founded in 1915, argued that not only Egyptian women but the whole nation was veiled, referring to the national revival that would be symbolized by the removal of the face veil.⁶⁹³

However, the real momentum for the removal of the face veil in Egypt was created by the members of the feminist movement. During the first two decades of the 20th century, leading Egyptian feminists like Huda Sharawi and

⁶⁹⁰ Badran, 1995, p. 11.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., p. 12.

⁶⁹² See Qasim Amin, *The Liberation of Women: Two Documents in the History of Egyptian feminism*, translated by Samiha Sidhom Peterson, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2000.

⁶⁹³ Baron, 2005, p. 35.

Bahithat al-Badiyah remained veiled. They argued that although the veil symbolized sexual difference, women should retain it until the society became ready for its removal.⁶⁹⁴ This gradualist approach, Badran suggests, turned the veil into a feminist tool which would assist women in their claim to participate in public life.⁶⁹⁵ They also insisted, however, that women would decide for themselves when to unveil; they did not need a call from male progressives, just like they refused to be guided by male traditionalists.⁶⁹⁶ Sharawi's removal of her face veil in 1923, the year when the Egyptian Feminist Union was established with Sharawi as its president, is referred to by scholars as a turning point leading to the unveiling of many Egyptian women.⁶⁹⁷ In her return from an international women's meeting in Rome, she appeared with her face uncovered. This was an individual but symbolic act, and perhaps a political statement that had helped with the unveiling of many others. Sharawi's picture with her face uncovered and with new style head covering immediately appeared in the press and kept being reprinted over the years.⁶⁹⁸

Egyptian feminists would also try to inform the public about unveiling in other countries, such as Turkey and Lebanon, through their publication, *L'Egyptienne*.⁶⁹⁹ Towards the end of 1930s, the face veil had largely removed by urban women thanks to these initiatives taken by the women's rights activists themselves. The fact that the veil did not become a national symbol in Egypt and thus the new unveiled Egyptian woman could be deployed as a symbol of a modern and independent Egypt against British colonialism helped women to legitimize and advance their claims against the face veil.⁷⁰⁰ This was very different from the case of Algeria, where the veil became the ultimate symbol of being Algerian against the culturally more aggressive colonialism

⁶⁹⁴ The topic of veiling was discussed in Egypt in 1909, in a meeting organized by Egyptian feminists for women, and the lecture given by a French woman compared the lives of Egyptian and European women. In Egyptian women's discussions on veiling and women's seclusion, there was a reference to freer peasant women who had productive roles and who were unveiled. On the other hand, there were references to the freedoms and achievements of women in the early periods of Islam, contrasted with the backwardness resulting from women's domestic confinement in the later period. Badran, 1995, p. 52-55.

⁶⁹⁵ Badran, 1995, p. 67.

⁶⁹⁶ Nabawiyah Musa was one of them for example. As a Muslim feminist, she had removed her face veil around 1909. Badran, 1995, p. 23.

⁶⁹⁷ Baron, 1989, p. 371. Sharawi kept her headscarf for some time, but later preferred to cover her hair occasionally. As a Muslim feminist, Nabawiyah Musa had removed her face veil even earlier, around 1909. Badran, 1995, p. 23.

⁶⁹⁸ Baron, 2005, p. 183.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 93.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 47-48.

of the French.⁷⁰¹ In fact, in 1937, the Fatwa Committee of Al-Azhar declared that the Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence did not oppose the removal of the face veil, and the Maliki School did not require the covering of the face. This can be interpreted as an indication showing the extent of legitimacy enjoyed by Egyptian feminists in their struggle against the face veil. As Badran suggests, “in this way the state, though the religious authorities, merely gave its indirect blessings to what women themselves had already achieved and what the peasant majority had always enjoyed.”⁷⁰²

The debate on unveiling in other Arab countries was very much influenced by the example of Egypt. Early advocates were male intellectuals who were inspired by Qasim Amin, like the Iraqi poet Jamil Sidqi al-Zahari.⁷⁰³ Women’s organizations were concerned primarily with women’s education and health, refraining from open mobilization for unveiling. In fact, the first women’s organization established in Iraq in 1923, the Women’s Awakening Club, for example, was disbanded because of the reactions that came from conservative circles. Despite the fact that members of the club had tried to explain that their goal was the advancement of the nation, the word “awakening” was perceived by the ulema as a call to discard the veil.⁷⁰⁴ Thus, inspired by the acts and writings of the Egyptian feminists, those Arab women in other countries who were advocates of unveiling mostly opted for individual removal of the face veil. Sometimes such symbolic public acts of unveiling were performed by women in groups on different occasions across the Arab world. A group of Syrian women first removed their face veil in nationalist demonstrations in Damascus in 1922; Muslim and Christian women of Jerusalem also unveiled during similar nationalist demonstrations in 1929; some intellectual Arab women unveiled for their public lectures on women’s issues, like Habibah Manshari in Tunis in 1929 and Anbara Salam in Beirut in 1927.⁷⁰⁵ The publishing of a book entitled *Unveiling and Veiling (al-Sufur wa al-Hijab)* by a Lebanese woman, Nazira Zayn al-Din, in 1928, however, created perhaps one of the most heated debates on unveiling and had reverberations not only in Greater Syria but across the Middle East.

⁷⁰¹ See Franz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, New York: Monthly Press, 1965.

⁷⁰² Badran, 1995, pp. 93-94.

⁷⁰³ See Efrati, 2012, pp. 115-117. Another advocate of unveiling in Iraq was a group of Marxist intellectuals in the 1920s, whose leading figure was Husain al-Rahhal. Their periodical, *al-Sahifa*, was advocating unveiling, in addition to women’s education, liberation and participation in the work force. Ibid., p. 118.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 122.

⁷⁰⁵ Badran, 1995; Thompson, 2000; Farzaneh Milani, *Veils and Words: The Emerging Voices of Iranian Women Writers*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1992, p. 3.

The debate on unveiling in Syria had indeed begun quite early as part of the discussion going on in the late 19th and early 20th century Ottoman context. Damascus-based religious conservatives were criticizing unveiling and mixing of men and women in public, for example, while at the same time supporting women's educational rights and political activity.⁷⁰⁶ Gelvin suggests that these ulema circles were also influential in the popular committees established during the brief Faysali interregnum (1918-1920), which organized campaigns to prevent women from wearing European style attire.⁷⁰⁷ During the Mandate period, the discussion on women's un/veiling was overshadowed by the dynamics of the colonial rule, just like the discussions on women's suffrage that had begun in the Syrian Congress in 1920.⁷⁰⁸ Because there was a dual legal system under the French Mandate (religious patriarchs had the right to supervise the religious law and personal status law), women's rights activists had to face a direct conflict with the religious elites in formulating and defending their demands publicly.⁷⁰⁹

Speaking from within an Islamic framework, Zayn al-Din's book argued that covering the face was against the spirit of Islam. Moreover, addressing the French state, it "made an explicit appeal for the precedence of civil law over religious law in issues of the veil and personal status."⁷¹⁰ Zayn Al-Din's book was translated into several languages in a year and received positive reactions especially from modernist circles. News of her book and her activities to promote her ideas in Beirut even reached the pages of provincial newspapers in Turkey. A Bursa newspaper, for example, published an article from a Beirut newspaper, celebrating Zayn al-Din as a "heroine Arab woman."⁷¹¹ However, while she was even compared to Qasim Amin and Mustafa Kemal by some, many people opposed the book severely. The ulema

⁷⁰⁶ James C. Gelvin, "Alternative Modernities and Constructions of Gender in Post-Hamidian Damascus," in *IXth Congress of Economic and Social History of Turkey, Dubrovnik, 20-23 August 2001*, H. İnalçık and O. Özel (eds.), Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2005, pp. 347-353.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 353.

⁷⁰⁸ The issue was revived in 1923 at the Lebanese Representative Council. It is important to note that those male members of the council who opposed women's suffrage were not composed of Muslims only; there were also Greek Orthodox representatives. For a detailed discussion on the Syrian and Lebanese debate on women's suffrage, see Thompson, 2000, pp. 117-126.

⁷⁰⁹ Thompson suggests that women's demands "sent tremors through the entire colonial civic order. They not only threatened the base of the power of the religious patriarchs, the dual legal system, but also the power of the state and nationalists elites who depended upon religious support, and the power of all men in the families." Ibid., p. 115.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid., p. 131.

⁷¹¹ "Mısır'da Peçe aleyhinde Nazire Zeyneddinin Faaliyetleri," *Hakkın Sesi*, 6 February 1936.

in particular responded by declaring the issue as a religious one, thus a matter of religious law under their authority. Al-Din's direct appeal to the French state for support on unveiling shaped the debates and reactions on this issue in Syria from that point onwards.



Figure 6.2. A photograph of Nazira Zayn al-Din, appeared as the frontispiece of her book. Source: Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

In the 1930s, upper-class women's adoption of French style dress and their participation in the public life gradually increased, which also triggered increasing reactions and even physical attacks against them by men.⁷¹² It

⁷¹² Thompson characterizes this as "violent gender conflict" stemming from men's efforts to remasculinize the public sphere and to reinforce the gendered spatial boundaries. See her detailed discussion, Thompson, 2000, pp. 171-224.

seems that unveiling remained limited to the elite circles; apart from a few bold women who had removed the veil, unveiling did not become a widespread phenomenon.⁷¹³ Even in Beirut, where elites adopted European customs more rapidly compared to the elite of Damascus, Muslim women would continue to wear veils until the early 1940s; they would remove them when they visited the Europeanized parts of the city but would put them on when they returned to their own neighborhoods.⁷¹⁴ In the 1930s, the agenda of the women's movement in Syria and Lebanon also became more moderate, emphasizing patriotic motherhood rather than the issues of unveiling or suffrage. This was also a move that should be understood within the context of colonialism; women were active supporters of the nationalist opposition against this domination.

They apparently believed that the support of a vital and unified women's movement could help nationalists win their struggle against the French, much as women had done in Egypt's 1919 revolution. Once nationalists controlled the state, they would be able to fulfill women's demands for rights. Women's leaders expected that an independent nationalist state would be secular and reform-minded, and would wield greater power over religious law than the French mandatory regime could.⁷¹⁵

Thus the colonial context significantly altered the dynamics of the demand for and the debate on unveiling. It was easier to denounce it as an imitation of the West; it could easily be a matter of controversy between men and women as a result of gender anxiety and men's fear of demasculinization under the colonial rule. It could, thus, easily be postponed until the nationalist victory. This points to an important difference in non-colonial contexts, such as Turkey and Iran, despite the fact that the anxieties stemming from the fear of "being/becoming too Western" were also part of the debate in these countries.⁷¹⁶

⁷¹³ A Turkish national newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, informed its readers in 1936 that a group of women had decided to remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf* at a meeting in the capital, Damascus. However, this group was composed of only six women. They had removed their veils during the meeting and went out to the street unveiled, the newspaper reported. "Şam kadınları peçe ve çarşafı attılar," *Cumhuriyet*, 14 April 1936.

⁷¹⁴ Thompson, 2000, p. 180.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁷¹⁶ Thompson, however, also includes Egypt in this analysis. While referring to the difference the colonial context brings into the picture, she contrasts the case of Syria and Lebanon not only from Turkey but also from Egypt. See *ibid.*, p. 139-140. This, I think, risks blurring the

A sort of in-between case was Afghanistan. A buffer zone under the impact of imperialist rivalries in the 19th century, Afghanistan was under the heavy influence of the UK until it became independent in 1919.⁷¹⁷ To achieve this, however, King Amanullah Khan had given up an important income of the state, the annual subsidy the British government had been paying to control Afghanistan's foreign affairs, which significantly limited the capacity of the state mechanism available to him. Wide suggests, although usually underplayed in the analyses of the 1920s Afghanistan, the extremely weak economic situation of the country and thus low capacity of the state should be taken into account in discussing both the reform agendas of King Amanullah, including reforms regarding women, and reasons behind their very limited impact, and even, in some cases, failure.⁷¹⁸ The king's attempt to raise the state revenue by increasing taxes and cancelling former subsidies to tribal leaders only contributed to his unpopularity and to the rising social discontent with his modernization policies. In addition, his radical approach to state building by expanding the size of government and bureaucracy and by increasing the number of state employees under this economic hardship turned his decade-long rule into "a period of both intense reform and social revolts."⁷¹⁹

The anti-veiling campaign in 1920s Afghanistan, if it can indeed be called a campaign, was the removal of the face veil by Queen Soraya during a speech given by King Amanullah in the palace in October 1928. At the moment he uttered in his speech that Islam does not dictate that women cover their faces, the queen stands up and removes her transparent face veil, and several other women attending the lecture follow her.⁷²⁰ The queen, in fact,

difference between Turkey and Egypt. For more on the anxieties of "becoming too Western," see Najmabadi, 1993.

⁷¹⁷ For more, see Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969. See also B.D. Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, *Connecting Histories in Afghanistan: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. In fact, even after independence, the British considered King Amanullah as dangerous for its regional interests for some time and tried to keep his leadership weak in terms of having impact and alliances in the region. See Saikal, 2012, p. 66. For the influence of British India over Afghanistan after independence, especially in terms of economy of dress, see Thomas Wide, "Astrakhan, Borqa', Chadari, Dreshti: The Economy of Dress in Early-Twentieth-Century Afghanistan," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 163-201.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid., p. 179.

⁷¹⁹ Saikal, 2012, p. 60. See also Wide, 2014, pp. 176-178.

⁷²⁰ Moghadam says "some one hundred Afghan women had reportedly discarded the veil by October 1928." Valentine M. Moghadam, "Nationalist Agendas and Women's Rights:

had appeared totally unveiled and in Western style clothing during the royal couple's tour in Europe a few months earlier. She was criticized in Egypt and Iran for this during their visit.⁷²¹ Thus, the act of the removal of the face veil by a handful of high-level women in the state bureaucracy was the final stage of this clothing change that had started during the tour. Apart from this symbolic performance, however, there was neither a law nor a decree that enforced unveiling. The use of the face veil and *chadari* (usually known as *burqa*) were discouraged through presenting royal women as examples, but this had limited effect on society other than the high classes and state officials of Kabul.⁷²² As Poullada indicates, "Queen Soraya's unveiling act on the palace steps no doubt offended the more traditional, but it must be noted that few felt forced to imitate her example. The fact is that during Amanullah's reign nearly all women who traditionally wore the veil continued to do so."⁷²³ His attempt to prohibit the use of the veil on certain streets of Kabul also proved short-lived.⁷²⁴ The state was simply incapable of imposing any systematic reform on clothing; "unlike Atatürk's or Reza Shah's 'authoritarian modernization,' where cultural reforms can be read as assertions of state power, Amanullah's exhortation to unveil only stressed the limitations of that power."⁷²⁵

Yet, it has been widely argued that Amanullah Khan's unveiling policy cost him his throne. Given that he had in fact done very little concerning

Conflicts in Afghanistan in the Twentieth Century," in *Feminist Nationalism*, Lois A. West (ed.), New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 75-100.

⁷²¹ Wide indicates that Queen Soraya had changed her clothing according to the each country they visited. She would appear completely uncovered in London, dressed identical in style to English Queen Mary, while covering her hair in Egypt. King Amanullah was wearing a hat. See Wide, 2014, p. 185. In Iran, in an interview with her in a women's journal, the queen characterized the veil as a tribal custom, gradually became related with religion. She said that it was intended to bring social decency, but turned into a restriction on women's advancement. See Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Conceiving Citizens: Women and the Politics of Motherhood in Iran*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 151-152.

⁷²² *Chadari* was a full-length cover. Similar to the unveiling policy, polygamy was never outlawed but only discouraged through an informal campaign that utilized Islamic references and by setting King Amanullah and Queen Soraya's marriage as an example, despite the reforms to secularize the legal system. Saikal, 2012, p. 78.

⁷²³ L.B. Poullada, "Political Modernization in Afghanistan," in *Afghanistan: Some New Approaches*, George Grassmuck, Ludwig W. Adamec and Frances H. Irwin (eds.), Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969, pp. 99-148.

⁷²⁴ Baiza, 2013, p. 91. Wide also mentions an announcement in the official newspaper prohibiting the use of *borqa*. However he indicates that there is no source showing that this was ever implemented; in fact "certainly such a decree would have been completely unenforceable, even in Kabul." Wide, 2014, p. 189.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

women's veiling, this seems too simplistic an explanation. In fact, he had initiated a more systematic campaign to modernize men's dress, which fueled hostility towards the king.⁷²⁶ Moreover, the reach of the reforms introduced during Afghanistan in the 1920s could hardly exceed the boundaries of the capital Kabul. However, his general policies regarding women's education, their greater participation in the public life, and symbolic change exemplified by the unveiling of royal women certainly played a role in the demonstrations and uprisings against his rule that began in 1928.⁷²⁷ As Saikal suggests, they at least "provided his opponents with more effective ammunition to fuel agitations in Afghan microsocieties against what they termed his 'infidel' rule."⁷²⁸ Especially outside Kabul, the influence of rumors and hearsay about the change in women's dress in Kabul played an important role in creating a perception that veiling was banned, and thus in fueling the hostility towards the king.⁷²⁹ Among the demands of the rebellious chieftains and ulema were the king's divorce from Queen Sorayya, closure of all girls' schools, recalling of the girls sent abroad for education, and restoration of the veil.⁷³⁰ The first decision of the new government established after the overthrow of Amanullah Khan in 1929 was the prohibition on woman leaving home without an escort and the policy of allowing unveiling was cancelled.⁷³¹

A quite different trajectory can be seen in the anti-veiling campaigns initiated in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. Although developed almost simultaneously with the symbolic efforts for women's unveiling in Afghanistan and arguably motivated by the reforms regarding women in Kemalist Turkey in order not to fall behind this bourgeois counterpart, anti-veiling campaigns in Central Asia and the Caucasus ended up being atypical

⁷²⁶ The campaign concerning men's clothing was also effective only in Kabul. For the details of the campaign, see *ibid.*, p. 186-188.

