“Conditional Freedom”
Identifying How Orientalism Informs Structural and Cultural Violence Towards Muslim Women in Turkey

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to my family, the light of my life. To my parents for teaching me love, acceptance, and dedication. Your hard work, determination, and strength inspires me forever and always. To my dearest brothers, Zaid and Yaser, for your unflagging support and encouragement.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to point out the ways in which Muslim women who wear the headscarf are subject to cultural and structural violence, and to discuss how that violence is informed by Orientalism. The study answers the following question: How does Orientalism inform structural and cultural violence against the wearing of the headscarf by Muslim women in Turkey? The theoretical framework applied to this study explores Johan Galtung’s different forms of violence: structural and cultural violence. The study also explores Edward Said’s ideas on Orientalism. In order to investigate the two aims of this study, interviews are conducted with five Turkish Muslim women who wear the headscarf. Moreover, Section E of the Turkish Constitutional Court Ruling regarding the headscarf ban in 1989 is analysed. This is done in order to examine the discourse related to modernisation, secularity and religion, as well as to identify structural and cultural violence, and how it may be informed by an Orientalist perspective. As a methodology, this study adopts a discourse analysis framework to gain a deeper understanding of the data.

The findings indicate that there is structural and cultural violence towards Muslim women who wear the headscarf, through both institutional and individual parties. Through the discourse of the participants and Section E of the Turkish Constitutional Court Ruling, these findings show that Orientalist attitude is an underlying factor in these forms of violence.

Keywords: cultural violence, headscarf, Muslim women, Orientalism, structural violence
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1 Introduction

In 2018, during a visit in Istanbul, I witnessed a confrontation between two women in a café in Ortaköy. The younger woman wore the Muslim headscarf, known as the hijab, while the other woman did not. As the argument escalated, the other woman began harshly criticising the woman’s appearance while tugging at her headscarf. The woman expressed her anger towards the girl by claiming that the headscarf did not belong in Ataturk’s modern Turkey. The older woman said, “Take that thing off your head so that you can use your brain!” The focal point of the argument was the younger woman’s appearance. I overheard several bystanders agreeing with this statement, while others shook their head in disagreement.

In reality, this type of confrontation regarding the headscarf is common practice in Turkey. As a nation, which is often described as the bridge between the East and the West, there is a deep divide within society; and a divide regarding what the headscarf entails. Public opinion regarding the headscarf shows that the majority of secular people in Turkey do not have any sympathy towards veiled Muslim women, because they see them as unable to escape the supposed oppression of Islam (Toprak & Uslu, 2009: 52). Studies show that the secular elite do not support Muslim women to seek education, or work, because they are viewed as inferior to the man and oppressed by their religion (Seckinelgin, 2006: 764), and thus, unable to follow the principle of secularism, which was introduced by Ataturk in the 1920’s (Bartkowski, et al, 2018: 31). Accordingly, the first official headscarf ban in Turkey was presented in 1982 by the Turkish Constitutional Court, and over the following years, it was continuously revised and became stricter to ensure that the headscarf could not be worn in state buildings and universities (O'Neil, 2010: 76). The headscarf ban also impacted the societal life of Muslim women who wore the headscarf. It was reported that many women experienced discrimination, physical and verbal harassment in their daily lives and found that wearing the headscarf limited them from getting a job (Okuyan & Curtin, 2018: 495). In 2013, the headscarf ban was

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1 Ortaköy is a neighbourhood in the Western side of Istanbul
completely lifted by the Justice and Development Party (AKP), however veiled women still experience difficulties in Turkey. Despite the fact that the structural barriers had been lifted, there is still tension and “carryover memories” between Muslim women and secular people in the public sphere (Ibid.).

Therefore, it is evident that the Turkish society experiences a great conflict regarding the headscarf issue and Peace and Conflict Studies highlights the importance of investigating what constitutes as ‘conflict’ and what is regarded as ‘peace’. With this in mind, it is important to introduce Johan Galtung in this study. Essentially, Galtung frames violence as depriving another human being of the freedom to make certain choices (Galtung, 1969: 168). Consequently, it can be reflected that depriving a Muslim woman from the right to wear the headscarf is a form of violence. Through the legislative changes done to instil a headscarf ban, structural violence was created, and legitimised the ideology that the headscarf was a symbol of inferiority, which transformed the structural into cultural violence within Turkish society.

These negative attitudes toward the headscarf cannot be considered in isolation from wider views on the relationship between Islam and ‘modernisation’. The establishment of the Republic of Turkey by Ataturk was done under the basis of laiklik, the principle of secularism (Bottoni, 2007: 175). His aim was to create a modern Turkey, which would follow the Western ideal of ‘progressed’ and ‘civil’ (Bartkowski et al, 2018: 31). Thus, among those, certain Western ideals constituted of regarding religion of lesser importance (Massad, 2015: 51). Western interest in Muslim women’s choice of dress, and its link to ‘development’, is therefore not a recent trend. Since white merchants and tourists began to avidly travel to Islamic Western Asia and North Africa in the seventeenth century, Western scholars have involved themselves in the matter regarding Muslim women’s so-called liberation. Scholars such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Margaret Hunt and Josephine Butler wrote on the underdevelopment of Muslim women, often disregarding the fact that since the seventh century, Muslim women have had the right to own property and exercise rights that European Christian women could not (Massad, 2015: 83). Amongst the arguments laid out by Western scholars was the view that Muslim women were backwards and oppressed (Ibid.). Hence, a hierarchical relationship was created from that discourse, of the oppressed Other, as introduced by Edward Said in Orientalism (1978). His argument is centred around the notion that anything opposite to the West, in this case the Orient, is deemed “uncivilised” and “unprogressed” (Said, 1978: 5). The view of the “helpless”, “exploited” and “forced” Muslim woman has been
furthered by the West, who have failed to take into consideration that the Muslim woman is acting with her free will. Thus, it can be argued that by introducing a westernisation process, Ataturk accepted the perception of Turkey as the Orient, by needing to modernise and progress towards Western ideals.

1.1 Aim and Research Question
This study consists of two aims. Firstly, it aims to point out the ways in which Muslim women who wear the headscarf are subject to cultural and structural violence. Secondly, this study aims to discuss how that violence is informed by Orientalism. The study centres itself in Turkey, which underwent many changes throughout history, making it a rich and fruitful case in the study of Muslim women’s freedom regarding the headscarf. Through a qualitative approach, this study interviews five Muslim women from Turkey, who wear the headscarf, and applies a discourse analysis to the data collected. The study argues against the perception of the headscarf as a symbol of oppression, by maintaining that the Muslim woman is oppressed when her right to education, work and free choice of dress are taken from her: when faced with the ultimatum between education, or work, and the headscarf, she is in fact not free. In order to examine these claims, this study aims to answer the following research question:

_How does Orientalism inform structural and cultural violence against the wearing of the headscarf by Muslim women in Turkey?_  

In order to answer the main research question, the study adopts six operational questions. The first set of questions are applied to the first part of the analysis concerning the Turkish constitutional court ruling.

1. How are discourses of modernity, secularisation and religion presented in this text?

2. Do the measures laid out in this legislation constitute forms of violence, and if so, how?
The second set of operational questions are applied to the second part of the analysis, concerning the material gathered from the interviews.

1. What forms of cultural and structural violence did the participants experience as a result of wearing the headscarf?

2. How do the participants feel about discourses of modernity, secularism, and religion in Turkey?

3. How do those discourses inform the way that the participants view themselves?

4. In what ways are structural and cultural violence present despite the lifting of the headscarf ban, through the experiences of the participants?

Through the semi-structured, in-depth interviews, the findings give awareness regarding the discourse of the participants and the emerging practices of structural and cultural violence, as a result of the Orientalist ideas entrenched in Turkish society.

1.2 Relevance to Peace and Conflict Studies

The aim of this thesis is to examine the ways in which Turkish Muslim women who wear the headscarf are subject to cultural and structural violence and how that violence is informed by Orientalism. This study is relevant to Peace and Conflict Studies by drawing upon Johan Galtung’s different forms of violence and Edward Said’s Orientalism in revealing how Muslim women might experience different forms of violence as an impact of Orientalist attitudes.

Peace and Conflict Studies highlights the importance of scrutinising the details and paying close attention to what ‘violence’ entails. What might be perceived as a “peaceful society” might not always be peaceful. There are several studies within the field of Peace and Conflict Studies, published in the Journal of Peace Research, that examine discrimination against religious groups. For example, Akbaba and Fox (2011) examined the link between religious identity and freedom, through freedom and discrimination (Akbaba & Fox, 2011: 807). Additionally, the Journal of Conflict Resolution published studies (Svensson, 2007; Borman et al, 2017) on how religious discrimination might lead
to internal violence within a state. Thus, this thesis is relevant to Peace and Conflict Studies by examining a case of structural and cultural discrimination towards Muslim women who want to exercise their right to religious freedom.

Firstly, Galtung has stated that structural and cultural violence are forms of violence that prevent human beings from their basic needs (Galtung, 1990: 292). Structural violence is argued to be unavoidable and often operating invisibly throughout society (Galtung, 1969: 173). Cultural violence is the tool used to legitimise structural violence, based on culture, ideology or religion. This thesis argues therefore that these forms of violence created societal pressure, conflict and a deep divide, which is relevant to Peace and Conflict Studies.

Secondly, Said exposes the production of binary representations, which distorted the representation of different people. Although Said’s study has largely been applied in the understanding of the binary between East and West, this study argues that Ataturk’s westernisation of Turkey led to portraying the headscarf as capturing backwardness and strange customs, which were deemed unmodern and needing to be erased, in line with Said’s concept of Orientalism. This led however to practices of structural and cultural violence against women who have continued to wear the headscarf. Through this study, one might be able to observe violence in a society, or circumstance, that might be labelled as ‘peaceful’.

1.3 Thesis Outline

The first chapter of the thesis introduces the research problem, the aim, and the research question. The second chapter outlines the background of the study, and Turkey’s history with regards to Ataturk, modernisation, and the headscarf, at a quick glance. The third chapter reviews the previous research in order to examine the gap in the literature, in relation to this study. The fourth chapter examines the theoretical framework of this study, where Galtung’s different forms of violence and Said’s Orientalism will be discussed. The fifth chapter presents the methodological approach of the study. Here, the research design, method, data collection, positionality and limitations are discussed. The sixth chapter presents the analysis of the data material in relation to the theoretical framework, using the six operational questions presented above. The seventh chapter discusses the findings and includes the conclusion of the study. Finally, the bibliography and appendix can be found.
2 Background

This chapter will briefly look at Turkey’s history and provide a succinct account of the modernisation process and headscarf rights in the country. It will provide a background of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk’s rule in 1923 and the modernisation and westernisation process. Finally, it will look at the attitude towards the headscarf in Turkey.

2.1 Turkey at a Glance

With a blend of Middle Eastern and Western values, Turkey is often described as the bridge between the East and the West. This is partly due to its location in the world, spread over Eastern Europe to Western Asia, and due to its history. For over 623 years, Turkey was under the Ottoman Empire, which ruled several part of Asia, Africa and Southeast Europe (Ambros et al, 2016: 8). Due to this rule, Turkey is a Muslim majority country, with a population of roughly 80 million people (Bartkowski et al, 2018: 30). Currently, there are several ethnic groups in the country, the Kurdish being the largest (Ibid.). Women’s rights and gender equality has long been an active topic in Turkish society, dating back to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey (Arat, 2010: 236). Today, Turkey is ruled by the AKP, which is a conservative religious party (Toprak & Uslu, 2009: 48).

