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

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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 terraion 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

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[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 andprestige 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

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[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 thrown. 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 Gökalp 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

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[670] François Georgeon, "Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası (1919-1938): Bazı İşaret Taşları," in *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, İskender Gökalp and François Georgeon (eds.), Istanbul: 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

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[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 teceddüt 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 *kıble* 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. *Kıble* 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 Babije 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 Briliği 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] "Dünkü 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

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[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

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[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.

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[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

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[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. İnalcık 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]

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[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,

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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, Dreshi: 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

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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, Ludwing 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 overthrown 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

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[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, "Feminicide 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 *Jadid*s). 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 faced 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 exits 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]

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[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 tuned 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

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[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]

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[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 Yoplum 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, fnt. 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 Forughi, 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 Jacopson, *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 Dowlatabadi 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]

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[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* form 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]

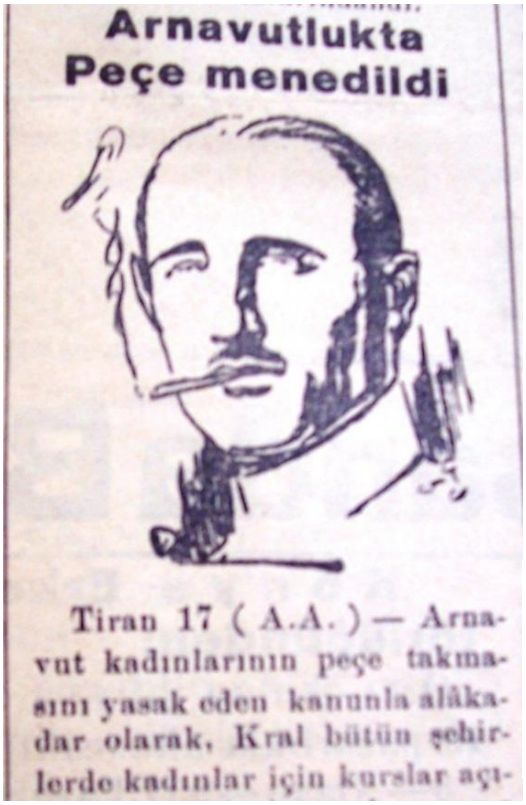
Arnavutlukta
Peçe menedildi
Tiran 17 (A.A.) — Arnavut kadınlarının peçe takmasını yasak eden kanunla alâkadar olarak, Kral bütün şehirlerde kadınlar için kurslar açı-

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 county 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 degree 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, fnt. 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 "extra-ordinary 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 forced 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 led 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.