⁷²⁷ In 1924, he had to close down the girls' school opened in Kabul due to religious opposition and rebellion, for example. Although the school was reopened later that year, King Amanullah nevertheless suspended further development in women's education until his return from the tour to Europe in 1928. Baiza, 2013, p. 78.

⁷²⁸ Saikal, 2012, p. 89.

⁷²⁹ Wide, 2014, pp. 190-192. There are also claims that the British circulated pictures of the queen without the veil among the tribes in the periphery. Accordingly, conservative tribal leaders and clerics denounced queen's removal of the veil as betrayal of Afghan and Islamic culture and this added to the enmity against the royal family. See Huma Ahmed-Ghosh, "A History of Women in Afghanistan: Lessons Learnt for the Future or Yesterdays and Tomorrow: Women in Afghanistan," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 4(3), May 2003, pp. 1-14.

⁷³⁰ Saikal, 2012, pp. 89-90. Amanullah Khan actually tried to reverse the situation by retreating from some of his policies, but it was too late. See Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003. See also Moghadam, 1997.

⁷³¹ Wide, 2014, p. 163.

examples in many ways.⁷³² Particularly the case of Soviet Uzbekistan stands apart as the most violent experience. Launched publicly on International Women's Day (8 March) in 1927 at a large demonstration, the *Hujum* (literally, attack), the Communist party-led anti-veiling campaign aimed at the removal of the full-body covering robe (*paranji*) and face veil (*chachvon*).⁷³³ Vanguards would be the party members and their immediate families, and they would perform this role through collective unveilings in party meetings, conferences and congresses.⁷³⁴ The burning of the veils in these gatherings became the symbol of the *Hujum*. There was no outlawing of the veil, but the state increasingly used force to create consent.⁷³⁵ While there were different individual and collective reactions to the campaigns, resistance was strong in general. The Muslim clergy called upon Uzbek men to attack women who were unveiled. An estimated 2,500 Uzbek women were murdered by the male opponents of unveiling.⁷³⁶

This unparalleled level of violence came to characterize the Soviet anti-veiling campaigns in the literature, emphasizing the role the radical and

⁷³² Northrop claims that the Turkish example fastened the Soviets to launch a campaign for women's emancipation. "The fact that Atatürk in Turkey and Amanullah Khan in Afghanistan had launched unveiling campaigns also pushed Bolshevik activists onward, lest such a dramatic statement of liberation first be made by a bourgeois rather than communist state. Party discussions in 1926 include specific references to the Turkish and Afghan examples, and Soviet press discussions of Atatürk and Amanullah became steadily more critical as their implied competition became greater." Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, p. 81-82.

⁷³³ The *Hujum* was in fact a general term for the campaign of the Communist Party to "liberate" Muslim women. See Kamp, 2006, p. 150. However, it took different forms across Central Asia and the Caucasus. In Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, it mainly aimed at the removal of the *paranji* and *chachvon*. Northrop notes that these heavy veils became widespread only after the establishment of the Russian colonial power in the 1880s, and they were primarily worn by urban women. Turkmen women used to wear *yashmak*, and Kazakh and Kyrgyz women rarely veiled. See Northrop, 2004, pp. 12-19. Kamp suggests, however, that the veiling of Bukharan women, for example, was not a response or was not influenced by Russian colonialism. See Marianne Kamp, "Women-initiated Unveiling: State-led Campaigns in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 205-228. Perhaps, the great variety in women's clothing and veiling across Central Asia makes it hard to make generalizations for the whole region. The degree of Russian penetration was also uneven, varied from one city to the other.

⁷³⁴ Northrop, 2004, p. 84.

⁷³⁵ Kamp, 2006, p. 3.

⁷³⁶ Marianne Kamp, "Femicide as Terrorism: The Case of Uzbekistan's Unveiling Murders," in *Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones: From the Ancient World to the Era of Human Rights*, Elizabeth Heineman (ed.), Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2011, pp. 56-70. Kamp notes that many of the murderers were the victim's family members.

anti-religious policies of the Communist Party played across the Soviet East. Northrop argues that having perceived Muslim women as victims of patriarchal oppression, the party utilized the idea of women's emancipation as a strategy to find Bolshevik allies.⁷³⁷ In his analysis, although the *Hujum* was initiated by Soviet women activists in the Uzbek Communist Party, Uzbek women were almost completely absent in the party ranks and thus the campaign was mainly guided by the Zhenotdel, the women's section of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. According to him, not only in Uzbekistan but also in other Muslim countries of Soviet Union, unveiling was experienced as an imposition from outside, a reflection of the "civilizing mission" of the Bolsheviks, and hence, should be analyzed as "part of a wider narrative of European interactions with the colonial subject." This colonial nature, Northrop suggests, also transformed the meaning of the veil for the Central Asian Muslims: "wearing a veil became more than a narrowly religious or moral matter; for many people it also became an act of political and national resistance to an outside colonial power."⁷³⁸ In this sense, he finds the closest example to the Soviet anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s in colonial Algeria in the 1950s, where the veil became the ultimate symbol of the struggle against the French.⁷³⁹

Kamp's analysis of the *Hujum* differs from that of Northrop in essentially two ways. First, she emphasizes the pre-Soviet roots of the discussion of women's emancipation and unveiling among the modernists of Central Asia (the *Jadids*). She argues that "reforming" women was already on the agenda of early 20th century Muslim reformers, who began discussing unveiling around 1910. Their ideas deeply influenced the activists that would be part of the anti-veiling campaigns during the Soviet era. In other words, there was an indigenous motive for women's modernization already under way in Muslim Central Asia and Caucasus before the Bolshevik Revolution.⁷⁴⁰ Second, Kamp underlines women's agency in the anti-veiling campaigns, particularly the vanguard role the initiatives of the Muslim women activists

⁷³⁷ Northrop, 2004, p. 11-12. For an earlier work looking at the motivations of the communist party in launching the unveiling campaigns based on Russian sources, see Gregory Massel, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.

⁷³⁸ Northrop, 2004, p. 13.

⁷³⁹ He suggests that the French authorities were directly inspired by the Bolshevik *Hujum*. Ibid., p. 29.

⁷⁴⁰ Kamp, 2006, pp. 32-52.

played in the early 1920s.⁷⁴¹ She suggests that instead of approaching the *Hujum* in the background of a struggle between the colonizer (Soviet Russia) and the colonized (Uzbeks), it should be analyzed as a multisided struggle in which the Uzbek women and men were the primary actors.⁷⁴²

Similar to the Uzbek case is Soviet Azerbaijan, where the party-led anti-veiling campaign launched in 1928 in fact originated in the debate among the Azeri women themselves. Already in 1917, at a Congress of Muslim Clergy of Transcaucasia, Azeri women had appeared with uncovered faces and without the *chador* and these initiatives for unveiling continued through the activities of the Muslim women's clubs after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1920.⁷⁴³ Thus, as Heyat suggests, the argument common among Soviet historians that "Azeri women (along with Muslim Central Asian women) were liberated from the veil for the first time by the Soviet government" is incorrect.⁷⁴⁴ In 1926, inspired by reforms in Turkey and news about unveiling in Uzbekistan, the debate on the *chador* accelerated in Azerbaijan and soon turned into a party-led initiative. Although there was never a law or a decree, there were directives issued by party and state organizations.⁷⁴⁵ Like in Uzbekistan, the unveiling momentum of the women's activists in Azerbaijan became a project at the hands of the party; a shift that Kamp characterizes as significant. This shift not only changed the parameters of women's activism and the symbolic meaning of the veil, but transformed unveiling into "a site of violent conflict."⁷⁴⁶ While the acceleration of the polarization on the issue of veil and increase in the level of violence threatened many women, it also led some women activists to participate in the anti-veiling campaigns more resolutely. The murder of a housewife, Sareyye Khalilova, by her father

⁷⁴¹ Women from all over Central Asian cities were also part of the debates in the Jadid press even before the 1917 Revolution. Women's journals were publishing articles comparing Muslim women's social positions in different countries, and making references to the debates on veiling in other Muslim contexts, such as Turkey and Egypt. Kamp, 2014, p. 209.

⁷⁴² Kamp, 2006, p. 6.

⁷⁴³ On International Women's Day in 1923, in many districts of Baku, women unveiled in groups gatherings. These early initiatives, too, received violent reactions. Kamp, 2014, p. 214-215. For the activities of the largest and most influential women's club in Azerbaijan of the time, Ali Bayramov Women's Club in Baku, see Farideh Heyat, *Azeri Women in Transition: Women in Soviet and Post-Soviet Azerbaijan*, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 89-94.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

⁷⁴⁵ Kamp, 2014, p. 219. The activists of the Women's Division of the party in Kazakhstan, Turkistan and Tajikistan also organized meetings for unveiling. Ibid., p. 221.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 223. The level of violence against unveiled in Azerbaijan women remained limited compared to Uzbekistan. But unveiled women faced assault in streets, were stoned by children, and beaten by men. There were even cases of murder. Heyat, 2002, p. 92; 98.

because she was unveiled in Baku in January 1930 became a turning point in Azerbaijan, for example. Meetings were organized across the country to denounce the veil and to declare commitment to “the path of Khaliova.”⁷⁴⁷ By the end of 1930s, the majority of the younger generation Azeri women were unveiled.

Similarities have been drawn between the Muslim Soviet republics, on the one hand, and the anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey and Iran, on the other, in broad terms, with regards to the role of the state in social change, in diminishing the power of the clergy and decreasing the public visibility of Islam. However, as Kamp suggests, the Soviet republics differ in that the state had greater coercive power at its disposal than did the state in Turkey and Iran.⁷⁴⁸ In addition, although Kamp rightly argues that colonialism should not overshadow the analyses of the anti-veiling campaigns that were put into practice in Muslim societies under Soviet Union and should not blur the role played especially by Muslim women activists, the presence of a colonial power was nevertheless a significant factor changing the dynamics of the unveiling debate in fundamental ways, as also underlined for the Arab context above. The fact that Turkey and Iran were independent states and that they were never directly colonized certainly sets them aside as the two closest examples of modernization in the Muslim world, in general, and of change in women’s clothing, in particular.

III. Iran, Albania and Turkey: Some Comparative Remarks

It can be argued that three cases - Iran, Albania and Turkey - differ from other examples discussed above and need to be explored in more detail and in comparison to each other. The authoritarian regimes of Iran, Albania and Turkey organized more systematic, determined and effective anti-veiling campaigns compared to other countries in the Muslim world. The similarity between these three examples of anti-veiling campaigns is actually part of a more general parallelism that exists between Iran, Albania and Turkey during the inter-war era: not only in the changes regarding women’s clothing, but also in many other fields; reforms initiated in these countries were guided by very similar modernization projects. This parallelism has received greater attention

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 99.

⁷⁴⁸ Kamp takes this comparative remark further in her recent article. She says, “‘the state’ varied so much that similarities in state actions [of Soviet republics, Turkey, Iran etc.] may be superficial.” Kamp, 2014, p. 206. For her earlier discussion, see Kamp, 2006, pp. 178-181.

in the case of Iran and Turkey.⁷⁴⁹ Inter-war Turkey and Iran have been viewed as different from other Muslim countries because they were formally independent nation-states that were never directly colonized. Moreover, they had adopted very similar laws and reforms under parallel authoritarian regimes, which were closely informed by each other. Thus, it has been argued that they show sufficient similarity for a historically grounded comparison in various fields.⁷⁵⁰ In fact, the similarities with inter-war Albania are not any less significant. Albania was also an independent nation-state, where modernization reforms were put into practice by an authoritarian regime led by strong and Western-oriented political elites, who were informed by the experiences of other Muslim-majority countries, particularly by Turkey. Just as Atatürk and Reza Shah had emerged as “men of order” in response to the intellectual, political and economic questions originated in the 19th century, the Albanian nation-state under the leadership of King Zog I was shaped by very similar concerns that fashioned the authoritarian regimes of Southeast Europe, including Turkey.⁷⁵¹ In all three countries, the nationalist agenda emphasizing the national identity, history and language emerged and developed side by side an equally strong desire to “catch up with the West” and to attain recognition as a modern, equal nation among the “civilized” states. The “woman question” and change in the way people dressed were central to this process.

However, no study has yet analyzed the anti-veiling campaigns in Iran, Albania and Turkey together. While there have been some attempts at comparing the policies of the Kemalist and Pahlavi regimes regarding women’s clothing, they did not go beyond outlining the issue in very general terms, and Albania was never included in the picture as a comparable example. Among the three, the Iranian case has received more attention, partly because most of the official documents related to the anti-veiling campaign of the first Pahlavi era were published by the Islamic regime in the 1990s and thus the

⁷⁴⁹ See Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher (eds.), *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2004; Touraj Atabaki (ed.), *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society, and the State in Turkey and Iran*, London, I. B. Tauris, 2007. For an earlier discussion that can be considered as an introductory piece, see Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of The Modern Middle East*, New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 26-30.

⁷⁵⁰ Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher, “Introduction,” in *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher (eds.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2004, pp. 1-12.

⁷⁵¹ See Berd J. Fischer (ed.), *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2006.

issue was more accessible and perhaps politically more “urgent” for scholars to explore because of the compulsory veiling imposed on Iranian women. More importantly, the anti-veiling campaign in Iran in the 1930s has been singled out in the literature as the most decisive, authoritarian and harshly implemented example. As one of the pioneers of the field of Iranian Studies has indicated, *kashf-e hijab* (unveiling) was the most radical component of the Women’s Awakening project of the Pahlavi regime, reflecting a “unique absolutist approach” to the issue of women’s dress.⁷⁵² This “uniqueness” stemmed from the argument that Iran under Reza Pahlavi was the only country to make unveiling compulsory country-wide. While most scholars of Iran emphasize this by claiming that veiling was banned by the shah, without detailing how, some specify the means through which it was banned. Kashani Sabet, for example, claims that the prohibition of *chador* was decreed and legislated,⁷⁵³ while Paidar suggests that the removal of the veil was ordered by a decree of the shah in January 1936.⁷⁵⁴ Moreover, even when scholars agree on the means through which the veil was banned in Iran, ambiguity remains as to what exactly was banned as the veil. Both Ettehaideh and Paidar, for instance, argue that a decree was issued by the shah; but while the former claims that the decree prohibited the *chador*, the latter says it prohibited both the *chador* and the scarf.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵² Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, p. 100. For the Iranian case, see also Patricia L. Baker, “Politics of Dress: The Dress Reform Laws of 1920-1930s Iran,” in *Languages of Dress in the Middle East*, Nancy Lindisfarne-Tapper and Bruce Ingham (eds.), London: Curzon Press, 1997, pp. 178-192; Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, “Expanding Agendas for the ‘New’ Iranian Woman: Family law, work, and unveiling,” in *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921-1941*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 157-180; Shireen Mahdavi, “Reza Shah Pahlavi and Women: A Re-evaluation,” in *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921-1941*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 181-192; Houshang Chehabi, “Banning of the Veil and its Consequences,” in *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921-1941*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 193-210.

⁷⁵³ See Kashani-Sabet, 2011, p. 156. She uses both words; on page 155, for example, Kashani-Sabet argues that the decree for unveiling became law, implying that the decree came first and then turned into a law. Iranian *chador* is very similar to Turkish *çarşaf* and thus can be seen as its equivalent.

⁷⁵⁴ Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 106-107. She also claims that the decree ordered the police to remove women’s veils.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 107; Mansoureh Ettehaideh, “The Origins and Development of the Women’s Movement in Iran, 1906-41” in *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, Lois Beck and Guity Nashat (eds.), Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004, pp. 85-106.

The Iranian case became such an important benchmark that while only little was known about women's unveiling in Kemalist Turkey except for some general remarks, many scholars have come to the conclusion that it was far less radical compared to Iran. This conclusion was also reinforced by scholars of Turkey writing in English. The lack of a comparable law banning veiling in Turkey has been interpreted as lack of intervention in women's clothing by the Kemalist regime.⁷⁵⁶ As a result, there emerged in the literature a consensus that in Turkey, "it was wisely considered that an outright ban on the veil would provoke a catastrophic storm"⁷⁵⁷ and thus "there was never any forced unveiling."⁷⁵⁸ Despite the fact that scholarly attention on comparative aspects of the Kemalist and Pahlavi modernizations has been on the rise and very important works have been published, the comparison of the anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey and Iran remained limited to such general conclusions, lacking detailed and solid information regarding the precise content, implementation and consequences of these campaigns.

Recent research on both Iran and Turkey has attempted to fill this gap and produced a different picture. As Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari argue in their critique of the scholarship on the Iranian case, recent studies actually reveal that anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey and Iran "had more in common than previously appreciated."⁷⁵⁹ Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari change the parameters of the comparison, since they suggest that "Iran's *kashf-e hijab* was neither legislated nor 'decreed' by Reza Shah,"⁷⁶⁰ there was in fact no banning of the veil countrywide in Iran. And again, contrary to what has been argued, there was in fact forced unveiling in Turkey, albeit at the local level, as this study has demonstrated in detail throughout previous chapters. Moreover, if there was one country that indeed legislated against the veil, it was Albania; yet, very little has been said about this "uniqueness." Equally little explored was the degree to which Albania can be discussed as part of the

⁷⁵⁶ It seems that a few short but important articles published in Turkish were not accessible to scholars who have attempted making comparative remarks. As emphasized in the introduction, these articles have not received the attention they deserved in Turkish-written sources either. For these leading articles in Turkish on anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey, see Çapa, 1996; Uyar, 1996; Yakut, 2002.