2.2 The Road to Turkey’s Modernisation

The Republic of Turkey was created in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who became the nation’s first president. His goal was to modernise Turkey and create a secular state which was compatible with Western values (Kavakci, 2016: 55). Amongst the steps to remodel Turkey was the establishment of Western Latin Script and the beginning of the Swiss model civil code (Bartkowski et al, 2018: 31). Consequently, Turkey was founded on the principle of secularism, known as laiklik. Further steps towards modernisation included the elimination of the relationship between religion and the state (Bottoni, 2007: 176) and he imposed a ban towards religious clergymen, and forbade the use of the fez, which was
a hat worn by religious men (Toprak & Uslu, 2009: 46). Additionally, he encouraged the use of modern, European-style clothes for women (Toprak & Uslu, 2009: 47). The partition between religion and the state also entailed that the Arabic call for prayer (Adhan) was banned by vice president Ismet İnönü, and the ban was not lifted until the 1950’s (Azak, 2008: 124). This caused a deep divide in the Turkish society, as those practicing religion were regarded as “traditional”, because Islam was seen as a form of “regression” for Turkey (Ibid.).

Ataturk’s aims and ideologies formed a way of thinking referred to as the Kemalist model, and under this model, modernisation and westernisation were synonymously at the core (Önis, 2004: 8). In the beginning, Kemalism focused on secularism and nationalism, and the focus was on the separation between the state and religion. This eventually evolved into secularism as regulating religious practices in social life (Soydan, 2019: 126). In 1924, the Presidency of Religious Affairs was established and passed a law that entailed that religion was under the control of the state (Adanali, 2008: 229). Education was also an important focus when constructing and maintaining the Republic of Turkey, because that was how the new set of ideologies, regarding the principle of secularism, would be taught and maintained among the coming generations (Soydan, 2019: 128). Kemalist reforms revolved around the importance of democracy and military teaching, and thus, the judiciary system focused on the importance to maintain the principle of secularism (Ibid.). By the end of the Second World War, traces of the Ottoman rule had been muted, and the daily lives of the Turkish people had transformed along with the modernisation of Turkey (Ozbay, 1999: 556). It is commonly regarded that the westernisation process of Turkey was a step to acquire membership in the European Union (EU). However, Turkey and the EU has continued with a rocky relationship due to the fact that Turkey’s membership requests had been set aside numerous times (Önis, 2004: 8).

Adnan Menderes, who was seen as a leader who violated Ataturk’s principle of secularism by reintroducing the prayer call in Arabic, was overthrown by the military coup in 1960 (Azak, 2008: 124). This coup paved the way for additional coups in 1980 and 1997, which resulted in a Turkey under military rule. After the 1980’s military coup, the Turkish Armed Forces and Kenan Evren took control of Turkey. This resulted in military regulation in schools and universities, which marked the beginning of the headscarf regulations (Toprak & Uslu, 2009: 47), and the implementation of the idea that the headscarf was a threat towards the modernisation of Turkey.
2.3 Turkey’s Attitude Towards the Headscarf

While Ataturk did not explicitly ban the use of the headscarf, his attitude towards religious clothing and the need to follow a Western style of dress, impacted Turkish society (O’Neil, 2010: 66). Turkey was divided between religion and secularity. The attitudes towards the headscarf were not positive, and women were often regarded negatively when wearing it (Okuyan & Curtin, 2018: 489). Due to the military rule in the 1980’s, the first official headscarf ban was introduced in 1982, under Kenan Evren’s presidency, and gradually became stricter. He would state in his speeches that the headscarf was not modern if not worn in the specific uniform style suggested by the government (Toprak & Uslu, 2009: 47). The Turkish Constitutional Court declared, in 1989, a headscarf ban that would take place in universities and government buildings (O’Neil, 2010: 76-77), however, this ban was not strictly imposed at first. Finally, in 1997, the state officially banned the headscarf and the strict ban was in place until 2013.

When the AKP party won the elections in 2008, it marked a new beginning for the headscarf, due to one of their goals, which was to remove the ban (Toprak & Uslu, 2009: 48). The party gained an increase of support in 2002, and in 2007 Abdullah Gul was elected president. This was a vital turning point for Turkey, because Gul’s wife wore a headscarf and this was important because it increased the support for the AKP (Toprak & Uslu, 2009: 55). Shortly after, he passed a law which allowed women to wear the headscarf in university buildings. However, this law was annulled soon afterwards, and its opposition demanded that the AKP party must be dissolved because it had violated the principle of secularism (Toprak & Uslu, 2009: 48).

The AKP was not dissolved but it had succeeded through their increased support. In 2011, a part of the headscarf ban was lifted, with regards to educational buildings, and women who wore the headscarf could enter schools and universities without being required to take it off, and eventually in 2013, the ban was fully lifted (Kavakci, 2016: 63). However, it is important to note that by this time Turkey had formed written and unwritten rules, through the attitudes of secularism and religion, and the deep divide in society (Kavakci, 2016: 52). While some women experience discrimination on the basis of their secular beliefs, other women experience discrimination based on their headscarf. The process introduced by Ataturk, and its aftermath, shaped the Turkey that is visible today.
3 Previous Research

This chapter argues that there is a gap in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies, regarding Muslim women in Turkey’s experience with structural and cultural violence. The chapter will review literature that has been selected with relation to Peace and Conflict relevance. Firstly, literature on the perspective of Muslim women’s rights will be explored. Secondly, as attitudes toward the headscarf in Turkey are informed by both Turkish and foreign views on the relationship between ‘modernisation’ and Islam, literature on this topic has also been reviewed in order to inform this thesis.

3.1 Covered Muslim Women in Turkish Society

The discussion regarding Muslim women in Turkey has been an ongoing debate for more than a century (Osmanbasoglu, 2015: 389). Attitudes towards the headscarf however, have always been strictly negative from a structural aspect (Osmanbasoglu, 2015: 390) and this is mainly due to Turkey’s establishment based on the principle of secularism (Roznai & Yolcu, 2012: 177) which has furthered an Orientalist attitude in society, based on the idea that the West is superior to the Orient (Mutman, 1992: 192). A study conducted by Zeydanlioglu (2008) examines Orientalism’s reproduction in Turkey. He notes that it is through Kemalism that Orientalist discourse is formed in Turkish society (Zeydanlioglu, 2008: 3) and these perceptions have led to Othering, within “in-groups” and “out-groups”. Thus, the construction of the Other is an important component of the perception of the Muslim woman in Turkey. Said’s Orientalism (1978), which could be argued to have begun the discussion regarding the Orient and the Other, outlines the relationship between the Orient and the Occident, and how the West constructs the Orient, through the Other. Said’s work is highly relevant to this study and will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter. Turkey has been linked to Orientalist attitudes, because of its history with both Islamic and Western style rule (Arcan, 2012: 120). The process of Othering therefore plays an important role in Orientalist discourse. Ålund (1997) further reflects on the notion of the Other. Her study is centred on how migrant women are perceived as the inferior and she argues that when it comes to women of
different backgrounds the label of the Other already exists due to the discourse of society (Ålund, 1997: 128).

Consequently, the construction of the Other towards the Muslim woman becomes a defining component of how the Muslim woman is regarded. O’Neil (2010) investigates the judiciary process of the headscarf ban towards Muslim women in Turkey. She writes that the headscarf ban, first introduced in 1982, placed a focus on the appearance of women, and from there decided what was modern and what was Western (O’Neil, 2010: 65). With this in mind, there are numerous case studies conducted by scholars regarding Muslim women’s perception in the society (Okuyan & Curtin, 2018; Golnaraghi & Mills, 2012). Here the literature relies heavily on the experiences of Turkish women in everyday societal life. A notable example of these studies is one conducted by Okuyan and Curtin (2018), who gathered Muslim women who were regarded as “religious” and interviewed them about their experiences as Muslim women in Turkish society. These views were contrasted with secular women’s views of being regarded negatively by Muslim women. Secular people regarded the Muslim woman as “oppressed” and “inferior” (Okuyan & Curtin, 2018: 52).

Thus, Muslim women who wear the headscarf are regarded as ‘pre-civilised’ and ‘traditional’, and opposite to what Turkey stands for: modernity (Osmanbasoglu, 2015: 391). Accordingly, it is a common perception that a woman who wears religious clothing does not belong in the Turkish society (Roznai & Yolcu, 2012: 204). On the other hand, with the rise of the AKP, the religious and conservative party, the headscarf wearing woman, has begun to become more tolerated in the public sphere in terms of work and education, however the headscarf has also become a symbol of threat towards secularists, because it may derive them of their own freedom (Højelid, 2010: 477).

### 3.2 Modernisation and Islam

Views on modernisation and Islam are always informed by, and in response to, foreign perspectives to some extent. Literature written regarding the traditional liberal feminist’s view on Muslim women has brought in the perspective of a monolithic religion (Choudhury, 2009; Rahman, 2018; Abu-Lughod, 2002; Andrea, 2009), in addition to often making the mistake of mixing religion and culture. The confusion between religion
and culture is a mistake that happens too often when Islam and Muslim women are being observed from a liberal\(^2\) feminist perspective (Choudhury, 2009: 158).

Lila Abu-Lughod (2002) has also heavily contributed to the literature on the perceptions by Western scholars. Essentially, Abu-Lughod argues that the West and its scholars are posing the wrong questions about Muslim women; questions that are causing a deeper divide in society (Abu-Lughod, 2002: 784) and contributing to the increase of ignorant opinions on the supposed oppression of Muslim women. The observation that Islam, or religion overall, is seen as unmodern, can be seen as an argument made by several scholars such as Wagner (2016), however Choudhury notes that this should not be possible due to the fact that “religiosity is rising” (Choudhury, 2009: 160). However, despite this, there is a notion of “liberal judgement” where liberal feminist scholars portray religious women as being “ignorant or having a sense of false consciousness” (Choudhury, 2009: 160) and this stems from the notion that Muslim women are oppressed and therefore living under a false reality.

While women have always had a clear position in Islam, as argued by Massad (2015: 111), Rahman (2018) offers a solution to the intricacy indicated by liberal feminists regarding the notion of a monolithic religion. She claims that knowledge of Islam is captured in a male perspective, rather than allowing women to access it and provide a feminist reading of that knowledge (Rahman, 2018: 23). Women are seen as prohibited from the knowledge, and by bringing to light a feminist reading of Islam, Rahman claims that it would provide a new insight, or interpretation, into Islam (Rahman, 2018: 23). Scholars, such as Virginia Woolf and Mary Wollstonecraft, would argue that women in Islam cannot exercise rights, however they are often forgetting that Muslim women were allowed many actions, that Christian women were not (Andrea, 2009: 273). Muslim women were given the right to own and sell property well before The Married Women’s Property Act in 1882 (Andrea, 2009: 274).