⁷⁵⁷ John Norton, "Faith and Fashion in Turkey", in *Languages of Dress in the Middle East*, Nancy Lindisfarne-Tapper and Bruce Ingham (eds.), London: Curzon Press, 1997, pp. 149-177.

⁷⁵⁸ Chehabi, 2003, p. 193.

⁷⁵⁹ Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi and Afshin Matin-asgari, "Unveiling Ambiguities: Revisiting 1930s Iran's *Kashf-e Hijab* Campaign," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 121-139.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

most sensible comparison; the one between Turkey and Iran. This section is an attempt to discuss these three cases together. One significant handicap is that we do not know as much about the Albanian case as we do about Turkey and Iran. Clayer's article seems to be the most detailed account available in English, in addition to sources on general parameters of modernization in Albania.⁷⁶¹ Thus, comparative remarks about Albania are mainly derived from her account.

In Albania, the a-religious character of the state had been underlined by the nationalist elite right from the start. As a European nation-state whose population was composed of multiple religious communities, Muslims being the majority, Albania was established as a secular state in order to strengthen the national identity and unity in the face of this religious diversity.⁷⁶² The idea of reforming Islam was on the modernization agenda of the elites even before the gaining of independence in 1920,⁷⁶³ and remained so, along with the idea of attaining state control over religious institutions once the state was established.⁷⁶⁴ The monarch of modern Albania, King Zog I, formerly known as Ahmet Zogolli, received his high school education in Istanbul, at Lycée Impérial de Galatasaray, where he was exposed to the ideas of the Young Turks.⁷⁶⁵ Directly involved in the Albanian national struggle against the Ottomans and then in the state-building process, King Zog was also influenced by the elite circles of Vienna when he was exiled there during WWI. He was determined not only to break Albania away from its Ottoman past, but also to refashion the nation as a truly modern European one.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶¹ Nathalie Clayer, "Behind the Veil: The Reform of Islam in Interwar Albania or the Search for a 'Modern' and 'European' Islam," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 231-251.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁷⁶³ Albania declared its independence during the Balkan Wars in 1912. However, it was occupied in WWI. Its independence was finally recognized by the international community in 1920.

⁷⁶⁴ For earlier debates on reforming Islam in Albania, see Nathalie Clayer, "Adapting Islam to Europe: The Albanian Example," in *Islam und Muslime in (Südost)Europa im Kontext von Transformation und EU-Erweiterung*, Christian Voss et Jordanka Telbizova-Sack (eds.), München: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2010, pp. 53-69.

⁷⁶⁵ For more, see Jason Hunter Tomes, *King Zog of Albania: Europe's Self-Made Muslim Monarch*, New York: New York University Press, 2004.

⁷⁶⁶ In fact, even his adoption of the name Zog as his imperial name was in order to distance himself from the Ottomans, to get rid of the Turkish sounding original family name Zogolli, which had a Turkish suffix (-oğlu). He also did not choose to officially use his first name, Ahmet, a Muslim male name, probably for the same reason.

Although this was also the goal of the Kemalist regime in Turkey, the Ottoman legacy continued to influence both countries in many ways. In fact, Albania was late among the Balkan states in achieving independence from the Ottoman Empire, and when it “emerged from the First World War it was still in many respects Ottoman, from its architecture to its religious make-up as well as many aspects its economic, social and political structure.”⁷⁶⁷ On top of this Ottoman legacy shared by the two countries came authoritarian regimes led by two “Balkan strongmen.”⁷⁶⁸ In particular, policies regarding religion and religious communities in inter-war Albania show striking similarities to those followed in Turkey under the Kemalist regime. Like in Turkey, the Albanian state aimed at establishing its control over religious affairs.⁷⁶⁹ Both countries opted for very radical secularizing reforms, such as abolishing the religious courts, the change of the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday, and the adoption of a secular Civil Code. Particularly the last one differentiates Turkey and Albania from Iran and other Muslim-majority countries where family laws were never fully secularized. The Albanian Civil Code, which was adopted in 1929, three years after the adoption of Swiss Civil Code in Turkey, was mainly based on the French Code Napoléon, with articles taken from Italian and Swiss Codes.⁷⁷⁰ As in Turkey, the Albanian Civil Code aimed at granting equal status to all citizens and secularizing the personal status law. It abolished polygamy and turned marriage into a civil matter, making provisions for a general divorce process for all Albanians regardless of their

⁷⁶⁷ Bernd J. Fischer, “Introduction,” in *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*, Bernd J. Fischer (ed.), London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2006, pp. 1-18.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁷⁶⁹ This state control also included the use of Islamic institutions and practices for nationalist and modernist policies of the state. For example, Ramadan sermons were used in Albania to advise Muslims on the significance of national unity, progress and civilization. Clayer, 2014, p. 232. The Kemalist regime in Turkey also systematically used the sermons as a means of political communication and indoctrination. Sevgi Adak, “Kemalist Laikliğin Oluşum Sürecinde Ramazanlar (1923-1938),” *Tarih ve Yönlüm Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 11, Fall 2010, pp. 47-88. In contrast to Turkey, however, where the regime tried to severely suppress the religious orders, the Albanian state continued to recognize these orders as part of the Islamic community. In fact, particularly the Bektashi doctrine had been highlighted and promoted as liberal Islam by Albanian nationalists since the end of the 19th century. These modernist nationalists were also emphasizing the equality of men and women, and as part of this, they were opposed to women’s veiling. See Nathalie Clayer, *Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri: Avrupa’da Çoğunluğu Müslüman bir Ulusun Doğuşu*, Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2013, p. 372.

⁷⁷⁰ Owen Pearson, *Albania in the Twentieth Century: A History, Vol. I, Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic and Monarch, 1908-1939*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2004, p. 307.

religion. As such, it severely limited the power and control of the clergy of all religions over their communities.⁷⁷¹

As in all other countries, the use of the veil in Albania was predominantly an urban issue. However, the *perçe* (face veil) did not necessarily refer to religious differences. For example, as Isa Blumi indicates, while rural women, both Muslims and Catholics, would work in the fields unveiled, women living in the cities, again both Muslims and Catholics, would be veiled in late-Ottoman northern Albania.⁷⁷² Nevertheless, in the 1920s when un/veiling became a political debate in newly independent Albania, the measures and propaganda were targeting the Muslim community. Women's unveiling became an issue as part of the discussions on improving women's social position, during which Turkey was one of the reference points. In 1923, for example, a deputy in the Albanian parliament referred to Latife Hanım's visit to the Turkish parliament having removed her face veil.⁷⁷³ The same year, at the congress of the Albanian Muslims in Tirana, abolishing women's veiling was discussed as a necessary reform for the progress of the country.⁷⁷⁴ In all major political developments throughout the 1920s, such as during the introduction of the Civil Code, the issue reappeared. The first open official action was taken in 1929. The Ministerial Council banned the *perçe* and the *ferace*, with the Ministry of Justice giving the necessary orders to the police stations not to offend people during the application of the ban and to work together with the district councils to convince women to remove these veils. Although it is not clear who was behind the initiative, it seems that some religious leaders among the Islamic community were also supporting unveiling.⁷⁷⁵ Associated not only with backwardness and fanaticism but also with the Ottoman past, the characterization of the *perçe* and the *ferace* in the discourse of the Albanian secularist elite was very similar to the perception of

⁷⁷¹ Pearson suggests that while Muslims showed no dissent to such changes, the Catholic clergy protested the adoption of the secular Civil Code but achieved no result. See *ibid.*, p. 308.

⁷⁷² Isa Blumi, *Rethinking The Late Ottoman Empire: A Comparative Social and Political History of Albania and Yemen 1878-1918*, Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2003, p. 147.

⁷⁷³ Clayer, 2014, p. 237. A proposal was discussed in the parliament in 1923 which suggested that the government should make propaganda through the national Islamic congress in order to improve women's social life by taking Turkey as an example. *Ibid.*, p. 247, fn. 14.

⁷⁷⁴ Vickers suggests that even the most conservatives reluctantly agreed at the congress that this was a necessary reform. Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2001, pp. 108-109.

⁷⁷⁵ Clayer does not give the details of the ban. Some sources claim that the president of the newly elected national Islamic Congress had asked the Minister of Justice to ban the veil. Clayer, however, argues that this is unlikely. She thinks that it was the initiative of the political authority rather than the head of the Islamic community. Clayer, 2014, p. 233.

the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the Turkish context. It is also telling that although there was a central decision, it nevertheless envisaged the involvement of the local administrative units to “convince” women, adding a strong local dimension to the process, as in Turkey and Iran. Similarly, this decision shows that the caution taken to avoid reactions was also present in the Albanian case. In fact, the punitive measures remained unclear. Clayer indicates that in the years following the ban, the anti-veiling campaign was implemented mainly through propaganda in the newspapers and lectures. Women who were government employees, such as teachers and midwives, were closely checked, however; as in the anti-veiling campaigns in other countries, these groups of women were the easiest target for the Albanian state to control and pressure.⁷⁷⁶ One important difference of the Albanian anti-veiling campaign was that unlike in Turkey and Iran, where the *çarşaf* and the *chador* were equally part of the unveiling debate, in Albania, the campaign in the 1920s was concerned with the *ferace*, which was a lighter outdoor dress compared to the *çarşaf* and the *chador*.⁷⁷⁷ The support of some religious intellectuals should also be noted; it seems that the anti-veiling campaign in Albania was a result of a wider consensus.

Although the Turkish example was a reference point in the early unveiling debates in Albania, the country indeed went further than Turkey. There was no equivalent in Turkey of the Albanian ministerial decision to ban

⁷⁷⁶ Clayer also indicates that in the year 1935, punitive measures were taken against some women for not obeying the ban. However, there is not further detail. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁷⁷⁷ It can be argued that Albania differs in this regard because it is a Balkan country. In the Balkans, Muslim women’s veiling was, generally speaking, lighter. In many Balkan contexts, the debate was on the use of the *ferace*. For example, Neuburger suggests that when Bulgarian reformers discussed veiling in the 1930s and 1940s, their focus was on the headscarves of the mostly rural Turkic and Pomak populations: their discussion “may have referred to little more than a peasant head-scarf tied across the chin instead of in the back of the neck.” Tying scarf behind the head was defined as the Bulgarian style, and thus, preferable. Impetus for unveiling also emerged from among the Muslim minority with the influence of Kemalism. The Bulgarian state, however, did not support this impetus. Mary Neuburger, “Difference Unveiled: Bulgarian National Imperatives and the re-dressing of Muslim Women, 1878-1989,” in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 252-266. Similarly, the Balkans differ in terms of the attitude of the *ulema* towards the issue of unveiling. It seems that the Muslim clergy was more divided, and there were some liberal or reformist groups among them that were more open to unveiling and ready to cooperate with the reformist political authorities on this. For the cases of Albania, Macedonia and Bosnia, see respectively, Clayer, 2014; Muhammed Aruçi, “The Muslim Minority in Macedonia and Its Educational Institutions during Inter-War Period,” in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain (eds.), London: Hurst, 2008, pp. 344-361; Xavier Bougarel, “Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy? Islamic Reformism and Revivalism in Inter-war Bosnia-Herzegovina,” in *ibid.*, pp. 313-343.

veiling; the initiatives against veiling in Turkey in the 1920s, indeed, remained limited to a few local attempts, as discussed in Chapter 2. Compared to Albania, in both Turkey and Iran, systematic efforts at changing women's clothing came later and were first preceded by attempts at reforming men's clothing.⁷⁷⁸ Unlike unveiling, in both countries, the changes in men's headgear were issued through legislation. While Turkey's Hat Law came in 1925, in Iran, the Pahlavi hat was made compulsory in 1928 as part of the Uniform Dress Law, which was not limited to headgear, but included all aspects of men's clothing.⁷⁷⁹ The emphasis on the Iranian case was on the standardization of dress for the purposes of national solidarity. The Pahlavi hat was represented as national headgear rather than an imitation of the European hat, which would be later made compulsory in 1935, following Reza Shah's visit to Turkey in 1934.⁷⁸⁰ In both countries, the regulations to modernize men's clothing in the 1920s did not concern women, but echoed a similar change in women's clothing in the public debates, as well as in the social protests that emerged against them.⁷⁸¹

In Iran, as in Turkey, the discussion of women's veiling goes back to the 19th century, but it remained an issue for a long time mainly among the

⁷⁷⁸ I could not find a detailed analysis of the discussions on men's headgear or clothing in Albania. Pearson indicates that in Albania "a stricter code of dress for men was also introduced which stipulated that the wearing of national costume was to be confined to national holidays." But he does not provide further details. Pearson, 2004, p. 385. Vickers mentions that this banning of the national costume for men came a few months after the unveiling law in 1937. Vickers, 2011, p. 135. Chehabi also mentions that both Albania and Afghanistan imitated the examples of Turkey and Iran on this issue, but they did not go as far. Chehabi, 2004. In her comparative analysis, Cronin suggests that there were indeed attempts to transform male clothing and headgear everywhere in the Muslim world except the USSR. Cronin, 2014, p. 14.

⁷⁷⁹ Houchang Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah," *Iranian Studies* 26(3-4), Summer/Fall 1993, pp. 209-229. The "uniform dress" was later explained in detail by regulations issued by the Ministry of Interior. It was defined as a Pahlavi hat and a European suit. There were exceptions to the law, however. Clerics, Sunni religious authorities, religious students and scholars were exempted from the law. Ibid.; Kashani-Sabet, 2011, p. 153

⁷⁸⁰ Mohammed-Ali Foroghi, then the Iranian ambassador to Ankara, had complained from the Pahlavi hat in 1928 and suggested the adoption of the European hat since this would standardize the dress of Iranians with the outside world. See Chehabi, 2004. Chehabi claims that the European hat, called as the international hat, was made obligatory for all state employees in Iran by a cabinet degree in 1935 and in this Reza Shah was inspired by the example of Turkey. Ibid.

⁷⁸¹ In the protests against the introduction of European hat in Iran in 1935, for example, it was rumored that this directive would be followed by the banning of the women's veiling. Chehabi, 2003. Similar rumors had emerged in Turkey after the Hat Law of 1925, as discussed previously in Chapter 2.

elite and no attempt was made by the state to remove it until the mid-1930s.⁷⁸² There were no equivalents in Iran of the local attempts at unveiling initiated in the 1920s in Turkey. The first woman who publicly unveiled in Iran was Babi poet and theologian Fatemah Baraghani, known as Tahereh Qorrat al-'Ayn. Her removal of the veil at a Babi meeting in Baadasht in 1848 created a huge unrest, which resulted in her eventual arrest.⁷⁸³ Although there was some relaxation in gender segregation and veiling beginning with the constitutional period, in the early decades of the 20th century, there was no consensus among the modernist intelligentsia about unveiling, and women's rights activists had different opinions even on the use of the face veil (*picheh*).⁷⁸⁴ However, there was a small but active group of feminists who had unveiling on their agenda in the early 1920s. As one of the pioneers, the president of the Patriotic Women's League (*Jam 'iyyat-e Nesvan-e Vatankhah*) Mohtaram Eskandari had removed her veil in Tehran in 1925, but stoned and harassed in the street for her actions to support unveiling.⁷⁸⁵ Similarly, Sadigheh Dowlatabadi, the editor of another women's journal, Women's

⁷⁸² For early discussions on unveiling in Iran, see Camron Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman: Gender, State Policy, and Popular Culture, 1865-1946*, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002, pp. 16-79; Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Authority and Agency: Revisiting Women's Activism during Reza Shah's Period," in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society, and the State in Turkey and Iran*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), London, I. B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 159-177. Amin mentions an attempt to forcibly unveil women in Soviet Republic of Iran in Gilan in 1921, which can be read together with the other examples under the Soviet rule. Amin, 2002, p. 8. On the short-lived Soviet Republic of Gilan, see Cosroe Chaqueri, *The Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran, 1920-1921: Birth of the Trauma*, Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1995. See also Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered the World Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, pp. 58-68.

⁷⁸³ There is in fact a debate on whether she actually unveiled or not. But, as Amin puts, "nonetheless, the story that she did remove her veil has become a permanent part of Iranian historical memory and has been appropriated by both feminist and nationalist myth makers." Amin, 2002, p. 257, fnt. 22. For more on Tahereh Qorrat al-'Ayn, see Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844-1850*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989. See also Milani, 1992.

⁷⁸⁴ See Najmabadi, 2007. For example, Kashani-Sabet notes the reports of American missionaries which depicted this relative relaxation in women's veiling in late 1910s and early 1920s for elite Iranian women. See Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, "Dressing up (or down): Veils, hats and consumer fashions in interwar Iran," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, Stephanie Cronin (ed.), London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 149-162.

⁷⁸⁵ See Sadeghi, 2007, pp 77-79. The Patriotic Women's League was a feminist organization founded by Mohtaram Eskandari in 1922. The league was closed in 1933; the state feminism of the Pahlavi regime took it over. See also Eliz Sanasarian, *The women's rights movement in Iran: Mutiny, appeasement, and repression from 1900 to Khomeini*, New York: Praeger, 1982.

Voice (*Zaban-e Zanan*), had also discarded the *chador*.⁷⁸⁶ In the late 1920s and early 1930s, while an increasing number of urban elite women had indeed removed their face veil, the removal of the *chador* still remained controversial, however. This was probably why it was still considered risky when three Muslims students of the American Girls' School in Tehran attended their graduation unveiled in 1929.⁷⁸⁷ Najmabadi claims that the regime seemed to be against the removal of the *chador* as late as 1932, and there were disagreements on the issue within and outside government circles.⁷⁸⁸



Figure 6.3. A clip from Turkish national newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, showing “modern” Iranian women watching a sports game. The caption reads “Iranian women progress in the way to development with an incredible speed.” *Cumhuriyet*, 25 November 1935.

⁷⁸⁶ Some sources argue that Dowlatnabadi was the first woman to remove the *chador* in public. See Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari, 2014, p. 138, fnt. 25.

⁷⁸⁷ Kashani-Sabet, 2014, p. 154.

⁷⁸⁸ Najmabadi, 2007, pp. 162-163.

In the mid-1930s, a more determined agenda for the modernization of women's clothing emerged in all three countries. The change in women's attire was already underway, but as the regimes became more authoritarian, they became more aggressive about controlling and shaping it. In Turkey and Iran, this process coincided with the suppression of all independent women's initiatives and organizations; the state would be the sole actor in determining the limits of "women's liberation."⁷⁸⁹ In Iran, the move for unveiling took off with the founding in May 1935 of the *Kanun-e Banuvan* (The Women's Center), which was a direct regime initiative. It should be also underlined, however, that some prominent members of the 1920s' generation of feminists, such as Fakhr Afaq Parsa and Sadigheh Dowlatabadi, were also members of the board of the center; they "began to cooperate with the state in the hope of fulfilling their long overdue dreams."⁷⁹⁰ One of the aims of the center was the removal of the veil. It started an open campaign for it by getting its own members to convince their relatives and others in their social milieu and by encouraging the participants of its meetings to unveil.⁷⁹¹ As Sadeghi indicates, "the center provided the organizational apparatus for propagating the idea of unveiling and its implementation."⁷⁹² Reza Shah's oldest daughter was the president of the center, thus the female members of the royal family were at the center of the campaign for unveiling. This was in fact one important similarity between Iran and Albania: the role the royal women played in the unveiling process. In the Albanian case, as well, King Zog's three sisters were the role models in their Westernized dress, making public appearances, tours and visits throughout the country to push for unveiling, including even the cities which were known for their Muslim conservatism.⁷⁹³

⁷⁸⁹ Interestingly, the state's taking over the independent women's movement was quite similar in both countries. While Women's Union was closed down in 1935 in Turkey, following the 12th Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship (IAW) that was held in Istanbul, in Iran the Patriotic Women's League was closed down after Tehran hosted the Second Eastern Women's Congress in 1932. Both regimes' claim that women had achieved all the rights these international organizations stood for is striking.

⁷⁹⁰ Sadeghi, 2007, p. 82.

⁷⁹¹ Kashani-Sabet, 2011, p. 154. This was not the sole aim of the center, however. Among its other aims were teaching women home economics, physical wellbeing and child rearing, and promoting charitable activities and the use of national products. Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari suggest that having considered these aims, one should analyze the perspective of the Women's Center as one "framing *kashf-e hijab* within a broader authoritarian nationalist project of modernizing women's education, physical health, and moral cultivation." Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari, 2014, p. 126.

⁷⁹² Sadeghi, 2007, p. 83.

⁷⁹³ Vickers, 2011, p. 135.

Albania, however, is distinct from both Iran and Turkey in that it is the only country to pass a law banning the veil. The Albanian parliament approved the Law on the Ban on Face Covering, which prohibited women from covering their face, wholly or partially, on 8 March 1937.⁷⁹⁴ Women who did not abide by the law would be punished with a fine not exceeding 500 gold francs.⁷⁹⁵ As mentioned earlier, the face veil was in fact banned in Albania in 1929. It seems, however, that this earlier attempt was ineffective and the regime felt the need to ban it again, this time by enacting a law. This time as well, the implementation of the law was supported by propaganda and with additional activities that were organized especially in the provinces.⁷⁹⁶ In addition, it is important to note that when unveiling became an issue of legislation in Albania, its scope was narrowed and kept limited to the face veil; the earlier ban in 1929 also included the *ferece*, which was not touched by the law issued in 1937. As in the earlier attempt, this time, a degree of support from the religious leaders was seen as necessary. The head of the Islamic Community had issued a fatwa eight days before the enactment of the law, declaring that it was not forbidden in Islam for women to show their face.⁷⁹⁷ According to the law, men who attempted to prevent women from obeying the code, who engaged in propaganda in favor of the veil, and who did not exert their authority to implement the law would also be fined.⁷⁹⁸ These were measures taken against social opposition to unveiling. In contrast to the official account, which claimed that the reform was a success, there was in fact significant unrest. While the police tried to control in the streets women's compliance with the law, some women refused to do so or adopted new forms of veils, which they could use to cover their faces occasionally, when

⁷⁹⁴ Clayer, 2014, p. 234.

⁷⁹⁵ Pearson, 2004, p. 385.

⁷⁹⁶ A Turkish newspaper reported ten days after the enactment of the law in Albania that the king had ordered the opening of literacy courses for women in the provinces, as well as courses on social manners. It was ordered that necessary measures should be taken in order to increase women's participation in the material and moral development of Albania. See "Arnavudlukta peçe menedildi," *Cumhuriyet*, 18 March 1937.

⁷⁹⁷ Clayer, 2010; Clayer 2014, p. 134. In fact, it has been claimed that this time as well the initiative in fact came from the religious leaders, even from religious personnel in the provinces. Clayer, however, thinks that it was probably the initiative of the political authority. But she adds that "it seems that a kind of compromise was achieved between the political and religious authorities." Ibid. She also thinks that the exclusion of the *ferece* from the law was a result of this compromise.

⁷⁹⁸ Clayer, 2014, p. 214. In fact, Pearson indicates that "anyone attempting to prevent women from complying with this law was to suffer even more stringent a penalty" compared to the penalty introduced for women. Pearson, 2004, p. 385.

encountering a police officer.⁷⁹⁹ Conservative Muslims' discontent with the unveiling law seemed to be one of the driving forces behind the unsuccessful revolt that broke out in May 1937 in the south, which was led by a former minister of interior, Ethem Toto, a Muslim politician.⁸⁰⁰

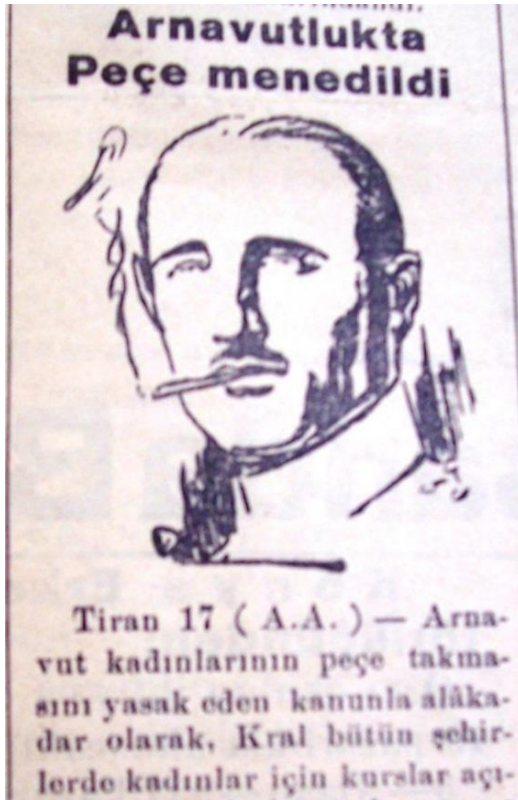


Figure 6.4. A clip from a local newspaper in Konya, announcing the banning of the *peçe* in Albania, with an illustration of King Zog. *Babalık*, 20 March 1937.

Turkey and Iran opted for a different strategy: avoiding direct legislation, handling the issue mainly at the local level, and guiding and monitoring the local administrators through certain ministries. As was the case for Ankara, the initial position of Tehran on unveiling was cautious. The first directive on unveiling sent to certain provinces by the Ministry of Interior of

⁷⁹⁹ Clayer, 2014, p. 235.

⁸⁰⁰ Vickers, 2011, p. 135. Pearson, on the other hand, claims that the objective of the revolt is unclear. However, he also notes that the revolt might have been benefitted from the uneasiness among the Muslims. Pearson, 2004, p. 386.

Iran on 9 December 1935 was very similar to the tone and language used by the Turkish Ministry of Interior in its initial directives to the provinces:

[To local] governments of Arak, Hamedan, Garrus, Malayer, Kermanshah, Sanandaj and Golpaygan: The subject of *kashf-e hijab* must be encouraged by [local] governments and the police without forcing *kashf-e hijab* on anyone. Preachers and others who might oppose or talk against it must be immediately arrested and punished by the police. Act in a very prudent and dignified manner. Report the progress of this matter routinely via secret code.⁸⁰¹

The subsequent directives were primarily issued by the Minister of Education, to be implemented by the Minister of Interior by monitoring the governors. In fact, Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari suggests that the key actor in Iran's anti-veiling campaigns was the Ministry of Education, since the directives sent by the Ministry of Interior also referred to its directives, emphasizing the importance of girls' enrollment in school, the role of women teachers, and finally, other state officials.⁸⁰² The Minister of Education, Ali-Asghar Hikmat, was responsible for the campaign's initial conception and implementation.⁸⁰³ As in Turkey, the state officials, especially female teachers, would be the vanguards, and the process would be managed by organizing conferences, meetings and social gatherings.⁸⁰⁴ Differently than in Turkey, however, in Iran, the instrument emphasized in the directives on unveiling to get women to adopt European dress was the national education system. One of the most detailed directives on unveiling was one sent by the Ministry of Education to all local officials in charge of education in the provinces.⁸⁰⁵ This directive called for all public elementary schools to be co-educational and for all elementary and secondary schools to adopt a uniform

⁸⁰¹ Quoted in Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari, 2014, p. 127. Directives also emphasized simplicity of dress in order not to avoid greed between the rich and the poor. Chehabi, 1993, p. 218.

⁸⁰² Attempts at changing the clothing of state officials began earlier. Kashani-Sabet mentions that Reza Shah decreed in 1931 that employees of the ministries should put on homespun clothing. However, she then mentions this measure as a law. Her references are US diplomatic circulars. Kashani-Sabet, 2011, p. 153.

⁸⁰³ Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari, 2014, p. 132. Cheabi also refers to Hikmat's banning of the veil for teachers and students as an initial step of unveiling in Iran. See Chehabi, 1993, p. 216.

⁸⁰⁴ Chehabi indicates that in Iran "state employees were to be given loans to buy new clothes for their wives, and to be put on unpaid leave of absence if they did not bring their unveiled wives to official functions." Ibid., p. 219.

⁸⁰⁵ For this directive, see Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari, 2014, p. 129.

dress for all students, which they had to wear in school as well as on the street. Although mentioned implicitly, it was obvious in the directive that the dress codes for students excluded the *chador*. The transformation of the clothing of ordinary adult women, on the other hand, would be achieved through the conferences, meetings and gatherings to be organized in the provinces by Ministry of Education officials. It was the duty of these officials to act as examples for other women and to inform them about the dress codes “common among chaste and noble families in civilized countries;” women should be told that these dress codes were in fact not alien to Islam or Iranian culture. Local administrators and heads of police were required to attend such organizations with their wives having removed the *chador*, and thus, to foster the development of mixed-gender environment.⁸⁰⁶

Hence, as far as the content of the directives issued by the state are concerned, it seems that unveiling in Iran was compulsory only for school girls, female government employees and wives of male government employees. And for many of these women, it meant not only the removal of the face veil and the *chador*, but also the headscarf, even if it was not explicitly dictated in the official documents.⁸⁰⁷ In other words, the norm set by the families of the Shah, the high level bureaucrats and the urban elite in general was the full adoption of European dress, including the replacement of headscarf with a hat. This seems to be parallel to the Turkish case, where most urban and provincial elite, as well as female government employees had removed their headscarf as well.⁸⁰⁸ However, what is different in the Turkish case is that the anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey deliberately targeted changing ordinary women’s dress; the bans issued by municipal councils were concerned with the removal of the face veil and the *çarşaf* by all women. In other words, the unveiling of school girls and female teachers in Turkey in the 1930s was achieved much earlier, through the regulations of the Ministry of Education, as mentioned in Chapter 2. Thus, to the extent that the content of the state directives and local decisions were concerned, the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s in Turkey can be seen as more comprehensive compared to the ones during the same period in Iran. In other words, their

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 130.

⁸⁰⁷ In some occasions, however, wives of government employees in the provinces appeared in compulsory gatherings wearing headscarves rather than hats. For one anecdote, see Chehabi, 1993, pp. 218-219.

⁸⁰⁸ There were some provincial elite women in Turkey who refused to remove their headscarves, however, as mentioned in Chapter 4.

intent was the imposition of unveiling on all women, regardless of whether they were state officials.

However, in practice, this difference tended to lose its significance, since, in the Iranian case as well, the anti-veiling campaigns surpassed the limits of the ministerial directives. In both countries, the local character of the anti-veiling campaigns and the ambiguity of the attitude of the center gave the provincial authorities greater space for action. In some of the provinces, the anti-veiling campaigns were implemented quite strictly by some local authorities despite the orders coming from the center cautioning them to refrain from using force. As it was discussed in previous chapters, in some provinces in Turkey, local authorities tried to limit veiled women's access to public places, such as parks, movie theaters, or state offices, contrary to the circulars sent by the Ministry of Interior. A similar tendency can be seen in the conduct of local Iranian administrators. A British consular report from Tabriz in February 1936, for example, mentioned that veiled women were excluded from public baths, public carriages and movie theaters. Moreover, doctors were ordered not to admit veiled women to the hospitals.⁸⁰⁹ As in Turkey, in Iran as well, unveiling was imposed on some women by force, although it was discouraged officially. Like Ankara, Tehran knew about this misconduct. In fact, there are oral historical accounts of police violence even in Tehran; Sadeghi tells the story of a woman who was stopped by a policeman for wearing a scarf, which he pulled off forcefully.⁸¹⁰ Reports of occasional use of violence led the Iranian Minister of Interior to warn the local authorities, once again, against such offenses in 1938. The minister had emphasized the need to be prudent and to act with good intentions in order to avoid reactions, misunderstandings and problems, especially in conservative provinces such as Qom and Mashad.⁸¹¹ Thus, it seems there was room to act differently in more "appropriate" provinces; such unclear points were perhaps one source of difficulty (and opportunity, by the same token) for local administrators in interpreting the directives coming from Tehran.⁸¹² The caution taken by the Pahlavi regime to not disturb traditional segments of the society and to not contradict the Islamic norms had in fact proved partly effective. There was no

⁸⁰⁹ Kashani-Sabet, 2011, p. 113-114.

⁸¹⁰ Sadeghi, 2007, p. 87. See also Chehabi, 1993.

⁸¹¹ Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari, 2014, p. 134.

⁸¹² Chehabi, for example, mentions some local authorities who requested more policemen from Tehran to be employed in the anti-veiling campaign. Whether this was an implicit approval of the use of force by the regime center, or the policemen were requested only to fight against the opposition rather than to enforce unveiling is unclear. See Chehabi, 1993, p. 219.

fatwa issued against unveiling by a major cleric in Iran;⁸¹³ some clerics even supported it.⁸¹⁴ Iranian women used various strategies to find their way. Hiding or adoption of long overcoats and scarves were common; in some instances, the authorities interpreted this as resistance to the policy of unveiling.⁸¹⁵ When unveiled, some women faced harassment and violence by members of the local populace for abiding by the new dress codes. Confronted by these various reactions on the ground, but at the same time, ordered by Tehran to fight against veiling and encourage unveiling, the authorities struggled to follow a consistent policy at the local level.⁸¹⁶

In conclusion, the similarities between the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s in Turkey and Iran were greater than previously acknowledged by the literature. Both Ankara and Tehran were careful not to create reaction; they tried to adopt a gradual strategy and to foster unveiling mainly through the help of the state officials and local elite. Although a complete Europeanization of women's dress was the ideal, for the most part, state intervention was directed mainly against face veil, *çarşaf* and *chador*, otherwise allowing a range of possibilities to adapt to the new codes. In fact, just as what unveiling entailed in mid-1930s Iran – primarily, the removal of the face veil and discarding of the *chador* – happened to be seen acceptable as “Islamic veiling” under the Islamic Republic, the target of the anti-veiling campaigns in mid-1930s Turkey – again, removal of the face veil and discarding of the *çarşaf* – was essentially achieved, since when the “Islamic dress” reemerged beginning in the 1960s and became a political issue in the 1980s, women's new veiling style – a long overcoat and a headscarf – was very much in line with the Kemalist standards of unveiling. As Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari claims for the Iranian case, this is an ironic conclusion for the Turkish case as well.⁸¹⁷ Nevertheless, it reflects the extent to which the authoritarian regimes of Iran and Turkey in the 1930s were careful not to

⁸¹³ Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari, 2014, p. 135. The opposition came mostly from lower level clerics at the local level. See *ibid*.

⁸¹⁴ Chehabi, 1993, p. 220.

⁸¹⁵ Note the similarity with the accounts coming from some provinces in Turkey, reporting women who adopted long overcoats. See Chapter 4.

⁸¹⁶ Chehabi, for example, notes that this increased the frequency of violence against unveiled women. Chehabi, 1993, p. 220.

⁸¹⁷ Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari explains this ironic conclusion as follows: “the core thrust of the 1930s ‘unveiling,’ essentially calling for women's faces to be uncovered and the discarding of the *chador*, was not only accepted as compatible with Islam in the post-Reza Shah era, but continued as ‘Islamic hijab’ even under the Islamic Republic”. Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari, 2014, p. 121. In Iran today, neither face veil nor *chador* is compulsory, whereas covering of the hair is.

contradict existing patriarchal and even Islamic norms. It also shows that these regimes tended to adapt to local circumstances to a certain degree, no matter how keen they were to transform them. This was perhaps a question of state capacity and penetration into society, rather than a question of ideological flexibility.