However, as noted by Choudhury, Western scholars should consider whether their views are imperial rather than liberal (Choudhury, 2009: 157). These views are coined from colonial and imperial actions which positioned the West to be the superior, and the South to be the inferior, which relates to the work of Said (1978). Society is progressed only when it follows the Western definition of ‘civil’ (Choudhury, 2009: 156). Abu-

\(^2\) Here, liberal feminism is discussed from Choudhury’s perspective. The liberalism of the feminist scholars are those ideas that stem from the views of Locke and Mill (Choudhury, 2009: 156).
Lughod contributes to this, by asking why Western scholars urge to know about the treatment of women and the “culture of the religion” rather than the role of the West in the underdevelopment, war and regimes in these regions (Abu-Lughod, 2002: 784).

Returning to the points presented in the previous chapter, the principle of secularism was presented as a validity and justification of the opinion that Islam, and religion in general, was a traditional and backwards practice (Barker, 2012: 10). Muslim women are regarded as unmodern and underdeveloped due to the headscarf, however when they work towards modernity and developing themselves, their right to wear the headscarf is taken away from them. As outlined above, there is an existing gap in the literature, regarding the link between Orientalist discourse and different types of violence exerted towards Muslim women in Turkey, who wear the headscarf. Turkey is a country that experiences a pull from two sides: one of them being the Eastern and the other being the Western. Muslim women are told what they should be, however, when they work towards the description of modernity, they are told that they cannot because they are not representing freedom. There are a few to no studies that look at the effects and impact that this has on Muslim women wearing the headscarf, through different forms of violence. The two aims of this thesis are to point out the ways in which these women are subject to cultural and structural violence and to discuss how that violence is informed by Orientalist perspectives. This study brings to light a unique perspective, because it aims to investigate structural and cultural violence towards Muslim women in Turkey and the Orientalist discourse’s impact on this.
4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in this study draws on the works of Johan Galtung’s structural and cultural violence and Edward Said’s Orientalism. As discussed previously, Turkey underwent a westernisation process, under Ataturk’s rule. By gaining a deeper understanding on the relationship between the West and the Orient, it could be observed that Orientalism is an underlying factor in the treatment of Muslim women, wearing the headscarf, in Turkey. As a result of these possible Orientalist ideas in the Turkish society, and the treatment of covered Muslim women, structural and cultural violence might be observed, which Galtung provides an abstract account for, resulting in the importance of navigating structural and cultural violence in this study.

4.1 Cultural and Structural Violence

Johan Galtung’s theory of the violence triangle offers a comprehensive understanding on the different forms of violence in society. The three types of violence that Galtung identifies in the violence triangle are: cultural, structural and direct violence. Fundamentally, he claims that violence does not necessarily have to be a direct physical, but it could also be indirect, such as structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 1969: 169). For Galtung, violence exists when “the potential is higher than the actual is by definition avoidable and when it is avoidable” (Galtung, 1969: 169). If an event would occur and it could be avoided, then violence is present. He argues that it is important to navigate how a human being is influenced as a cause of violence, which he divides into three categories; subject, object and action (Galtung, 1969: 169). Here, the subject is the one negatively influenced, the object is the tool used for the negative influence, and the action is the act of negatively influencing. Fundamentally, direct violence is not merely a physical act, but rather it can take place through psychological impact and negative influence, and it is not always intended, but it could also be unintended (Galtung, 1969: 170). He moves on to cultural violence which he defines as:
...those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimise direct or structural violence.

(Galtung, 1990: 291)

Galtung argues that cultural violence justifies direct and structural violence, by working on changing moral judgements and “making reality opaque” (Galtung, 1990: 292). Here he highlights that this type of violence legitimises the act, which therefore constitutes a link between the different types of violence outlined. They are interrelated in the sense that “direct violence is an event; structural violence is a process with ups and downs; cultural violence is an invariant, a ‘permanence’” (Galtung, 1990: 294). For example, group A positions themselves as superior to group B, and exercises direct violence over group B, while also producing images of cultural violence, such as racism; however, the aftermath of this, which can be seen after years, would be cultural violence, such as racism towards group B, and structural violence, such as discrimination towards group B (Galtung, 1990: 295). Perhaps not seen clearly, due to the course of time, cultural and structural violence still runs vivid in society, because it has been internalised. Structural violence becomes unintended because the individual is following a set of rules indicated in a structure (Galtung, 1985: 145). Structural violence is then “an abstract form without social life, used to threaten people into subordination” (Galtung, 1969: 172). Structural violence becomes significant in this study because it allows for a deeper understanding on the structure of discrimination and violence that is not necessarily visible, and the power that runs through this structure. The act of violence flows from the structure to the agent. Essentially, Galtung argues that structural violence is “silent” and “static” (1969: 173) and thus, violence could occur at times when it is not discernible.

Later, Galtung identifies four categories which outlines human basic needs: survival, well-being, freedom and identity (Galtung, 1990: 292). As explained previously, violence is not always exerted through a physical act, it can be observed in the smallest aspects of life. The four categories for basic needs are interrelated and their negation equals violence (Galtung, 1990: 292). For example, identity could lead to alienation, through language or cultural ideas which could serve as a barrier between two groups (Galtung, 1990: 294). Similarly, well-being and survival is threatened if medical care is withheld (Galtung, 1990: 293). Within this, Galtung pinpoints that in the middle of the violence structure, there is exploitation, and this serves as a hierarchy, where the ‘top-
dogs’ are exerting power over the ‘under-dogs’ who are the target for the structural violence. Thus, the violence triangle is completed, as Galtung describes:

At the bottom is the steady flow through time of cultural violence, a substratum from which the other two can derive their nutrients. In the next stratum the rhythms of structural violence are located. Patterns of exploitation are building up, wearing out, or torn down, with the protective accompaniment of penetration-segmentation preventing consciousness formation, and fragmentation-marginalization preventing organization against exploitation and repression. And at the top, visible to the unguided eye and to barefoot empiricism, is the stratum of direct violence with the whole record of direct cruelty perpetrated by human beings against each other and against other forms of life and nature in general.


As outlined from the quotation above, the three types of violence are interrelated and fuels from the other. Further, there is often a direct link between cultural and direct violence, because cultural violence becomes normalised and eventually erupts into direct violence, because direct and structural violence are based on needs (Galtung, 1990: 295). Finally, it is important to note that violence can start in any corner of the violence triangle (Galtung, 1990: 295).

In conclusion, the outlined section above provides a deeper understanding of the different types of violence that may occur in a society. These types of violence may be seen in direct forms, and indirect forms, such as structural and cultural violence. The types of violence form a violence triangle, and they become interrelated and may often be observed multiple at once.

4.2 Orientalism and the Other

In order to comprehensively understand the occurrence of structural and cultural violence towards Muslim women who wear the headscarf, in Turkey, it is important to deconstruct the impacts of the westernisation process introduced by Ataturk in the 1920’s. In order to do so it is fundamental to illustrate Said’s ideas regarding the relationship between the West and the Orient. First, it shall be noted that Orientalism cannot be studied without discourse, because it is through discourse that the West produce and manage the Orient
(Said, 1978: 3). Therefore, this study looks at Orientalism as a sort of discourse used to illustrate and maintain the role of the Other, constructed by the West.

My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.

(Said, 1978: 3)

According to Said, Orientalism is a “style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident” (Said, 1978: 5). For Said, Orientalism is the way the Orient is spoken about and expressed (El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017: 1065). Said details Orientalism as the British and French traveller’s encounters with the Middle East, and Islam’s representations in those experiences (Said, 2003: 203). He claims that the Orient and the Occident are constructions and are not labels that were simply there (Said, 1978: 3) but discourse that was constructed. The point is that the West has divided the world into two (Said, 1978: 7) and constructed a perception of the global South which promotes the belief that the West is superior to the rest of the world, which therefore puts it into the position of the influencer and the other as the influenced. If the other does not want to be influenced, the other is deemed as ‘uncivilised’. This hierarchy is not rooted in geography, but rather a hierarchical relationship (Kavakci, 2016: 52). Said elaborates on Orientalism as such:

...it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with the colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values, power moral (as with ideas about what “we” do and what “they” cannot do or understand as “we” do).

(Said, 1978: 12)

It is evident from this quotation that the Orient is a creation of the Other. The Orient is what the West is not; what it cannot grasp; it is the polar opposite of the Occident (Said, 1978: 5). They are binary opposites, and define one another, in the sense that one is what
the other is not. Thus, it can be illustrated that placing the division between the two enables society to partition between what is progressed and what is not. From this perspective, if the West is the symbol for freedom, the Orient is the opposite. Moreover, the concept of the Other has played a defining role in the portrayal of the Orient. The process of Othering is a form of discourse, which is constructed to define a differentiation between “Us” versus “Them” (Petersson, 2009: 461). The Other sets the tone for what is deemed as “good” and what is deemed as “evil” and who partakes in those roles. The Other is different from the “Self” (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 154). If the Orient is deemed as the Other, which is different from “Us” - the West - the Orient is the opposite; it represents another group, and this construction validates the superiority and power that the binary opposite of the Other, the Orient, holds. The Other becomes constructed as a symbol of primitivism (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 155). The power that the West holds is then defined by the Orient (Mutman, 1992: 167) and it cannot exist without the construction of the Other.

The discursive aspect of the Orient is, therefore, constituted through the means by which the West exercises hegemony over its inferior. As Mutman writes:

Orientalism as a discourse, as an embodiment of power in the problematic of language, is therefore the hegemonic moment of Western imperialism. The Orient, or the Other of the West, is always compared to something other than the West, which the West is simply supposed to occupy. The distinction between the West and East is the marking of the East.

(Mutman, 1992: 171).

Therefore, when it comes to the exercise of hegemony, the West constructs the Orient to validate its superiority and exemplification. Westernisation and modernisation within the framework of Orientalism is important in this study, specifically to the case of Turkey, because of the westernisation process the country went through under Atatürk’s rule. In relation to religion, Orientalism can be seen as a furthering of the Western view on Islamism (Mutman, 1992: 176). Mutman argues that “the act of Westernizing/modernizing is bound to Orientalize as well as Westernize, and traditionalize as well as modernize its subjects” (Mutman, 1992: 178). Through this act it is evident that the reason the West is powerful is through the hierarchical hegemony it has defined itself in by contrasting itself to the Orient and positioning itself against Islam. The discourse around religion, and specifically Islam, has been a characterizing aspect of
the West’s opinions on the modernity and development on the Orient (Mutman, 1992: 179).

Westernization/modernization can be seen as an operation which divides a Third World society into two different sections, such as modern and traditional, or civilised and backward, and which generally speaking, constitutes Third World subjects as objects and targets of a transformative practice along the lines of Western/modern hegemonic reason and order. (Mutman, 1992: 176)

Here, Mutman makes an important point: whereas the headscarf was once seen as a practice of religion, it has through a shifted discourse towards the Orient and Islam, become a symbol of defiance towards the West and its way of rule (Mutman, 1992: 179-181). The introduction to an “antagonistic relationship” between Islam and the West was furthered by historical acts such as the 1973 oil crisis (Mutman, 1992: 181). When the West views Islam as an imperial threat, it creates a “double bind” (Said, 1997: 156), where the West wields the power in order to maintain its power over the Other, in this case Islam. This introduced the view that Islam and secularism did not go hand in hand, and therefore was not deemed as a “modern” phenomena.

In order to elucidate the concept of modernity within Orientalism, this study adopts an explanation provided by Ashcroft, Griffins and Tiffin (2007). The term ‘modernity’ has, over history, become a term that differentiates between the structures and social organization of the world (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 130). Over time, modernity developed into a concept which signifies superiority and has played a role in colonial discourse (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 131). Simply put, the concept of modernity began to appear distinctly when Europe began to establish hegemony over a non-European country (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 131). Modernity has since then become a concept which is used in everyday life, to describe alternative things. It became a code of analysing what is ‘civilised’ and what is not, by using rationality as a core feature, and overlooking the fact that it stems from a European notion of belief (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 131). It is further argued that the concept of modernity becomes a “key aspect” of imperialism and relates to the image of Europe as the developed and the rest as a representation of underdevelopment (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 132). In relation to Orientalism, the concept of
modernity becomes a vital point of understanding the relationship between the West and the Orient, because it provides a further representation between the Orient as the Other.

Through the outlined framework, it is evident that the Orient plays a key role in defining the West’s power over the Other. The West constructs an Other in order to position itself as the example to follow, and through this the Other is deemed as “unmodern” and “uncivilised”. Through this discourse the West maintains hegemony and wields the image of the Other as a binary opposite. As a final note, it is important to mention that although Orientalism is a theory which is used for post-colonial studies, it is still highly relevant in this study. Though Turkey may not have been colonised, it is through the representation of the West as a superior which introduced the westernisation process, and that representation was constructed from Orientalist discourse. The idea of Orientalism is therefore embedded in Turkey, through its founders and their Western influence.
5 Methodology

This chapter examines the chosen methodology for the study in order to answer the research question. First, the research design will be explained. Second, the data collection will be clarified. The following section will navigate the material and the discourse analysis framework. Finally, positionality and possible limitations will be reflected on.

5.1 Research Design

This study is based on a qualitative research design. A qualitative research is used when a topic needs to be explored with more detail, as Creswell writes:

This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work (...) We conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and participants in a study.

(Creswell, 2007: 40)

A qualitative research design is valuable to this study because it relies on the developments and process of the data collection (Creswell, 2014: 236). For this reason, this study obtains its data through semi-structured interviews, as well as a secondary-source document, and adopts a discourse analysis as a method to review its findings. This will be further explained in the following sections in this chapter.

The choice of method has been selected for the purpose of understanding the discourse of the participants in the interviews conducted, and the secondary-data document, in order to answer the research question. The secondary-data document is comprised of an extract of the Turkish constitution declaring the reason for a national headscarf ban in 1989. A discourse analysis will be conducted on both types of data for the purpose of investigating the possible structural and cultural violence occurrence due Orientalist attitude in Turkish society. Therefore, the study revolves, to a great extent, around the participant’s experiences.
Finally, as Creswell puts it, a qualitative research design departs from a social constructivist approach (2007: 21). Qualitative research considers that the researcher’s own positioning and background may shape their interpretations (Creswell, 2007: 21). Thus, through perception, the researcher shapes their knowledge within the interchange.

5.2 Data collection
The data collected for this study consists of five semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The interviews sampled five randomly selected Turkish Muslim women who wore the headscarf during the entirety of the headscarf ban in Turkey. The sampling of the interviews was done through mutual contacts, using ‘snowball sampling’ (Bryman, 2012: 424). The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and audiotaped with the permission of the participants. The interviews were conducted in English, as chosen by the participants, and the duration for the interviews varied between 45 to 55 minutes. For ethical considerations and safety purposes, the names of the participants were withheld.

After the interview, the audiotape was transcribed. For this study, a semi-structured interview was important, because the data depended on the recollection of the interviewee’s experiences and how their views and reflections related to broader discourses. When conducting interviews, it is important to be prepare an outline of questions in advance and leave room for questions that may arise during the interview (Creswell, 2007: 140). Each participant experienced distinct incidents, and therefore different questions emerged for different accounts in order to further understand their circumstances.

The second piece of material is a translation of a Turkish Constitutional Court Decision Section E, which was ruled in 1989. The secondary source data was published and translated by Mary Lou O’Neil in her article ‘You Are What You Wear: Clothing/Appearance Laws and the Construction of the Public Citizen in Turkey’ in 2010. This section has been selected because it provides the grounds for the ruling and an explanation as to why the decision was made to ban the headscarf. In order to inquire that the translation is accurate, the section has been additionally reviewed by two native Turkish speakers. This secondary data will serve as a basis of reference to the interviewee’s accounts of the events that took place.

3 See Appendix A
5.3 Introducing the Participants of the Study

The interviews conducted in this study featured five Muslim Turkish women who wear the headscarf. In order to gain an understanding of the identity and who these women are, this section will provide a very brief overview of each participant. As mentioned previously, the participants in this study chose to remain anonymous and therefore their names are withheld.

The first interview conducted was with Participant A. She is 22 years old and she is currently a student. She was born and grew up in Istanbul, where she also attended university for a few years. She started wearing the headscarf when she was 14 years old. I was introduced to Participant A through a mutual friend.

The second interview was with Participant B. She is a 38-year-old civil engineer and studied in university during the ban in 1989. She started wearing the headscarf before the ban, and continued wearing it throughout her university life and into her work life. I got in touch with her through a group for Turkish girls.

My third interview was with Participant C. She is a 28-year-old PhD student in Istanbul University. She is originally from Eastern Turkey, but she moved to Istanbul for her studies. I got to know Participant C through mutual studies.

The fourth woman I interviewed was Participant D. She is 30 years old and she grew up in Turkey where she attended medical school. She started wearing the headscarf when she was 13 years old. She also worked as a family physician for several years. I got in touch with Participant D through Participant C.

Finally, the last interview was conducted with Participant E. She is 29 years old and she is currently a student. She has a degree in physiotherapy, which she reflects on, was very difficult to achieve due to her appearance and wearing the headscarf. I was introduced to Participant E through a mutual friend.

5.4 Discourse Analysis

The discourse analysis in this study will follow Gillian Rose’s (2001) ideas which she presents in her chapter titled ‘Discourse Analysis I’. It is important to note that ‘Discourse Analysis I’ was more relevant to this study, than ‘Discourse Analysis II’, because the latter explores practices of institutions, and ‘Discourse I’ looks at discursive formation and production in all practices (Rose, 2001: 140), which is suitable to this study.
According to Rose, discourse “refers to groups of statements that structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking” (Rose, 2001: 136). It is through discourse that a human being can acquire knowledge regarding the understanding of the world’s processes (Rose, 2001: 136), and thus, how the comprehension of the world depends on discourse. Rose highlights the importance of intertextuality when considering discursive processes. Essentially, it is valuable to consider the meaning behind the image or the text, because the piece of image or text is dependent on that meaning (Rose, 2001: 136). Accordingly, intertextuality provides a deeper insight into the material.

Additionally, Gill (2000) identifies four themes within a discourse analysis:

...a concern with discourse itself; a view of language as constructive and constructed; an emphasis upon discourse as a form of action; and a conviction in the rhetorical organisation of discourse.

(Gill, 2000: 174).

First, she reflects on the term ‘discourse’ which presupposes any text or talk and interests itself in the content of the text (Gill, 2000: 175). Second, the theme of constructive and constructed language looks at the way an event is described, and this varies from speaker to speaker (Gill, 2000: 175). The third theme considers that human beings are always “orienting to the interpretive context in which we find ourselves, and constructing our discourse to fit that context” (Gill, 2000: 175) and this interpretive context is dependent on who the subject is speaking to. Similarly, Rose argues that it is crucial to navigate the social context of the discourse production, when conducting the analysis (Rose, 2001: 141). The final theme explores the notion that “discourse is involved in establishing one version of the world in the face of competing versions” (Gill, 2000: 176). Thus, discourse is a way of influencing through text or talk, by allowing the construction of language to work as a tool of persuasion.

### 5.5 Discourse Analysis Framework

In order to conduct a discourse analysis, this study will follow Rose’s seven step analysis, as outlined in the chapter ‘Discourse Analysis I’ in her book *Visual Methodologies* (2001). The seven steps are interrelated and provide a framework to guide the analysis:
Step one involves surveying the data without any pre-existing notions and examining it through a new light in order to consider what may have been overlooked previously (Rose, 2001: 150). In this study, this was done through examining certain words and the way the participants chose to reflect on certain recollections in certain manners.

Step two involves allowing the data to guide the investigation (Ibid.).

Step three involves identifying the reoccurring themes that arise from the data. These key themes may be in the form of words or visual interpretations and these will be used to examine “relations between statements” (Foucault, 1972: 29; as cited in Rose, 2001: 150). Thus, the themes identified in the data may form connections and associations which are important to the context (Rose, 2001: 151). Several themes such as religion, modernity and secularity were identified in the discourse of the participants. These themes will be looked at with greater detail in the following chapter.

Step four involves examining the effects of truth, which is the tool of persuasion and works to examine the way truth is claimed and dealt with (Rose, 2001: 154). This involves looking at word choices and the way the participants express themselves.

Step five involves exploring the complexities and contradictions within the data. This is done in order to investigate the coherency and logic of the discursive practice (Rose, 2001: 155).

Step six highlights the value of investigating the visible and the invisible in the data. Rose claims that the invisible has compelling effects that cannot be overlooked (Rose, 2001: 158-159). During the interviews, there were several insinuations in the discourse of the participants and that is important to consider in the analysis.

Step seven involves attention to detail. Here, Rose emphasises the importance of observing the said, as well as the unsaid, assumptions that may underlie in the material, and its different interpretations (Rose, 2001: 159).

Along these lines, the steps above serve to guide the analysis of the data, and will contribute to a deeper analysis of the operational questions outlined in the introduction chapter.

5.6 Positionality

In any research, it is important to critically evaluate one’s own positioning as a researcher (Walshaw, 2008: 323). I am a Muslim woman born in Sweden, raised in countries in
Europe and North America, with a mixed Middle Eastern ethnicity. Due to my background, I am viewing these concerns and topics from both an insider position and an outsider position, depending on who is asked and from what angle it is viewed. I am familiar with the culture, the language and the politics of the country, and that allows for a deeper understanding of the issue. However, it is vital to remain neutrality in research, and that has been my point of departure and aim, throughout the entire study.

5.7 Limitations

As in any research, it is crucial to reflect on the possible limitations that may arise in the process. As mentioned previously, I am a Muslim woman and the participants in this study are aware of it, which may cause them to share their experiences, and answer questions, in a different way than they otherwise would. They may choose to highlight certain topics, and refrain from addressing others. Additionally, the participants were recalling certain events that took place between four to ten years ago, and certain events may be suppressed or overlooked.

A further limitation could be the scope of this study. As there were five interviews conducted, this data does not speak for the entirety of Muslim women who wear the headscarf in Turkey. While the participants were randomly selected, it was later observed that all of the participants had attended university. However, the study combines this data with that of the constitutional rules in Turkey in order to provide an additional perspective that informs the research outcomes.
6 Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected and the chosen methodology, and connects it with the theoretical framework discussed in chapter four. The chapter will answer the operational questions presented in chapter one, regarding the Turkish constitutional court decision in 1989 and the participants’ experiences.

6.1 Analysis of the Constitution

6.1.1 How are discourses of modernity, secularisation and religion presented in this text?

To begin with, there are three interrelated themes in the Constitutional Court Decision (henceforth referred to as 1989/12: E): religion, modernity and secularism. Firstly, it is noted that “secularism is about changing mentality” (1989/12: E) and this claim can be viewed with regards to Orientalist attitudes, because there is an indirect meaning that the negation of secularism, religion, holds an inferior status to secularity. This is further seen, later on in the ruling, where it is stated that clothing, whether religious or not, that contradicts modernity and the principle of secularism, are seen as inappropriate and further, create a violation to that principle (1989/12: E). Essentially, modernity is deemed as a part of the principle of secularism, despite not clearly stated in the discourse. Clothing, according to the ruling, is not modern because it violates secularism.