This is also a good point to think of the differences among the three countries. In comparisons between Turkey and Iran, it has been emphasized that Turkey's greater proximity to Europe and the greater intensity of its interactions with the West prepared a more advantageous setting for modernization reforms.⁸¹⁸ The same could be argued for the case of Albania since, as a country located in Europe, the aspiration to look and live like a European was very strong and considered very urgent from the start. In fact, during the debates on unveiling in the mid-1930s, Albanian politicians and intellectuals who advocated a ban on veiling claimed that this was necessary if Albania wanted to be seen as part of Europe and included among the European countries.⁸¹⁹ Thus, this strong motivation should have played a role in Albania's uniqueness as the only country to legislate against the veil. One can also trace the difference of Iran in this regard by following measures taken prior to the anti-veiling campaign of the mid-1930s, which aimed at weakening gender segregation and opening more space for women in public. For example, in 1928, the police received orders to allow women to visit public places unveiled and women were permitted to speak with men in the streets and to use the same carriage with them, and in 1935, those women who were unveiled in Tehran received police escort against street attacks.⁸²⁰ Such measures were not considered necessary in Turkey or in Albania, where gender segregation was comparatively more relaxed already, at least in major cities.

Perhaps a more important factor was Turkey's early experience with modernization, and consequently, its relatively more centralized state and better organized bureaucracy. This is the second dimension that has been underlined in the literature as an advantage of Turkey compared to Iran. While Reza Shah was likened to Atatürk in terms of aims and methods of modernization, as far as the means he had at his disposal to realize these aims

⁸¹⁸ Chehabi, 1993; Chehabi, 2004, p. 230.

⁸¹⁹ Clayer, 2010.

⁸²⁰ Chehabi, 1993; Kashani-Sabet, 2014, p. 155; Sadeghi, 2007, p. 83, 86. While Kashani-Sabet dates the permission for women to speak to men in the streets and to ride the same carriage with them in 1928, Sadeghi dates it in 1935. Whether the same permission was reissued in 1935 again is unclear.

were concerned, he was rather compared to Sultan Mahmud II, an Ottoman sultan notable for his reforms to modernize the state in the early 19th century (reigned 1808-1839).⁸²¹ The fact that “state initiated and privately backed reforms had a much longer history, scope, and cumulative effect in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire compared with the few, short-lived, and limited measures at reform in Qajar Iran”⁸²² contributed immensely to the republican regime’s efforts at modernization after the collapse of the Ottoman state. As Atabaki and Zürcher argue, “where Reza Shah had to build a state, Atatürk, during his 15-year rule (1923-1938) could transform an existing one.”⁸²³ Although more studies are needed to compare the capacity of the Albanian state specifically with regards to the issue of organizing and enforcing an anti-veiling campaign, interwar Albania has been generally analyzed as a weak state in the literature, both economically and politically.⁸²⁴ Vickers suggests that “during the interwar years, Albania remained Europe’s least developed and poorest state by far.”⁸²⁵ Although King Zog managed to unify the country in the second half of the 1920s, local tribes and landowners were still quite powerful and their loyalty to the regime was secured by distributing them important posts in the army and by a related pension system.⁸²⁶ From the very beginning, Italian influence was significant and accepted on the basis of financial support, and later in the 1930s, this influence took the form of an increasing Italian penetration in Albania.⁸²⁷ In fact, Clayer suggests the revitalization of the unveiling debate in Albania in the mid-1930s, which resulted in the enactment of the ban on the face veil in 1937, coincided with a deep economic and political crisis in the face of rising tension with Italia.⁸²⁸ The true purpose of the law was to underline the image of Albania as a European country; at a time when Albania’s sovereignty was under threat

⁸²¹ Jean-François Bayart, “Republican Trajectories in Iran and Turkey: A Tocquevillian Reading,” in *Democracy without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, Ghassan Salamé (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 1994, pp. 282-300.

⁸²² Najmabadi, 1991, p. 55.

⁸²³ Atabaki and Zürcher, 2004, p. 10.

⁸²⁴ Late unification, political chaos in the initial years, frequent local uprisings and financial difficulties were some of the reasons of this weakness. For a more detailed discussion, see Barbara Jelavich, *The History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century, Volume II*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 177-184.

⁸²⁵ Vickers, 2011, p. 120.

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁸²⁷ Albania had no currency of its own and no credit organization until the National Bank of Albania was established in 1925 with Italian support. *Ibid.*

⁸²⁸ In the debates, it was claimed by some that the ban on the veil would “save the entire nation from socio-economic decline.” Clayer, 2010.

by Italy, the aim was to reinforce the idea that “Albania should be a sovereign country among the other Western countries.”⁸²⁹

Another important dimension to consider, which is directly related to the question of state capacity, was the institutional means through which cultural modernization was put into practice. It can be argued that the main channel of transforming the society, perhaps for all modernizing regimes, was the national education system. Modern education was the key for the Iranian, Albanian and Turkish political elite to create patriotic, modern citizens and to integrate the masses into their regimes. Entering the school system meant a major transformation for children, and particularly for female students, this meant the removal of the veil.⁸³⁰ This was not enough, however, for a comprehensive and rapid change in women’s clothing. The question was the capacity to apply the decisions or laws issued by the central elite regarding unveiling in the provinces. In this respect, I would argue, that the Kemalist regime was more capable and successful in diffusing into the local and diversifying the channels through which the targeted cultural changes could be realized, or at least, propagated and promoted. In comparisons between Turkey and Iran, this institutional capacity of the Kemalist regime has been in fact underlined by a number of scholars. Owen, for example, pointed to the importance of the establishment of a political party by Atatürk and the administrative, organizational and ideological capabilities this provided for the working of the regime.⁸³¹ Likewise, Abrahamian stressed that Atatürk ruled with the help of a political party, while Reza Shah was able to benefit from neither the support of the intelligentsia to the degree that Atatürk could nor the assistance of an organized political party.⁸³² One could add to this the significance of the establishment of the People’s Houses in Turkey, which provided yet another channel for the regime for political and cultural indoctrination at the local level.⁸³³ Moreover, the institutional diversity in the

⁸²⁹ Clayer, 2014, p. 234.

⁸³⁰ In fact, in terms of establishing schools and the number of female student in every level of education, Turkey was also leading both Albania and Iran. As Najmabadi underlines in her comparison between Turkey and Iran, “the first modern school for girls was established in Istanbul in 1858, in Tehran, not until 1907. A Teachers’ Training College for women was opened in 1863 in Istanbul, in 1918 in Tehran. ... Women gained access to university education in 1914 in Istanbul, but only in 1936 in Tehran.” Najmabadi, 1991, p. 55.

⁸³¹ Owen, 1992, pp. 27-29.

⁸³² Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 149.

⁸³³ The Iranian regime, for example, was late in creating such institutions. Afary indicates that in addition to the national school system, two other state institutions were created in Iran in 1939 to foster cultural modernization and to increase ideological indoctrination: the Institute

Turkish periphery, which was highlighted in Chapter 4, was also crucial for both hosting diverse local actors and giving them opportunities to position themselves as “local initiators” of certain reforms, such as unveiling. In other words, however limited the capacity of the local party branches, People’s Houses, municipalities, and local associations, for instance, in inter-war Turkey were when analyzed on their own, comparatively speaking, they were an advantage for the Kemalist regime when it adopted the strategy of handling the issue of unveiling at the local level. Perhaps, the role that the municipalities played in the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s and the fact that the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were local, and were nevertheless “discussed” and issued by city councils – at least through a seemingly more inclusive process – should not be underestimated. This does not mean that the Kemalist regime was any less authoritarian compared to Iran or Albania – only that the authoritarian regime in Turkey had relatively better means available to function at the local level and to penetrate the society. The lack of this institutional capacity in Albania, for example, was perhaps one of the reasons why the anti-veiling campaign remained ineffective despite the ambitious move of the regime to enact a law on the issue.

On top of this difference in terms of state capacity and institutional organization at the local level came the difference between the attitudes of the political leaders. In particular, Reza Shah’s attitude towards the anti-veiling campaign deserves attention since it can possibly explain, at least partly, why the Iranian case has been analyzed as more comprehensive and repressive than it was on paper. Although there was no legislation in Iran banning the veil, and no central decree issued by the shah prohibiting the veil country-wide, the role both the regime center and the Shah and his family played in the process was publicly very visible. The anti-veiling campaign had begun by the direct involvement of Reza Shah and his wife and daughters, as well as the family of all high-level bureaucracy in Tehran, which was probably quite influential in spreading the perception that the shah indeed ordered unveiling. For example, many sources indicate that unveiling became a state policy and was publicly launched by a speech made by Reza Shah at a ceremony at Tehran Teachers’ College on 7 January 1936, which was covered by the press. Evidently, a notice was sent beforehand to all women teachers and wives of ministers, high military officials and high bureaucrats asking them to attend

for Development of Thought (Sazeman-e Parvaresh-e Afkar) and Institute for Propaganda (Sazeman-e Tablighat). Janet Afary, *Sexual Politics in Iran*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 147.

the ceremony having removed the *chador* and adopted European clothes and hats instead. Shah's wife and daughters had also adopted Western attire. Later, in her memoir, Reza Shah Pahlavi's eldest daughter, Ashraf Pahlavi, would also recall this ceremony as the beginning of the unveiling process. She would claim that after this ceremony, her father ordered all women to unveil.⁸³⁴ The day of the ceremony, 7 January (17th of Day in Persian calendar), would be known as "Women's Emancipation Day" (*Rooz-e Azadi-ye Zan*).⁸³⁵ In fact, even prior to this event, throughout 1935, British and American diplomatic sources reported the possibility a ban on veiling Iran based on their observations of and communications with Reza Shah and his close circle bureaucrats.⁸³⁶ Symbolic as it was, the ceremony on 7 January 1936, and further involvement of Reza Shah and his family in the process must nevertheless have played an important role in the wide-ranging form the anti-veiling campaigns took in practice in Iran, despite the more limited nature of the official directives.⁸³⁷ In fact, it is quite probable that the shah had given verbal orders, at least to the ministers who were involved in the process.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁴ See Ashraf Pahlavi, *Faces in a Mirror: Memoirs from Exile*, New York: Prentice-Hall, 1980. Jane Doolittle, who was the headmistress of the American Bethel Girls Schools in Tehran recalled later that the day after the ceremony, they were invited to a meeting by the Minister of Education who said "now that Her Majesty and her daughters appeared without chadors, wearing hats and proper clothes, it is unseemly that any woman in Iran should appear in anything but a hat." Quoted in Amin, 2006, p. 95.

⁸³⁵ Sedghi, 2007, p. 86.

⁸³⁶ Amin says "as early as 2 July [1935], American diplomats had begun to appreciate both the unpopularity of unveiling and Reza Shah's determination to implement it, going so far as to speculate that the policy could invite an assassination attempt." Amin, 2002, p. 86. See also Rostam-Kolayi, 2003.

⁸³⁷ This was perhaps also the reason for many scholars' reading of unveiling in Iran as a compulsory policy of the regime. Chehabi mentions many instances where ordinary women were forced to unveil and the central authorities in Tehran seemed to know about them. See Chehabi, 1993.

⁸³⁸ While analyzing the changes in the state emblem of Iran through time, Najmabadi, for example, notes that she could not find a decree by Reza Shah ordering the removal of the facial features of the sun in the emblem. However, she underlines that the order may have been a verbal one. She refers to Yahya Zuka, who suggested to her in a private conversation that "many royal orders during Riza Shah's period were verbal, dutifully communicated by obedient attendants to appropriate state officials. Najmabadi, 2005, p. 260, fn. 5. Even the national news agency of Iran was reporting that there was a national "movement" against veiling. Reporting of the Pars News Agency on the anti-veiling campaign was translated and published in some Turkish newspapers. See "İranda inkılâb hareketleri," *Cumhuriyet*, 19 January 1936.

IV. Conclusion

The brief survey this chapter provided on the anti-veiling campaigns in the Muslim world shows that they have “broad similarities” and an “extraordinary synchronicity,” as Cronin suggests in her comparative account.⁸³⁹ Having analyzed the modernist agendas that emerged in almost all Muslim countries during the inter-war era, she asserts that “although very different political formations, these regimes, whether elite nationalist or communist, were all opposed to what they viewed as the reactionary forces of Islam and tradition, forces which they equated and conflated, and all wished to create a new and modern woman, unveiled, educated and integrated into the workforce.”⁸⁴⁰ Likewise, in all examples, the emphasis on the necessity of remaking the nation’s women along modern lines existed side by side with an equally strong emphasis on protecting women’s morality. The fact that anti-veiling campaigns emerged as part of a nation-building process, they were directly influenced by the ideological hegemony of nationalism, and as a part of it, strengthening of certain patriarchal gender norms, such as sexual purity and morality.⁸⁴¹ It can be argued that the “modern-yet-modest” formulation was valid in varying degrees in all attempts to change women’s clothing in the Muslim world.⁸⁴² Since dress was also considered as a marker of the national identity, as much as it was of modernity, the removal of the veil was not presented as complete Westernization and never defended as pure adaptation to European norms; in some contexts, it became a necessity of national solidarity, in some others it came to mean a return to a national Golden Age, where men and women were working for the national prosperity.

In fact, the nationalist discourse shaped the discourse on unveiling in many different ways. The increasing emphasis on the national health, for example, had its impact on the ways in which unveiling was promoted and propagated. Women’s health as mothers of the nation began to be seen as indispensable for raising children with strong minds and bodies, and the idea that veiling prevents women from receiving enough sunlight, or women’s seclusion prevents them from doing sports was quite widespread across the

⁸³⁹ Cronin, 2014, p. 3.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁴¹ For a discussion on how nationalism strengthens patriarchal gender norms based on the example of Egypt, see Beth Baron, “The construction of national honor in Egypt,” *Gender and History* 5(2), 1993, pp. 244-44.

⁸⁴² See Deniz Kandiyoti, “Introduction,” in *Women, Islam and the State*, Deniz Kandiyoti (ed.), Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991, pp. 1-21; Najmabadi, 1991, 1993; Abu-Lughod, 1998.

modernizing regimes in the Muslim world. As mentioned in Chapter 3, in Turkey this would lead to the involvement of local health commissions in the process of banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. In Iran, for example, the directives sent by the Ministry of Education on unveiling underlined the need to increase opportunities for girls to engage in sports at schools; promoting women's physical training, and forming groups like Girl Scouts, would be the first step in this regard.⁸⁴³ Another nationalist framework used for unveiling was to argue, for example, full-body covers were not dictates of Islam but a "foreign" culture. Accordingly, the *çarşaf* in Turkey and the *chador* in Iran would be alien dresses imposed by the Arabs, whereas the *ferece* in Albania would be the symbol of Ottoman domination. One aim of such arguments was also to counter the opposition to unveiling based on religious reasons. In fact, both the official state discourse and the elite discourse in various levels sometimes defended unveiling by seeking legitimacy in Islam, arguing, especially, that the face veil does not exist in Islam. All regimes referred frequently to the similar attempts and initiatives in other Muslim countries, in order to be able to claim the appropriateness of unveiling to Islam; other Muslims too were supporting it.

Nowhere were women passive receivers. In countries like Egypt, Syria, Turkey and Iran, initial moves for unveiling came from early feminists or women's rights activists, albeit in some cases they remained as symbolic, individual acts. However, almost everywhere, the anti-veiling campaigns benefited from the support of those women who had already unveiled or easily adapted themselves to the new norms and became involved in spreading unveiling. In even the most systematic attempts at unveiling, such as in Albania, Iran and Turkey, the modernizing regimes depended heavily on the loyalty and agency of female state officials, particularly school teachers, to perform and promote their message among the masses. The national education system was perhaps the most important means through which change in women's dress was realized. Even in countries where there was no systematic anti-veiling policy, the most important momentum for unveiling came when women entered school. Increase of girls' schools and their adoption of special uniforms provided the opportunity for younger generations to unveil and to dress differently than their mothers. Different cases of anti-veiling campaigns also show that the majority of the women, who were not part of the school system and were part of the poor masses, tried to adopt the new dress codes

⁸⁴³ Rostam-Kolayi and Matin-asgari, 2014, p. 130. For examples of health arguments deployed for unveiling in other countries, see Badran, 1995; Wide, 2014.

and domesticate them in variety of ways; the combination of many forms of dress and veiling, especially long overcoats and headscarves became common.

Societal reactions also took many different forms. While in some cases, such as Turkey, there was no collective action or demonstration, in others, such as Albania and Afghanistan, some anti-regime uprisings used unveiling as a tool to mobilize social discontent. The fact that these authoritarian regimes were in fact more cautious about imposing unveiling than they were imagined to be is an important conclusion. One exception in this regard was the anti-veiling campaigns under the Soviet rule, where violence against unveiled women was widespread and systematic. However, even in these oppressive examples of anti-veiling campaigns, ordinary people's reactions were not as simple as passive compliance vs. active opposition. Rather, as Northrop underlines, people could utilize many different and complex strategies, "from studied obliviousness to passive resistance to the spreading of gossip and rumors. They also included varieties of creative subterfuge around questions of law and everyday life."⁸⁴⁴ In fact, the role of rumor and hearsay was strikingly high in anti-veiling campaigns everywhere. This was probably so because the parameters of the campaigns remained a bit unclear everywhere, except, perhaps, in Albania, where unveiling was imposed through enacting a law. Even there, however, as everywhere, the implementation process was the key, and local variations and attitudes of those who were obliged to apply the decisions on the ground were definitive. Moreover, just like they influenced inner dynamics in each country in significant ways, rumor, perceptions, exaggeration and misinformation also played an important role in assessing the experiences of other countries. As mentioned earlier, the Turkish press, both national and local, tended to exaggerate the scope of unveiling in other Muslim countries and used this as an extra motivation for promoting the campaigns. Some reports in the Western press about Turkey mistakenly presented the anti-veiling campaigns either as countrywide by ignoring their local character or as a compulsory reform based on a law or decree by the central government.⁸⁴⁵ The impression that the veil

⁸⁴⁴ Northrop, 2004, p. 347.