However, following Rose’s framework, and noting the unsaid (Rose, 2001: 159), the principle of secularism argues for modernity, and a Western outlook, which therefore concludes that the target of the ruling is essentially religious clothing, such as the headscarf, despite stating that it is not only aimed at religious clothing. When Turkey began the westernisation process under Ataturk, it abandoned an Islamic rule to follow a Western style of rule (Kavakci, 2016: 55). The principle of secularism was established from that ideology, which would mean that it essentially specifies the Islamic headscarf, which is in the discourse of the ruling labelled as unmodern. Considering that the
antithesis of ‘secular’ is ‘religious’, what violates the principle of secularism is specifically religious clothing.

Finally, by juxtaposing words such as ‘freedom’, ‘thought’, and ‘contemporary’ and ‘healthy’, the discourse could be implying, following the principle of secularism, that the religion, and its perception as negative, is the opposite of these words. It promotes a negative connotation, regarding the opposition of the principle of secularism, in this case being religion and the headscarf. It can therefore be assumed that being “healthy” can only be achieved through Western style clothing. In the constitution, “changing mentality” (1989/12: E) could therefore be seen as taking away the right for Muslim women who wear the headscarf, to practice their religion to the extent they wish to. By demanding from women to dress in a certain way in order to change their mentality, it could be interpreted that the court ruling is insinuating that religious clothing becomes an obstacle for free thought. By claiming that secularism is “a condition of creating a contemporary, healthy society” (1989/12: E), the idea that religion as a form of oppression and confinement becomes the unsaid.

6.1.2 Do measures laid out in this legislation constitute forms of violence, and if so, how?

It is important to observe the adjacency of secularism and religious clothing in the ruling. This section of the ruling against the headscarf in universities and public government buildings, creates structural violence. Structural violence is introduced by the “top” and sent down to the “bottom” (Galtung, 1990: 295). In this case, the ruling is decided and implemented unto the subject, being the Muslim women wearing the headscarf. Here, structural violence becomes firstly, justified by positioning itself beside the principle of secularism and Ataturk’s westernisation process and secondly, it becomes legitimised through positioning itself as a role of freeing these women from old-fashioned actions, such as wearing the headscarf. As noted by Galtung, structural violence justifies cultural violence (Galtung, 1990: 292). By placing a distinction on the importance of maintaining the principle of secularism by Ataturk, this ruling becomes a form of structural violence, because it threatens people into following an ideology through taking off their headscarf. This is related to Galtung’s idea regarding forcing people into subordination (Galtung, 1969: 172). Eventually, the structural violence becomes silent (Galtung, 1969: 173), because the discourse of the ruling becomes justified through the people following this
ideology, and that is where cultural violence is introduced. This claim will be further elaborated on in the following section.

6.2 Analysis of the Interviews

Despite coming from different background, the participants had quite similar responses to the questions, which resulted in reiteration of several themes and discourses. The main themes that reoccurred in the discourse of the participants were ‘secularity’, ‘Western’, ‘Ataturk’ and ‘modernity’. These themes were mentioned in all of the five interviews conducted and will further be analysed in the following subsections.

6.2.1 What forms of cultural and structural violence did the participants experience as a result of wearing the headscarf?

Throughout all of the five interviews, several forms of structural and cultural violence were visible as result of wearing the headscarf. Essentially, the act of being forced to take of the headscarf in educational buildings, which all participants underwent, is structural violence. As mentioned previously, violence is depriving another human being of the freedom to make certain choices (Galtung, 1969: 168). As Participant B narrated, she could not enter a café in a public building due to her headscarf, which illustrates that she does not have the freedom to be in certain places due to her appearance and dress, which leads to alienation. As outlined previously, alienation is one of the effects of cultural violence (Galtung, 1969: 294). Considerably, all of the participants had experienced a form of alienation during the ban: for example, Participant E depicts how she could not perform her final examination because the professor did not want to change the participant’s partner to a female, and made her undress in front of her male partner⁴ and that is a form of structural violence, because her professor holds the authority over her, and legitimises this authority, structural violence, by claiming that she should be ‘modern’. Modernity is then hidden in the shape of cultural violence, and uses it to legitimise the authority imposed over Participant E. Likewise, Participant C could not take part in an art class, because immediately upon meeting the director face-to-face:

⁴ Participant E, Interview 5
...as soon as he saw us, his face immediately changed. He said so sorry but our class is full...He said I don’t think you will fit in this place. To our faces. (Participant C)

Although it is not made explicitly, the man in the scenario came to the conclusion that she does not fit in the class, because of her headscarf. Here, the ‘invisible’, can also be seen in the discourse of Participant C. As Rose argues, the ‘invisible’ must be observed because it can be imperative to the discursive formation (Rose, 2001: 158-159). Participant C, like the man, does not explicitly state that it is because of the headscarf that the problem occurs, but rather it is left unspoken yet obvious. By earlier stating that this art class was in located in Taksim, which the participant claims is one of the most secular areas in Istanbul⁵, an underlying assumption is that the director of the art class, also holds secular beliefs, and is in opposition of religious clothing. Additionally, Participant C also experienced a form of cultural violence when she expressed her opinions in class, in front of her “secular professor” and as a result, got a lower grade in her examination⁶. Through institutional discrimination, Participant C experienced cultural violence because it had become normalised. The structural violence in this scenario is so internalised, through legislative practices such as Section E of the Constitution, that authority figures such as professors can exert that discrimination based on it. Cultural violence then legitimises structural violence (Galtung, 1990: 292).

Finally, Participant B recalls how she was being searched by security guards when she entered her university campus:

Outside every university entrance, there were security officers, who checked that I wasn’t entering with the hijab. They were fully armed. There was fear. I kept thinking they are here for me. But I had not done anything wrong. They were waiting at every entrance (Participant B)

It is evident that the covered woman is the target here. There is a structural practice towards Muslim women wearing the headscarf on university campus. Participant B is stopped and searched because she wears the headscarf. Essentially, the act of forcing a woman to take of her headscarf is alienation and Othering in itself, whether it is done verbally or through a structural system and law. In all of these scenarios, there is a

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⁵ Participant C, Interview 3
⁶ Participant C, Interview 3
stereotype being made without the participant being given a chance to express herself, and that is a form of structural and cultural violence. Further, since the woman cannot express herself, and is assumed to be forced to wear the headscarf by her family, she is essentially being spoken for through Orientalist attitudes (Kavakci, 2016: 52), which structural violence is established from. A reason for this could be related to the view of the Muslim woman as oppressed and backwards, and that is how structural violence works. It begins at the top and slowly develops down, until it becomes normalised and grows into a common way of thinking that is visible through various forms of acts in society, and further legitimised by cultural violence (Galtung, 1990: 294). Thus, being religious seems to be an autonomous for being uncivilised in most of the scenarios that the participants went through, with relation to Orientalist discourse (Said, 1978: 8), and additionally this discourse impacts and creates structural violence, because it is with the principle of secularism that the constitution (1989/12: E) justifies its decision to ban the headscarf, as noted in the previous section.

6.2.2 How do the participants feel about discourses of modernity, secularism, and religion in Turkey?

For most of the participants, there is an explicit link made between modernity and the West, which was often explained. According to Participant A, the West is related to the ‘secular’, because for her, secularity can be observed when a person imitates the West and refrains from displaying their religion, religious ideas and cultural background. Additionally, she claims that Ataturk introduced the concept of modernity to Turkey, which resulted in a change in society and its attitude towards women who wear the headscarf. For Participant B, there was also a clear connection between modernity and Ataturk, in the sense that modernity is about appearance for Ataturk, whose ideology is still followed by many people today, who are in opposition to the headscarf.

As argued previously, modernity is a concept that is used, by not only modernising, but also traditionalising the Other (Mutman, 1992: 178), and further used as a tool to secure the hierarchical position between the West and the Orient (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 131). Thus, modernity is a concept that determines what is to remain traditional and what is to be labelled as progressed. If the West is the modern, they are also

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7 Participant B, Interview 2  
8 Participant A, Interview 1  
9 Participant B, Interview 2
subjugating the meaning of modern, which means modernity will never be grasped by the Other. The Other will never be seen as modern, because Otherness and modernity are binaries. Interestingly, many of the participants argued that ‘secular people’ viewed modernity in terms of appearance:

When you look at Western Turkey, they associate these ideas with making a modern Turkey. They relate the hijab to Arab culture. For Turkey, being Arab is primitive...They look at the West, who are wearing open clothes, so for them the more you undress, the better. The more you show of your body, the more modern you are...It’s that secular perspective, because they connect it with the West (Participant C)

From the quotation above, it is evident that Participant C believes that modernity, for ‘secular people’ is associated with clothing. Similarly, Participant E explains how her teachers were “modern” people\(^\text{10}\) and therefore wanted the girls who wore the headscarf in her class to have a similar approach:

...when you had the headscarf, it meant that you were not modern, European, you didn’t have European thoughts. You were... how can I say? Old fashioned. You were dumb, you did not understand anything. You lived in older times. They thought in this way. (Participant E)

According to participant E, there is a clear connection between being modern and being secular\(^\text{11}\) which she explicitly states later on in the interview. As outlined in the theoretical framework, this notion of modernity could be linked to the Orientalist attitude in society. From the quotations above, modernity goes hand in hand with what is labelled as ‘civil’ and what is labelled as ‘uncivil’ (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 131). On the other hand, for all of the participants, modernity is not linked to appearance, as explained by Participant D, where she says that modernity is about “feeling free in the time you’re living in”\(^\text{12}\). Through this statement, there is a matter left unsaid: freedom. Participant D claims modernity is being free, while previously she had stated that she was not viewed as modern, nor did she have freedom. There seems to be an internal association between the meaning of ‘modern’ and ‘Ataturk’. This is further explained by Participant C, who

\(^{10}\) Participant E, Interview 5
\(^{11}\) As above.
\(^{12}\) Participant D, Interview 4
explains that there were women on the street who ask her why she is wearing the headscarf, and she explains that she does not blame him, “but it’s related to him”\textsuperscript{13}. Much like Participant D, when asked about what modernity meant for her, participant A did not focus on appearance:

It’s about self-development. It’s about travelling the world, learning, meeting more people. Learn a language or work on your career. It’s about the inside. Not about culture, not about clothes. (Participant A)

For all of the participants, modernity is not linked to appearance, but rather what goes on in the mind. There is a clear distinction being made between what “they” view as modern and what the participant sees as modernity. Nonetheless, the themes of modernity, secularism and religion were used interrelatedly in the discourse of the participants, which suggests a link being made from the experiences of the participants.