⁸⁴⁵ For example, the newspaper *New York Herald Tribune* reported on 11 September 1935 that the wearing of women's "harem" clothes was banned by a law in Turkey, which concerned 35 provinces. According to the reporting, it was interesting that the president of Turkey, Kemal Atatürk, had the time to act like a fashion referee for the women of his country since world politics was getting increasingly tense. The Turkish translation of the news was circulated among the necessary state offices as a secret journal by the General Department of Press at the Ministry of Interior. See T.C. İç Bakanlığı Basın Genel Direktörlüğü Gizli Bülten, TNPA 13216-7/1, 24 September 1935.

was banned in Turkey was also widespread in other Muslim countries. For example, during the discussions in Soviet Uzbekistan on whether to ban the veil by law or decree, both opponents and proponents of the idea referred to the Turkish case, mistakenly, as an example of banning the veil by decree.⁸⁴⁶ Similarly, the idea that the Afghan king was overthrown because he outlawed the veil was also used as an argument supporting the necessity to be more cautious and to avoid banning the veil.⁸⁴⁷ News claiming that Reza Shah banned the veil in Iran could be seen in the Turkish press as early as mid-1935.⁸⁴⁸

A comparative look at the anti-veiling campaigns in different Muslim countries also reveals that dress change was as much an economic issue as it was a political and cultural one. The removal of women's conventional clothes, be it a *peştamal* in a Turkish district or a *ferece* in an Albanian town, was difficult not only because these clothes were traditional or customary, but also because they were cheap and usually local products, more easily accessible to the ordinary people, the majority of whom were poor and rural in all Muslim countries in the 1920s and 1930s. A European-style overcoat or hat was much more expensive and difficult to find. This economic side of the story shaped people's attitude towards unveiling everywhere. For example, as Wide convincingly shows, the trade of second-hand clothes and manufactures from British India was central for the "economy of dress" in inter-war Afghanistan; thus what people wore was determined more by their practical concerns and conditions than they were by the ideological priorities of the state. He draws a conclusion which in fact describes the dynamics of clothing change in a wider context:

A 'market place' of goods and ideas has helped connect the economic to the intellectual, the material to the cultural, and move discussions of the period beyond all-too-prevalent oppositions of 'tribalism,' 'conservatism,' 'religiosity,' 'xenophobia' on the one hand, and 'modernization,' 'Westernization,' 'secularization' and 'globalization,' on the other. It is not that these terms have no explanatory force. But dress is a lived practice that cannot be reduced to such abstractions.⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁶ Northrop, 2004, p. 286.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 293.

⁸⁴⁸ For example, see "İranda irtica," *Cumhuriyet*, 23 June 1935.

⁸⁴⁹ Wide, 2014, p. 193.

These broad similarities notwithstanding, anti-veiling campaigns in the Muslim world differed from each other in crucial ways. As this chapter tried to show, from elite discussions to diverse encounters with Western colonialism, many factors played a role in these differences. I argued that three countries, Albania, Iran and Turkey experienced the most systematic, determined and effective anti-veiling campaigns. The parallels between these three countries in terms of their political regimes and modernization policies also constituted a similar framework for their anti-veiling campaigns. However, there were also critical differences between them. Albania was the only country in the Muslim world that legislated against the face veil. Turkey and Iran, on the other hand, put more emphasis on the fight against unveiling at the local level, but still utilized different means and strategies. A comparative look at the Turkish case reveals that its greater state capacity and institutional variety at the local level set it aside from the other countries. The Kemalist regime could operate in the provinces through institutions that were greater in number and stronger. As seen in Chapter 4, in Turkey, many actors and institutions were involved in the shaping and implementation process of the local anti-veiling campaigns, from governors to the local branches of the RPP, from city councils to People's Houses, from local newspapers to sports clubs. This did not make the Kemalist state any more pluralist or less authoritarian, but this institutional diversity clearly added to the dynamism of the reform process. The Pahlavi regime's strategy to impose unveiling through the ministries, while appearing to be similar to the Turkish case, could not and did not compensate for this institutional strength of Kemalism and the relatively greater room this strength allowed for negotiating and domesticating the anti-veiling campaign in the periphery.

As a final remark, it should be emphasized that the reading provided here regarding the anti-veiling campaigns in the Muslim world is concerned with the inter-war period. Both national and international dynamics changed for all countries in the following decades. Everywhere, however, the issue of unveiling continued to be an issue of struggle, a main axis for political debates and conflicts with strong symbolic and ideological underpinnings. The debate on banning the veil reemerged in the Soviet Union in the 1940s.⁸⁵⁰ In 1943, a group of Syrian women submitted a petition asking for official unveiling, which led to protests by Islamists; and Muslim women who joined the Christian women's march in Beirut in November 1943 removed their face

⁸⁵⁰ Northrop, 2007, pp. 309-311.

veil.⁸⁵¹ In 1959, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1919 Revolution and women's participation in it, Esther Fahmi Wisa delivered a speech entitled "the emancipation of Egyptian women and their freedom from the veil" at the Opera House in Cairo.⁸⁵² Moreover, new countries where Muslims were a minority joined the struggle against veiling in the aftermath of WWII: in post-war Yugoslavia, bans were issued on the use of face veil both in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina; in Bulgaria, an anti-veiling campaign was launched by the new communist regime in the late 1950s.⁸⁵³ And in Turkey, the debate on unveiling resurfaced in almost every decade, and each time, with new dimensions and discussions added. A constant, however, was the controversy around the Kemalist policy of unveiling in the 1930s, which continued to set the parameters of the debate until today.

⁸⁵¹ Thompson, 2000, p. 242; 257

⁸⁵² Baron, 2005, p. 120.

⁸⁵³ For Bulgaria, see Neuburger, 2014. The ban on the face veil in Serbia and Bosnia was reported in a Turkish newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, in 1947 and in 1950, respectively. See "Sırbistanda Müslüman kadınlarının peçe kullanması yasak," *Cumhuriyet*, 9 April 1947; "Bosna Hersekte peçe yasak edildi," *Cumhuriyet*, 29 September 1950. Unfortunately, there are no studies on the anti-veiling campaigns in Yugoslavia. *Cumhuriyet* also reported the removal of the face veil in India at a conference organized by women in Ajmer. Accordingly, women who attended the conference had removed their face veil following the example of the president of the conference, Satyavati Rajput. See "Hind kadınları peçeyi atıyorlar!," *Cumhuriyet*, 22 February 1941. A Canadian newspaper of the time also reported the removal of the veil at the same conference, but the emphasis was on the condemnation of the *purdah* (veiling and segregation) in general. Whether there were Muslim women attending the conference is unclear. See "Say Never Again to Wearing Veil," *The Lethbridge Herald*, 24 March 1941.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

In his pioneering work, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, Berkes characterizes the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code in Turkey in 1926 as “the greatest coup of the new period” and “the most constructive achievement” of the Kemalist regime, “because the wheels of the society were thus put on a new track.”⁸⁵⁴ In discussions on the civil code and family law in building up to this reform, the Kemalists favored a unified system of codes based on secular principles, which, according to them, was a necessity if Turkey wanted to be part of the modern world. To exemplify this determination of the Kemalist elite, Berkes quotes a speech of Mustafa Kemal in 1925, where he, as the leader of the new regime, made this point very explicit:

The Turkish Revolution signifies a transformation far broader than the word revolution suggests. ... It means replacing an age-old political unity based on religion with one based on another tie, that of nationality. This nation has now accepted the principle that the only means of survival for nations in the international struggle for existence lies in the acceptance of the contemporary Western civilization. The nation has also accepted the principle that all of its laws should be based on secular grounds only, on a secular mentality that accepts the rule of continuous change in accordance with the change and development of life's conditions as its law.⁸⁵⁵

Berkes then goes on to underscore the revolutionary character of adopting a fully secular Civil Code by quoting the Minister of Justice, Mahmut Esat (Bozkurt), who defended the new law based on similar lines on the day it passed in the parliament, 17 February 1926. In his speech, Mahmut Esat had in fact placed the idea and the aim behind the introduction of the new code within the larger framework of Kemalist modernization:

⁸⁵⁴ Berkes, 1998, p. 467.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 470.

We must never forget that the Turkish nation has decided to accept modern civilization and its living principles without any condition or reservation. ... If there are some points of contemporary civilization that do not seem capable of conforming to Turkish society, this is not because of the lack of capability and native capacity of the Turkish nation, but because of the medieval organization and the religious codes and institutions which abnormally surround it. ... The Turkish nation, which is moving with determination to seize contemporary civilization and make it its own, is obliged not to make contemporary civilization conform to the Turkish nation, but to adjust its steps to the requirements of contemporary civilization at all costs.⁸⁵⁶

The determined voice that can be heard in Mustafa Kemal's speech and in Mahmut Esat's comments on the new Civil Code can in fact be traced in other Kemalist reforms and policies of the early republican era. One can refer to several other speeches of Mustafa Kemal or members of the high Kemalist elite where their strong political will and the ideological motives that shaped the general frameworks of the Kemalist reforms can be examined. In fact, such analyses have dominated the literature on Kemalist modernization; the visions of the Kemalist elite in Ankara and what they had to say about the targets and aims of the policies they introduced have been the starting point of any analysis on these policies. They have also been read as reflecting the ultimate character of the Kemalist modernization "projects," which have been seen as solid, well-formulated plans of a cohesive group of political elites to change the society in a top-down manner. In this line of thinking, "social change, seen as self-propelling movement with an internal spring, has no place;" it is rather seen as promoted and shaped by the "projects" of the elites, or as they are usually called, of the "social engineers."⁸⁵⁷ As Brockett suggests, the "assertion that what the Kemalist elite believed should happen was indeed taking place" has been very strong in the literature,⁸⁵⁸ and thus little attention has been given to the study of the implementation process of the reforms as they were translated into concrete policies and doings of the various levels of state agents in the provinces. As valuable and informative as it is, Berkes's

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 471.

⁸⁵⁷ Mardin, 1997, p. 65. In this chapter, Mardin criticizes this dominant approach in the literature and suggests that in order to understand social change, scholars should rather look at its micro aspects and study the "everyday" and "life-worlds" of social subjects. However, Mardin points at religion as the "life-world" and sees Islam as the dominant motive in the lives of ordinary people in Turkey, which I think is an approach that narrows the concept of life-world and limits the contributions it could make to the literature.

⁸⁵⁸ Brockett, 1998, p. 45.

analysis of the new Civil Code, for example, does not offer sufficient clues to understanding why in the 1930s one could still encounter practices that were clearly against this law. In 1931, for instance, the party report on the concerns and requests raised in the local congresses of the RPP in 38 provinces included notes that in the villages of some provinces, such as Artvin, Erzincan, Erzurum and Kars, marriages were carried out only by the religious hodjas, and thus these marriages were unregistered.⁸⁵⁹ According to the report, the local RPP representatives had demanded such acts be prevented, and the Ministry of Justice was also informed on the issue.⁸⁶⁰ Newspapers of the 1930s, national and local alike, were indeed full of news about such issues of unregistered marriages and births, and the many attempts by the state to have them registered by granting a pardon.⁸⁶¹ This evidence shows that the Civil Code was still contested in the periphery years after its introduction and could not be fully implemented, despite the resolute voice of the political elite in Ankara.

This thesis has departed from a similar discrepancy between “the fact and fiction” in the study of the Kemalist modernization. Drawing on the case of the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s, it aimed to challenge the elite-centered analysis of the early republican era by focusing on how the state policies were shaped and experienced in the provinces. The analysis presented here has been informed by a theoretical perspective that focuses on a relational understanding of state-society relations, emphasizes the importance of the local, and acknowledges the agency of the societal actors. It aimed to reveal, in the example of the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s, a more detailed and complex picture of the Kemalist reforms and policies in the periphery that takes into account the ambiguities, hesitations, contradictions, unanticipated consequences, negotiations and compromises embedded in the modernization process. In doing so, this study has sought to contribute to a recently increasing body of literature on the social history of the early republican period that sheds more light on the micro dynamics of social change.

⁸⁵⁹ For the report, see PMRA 030.10/79.522.2.

⁸⁶⁰ Similarly, despite the fact that the new Civil Code clearly banned polygamy, it continued to exist in the following decades. For a discussion on this issue, see Nicole A.N.M. van Os, “Polygamy Before and After the Introduction of the Swiss Civil Code in Turkey,” in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 179-198.

⁸⁶¹ For example, see “Diyarbakırda 40 bin Mektum Nüfus Kaydedildi,” *Son Posta*, 13 July 1934; “Gizli Nüfus,” *Son Posta*, 19 August 1934; “Gizli Doğum,” *Yeni Asır*, 19 November 1934; “Gizli Nüfus Yazımı Uzatıldı,” *Yeni Adana*, 20 January 1935; “Gizli Nüfus Hakkında,” *Yeni Adana*, 7 July 1936.

The case of the anti-veiling campaigns is particularly illuminating when it comes to studying such micro dynamics. Unlike many other Kemalist reforms, there was no law or central decision guiding the implementation of the campaigns in the provinces. Although Ankara clearly encouraged the local administrators, and tried to control and coordinate their initiatives for women's unveiling, the campaigns remained as local phenomena and were mainly fashioned by the local actors and circumstances rather than by directives coming from the center. In fact, as discussed in detail in Chapter 4, the directives coming from Ankara were usually weak in terms of policy guidance, and at times, vague and even inconsistent. As such, anti-veiling campaigns can be seen as an ambiguous reform agenda in terms of content and application. This ambiguity, it can be argued, created even a broader space for various actors to be involved in the shaping of state policies, and combined with their local character, turned the anti-veiling campaigns into a very rich case to observe these complex interactions between state and societal actors.

The public debate on the proper way for women to veil themselves and the characterization of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as uncivilized clothing originated in the late Ottoman Empire. Although the "new woman" of the republic was promoted to symbolize a radical break with the Ottoman past, neither the search for a new womanhood nor the idea that linked social development, progress and modernity with women's emancipation and modernization of their clothing was new. The change in women's clothing and the decrease in the use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were already under way among the elite women in major Ottoman urban centers. Ottoman women's increasing participation in the work force and their efforts in the war years prepared a fertile ground for their further visibility in the public sphere in the republic. The initial attempts to intervene in the clothing of women in the 1920s, which can indeed partly be seen as a continuation of the tradition of state regulation of clothing in the Ottoman era, had built on the modernist discourse and practices that emerged during the empire, but also furthered them by opening the way for direct intervention in women's veiling.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the anti-veiling campaigns in the second half of the 1920s were local, narrow in scope, limited in number and largely uninfluential in practice. While some of them seemed to be encouraged by the central elite, the campaigns were mainly the initiatives of the local elite. It was demonstrated that they emerged immediately after the enactment of the Hat Law of 1925 and were undoubtedly part of the public debate and general atmosphere the hat reform generated on modern and civilized clothing. I

argued that the Hat Law functioned as a reference point and source of legitimacy for those provincial elite, men and women, who wanted to initiate a similar modernization attempt with respect to women's clothing in their localities. Particularly significant was the influence of the hat reform experience in shaping the way the question of women's veiling was handled. The Kemalist strategy of dealing with women's clothing not by issuing a law or a central decree was informed by the reactions the hat reform received. However, I also argued that part of the reason for this choice should be found in the patriarchal concerns of the Kemalist regime while trying to trigger change in women's social position and public roles. The patriarchal agreement between the elite and non-elite male actors was to "protect" women's morality from the ills of "too much" Westernization. This patriarchal agreement, combined with the fear of a social reaction even wider than the hat reform received, fed into the tendency of the Kemalist regime to transfer the question of unveiling to the provincial level, to trust the modernist ambitions of the local elite, and thus to be content with a more gradual change in this "sensitive issue."

While it can be argued that this tendency continued throughout the single-party era in broad terms, we see a bolder attempt to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the 1930s, which I call the main wave of the anti-veiling campaigns. Local attempts to eliminate the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would be applied in a much more comprehensive manner during this main wave, both in terms of content and the scope, and the strength of the propaganda efforts regarding it. I suggested that this main wave should be analyzed in the context of 1930s Turkey, which was characterized by an increasingly authoritarian regime that consolidated its power and was more determined to penetrate the society and to intervene in ordinary people's cultural and daily practices. In other words, the anti-veiling campaigns could be understood as part of a new phase the Kemalist regime entered in the 1930s, marked by the policy of statism not only in economic sphere but also in other fields. This new phase was also shaped by an assertive move for cultural modernization, of which the anti-veiling campaigns were an important component alongside other bold reforms, such as the adoption of Western measures and the language reform. As discussed in Chapter 3, the year 1934 had witnessed a particularly intense reform movement in this direction, including the anti-veiling campaigns, the Surname Law, the Dress Law, and women's gaining of their full political rights. The relationship between the Kemalist regime's turn to statism and the acceleration of the attempts at cultural modernization that I underlined in this

thesis needs to be analyzed further based on other examples to get a more vivid picture of this “second phase” of Kemalism in the 1930s. The anti-veiling campaigns were perhaps one of the best ways of looking at the “cultural” codes of the regime, which aimed at creating a more “civilized” society, both in visual and behavioral terms. However, I think, these series of reforms that we have associated with cultural modernization should not be seen as being limited to such discursive and ideological categories of “modern,” “civilized” or “new,” as they were frequently addressed by the Kemalists themselves. They should also be seen in a broader context of state centralization, as components of an increasing attempt on the side of the regime in the 1930s to restore its legitimacy, to enlarge its ideological hegemony, and to increase regulation, systematization, and homogenization in order to inventory various aspects of daily life of its citizens and bring them under control. It is I think in this way that we can see the integrated nature of economic, political and cultural spheres as well as the links between different policies of the single-party era more clearly.