6.2.3 How do those discourses inform the way that the participants view themselves?

During the interviews, several words such as “humiliation”, “sad”, “hurting”, “devastated” and “acceptance”, were used numerously by the participants to convey emotions, and as a tool to describe their feelings and describe the effects of truth. The effects of truth are examined in order to understand the way truth is used and dealt with (Rose, 2001: 154). When the participants are using these words they show their feelings regarding the events that took place, they make the scenario emotional, because it portrays the human behind the event. Besides, the descriptions made by the participants, is a form of link between the subject, the event and portrays its consequences, that may not be visible to the eye. The participants recall accounts of how these discourses informed the way they view themselves. The discursive formation of the tool used to persuade is then made through a psychological link. In addition, it is important to note that the participants describe these events with immense distress, because the headscarf is their identity. For example, Participant B explains that she was forced to take off the hijab:

\textsuperscript{13} Participant C, Interview 3
We were not allowed, but I went anyways. I couldn’t accept it. I wore it in school until someone came up to me and told me to take it off. I didn’t want to do it by myself unless someone forced me, because I couldn’t accept it. I felt like I was betraying myself. I kept thinking that if someone told me to take it off and I did, then it wasn’t me. I wasn’t doing it. Because being without hijab in public was not me. (Participant B)

From the quotation above, it is apparent that Participant B underwent a psychological struggle between her identity and her right to education. She would enter the university, and face the risks of being searched and later investigated by the dean’s office, because she felt that she was being stripped of her individuality and integrity. This process is identified as cultural violence, because taking away the right of a woman to wear the headscarf is the legitimisation of her religion as belonging to the Orient, which the analysis of the constitution in the previous section implied. Therefore, this becomes the legitimisation of the structural violence. Participant E recalls how she was seen as “old-fashioned” and “lived in older times” by her secular professors. Again, there is reoccurring discourse of ‘secularity’ being used to differentiate between the Self. By implementing the ban, the headscarf is deemed ‘uncivil’, further assisting the Orientalist attitude that the headscarf supposedly does not belong in public society. This ideology begins to affect the subject of this violence. This was observed with Participant E:

Some chose to take it off. Some didn’t want to. When I’m thinking back I was strict. I think back and I think I maybe should have taken it off. I wanted to stand up for myself but now I wonder why I was so stubborn (Participant E)

The quotation above illustrates how the negative attitude towards the headscarf began to affect Participant E’s view on herself. She questions why she stood up for herself. Relating back to Galtung’s argument, cultural violence makes “reality opaque” (Galtung, 1990: 292), and this can be seen through Participant E’s recollection, when she begins to doubt herself. Similarly, Participant C elaborates by claiming that wanted to change the perception that her friend had of the headscarf as a threat to her freedom:

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14 Participant B, Interview 2
15 Participant E, Interview 5
Actually one of my best friends originally had a problem with the headscarf because she told me that when she looked at me she felt pressure to wear as well. She felt threatened. Not every woman who is wearing hijab is against you, we don’t want to force anyone because we ourselves are being forced. (Participant C)

This is also reiterated by Participant D, who claimed that she sometimes felt a burden, because by wearing the headscarf she was visibly representing Islam, and because there was already a negative view on the headscarf, she wanted to show the “secular people” that her religion was good by her behaviour\(^{16}\). The lack of freedom that these women had, began to affect the perception they had on themselves.

6.2.4 In what ways are structural and cultural violence present despite the lifting of the headscarf ban, through the experiences of the participants?

Despite the fact that the headscarf ban was lifted in 2013, the aftermath of it is still visible in society. The most notable aspect is the idea of “secular neighbourhoods” which Participant A calls them\(^{17}\). Being the Other in the Turkish society, is still a continuing matter for these women, as told by Participant D who explains that the headscarf is now seen as a symbol of oppression, because she was still regarded as being “forced by her religion”\(^{18}\). Additionally, Participant C still experiences discrimination based on her headscarf:

Recently, on the bus, I was standing and the woman sitting closest to me pushed me back because she didn’t want me to have it, and she pointed at an uncovered woman and told her to take her seat. I’m not blaming Ataturk, but it’s related to him. When you ask these people they immediately they [sic] say they are a soldier for Ataturk, they support him. (Participant C)

The quotation above illustrates the discrimination towards women who wear the headscarf, because as Participant C explains, the woman pointed at another woman who

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\(^{16}\) Participant D, Interview 4

\(^{17}\) Participant A, Interview 1

\(^{18}\) Participant D, Interview 4
did not wear the headscarf. She wanted to choose what type of woman would take her seat when she got off the bus.

Interestingly, Participant B claims that religion and politics cannot mix, and she outlines that the consequence for this is that Muslim women who wear the headscarf are further seen as the Other, because the AKP is using it as a tool for their own political ideologies. This is a deep contradiction in the discourse, because although the participant claims that the AKP is setting the scene for a new ban\(^\text{19}\), she is also narrating the cause and effects of not having a ban. The fact is that several participants touched on this aspect of the situation in Turkey, by relating the AKP’s acts as an addition to the negative attitude towards covered women, in today’s Turkey. This statement is also complex, because noting from the answers of the participants, and as seen in chapter two, that is also the goal of the principle of secularism. While Ataturk is being regarded as one who introduced these changes in society, these changes and negative attitudes are being furthered by the AKP who is the party that lifted the ban on the headscarf. Structural violence is then established by Ataturk’s secularity, and furthered by the AKP’s actions in society which cause their opposition to exert these forms of cultural and direct violence towards Muslim women wearing the headscarf.

In conclusion, the sections above have looked at the discourse and usage of terms, themes and context of the data, through four operational questions. Noting that there is a clear link, for the participants, between the modernity, secularism, Ataturk and the West, it is evident that these ideas may have taken shape during the westernisation process that Turkey underwent under Ataturk’s rule. Many of the participants stated that although he ruled nearly one hundred years ago, his ideas are still highly visible in society. Thus, as argued previously, by introducing a westernisation process into the Republic of Turkey, Ataturk accepted the image of Turkey as being part of the Orient and Turkey as the Other. Culturally, to this day, Turkey maintains its traditions often rooted in Ottoman times (Bartkowski et al, 2018: 26), despite having underwent the westernisation process, meaning that Turkey is still considered a part of the Orient, because of these traditions. Furthermore, under the perception that the Other is what the West regards as the Other, the West is not the Other (Mutman, 1992: 167) and therefore any links to the West are seen as ‘uncivil’ because the West has defined themselves as the superior in order to

\(^{19}\) Participant B, Interview 2
maintain hegemony over the rest of the world (Said, 1997: 56). That is to say, a country that begins to evolve and adapt itself into the West, has accepted their image, way of ruling, and leading as the Other. In this case it can be argued that Turkey constructed an Other of themselves, through the westernisation process in the 1920’s. It had accepted the connotations that come with the Orientalist perspective. It had strived to become modern, but the definition of modernity is rooted in a European origin (Ashcroft et al, 2007: 131); the West has assembled that definition by opposing itself to the Other, which is the Orient. In reality, this modernity is never deemed accepted, because the West will always continue to pose itself at the top; because it is the West that constructs the idea of the Orient. The Orient cannot break free from this definition, because it is set under a hierarchical power relation (Mutman, 1992: 176) Additionally, Turkey as the Other, by contending these ideas in society, creates a confirmation that the structural violence imposed by the “top-dogs” (Galtung, 1969: 169), in this case the government, is justified, because the structural violence becomes normalised through cultural violence, when it targets religion specifically (Galtung, 1990: 294). Therefore, it is apparent that Orientalist attitudes impact structural and cultural violence in Turkey towards Muslim women who wear the headscarf.
7. Conclusion

This chapter concludes the study by examining and combining the different findings of the research in order to answer the research question of this thesis:

*How does Orientalism inform structural and cultural violence against the wearing of the headscarf by Muslim women in Turkey?*

In the first section, the findings from the analysis of the data collected will be presented and discussed in terms of the two aims of the thesis: pointing out the ways in which these women are subject to cultural and structural violence, and discussing how that violence is informed by Orientalism. In the second section, possible further research will be discussed.

7.1 Findings

To begin with, the findings of this research show that the headscarf ban, implemented in 1989, results in several different forms of structural and cultural discrimination and violence towards Muslim women, who wear the headscarf. The analysis of Section E in the Constitutional Ruling finds that there is clear discourse used to separate between secularity and religion. Discourses of modernity, secularism and religion are presented in the ruling through descriptions such as “contemporary, healthy society” (1989/12: E) and it is evident that there is a partition between modernity and religion. The discourse shows that visibly practicing religion, through the headscarf and other religious clothing, is not in alignment with the principle of secularism, despite women’s attempt to seek education and further develop themselves. Accordingly, modernity and the principle of secularism, are threatened by religious clothing because they do not align with Ataturk’s ideologies.

The ruling directly signifies structural violence, by implementing an Orientalist attitude: that the Orient and Islam is inferior to the West, and thus, begins the process of the violence triangle. By the legitimisation of the Orientalist attitude, structural violence becomes cultural violence through the course of that discourse. Through the ruling it is
clear that structural violence begins at the top, and is legitimised as it is sent down to the bottom (Galtung, 1990: 295). Structural violence is justified by the idea that the headscarf is a supposed threat to the principle of secularism and therefore becomes a tool to free Muslim women from religion, as it is seen as backwards and old-fashioned. Cultural violence is thus observed through the practices of the regulation in daily life towards Muslim women who wear the headscarf.

While the scope of the interviews is small, the participants interviewed provided rich and fruitful data regarding their experiences in Turkish society, and from that it is evident that they were subject to both structural and cultural violence. Treatment against these women support the constitutional regulations and the Orientalist ideas behind it. The participants discourse found that there is a reoccurring use of ‘modernity’, ‘secularity’ and ‘Ataturk’, when recalling the events that occurred regarding their headscarf. The participants experienced several forms of structural and cultural violence by being told to take off their headscarf when entering university buildings, not being permitted to join an art class because of their headscarf, and being investigated by the faculty of the university department. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the participant used similar discourse when describing the events that occurred, with the reoccurrence of words and themes such as ‘modernity’, ‘secularity’ and ‘Ataturk’. It was evident that most of the participants relates the structural and cultural discrimination towards them, to Ataturk and the westernisation process that he introduced.

Additionally, the discourses used to narrate the events by the participants show that there is a differentiation being made between themselves and the secular people. Also, that discourse indicates that the participants often feel “humiliated” and “devastated” over the discrimination they faced, due to the headscarf. For example, Participant E recalls that she began to question whether she should have just accepted the rules and taken it off completely. This demonstrates a psychological struggle between the identity and the right to education. As all participants explained, the structural violence and cultural violence they are subject to affect their identity and the way that they perceive themselves. Finally, the findings indicate that structural and cultural violence continues to persist in Turkish society, due to the internalisation of the structural violence (Galtung, 1990: 292) and Orientalist attitudes informing that violence.

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20 Participant E, Interview 5
In conclusion, it can be observed that Orientalism informs structural and cultural violence imposed on Muslim women who wear the headscarf. This attitude takes the perspective that the Muslim woman is oppressed and inferior (Said, 1978: 5), and thus, opposite to what Ataturk’s nation stands for. Structural and cultural violence has impacted the lives of Muslim women who wear the headscarf, as is evident from the interviews, and it continues to do so due to the Orientalist attitude that underlies in the Turkish society. This study tried to bring a new perspective by looking at Orientalism as an influence to structural and cultural violence in Turkish society. From the gathered data, it is clear the Muslim women who wear the headscarf experience deep structural and cultural violence. While other studies have looked at Orientalism as a hierarchy between the Orient and the Occident, this study has revealed that Orientalist ideas are upheld within the Turkish society and its people. This is done through structural regulations and the legitimisation of those laws through the cultural violence exerted by the people who describe themselves as secular, towards women who wear the headscarf.

7.2 Further research
In the duration of this study, several interesting questions have come up that could be further researched. Amongst those would be developing this study into a larger scope and interviewing a selected amount of Muslim women, wearing the headscarf, in different cities in Turkey, from different age groups. Additionally, further research could investigate the construction of enemy images from both groups: the secular and the religious, towards each other. Another interesting scope of research, would be to interview people who define themselves as secular, in order to gain a first-hand perspective and a deeper understanding of their perception on Muslim women, who wear the headscarf.
8. Bibliography


1 Appendix

1.1 Turkish Constitutional Court Ruling 1989/12

“The situation of clothing is not just a subject of formal appearance. Secularism is also about changing mentality. It is a condition of creating a contemporary, healthy society. A person is a whole with an internal and external world, feelings and thoughts, body and spirit. Clothing is a means of reflecting the personality. Clothing that contradicts the regulations envisioned by the laws of the Revolution and which are against modernity, whether they are religious or not, cannot be considered appropriate. Religious clothing constitutes a heavier violation since it contradicts the principle of secularism.”

(Turkish Constitutional Court Decision 1989: Section E; as cited in O’Neil, 2010: 76)

The full court decision and ruling can be found at:
http://kararlaryeni.anayasa.gov.tr/Karar/Content/152e95a6-8e5c-4e9e-ae1a-197acdaefe66?higllightText=basörtüsü&excludeGerekce=False&wordsOnly=False
1.2 Interview Transcripts

Interview 1, Participant A:

Can you tell me a little about yourself?
I’m twenty-two years old... I’m currently studying International Relations at university. I came to Sweden in 2016. Before I was living in Istanbul, I was born and grew up there. I was studying psychological counselling in Istanbul.

How is daily life?
Hmm, it was normal. It was a normal childhood. How can I explain it? Yeah, it was good.

When did you start wearing the headscarf?
When I was fourteen years old.

How was it?
Actually in my school, there was not anyone wearing it. And I saw my mom, and my mom’s friend and other girls my age, and they are wearing hijab and I knew it was for my religion and I felt like I also can do it and I want to do it! So I started wearing it. And in school I can’t wear it, so I was wearing it at home and then before I enter the school I take it off. I go to my lessons and then when I’m done I’m wearing it again.

Was this in high school?
No, this was primary school, but it’s the same in high school. After the classes I wear the hijab, but outside the school garden. In Turkey, schools are in a garden, and it has a fence and you can’t go in within that fence with the hijab... Then I wear it and I go home. I adapted it to school.

How did this make you feel?
Well before I wore the hijab I knew that this was the rule of the government. I accepted it. It was not a different thing for me. It was kind of normal. I didn’t know that this isn’t freedom.

What would happen if you were to wear the headscarf within the school property?
Actually I didn’t try it, because like I said, I thought it was normal and it should be like this. But I remember once I wore my hijab in the school’s toilet, the teachers came and said you shouldn’t wear it here. You should wear it outside. By the way, I was putting it on before leaving the high school.

When did you go to high school?
In 2010. I was fifteen.

Did you ask them why?
No, because it was normal. I was feeling I was doing a wrong thing when I put it on, because the government said it was like this. I felt bad because I was breaking the rules. It was like this everywhere. If you wanted to wear your hijab you should go to – okay, in Turkey there are schools where you go if you want to become a religious man or religious woman – so if you want to wear the hijab, you should go to these schools. But I didn’t
want this thing, I had different goals and careers. So I had to take it off. Of course I was thinking, why is there a line in the school garden, in here you cannot wear the hijab, and out there you can? But everywhere was the same, and I was young, too young to break the rules.

**Where there other places you had to take it off?**
I had to take it off in national exams. They were outside of school.

**Did you ever experience any difficulties wearing the headscarf?**
A secular woman came to me once and said, “You’re so young! You shouldn’t wear it, it’s not your choice, it’s your parent’s choice, and you don’t want to, if they’re forcing you I can help you!” These were just random women on the street. They were secular.

**How can you conclude that they were secular?**
In Turkey it is so obvious. There is a division in society. You should be like the West, you shouldn’t show you culture or religion. You should imitate the West. You shouldn’t be different. In one way, I understand them. When I wear the hijab, I’m obviously Muslim, people can see and understand. They’re saying you shouldn’t wear the hijab because school isn’t a religious place. You should wear a uniform; you should be one type. When I think in that way I understand them, but I don’t support them.

**Why are they positioning modernity with religion?**
I love him, but I think it is because of Ataturk. Because he is thinking in that way. When he brought modernity in Turkey, Turkey changed. A lot of things changed. I think it’s because of him. He began this, kind of, process. In Turkey a lot of people love him and follow him. He doesn’t like hijab, so they don’t like it either. I mean, there is no direct sentence from Ataturk where he is saying he doesn’t like the hijab, but everything his ideology is pointing to it. He’s saying a Turkish woman should be modern and dress like a European. According to this description you shouldn’t wear the hijab. This is so complex. Inside a Turkish person there is a big conflict, half of me is Western and the other half is Eastern. It’s hard, especially psychologically. We don’t belong to either. But yes, Ataturk wanted this.

**Did anyone else, aside from that woman, tell you to take off your headscarf?**
No. Actually I forgot to mention! In my last year of high school, the ban was lifted. I could wear the hijab in school.

**Do you ever feel like an outsider when you wear the headscarf?**
Of course. Maybe this is weird, but in Turkey it’s so obvious to know people’s political opinions. Some neighbourhoods, some universities, some café’s, when I go to these places I feel like this. Like I don’t belong. But not always. Maybe it’s because of me. Because I try not to think about it. I think that it could me my complex, because I supressed these emotions, sometimes you feel like an outsider from a look, or a way of speech.

**Do you encounter any obstacles when you wear the headscarf?**
Definitely! When I studied in university, I wanted to work at the same time. I wanted to work as waitress, but they don’t accept me. I know the boss, he is religious, but he didn’t want because he is thinking about his restaurant and he knows by putting me in the restaurant, it will affect his customers, and they will leave when they see a covered girl.
They will think that this restaurant belongs to religious people and they don’t like it, they don’t want to come here.

**Did he tell you specifically that was the reason?**
No, of course not, but it is obvious. This happens too often in Turkey. Companies have dress codes, you have to follow it. But the dress code is normal, Western style, the only implication that it has is that your hair is not covered.

**Are you ever treated differently because of the headscarf?**
Yes, of course. I can’t name one, there are many times. It was normal. Really normal. We got used to it.

**Do you feel like Ataturk’s ideas are still in society?**
Of course. They are big ideas. Too big! Such ideas stay through time. Also, secular people are active with his ideas through societies and clubs.

**From your experience, did you ever feel like even though the headscarf ban was lifted, you were different?**
Of course, of course. I always feel. When I go to these places I told you about, I am different. These ideas don’t change suddenly. Still today you can see it. Now people are following Ataturk, they’re hating religious people even more because of tensions and the AKP. There is conflict. This dispute belongs to two sides, left and right. The government, now, are not making easier now.

**What is modernity to you?**
It’s about self-development. It’s about travelling the world, learning, meeting more people. Learn a language or work on your career. It’s about the inside. Not about culture, not about clothes. People think culture is not modern, people associate religion and culture. It’s not okay. It’s not about this.

**Does the headscarf stop you from being modern?**
Of course not. I’m modern. I’m a modern girl, a modern woman. Because I’m reading, I’m studying. It’s not about the hijab, it’s not about the clothes. It’s so silly. It’s not about appearance.

**Is being told to take the headscarf a threat to your freedom?**
Of course! Of course, how can I be free under this? They hate me because of it. They want to change me; how can I be free?

**Do you think it is common for Muslim women in Turkey to experience negative things when wearing the headscarf?**
Of course it is not something normal in general. But I know Turkey, it happens all the time. It is definitely usual. It’s common, but not normal. Any woman who wear hijab that you touch in Turkey, will tell you some sort of trauma she experiences because of the hijab.
Interview 2, Participant B

Can you tell me a little about yourself?
I’m 38 years old. I’m currently studying a language course. I graduated university with a degree in Civil Engineering.

When did you first start wearing the headscarf?
I started wearing it when I was in high school. 1997. We had to take it off, of course, but I was in high school. The ban came in waves in the 1990’s.

Did you have to take it off everywhere in the school?
Yes, within the school property, whether that was inside or outside in the garden.

How was it in university?
University was not good. It began in stages, step by step. First I should explain that in my class, for every ten men there was one woman. So we were not many women, maybe around ten? So the first term for me in university in 1999, the ban began again. We were not allowed, but I went anyways. I couldn’t accept it. I wore it in school until someone came up to me and told me to take it off. I didn’t want to do it by myself unless someone forced me, because I couldn’t accept it. I felt like I was betraying myself. I kept thinking that if someone told me to take if off and I did, then it wasn’t me. I wasn’t doing it. Because being without hijab in public was not me.

Did anyone ever tell you to take off your headscarf? If so, who?
Yes. Faculty members mostly. Later on in the first term, we had exams and we had a week to stay home and study for them. They called me from the dean’s office and they wanted me to come in to answer some questions. Imagine that I’m already under big stress from the exams, and I went in. It was a big table and there were so many faculty members sitting there, with the dean. They asked me why I’m wearing the hijab, what my purpose was, what was going on at home. It was awful. I can’t explain how I felt. Of course I was told not to wear it. Later, they followed up with a letter and I hid it from my parents, because it would make them so sad. The second term was not better, because like I said, it came in steps. First it was in examinations, then it was in the lecture halls. Every time I had to take off my hijab outside and everyone was staring at me. Then outside of every university entrance, there was security officers, who checked that I wasn’t entering with the hijab. They were fully armed. There was fear. I kept thinking they are here for me. But I had not done anything wrong. They were waiting at every entrance. They closed off our prayer hall. I had to take off my hijab when I went between each building. When we had academic field trips I tried not to go because I knew I had to take it off. Eventually the ban was enforced in all university buildings. I couldn’t even go to the school canteen without being told to take it off. And as I told you, I didn’t want to. This was not my choice. I didn’t have freedom. I used to bring my own food and sit outside. In the winter I would walk around campus in between classes and my hands were so frozen that I
couldn’t get the pin off my hijab when they guards were waiting for me outside the entrance to take it off. At last the banned the whole campus.

**How did this make you feel?**
This wasn’t me. This person that went to university in those four years wasn’t me. I used to look in the mirror and I didn’t recognize myself. My classmates who were used to seeing me in hijab outside of university, did not recognize me in the classroom. It was a difficulty for me, psychologically and physically. I couldn’t exist, I couldn’t be me. I was another person. There was an inner struggle, a conflict inside me.

**Did you encounter any other problems while wearing the headscarf?**
Many. So many that I can’t remember all of them. For example, the bus to the university. I tried to avoid the public busy because as soon as the bus would enter the campus - it had to drive through campus, there approximately six stations in total for the whole campus – the soldiers were entering the bus and looking around to see if they could spot any covered woman. If they did, we had to take it off. In the middle of the bus. I’m carrying my notebooks, my laptop, my equipment, and I’m holding the railing for balance. The bus is continuing to drive, and the guard is standing in front of me asking me to take off my hijab. The bus is packed. How can I? What am I supposed to do? During this time, I was devastated.