One mechanism in the 1930s through which such parallel processes of modernization and state penetration infused deeper into the provinces was the municipal administration, which was significantly strengthened by the Municipal Law of 1930 and reorganized as one of the local promoters of modern life. As analyzed in Chapter 3, this law and the subsequent amendments to increase further the punitive powers of the municipalities had in fact drawn the legal framework within which the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s were shaped and implemented. In this sense, it was no coincidence that when direct bans were issued on the use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in a great majority of the anti-veiling campaigns, they were issued by the city councils acting on the basis of the Municipal Law. However, it would be misleading to see the anti-veiling campaigns as municipal regulations only because the bans were issued by the city councils. In fact, one of the major findings of this thesis is the multiplicity of institutions and actors involved in the process leading to an anti-veiling campaign and its implementation thereafter. In other words, just as it was possible to see mayors or city council members who were unwilling to use the legal capacity of the municipalities to initiate an anti-veiling campaign, it was also common to see sport clubs, local associations, local newspapers, People’s Houses, the local RPP branches or the members of the provincial councils that pushed for an effective campaign. Depending on the locality, one or more of these actors and institutions could play a decisive role in the organization of an anti-veiling campaign, the ban

issued by the city council being one component of the process. The implementation of the campaign was even more complex, since it was shaped by the support as well as resistance of various actors at the local level, and simultaneously, by the interaction between Ankara and the provinces. That is why this thesis suggested that in order to better analyze the single-party era, it is imperative to bring the local back into the analysis, to keep a micro-macro balance, and to reconsider the periphery not as a locus of the “traditional,” the “masses,” or religious opposition to Kemalism but as a sphere of interaction between various actors and positions, where Kemalism and daily state practices were negotiated.

A closer look at the anti-veiling campaigns as they were experienced at the local level reveals a number of crucial insights regarding 1930s Turkey. First, the problematic aspects of focusing on high politics of the capital notwithstanding, the dominant tendency in the literature to picture a homogeneous and unified Kemalist political elite is misleading. The detailed discussion on the position of Ankara on the anti-veiling campaigns in Chapter 4 revealed that the high Kemalist elite was not only in fact less monolithic than they have been imagined to be, but also could act quite hesitantly and reluctantly on certain issues. As in other policies, Ankara was involved in the anti-veiling campaigns through various channels, the main ones being the Ministry of Interior and the RPP General Secretary. However, the nature of this involvement and the working of these channels were quite complex and they ensured neither a solid control over nor a consistent implementation of the anti-veiling campaigns. The Kemalist elite’s hesitations, as clearly surfaced in the RPP congress in 1935, continued throughout the process and the basic consensus on the need for encouragement, inculcation, and propaganda regarding unveiling, as constantly appeared in the circulars sent from Ankara, had little effect in uniting the experiences in different provinces. As shown in Chapters 4 and 5, the regime center acted much more consistently and cohesively in cases it perceived an open resistance. It equally reacted quite steadily to those provincial administrators who pushed for an aggressive anti-veiling campaign, going beyond the authority they had been given by Ankara. It is, I think, also significant to remember in this regard that the use of force in the anti-veiling campaigns was also consistently rejected by Ankara, though it could not be avoided.

Second, the role and the attitudes of the local elite were decisive at all levels. One of the most important findings in this matter is the fact that in some of the anti-veiling campaigns the initiative came from the local, from those

who envisioned themselves as the representatives and the agents of modernization in the periphery. In other words, the anti-veiling campaigns cannot be seen as directed and imposed from Ankara only; they were supported and even initiated by some local modernists, native and appointed alike, and thus emerged as a result of more widely shared ideological premises and ambitions. Some local elites, on the other hand, varying from provincial governors to native members of city councils, were content with a more gradual change on the issue of women's veiling. There were also those who had reservations about, or even critical of, the anti-veiling campaigns. Even provincial governors, perhaps the most coherent group ideologically and educationally, could interpret the central policies and reforms in quite diverse ways. This variety formed the basis of another important argument of this thesis: not only that the concept of local elite is essential in analyzing the Kemalist state in action, but also that the local elite should not be seen as monolithic or limited to state-appointed officials. Rather, it should be defined in an inclusive manner, as a composite group broad enough to embrace power networks at the local level. It is crucial to remember that while salient differences like native vs. non-native, or educated vs. non-educated proved important in many instances, these differences among the local elite were not as rigid and bold as they have usually been assumed in the literature.

Third, the local, or the "periphery," had many components. As argued in Chapter 5, the local has to be diversified to reflect the multiplicity of the actors and voices it contains. Much like the central elite in Ankara, the local elite also did not act in a vacuum; their actions were shaped in relation to the reactions coming from the ordinary people, the real addressees of the state policies. The subordinated sectors of the society had an influence on the anti-veiling campaigns in various and creative ways, such as circulating rumors and writing anonymous letters. While popular resistance to the campaigns remained largely within the limits of "secure" strategies, some anti-veiling campaigns, especially those that were enforced through the police or the gendarmerie, received violent reactions. Reactions to the campaigns also reveal that popular resistance cannot be reduced to religious or traditional reasons, as would be expected from the "periphery," as it is depicted in the literature. Popular resistance was significant, for example, particularly in making the economic aspect of the campaigns more visible to the authorities. The local producers of the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal*, as well as poor people who were unable to afford the "modern" clothes to replace them reacted to the anti-veiling campaigns largely with economic concerns.

Forth, this thesis argued that since women were the main target of the anti-veiling campaigns, their agency should be highlighted. In other words, women's roles in this process, as both facilitators and actors that tried to adapt, shape, modify and/or resist the change the Kemalist regime wanted to initiate, should be particularly underscored. Chapter 5 demonstrated that some women played an active role in the anti-veiling campaigns, not only as supporters but also as initiators of the bans issued by local institutions. Some women tried to resist the intervention in their clothing in various ways, while others domesticated new clothes by adapting them to local circumstances or by embracing new forms of covering their hair. A detailed look at women's reactions to and involvement in the anti-veiling campaigns showed that women's agency should be analyzed and conceptualized by going beyond the dichotomy of open resistance and passive obedience. It also demonstrated that these campaigns could not be understood within the parameters of the never-ending debate on whether they were liberating or oppressive. Women's unveiling in the early republic has been discussed by the critics of Kemalism in Turkey as one of the most powerful symbols of Kemalist oppression, and became highly politicized, especially during the headscarf debate in the recent decades. While the Kemalist narrative celebrates such policies as the emancipation of women, contemporary historiography that has emerged as a critique of this narrative has largely represented women as victims of them. In both accounts, however, women have been characterized as passive receivers of state policies. I tried to show that this was not the case. Based on my analysis of women's agency, I also suggested that the feminist critique of Kemalist modernization should also respond to some women's willingness to be part of this experience because they thought it provided a *potentially* broader space for women's self-actualization.⁸⁶² In other words, we can acknowledge and address the various ways women were involved in the anti-veiling campaigns, resisted to them or altered them, without reducing this variety to rigid categories like full emancipation or oppression. Equally, we can analyze possibly empowering aspects of the anti-veiling campaigns for some women, without undermining their authoritarian character and without

⁸⁶² The feminist literature on Kemalist modernization partly touched upon this willingness by emphasizing a small group of professional women who were seen as having "internalized the Kemalist message." See, for example, Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey," in *Women, Islam and the State*, Deniz Kandiyoti (ed.), Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991, pp. 22-47. However, this analysis needs to be enlarged to also include those women who were actively participated in the shaping of the Kemalist policies in the provinces.

ignoring the fact that some women became victims of state and male violence because they refused to unveil or veil.

In Chapter 6, I discussed the Turkish anti-veiling campaigns within the broader context of the Muslim world. I argued that despite the fact that the Kemalists turned their face to the West as the ultimate reference point, they never missed to make references to their “Eastern,” “less developed” neighbors and brothers, in order to increase the legitimacy of their policies inside the country and to promote their “leadership” in modernization of the Muslim world outside the country. Developments regarding women’s clothing and veiling in other predominantly Muslim countries were closely watched and they could be used as motives to foster anti-veiling campaigns at the local level. For Kemalists, in Ankara and in the provinces alike, Turkey was the model country, and thus Turkish women were and should be always leading the way for modernization of Muslim women’s social positions, including, their clothing. In effect, the interaction among different Muslim societies was never one-sided. On the question of women’s unveiling, the modernist regimes of the inter-war era shared common visions and ambitions, but differed significantly in terms of how to deal with it.

The analysis provided in Chapter 6 demonstrates that the debates on and attempts at women’s unveiling in different Muslim countries all stemmed from a similar search for a new, modern and national woman. From the Arab countries to Soviet Muslim republics, modernization of women, and as part of it, modernization of women’s clothing, echoed modernization and development of the nation as a whole. In all experiences, though in varying degrees, unveiling was presented as a national cause rather than a pure imitation of the West, and a particular emphasis on protecting women’s morality accompanied the emphasis given to their new roles as modern citizens. The reactions the anti-veiling campaigns received and the ways in which women tried to cope with them also revealed significant similarities across the cases. One important conclusion perhaps is that no matter how authoritarian the political regimes in inter-war Muslim world were (as all of them were), the implementation of the authoritarian policies like the anti-veiling campaigns was never without contestation and almost never took the shape the central elite envisioned. From cultural to economic factors, many dynamics altered the original “projects” and the end results were always shaped by an interplay between various actors and discourses.

I highlighted the anti-veiling campaigns in Albania, Iran and Turkey as the most systematic and effective campaigns in the Muslim world. I

discussed these three cases comparatively not only to understand the interaction between them, but also to emphasize the distinctive characteristics of the Kemalist regime in 1930s Turkey more vividly in the light of its closest contemporaries. The comparison shows that the Kemalist regime was *relatively* more capable of infusing its ideology deeper into the society, integrating *relatively* broader segments of the population to its circles of power, and providing *relatively* larger institutional variety and capacity to embrace these actors as agents at the local level. In 1930s Turkey, the Kemalist state functioned in the provinces through various institutions: the local branches of the RPP, the People's Houses, the municipalities, the city councils, the provincial councils, and various associations. The anti-veiling campaigns were shaped by the initiatives and acts of these institutions, which functioned as settings accommodating different actors and positions. I argued that this institutional diversity and capacity did not make the anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey any more democratic. Nor did they make the Kemalist regime in the 1930s less authoritarian. But I think it is safe to argue that the Kemalist regime was *relatively* more capable of adjusting negotiation, domestication and variation without endangering its political power and ideological hegemony *compared* to its contemporaries in the Muslim world. In this sense, the findings of this thesis support Meeker's observation that the Kemalist regime allowed a certain degree of popular participation in governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to incorporate the local actors in the new system, much like the way the Ottoman state operated in the provinces. It is, I think, also crucial to see the capacity of Kemalism to mobilize people, from teachers to school children, from women to various local elites if we are to understand its salience as a political reference beyond the single-party era.

In relation to this point, I should emphasize as the last concluding remark that the reading of the 1930s Turkey this thesis has suggested based on the example of the anti-veiling campaigns should be seen as an attempt to further our understanding of the authoritarianism of the period. In other words, this reading does not diverge from the general characterization of the Kemalist single-party state as an authoritarian state, but claims to provide a better account of how this authoritarian state actually worked. There is no doubt that the Kemalist regime in the early republican period was an authoritarian regime, and though in varying degrees, the modernization policies initiated by this regime touched every sector of the society, as the political elite in Ankara had anticipated. However, there is also no question that the visions of the

political elite in Ankara, and the policies, reforms and instruments of this authoritarian regime were influenced and shaped by its encounters with the society, with the realities and dynamics of social life it faced when operating in practice. In other words, it is the encounter and interaction of the state and the society out of which the social change, or the various “projects” of Kemalist modernity, took their final form. Therefore, as Migdal suggests, one needs to look at those spaces where this encounter and interaction occurred; spaces where the project of modernity initiated by the elite met the society, and where they transformed one another.⁸⁶³ The case of the anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey of the 1930s demonstrates that the state policies of the single-party era and the change they created could be understood fully only by looking at the interactions of the state and the society, by focusing on the concrete forms these policies took in the provinces, and by appreciating the multiplicity of actors and agencies at the local level, the state being only one of them.

⁸⁶³ Migdal, 1997, p. 255.

APPENDIX

The table below shows the cities (provincial capitals, district capitals, and sub-districts) where there was an outright ban. It does not include the cases where there was an anti-veiling campaign but the campaign did not lead to an outright ban (or cases where it is unclear whether it did or not). For example, in Diyarbakır, the campaign seems to be limited to a decision by the members of the People's House, and thus it is not included in the table below. Therefore, it should be noted that the actual number of anti-veiling campaigns was higher than the number of cases included in the table. The bans are listed chronologically, based on the time the decisions were made and declared rather than the time the bans became effective. Enforcement dates, if known, are mentioned in the Notes column. Since provincial newspapers do not specify on which day exactly the decision was made when reporting on the bans, I use only the month and the year for the date of the bans. I used the name of the issuing authority as it appears in the source. For example, if the ban was reported only as a municipal decision (*belediye kararı*), I noted the municipality as the issuing authority. If it is specifically mentioned that it was the city council (*belediye meclisi*), then I specified the city council, an organ of the municipality, as well.

It should also be noted that the list provided below does not claim to be comprehensive. Although it is the most comprehensive list available in the literature, it is based on the sources I consulted within the limits of my research.

List of the Local Bans in the 1930s

Date of the Ban	City	Content	Issuing Authority	Source	Notes
August 1933	Safranbolu	<i>Çarşaf</i>	District Governor	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 21 August 1933	
April 1934	Giresun	<i>Peçe</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 24 April 1934	

April (?) 1934	Mersin	<i>Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 7 April 1934	The proposal to ban the <i>çarşaf</i> was submitted to the city council in April. The ban was put into practice on July 1 st . See also <i>Yeni Mersin</i> , 1 July 1934.
August 1934	Armutlu	<i>Çarşaf</i>		<i>Son Posta</i> 30 August 1934	It is not clear which institution issued the ban.
November 1934	Bergama	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Kıvrak</i>	City Council	<i>Anadolu</i> 7 November 1934	
November 1934	Buca	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Anadolu</i> 19 November 1934	See also <i>Yeni Asır</i> , 19 November 1934
November (?) 1934	Kayseri	<i>Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Yeni Asır</i> 27 November 1934	<i>Yeni Asır</i> reported a decision for the removal of the <i>çarşaf</i> . See also <i>Yeni Adana</i> , 4 December 1934. However, whether this initial decision included a ban is not clear. <i>Cumhuriyet</i> later reported a ban on the <i>çarşaf</i> in the district capitals and villages of Kayseri. <i>Cumhuriyet</i> , 16 September 1935.

December 1934	Bodrum	<i>Çarşaf, Fita, Peçe</i>	City Council	<i>Yeni Asır</i> 12 December 1934	The ban was put into practice on 1 January 1935. See also <i>Cumhuriyet</i> , 12 December 1934; <i>Yeniyol</i> , 13 December 1934.
December 1934	Fethiye	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Yeni Asır</i> 12 December 1934	15 days were allowed to remove the <i>peçe</i> , and six months for the <i>çarşaf</i> .
December 1934	Kemaliye	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Yeni Adana</i> 18 December 1934	See also <i>Babalık</i> , 18 December 1934.
December 1934	Bartın	<i>Kafes</i>	Municipal Committee (<i>Belediye Encümeni</i>)	<i>Antalya</i> 20 December 1934	A period of one week was provided to remove the <i>kafes</i> in Bartın city center.
December 1934	Bolu	<i>Çarşaf</i>	Municipality	<i>Yeni Asır</i> 21 December 1934	The decision of the municipality was put into practice in mid-June. See <i>Cumhuriyet</i> , 18 June 1935; <i>Yeniyol</i> , 19 June 1935.

February (?) 1935	Bursa	<i>Çarşaf, Kafes</i>	City Council	<i>Hakkın Sesi</i> 3 February 1935	The decision of the city council was to ban tailors from sewing the <i>çarşaf</i> . On the February 10 th , the <i>kafes</i> was banned. The time of the decision that banned the <i>çarşaf</i> is unclear, but it is certain that such a general ban was issued. See <i>Hakkın Sesi</i> , 10 October 1935.
February 1935	Antalya	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Kafes</i>	City Council	<i>Antalya</i> 16 February 1935	All <i>kafes</i> es were to be removed by the end of February, while for the removal of the <i>peçe</i> and the <i>çarşaf</i> , women had time until the end of April. See also <i>Yeniyol</i> , 14 February 1935; <i>Yeni Asır</i> , 14 February 1935.
February 1935	Adana	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 13 February 1935	The ban was put into practice on March 16 th . See <i>Yeni Asır</i> , 13 March 1935.
February 1935	Akşehir	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	Municipality	<i>Babalık</i> 13 February 1935	

February (?) 1935	Erzincan	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Kafes</i>	Provincial Council	<i>İkbal</i> 22 February 1935	
February 1935	Rize	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Umbrella</i>	City Council	<i>Yeni Asır</i> 1 March 1935	Women were given a period of one year to replace their <i>çarşaf</i> with an overcoat.
March 1935	Artvin	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Yeni Asır</i> 7 March 1935	See also <i>Halk</i> , 7 Mart 1935.
April 1935	Muğla	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 25 April 1935	The ban was put into practice in June. See also PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 15 October 1935.
April 1935	İnegöl	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Kafes</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 25 April 1935	Noncompliance would be fined, ranging from 5 to 50 liras. See also <i>Hakkın Sesi</i> , 23 April 1935.
April 1935	Ereğli	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Babalık</i> 10 August 1935	The ban was put into practice on 1 August 1935.
May 1935	Nevşehir	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Yaşmak</i>	Municipality	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 18 May 1935	<i>Peçe</i> and <i>Yaşmak</i> were to be removed immediately.
July 1935	Sungurlu	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Kafes</i>	Municipality	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 10 July 1935	Both the local party administration and the District Health Council (<i>Sağlık Kurulu</i>) were part of the decision making.
August (?) 1935	Zile	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 2 August 1935	See also <i>Yeni yol</i> , 3 August 1935.

August 1935	Kastamonu	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Yeniyol</i> 3 August 1935	See also <i>Halk</i> , 3 August 1935.
August 1935	Konya	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Şelme</i>	City Council	<i>Babalık</i> 7 August 1935	The ban was put into practice on 15 September 1935. See also <i>Cumhuriyet</i> , 9 August 1935.
August 1935	İlgın	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Babalık</i> 10 August 1935	
August 1935	Kadınhan	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Babalık</i> 13 August 1935	
August 1935	Karaman	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Babalık</i> 15 August 1935	See also <i>Cumhuriyet</i> , 21 August 1935.
August 1935	Aydın	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Peştamal</i>	City Council	TNPA 13216-7/1 17 August 1935	
August 1935	Tosya	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	TNPA 13216-7/1 21 August 1935	
August 1935	Göynük	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 23 August 1935	
August 1935	Afyon	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 24 August 1935	See also <i>Son Posta</i> , 24 August 1935.
August 1935	Sivas	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 26 August 1935	
August 1935	Isparta	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>		<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 26 August 1935	It is not clear which institution issued the ban.
August 1935	Çorum	<i>Çarşaf</i>	Municipality	TNPA 13216-7/1 20 August 1935	

August (?) 1935	Seyitgazi	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	Municipality	TNPA 13216-7/1 7 February 1936	
September 1935	Erdek	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 1 September 1935	
September 1935	Soma	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 10 September 1935	
September 1935	Karacasu	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Peştamal</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 13 September 1935	
September 1935	Elaziz	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 13 September 1935	
September 1935	Çermik	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>		<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 16 September 1935	It is not clear which institution issued the ban.
September 1935	Denizli	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Peştamal</i>	Governor	<i>Babadağ</i> 24 September 1935	Cited in Uyar, 2006.
September 1935	Kilis	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Son Posta</i> 23 September 1935	Women were given time to remove their <i>çarşaf</i> until December 1935. See also <i>Cumhuriyet</i> , 27 January 1936.
September 1935	Yozgat	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	Governor (?)	PMRA 490.01/17.88.1 13 November 1935	
September 1935	Sinop	<i>Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 3 October 1935	
September (?) 1935	Çankırı	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	TNPA 13216-7/1 4 November 1935	
October 1935	Bitlis	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Son Posta</i> 2 October 1935	

October (?) 1935	Uşak	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 3 October 1935	The <i>peçe</i> was to be removed immediately, whereas the <i>çarşaf</i> was allowed only until October 29 th , Republic Day.
October (?) 1935	Mardin	<i>Peçe</i>	Municipality	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 3 October 1935	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> reported that there was a decision by the municipality. However, whether the decision included a ban on the <i>peçe</i> is not clear.
October 1935	Siirt	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	Municipality	<i>Son Posta</i> 13 October 1935	The campaign was initiated by the People's House earlier in March. See <i>Halk</i> , 25 March 1935.
November 1935	Adıyaman	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 7 November 1935	
November 1935	Maraş	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Karadon</i>	City Council	PMRA 490.01/17.88.1 5 November 1935	<i>Karadon</i> was a type of baggy trouser common among local men in Maraş. See also <i>Cumhuriyet</i> , 11 November 1935.
November 1935	Gümüşhane	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 13 November 1935	
November 1935	Bayburt	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> 29 November 1935	

November 1935	Akçaabat	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	Municipality	<i>Halk</i> 25 November 1935	
December 1935	Maçka	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Peştamal</i>	Municipality	<i>Halk</i> 12 December 1935	
February 1936	Trabzon	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Halk</i> 10 February 1936	
February 1936	Of	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf</i>	City Council	<i>Halk</i> 24 February 1936	
March 1937	Ordu	<i>Peçe, Çarşaf, Peştamal</i>	Governor	TNPA 13216-7/1 5 March 1937	The <i>peçe</i> , the <i>çarşaf</i> , and the <i>peştamal</i> were banned as of 23 April 1937.
November 1938	Hakkari	<i>Peçe</i>	Municipality	TNPA 13216-7/2 20 November 1938	It was the municipality of Çölemerik, the provincial center of the province of Hakkari that decided to ban the <i>peçe</i> . Cited in Yılmaz, 2006.

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Newspapers and Periodicals

Ak Günler (Adana)
Anadolu (İzmir)
Antalya (Antalya)
Babalık (Konya)
Cumhuriyet
Halk (Trabzon)
Hakimiyeti Milliye
Hakkın Sesi (Bursa)
İkbal (Trabzon)
Kars (Kars)
Resimli Ay
Son Posta
Yeni Adana (Adana)
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SAMENVATTING

Kemalisme in de Periferie: Anti-Sluiering Campagnes en Verhoudingen tussen Staat en Samenleving in de jaren 1930 in Turkije

De Kemalistische periode van modernisering is vaak beschreven als een periode van autoritaire modernisering gekenmerkt door een aantal zeer radicale hervormingen geformuleerd door de heersende elite en top-down opgelegd aan de samenleving. Deze hervormingen zijn vaak gekenmerkt als “modernisering van bovenaf” en onderzocht aan de hand van een staat-gecentreerde benadering, welke zich vooral richt op de intellectuele bevlogenheid, de ideologische fundamenteën en het politieke discours van de Kemalistische elite, waarbij in het bijzonder de visie, ideeën en “projecten” van Mustafa Kemal Atatürk centraal worden gesteld. Ondanks dat al sinds de jaren 1960 de aannames van de modernisering theorie, die de klassieke literatuur over de moderne Ottomaanse/Turkse geschiedenis domineren, worden bekritiseerd, heeft de aanpassing in het theoretische kader bijna niet voor een verandering gezorgd in de focus op de staat en de elite. Nieuwe benaderingen die meer sociologisch van aard waren, zoals de centrum-periferie analyse, gingen niet verder dan de tweedeling tussen staat en samenleving. De gecompliceerde socio-historische realiteit, zoals de welwillendheid van de staatsvertegenwoordigers om te onderhandelen en tot een compromis te komen met de heersende gewoonten en structuren in de samenleving, en de neiging van de staatsvertegenwoordigers om de hervormingen op verschillende en zelfs behoorlijk creatieve manieren aan te pakken is veelal buiten beschouwing gelaten.

Recentelijk zijn nieuwe studies verschenen waarin de focus niet langer op de staat en de elite ligt. In deze studies worden er vragen gesteld als hoe de staatshervormingen werden geïmplementeerd, hoe de beleidsplannen naar de provincies werden gebracht en werden vertaald naar dagelijkse routines van de staat, en hoe dit beleid onderdeel uit ging maken van het alledaagse leven van de gewone bevolking. Dat deze vragen worden gesteld is het resultaat van een verschuiving in het theoretische kader en de concepten die worden gebruikt om de relaties tussen staat en samenleving in vroeg Republikeins Turkije te begrijpen. De invloed van de “geschiedenis van

onderaf school” *subaltern studies*, de relationele sociologie en de antropologische perspectieven met betrekking tot de staat en relaties tussen de staat en samenleving hebben een cruciale rol gespeeld in deze verschuiving.

Door zich te baseren op de theoretische inzichten afkomstig van deze verschillende studierichtingen en in het bijzonder op de *state-in-society* (de staat in de samenleving) benadering van Joel Migdal, maakt dat deze dissertatie onderdeel is van de recentelijk bloeiende literatuur over de Republiek Turkije, en draagt hier verder aan bij. Net als Migdal probeert de auteur zowel de relatie tussen de staat en de samenleving te bezien als meer dan een dichotomie, als de sociale verandering tijdens de Kemalistische modernisering te analyseren als een relationeel proces. Dit gebeurt door zowel rekening te houden met de rol van de mensen in de maatschappij als met de beperkingen van de staatsmacht. In algemene termen is het een onderzoek naar de verhoudingen tussen de staat en de samenleving in de jaren 1930 in Turkije, met als doel te begrijpen hoe het Kemalistische beleid en de hervormingen werden ontvangen, geïnterpreteerd, onderhandeld, en overeengekomen, maar ook hoe er weerstand werd geboden door verschillende groepen in de provincies. Het punt waarop deze studie focust om deze onderwerpen te bespreken is de regulering van vrouwelijke kledij zoals in de anti-sluiering campagnes in de jaren 1930.

De campagnes die zich alleen richtten op de *peçe* (gezichtssluier), de *çarşaf* (volledige lichaamsbedekking) en bepaalde locale variaties op de *çarşaf*, werden voornamelijk georganiseerd op lokaal niveau en gevormd door de interactie tussen de initiatieven van de lokale elite en de betrokkenheid van de staat om deze initiatieven te coördineren en reguleren. Een gebrek aan een nationale wet of decreet die de kleding van vrouwen reguleerde en aan stevige en consistente richtlijnen vanuit de hoofdstad, alsook het lokale karakter van de anti-sluiering campagnes liet ruimte voor discussies, onderhandelingen en lokale variaties, welke uiteindelijk resulteerden in een ingewikkelde en minder radicale transformatie in hoe vrouwen zich kleedden in de provincies. Daar komt bij dat het feit dat het bedekken van het haar nooit openlijk is besproken ervoor zorgde dat er meer ruimte was voor selectieve assimilatie van het beleid door vrouwen. De anti-sluiering campagnes in de jaren 1930 in Turkije zijn een duidelijk voorbeeld van interventie van de staat; een voorbeeld dat erg dubbelzinnig was, en divers en inconsistent in de uitvoering. Als zodanig biedt de kwestie van de anti-sluiering campagnes een rijk terrein om de houdingen, strategieën en acties van de vertegenwoordigers van de

staat, lokale elite en gewone mensen te onderzoeken, alsook de manier waarop ze op elkaar inwerkten en werden uitonderhandeld.

Deze studie is de eerste monografie die zich bezhoudt met de anti-sluiering campagnes in de vroege Turkse Republiek en haar bijdrage aan de bestaande literatuur is tweeledig. Ten eerste presenteert ze een gedetailleerd overzicht van de discussies over en de pogingen tot het ontsluiten van vrouwen in Turkije vanaf de laat-Ottomaanse periode, en focust ze op de belangrijkste golf van anti-sluiering campagnes in het midden van de jaren dertig door deze in te kaderen als onderdeel van een nieuwe fase waarin het Kemalistische regime zich in die tijd bevond. Hierdoor geeft ze een zeer veelomvattend verslag van de anti-sluiering campagnes in de vroege Turkse Republiek door het onderliggende algemene politieke betoog te analyseren en te kijken naar de wettelijke en institutionele mechanismen waarmee ze werden geformuleerd en toegepast. Dit geeft een beeld van alle aspecten van de campagnes en plaatst deze in de context van de hervormingen in het algemeen. Ten tweede gaat de studie, terwijl ze kijkt naar de hoofdkarakteristieken van de anti-sluiering campagnes in de provincies en deze analyseert als een algemeen verspreid hervormingsproces, tegelijkertijd ook dieper in op de lokale context. Door veel nadruk te leggen op het belang van het bestuderen van de lokale aspecten, analyseert de studie de campagnes in de context van de ingewikkelde situatie van de lokale omstandigheden en de politiek. Maar door dit te doen focust ze niet op slechts een aantal gevallen. Ze verdiept zich in het lokale, in de micro dynamiek van de campagnes in verschillende gevallen en onderzoekt deze aan de hand van gangbare conceptuele kaders zoals weerstand en vertegenwoordiging. Twee van deze conceptuele kaders in het bijzonder die worden toegepast om de anti-sluiering campagnes te bestuderen zijn die van lokale elite en vrouwen vertegenwoordiging, hetgeen de analyse in deze studie van de campagnes onderscheidt van die van andere onderzoekers. Deze tweeledige analyse van de scriptie is gebaseerd op een combinatie van verschillende bronnen: een selectie van lokale kranten, de archieven van de Turkse centrale staat en politie en rapporten van Amerikaanse en Britse diplomaten.

De dissertatie bestaat uit vijf hoofdstukken. Hoofdstuk 2 richt zich op het debat over het (ont-)sluieren van vrouwen en pogingen tot anti-sluiering campagnes van voor de jaren 1930, namelijk vanaf de oorsprong van de kwestie in het Ottomaanse Rijk in de 19e eeuw tot de vroege initiatieven tot het organiseren van anti-sluiering campagnes in de jaren 1920. Hoofdstuk 3 gaat over de anti-sluiering campagnes in de jaren 1930 als belangrijkste golf

van vrouwenontsluiering en situeert deze in de bredere context van Turkije in die periode, gekenmerkt door een verandering naar een meer autoritair regime dat graag de samenleving binnendringt en haar controle over de economische, sociale en culturele domeinen vergroot. Naast het geven van een macro beeld van Turkije in de jaren 1930, bespreekt dit hoofdstuk ook in detail de timing, de omvang, het betoog en het juridische kader van de anti-sluiering campagnes. Hoofdstuk 4 focust op het lokale en kijkt in het bijzonder naar de rol die de lokale elites speelden in de anti-sluiering campagnes. Het laat zien dat als samengestelde groep de houdingen van de lokale elites divers waren en ze een cruciale rol speelden in het vormen van de campagnes in de provincies. Hoofdstuk 5 bespreekt de onderwerpen van weerstand en vertegenwoordiging en kijkt naar de houding en reacties van de gewone mensen, en in het bijzonder naar de rol van vrouwen, in de anti-sluiering campagnes. Hoofdstuk 6 plaatst de Turkse anti-sluiering campagnes in het grotere overzicht van de Moslim wereld in termen van de debatten over, en de pogingen tot, het veranderen van de kledij van vrouwen tijdens het interbellum. Het laat zien dat ondanks een algehele trend van de ontwikkeling van een betoog over kwesties van vrouwen en de modernisering van hun kledij in de gehele Moslim wereld, deze kwesties op verschillende manieren werden benaderd. Albanië, Iran en Turkije worden vergelijkend behandeld om de kenmerkende aspecten van de Turkse anti-sluiering campagnes van de jaren dertig beter te benadrukken.

Deze dissertatie concludeert dat de heersende neiging in de literatuur tot het beschrijven van een almachtige Turkse staat en een eensgezinde Kemalistische politieke elite misleidend is. De rol en de houding van de lokale elites en van verschillende maatschappelijk betrokkenen waren bepalend op alle niveau's. Daarom is het essentieel om het lokale niveau te bestuderen bij een analyse van de Kemalistische staat in actie en om de ingewikkelde manieren te zien waarop het staatsbeleid werd aangevochten, gebruikt en gedomesticeerd in de provincies. Deze studie beargumenteert ook dat de centrum-periferie dichotomie meer verbergt dan dat hij uitlegt; zowel het 'centrum' als de 'periferie' hebben vele componenten en ze zijn op verschillende manieren met elkaar in interactie. Het beleid en de hervormingen van de Kemalistische eenpartijstaat werden gevormd door zijn ontmoeting met de samenleving, met de realiteit en de dynamiek van het sociale leven waar het mee in aanraking kwam in de praktijk. De kwestie van de anti-sluiering campagnes in Turkije in de jaren dertig laat zien dat het staatsbeleid van het eenpartijtijdperk en de verandering die het creëerde alleen

volledig kan worden begrepen door te kijken naar de wisselwerking tussen de staat en de samenleving, door te focussen op de concrete vormen die dit beleid aannam in de provincies en door de veelheid van deelnemers en vertegenwoordigers op lokaal niveau te waarderen, waarvan de staat er slechts één is.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Sevgi Adak was born in Denizli (Turkey) in 1979. She graduated from Izmir Buca Anatolian High School in 1997. After completing her BA degree at Bilkent University, Department of Political Science, she enrolled at Sabanci University in Istanbul and completed her first MA degree at the Graduate Program in History with her thesis “Formation of Authoritarian Secularism in Turkey: Ramadans in Early Turkish Republic, 1923-1938.” She completed her second MA degree in political science at York University, Toronto. She also holds an MPhil degree in political science from the Central European University, Budapest. Since 2009, she has been a PhD researcher at Leiden University, the School of Middle Eastern Studies at the Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS). She was also a Research Fellow at the International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam. Currently, she is teaching at Istanbul Bahçeşehir University, Department of Sociology. Her latest publications include a co-authored book chapter, “Is ‘Dialogue among Civilizations’ a True Remedy for ‘Clash of Civilizations’? Rethinking Civilizationist Categories with Reference to Turkey-EU Relations,” published in Mojtaba Mahdavi and W. Andy Knight (eds.), *Dialogue and “Dignity of Difference”: Building Capacity for Otherness* (Ashgate, 2012), and a book chapter, “Women in the Post-Ottoman Public Sphere: Anti-Veiling Campaigns and the Gendered Reshaping of Urban Space in Early Republican Turkey,” published in Nazan Maksudyan (ed.), *Women and the City, Women in the City: A Gendered Perspective on Ottoman Urban History* (Berghahn, 2014). Her academic interests include modern Turkish history, Turkish politics, state-society relations in the Middle East, women’s history and contemporary feminisms in the Middle East.