**How was it after university?**
After university I was looking for jobs. I was hired.

**Did you experience any difficulties when applying for jobs?**
I did find work. But I remember once I went a job interview. I was overqualified, I knew it and the man interviewing me knew it. During the interview he said he would hire me, but I had to take off my hijab because the people I would be working with from the municipality and government would not want to work with a woman who is covered. Of course, I did not accept it, I always worked in companies that accepted my hijab. After he said that he tried to justify himself, he said he was religious and he attended Friday prayer. He said his mother was reading Quran. He said this was not his idea, he was trying to justify himself.

**How was it in everyday society?**
In some ways it was better, but I still experienced many things. For example, once my colleagues and I decided to go out a little road trip in the South and they wanted to visit a café in a university campus in Adana. During the whole car ride I was sitting and thinking what their reaction was going to be when they saw me, a covered woman, trying to enter. I wasn’t sure. There was never a guarantee. We got out of the car and was on the path towards the entrance. I was not even in the café yet, we were outside, the busboy saw me from far away and immediately, he did not hesitate for one second, immediately he came towards me and said “Sorry miss, but you cannot enter”. My friend, my colleague, was shocked. He was originally from Turkey but he studied in Cyprus, he was a leftist, and he was shocked. He could not understand. But my other friends understood because they lived in a religious society and they were seeing in their everyday life. Even the leftist, who was from another country was shocked. I was upset. My friends tried to
cheer me up, they were so kind to me. It was difficult. I felt like I was an obstacle for other people. They were trying to have fun, relax and enjoy their time and they could not because of me. I know they didn’t blame me. But it was reality, they could not because of me. I had unintentionally stopped them.

**What is modernity to you?**

I want to ask you, what is modernity? What does it mean? Your definition is different from mine. We have two different perspectives. It’s not about “modern”, it’s about what is behind it. You have to look at opinions. Actually, if you are saying you have to be modern, you are not. Being modern is about what goes on in the brain. It’s not about appearance. They are always looking at appearance. You have to exchange ideas. In a democracy there has to be conversation, you cannot only focus on your own ideology, you have to be able to see other opinions. Even if you do not agree, you have to be able to ask why and understand. In my generation, we couldn’t ask why. Imagine you are being stepped on, there is pressure from the top, you can’t even lift your head. If you are at the bottom, how are you able to look at the top? At the people who are coming with these ideas. From young ages, we are fed information about the founding father of Turkey, and we are saying he is great and he is a hero, of course we grow up with these opinions. We begin to accept everything; we do not question it. Ataturk was human, he made mistakes, like all humans. Actually I can’t tell you much about him, because as I mentioned, we were always told only good things about him. But he was a human being. He made great things in Turkey and he made bad things too, as the history books tell. He created this ideology. It’s not different from what the AKP is doing now. They are using the *hijab* as a tool for their political ideology. Religion and politics cannot mix. The *hijab* is not politics; it is for religious purposes only. They look at covered women, who are minding their own business, as wanting to force them to wear as well. It seems as if we are a threat to their freedom, and the only way they can protect themselves is by robbing us from our freedom.

**Does the headscarf hinder you from being modern?**

The hijab itself is not a hinder. The people’s opinions on the hijab is an obstacle for me. I don’t have freedom. I’m not myself. People look at me and they see a woman who is underdeveloped. They judge by the way I look, by my clothes. Not my intelligence and academic capabilities. It’s a shame. Your thoughts are what is important, not your looks.

**Do you think it is common for Muslim women in Turkey to experience negative things when wearing the headscarf?**

Yes.
Interview 3, Participant C

Can you tell me a little about yourself?
I’m 28 years old. And I’m attending Political Science and International Relations department in Marmara University in Istanbul.

How is your life in Turkey?
I’m originally from Eastern Turkey, it’s been three years, a totally different life. I don’t know, it was difficult.

In what ways is it difficult?
How can I say? Life in Istanbul is difficult. Istanbul is so crowded. It’s consuming my energy; I need to focus on studies. My bachelors is in English, and English my second language. We lived through a lot of things in Turkey. It was difficult when I first started attending university. We experienced a lot of things in the society from different people. We used to take off our hijab when we enter the university. It was exhausting. I was feeling like I had two personalities when I was entering the university.

Did you encounter any obstacles while wearing the headscarf?
When we were entering university there were security guys and you have to pass through them, and if you have hijab you have to take it off in front of them, in the middle of the street. It’s humiliation, you know. People were saying that it was humiliating. There were traffic jams, and people were looking at you from their cars, from the bus. So we rebelled and we asked for a place to be able to do this in private. They built a small gazebo type of house. Maybe ten girls could fit? My university is one of the biggest in Istanbul. Most of the women are covered. How could we fit? By the big gates, there were close to one hundred girls entering the university at the same time. Are we all going to stand there and take of the hijab? Imagine you were sticking in your head, because you couldn’t physically go in. This was our reality. And for what? To get education. Isn’t education the most basic right for every human being? The problem is, for example, me, how can I say, in Turkey there are two types of covered women. Sometimes they are wearing a really long dress for outside. They were covering the whole body. But me, I wasn’t using this. When I was taking off my hijab I looked normal. Normal. At the same time, I felt like I was hiding my real identity. If they knew I was using the hijab they would decrease my grade. It’s going to affect me negatively. I was hiding my identity. I felt like I had an identity crisis all the time. This was happening every day.

Did you experience this before university?
Yes, in high school. This was happening when I was twenty years old. But in high school it was different. I was so young. It wasn’t a big issue. My friends were so good, they were looking at me as a friend, not as someone who uses the hijab. But university was different because you are trying to construct your identity. You’re shaping who you are. If you’re lucky, you don’t have to face this people. You can tell by the way they look at you. They think “Oh she’s nice, but she’s using the hijab outside”. And it was hurting.

Were you ever treated differently because of the headscarf?
Yes, definitely. We are talking about university, which contains a lot of different people. My personality is open, I’m social. I’m welcoming. But other people have different styles. Maybe at first they’re cool with you, but when they understand you’re using it, they have a different attitude. This wasn’t just my classmates; it was also the professors. For
example, I couldn’t show who I am properly, because I kept thinking it would limit me. I wasn’t raising my hand, I didn’t want a lot of attention, for it to affect me. Because people were talking. If I answered questions and showed I was clever, the classmates would go and tell them I’m religious. As if it’s a tool. I will never ever forget this time when I got an A on my first exam. I memorised the whole book. I got the highest grade among the students. For the final grade, he lowered my grade. He heard I was religious and he changed it. He was secular so he didn’t want this for me. He had different ideologies and for him religious people couldn’t be intelligent.

**How can you be sure that his actions are because of having leftist views?**

When you live in Turkey these things are super obvious in society. For example, no one is declaring themselves as secular, but they have that view and they act on it. It’s kind of unspoken but it’s not hidden. It is clear who is what. You’re used to seeing this from childhood. It’s just the way it is. They’re saying “everyone should wear what they want”, “we are for human rights”, but when the AKP tried to remove the ban in 2007 or 2008, I remember it like yesterday, some of my classmates they started protesting the AKP government. They said we shouldn’t have covered women in university. So what is this? Yesterday you were saying human rights and freedom, and today you are protesting against me, because you don’t want to see me? My professors as well. One day he said he was so sad for women that have to take off their hijab. Some women were wearing wigs, to not show their hair. And my professor said it’s so humiliating to see them having to do this. I couldn’t stop myself. I raised my hand and said I didn’t understand. Why do we have to look at people the way their dress? Why are we so against Muslims? One of my classmates, loudly said “I just want to shut her mouth”, and this girl was dying for human rights. Later that day she wrote on Facebook and declared my as ‘person non grata’. The person who is not welcomed. Whenever she saw me after that, she would say “Oh, person non grata came”. When the topic of hijab came up, the leftist used to say “Shouldn’t we talk about LGTB rights instead?” Okay, we are not here to create a hierarchy between people’s struggles. Why are you positioning the two groups against each other? Why can’t you protect both rights? I remember my professors did not tell them off. He wanted to listen. He agreed with those people. It was fake, he was just pretending to protect these rights.

**Why is the headscarf associated with modernity?**

Actually for me, hijab is just hijab. It’s just clothes. God requested from us, and we are doing it. When a woman has a hijab it’s okay. But Turkey is different, for example, people could not believe I spoke English. They thought I was dumb. How? My brain is still working. Hijab is not a barrier. To be honest, I want to show them that the woman who wear the hijab can speak languages and be modern, which I don’t know what this means. I’m not looking at it from this way. Being modern for me is about improving yourself. Even the villager has these opinions, these Western opinions. I graduated university and you’ve never set your foot in there. When you look at Western Turkey, they associate these ideas with making a modern Turkey. They relate the hijab to Arab culture. For Turkey, being Arab is primitive. I don’t know how many Arabs they’ve seen in their life, to even draw any conclusion. They look at the West, who are wearing open clothes, so for them the more you undress, the better. The more you show of your body the more modern you are. For them, when they see me without the hijab, I’m smart and knowledgeable, as soon as I put it on again, they take it back. Now I become primitive and backwards. It’s that secular perspective, because they connect it with the West. The society where I was, was the most secular society. My university was in Kadiköy in
Istanbul. This belonged to the CHP, and when you look at them back then, they were lying about us, they promoted false information about religious women. Once I remember we were looking at student houses, and a young woman gave me a pamphlet, they were an organisation related to Ataturk, so I took it because I don’t have any problem with him. I like him, but I’m not dying for him like other people, yeah he saved our country, I have respect for him. Then an old woman came and snatched it from my hands. Twenty years older than me, kind of like my mother’s age, can you imagine? She said no, when you’re touching this you’re making this building dirty. I kept thinking okay, you’re a supporter of Ataturk and you’re trying to make this country modern, and developed with these ideas. People are using his ideas to be modern. Even within the CHP, there were these parliament members. When you look at random people, they’re yelling at me.

**Did anyone ever tell you to take off your headscarf in public?**

Once a woman came up to me and said “Poor baby! Why are you wearing this, huh? Why? Is it your parents?” I said No it’s my decision. She said Poor girl, poor girl, I’m so sad for you, so sad for these types of girls, that are wearing this type of thing, they’re trying to develop themselves still they can’t, they just can’t”. I said thanks grandma and walked away. Recently, on the bus, I was standing and the woman sitting closest to me pushed me back because she didn’t want me to have it, and she pointed at an uncovered woman and told her to take her seat. I’m not blaming Ataturk, but it’s related to him. When you ask these people they immediately they say they are a soldier for Ataturk, they support him.

**Did you experience any difficulties when applying for jobs?**

I didn’t but there was an art course. It was in Taksim, which is one of the most secular places in Istanbul, by the way. We called them before, and the guy was like yeah, let’s do it, you are very welcome, we want to see you. This was private by the way. You had to pay. Then we went, as soon as he saw us, his face immediately changed. He said so sorry but our class is full. But it wasn’t ten minutes ago? He said I don’t think you will fit in this place. To our faces.

**Do you feel like Ataturk’s ideas are still in society?**

Maybe he died, but his ideas were living. It’s not just my idea. The people who were behaving in this way I told you, they were bringing his name into the context. They said this is Ataturk’s country, you have to be modern, he wants us, the young Turkish woman shouldn’t wear the hijab. They had a problem with practicing religious things in public, because you shouldn’t enter religion with the public sphere.

**Is being told to take the headscarf a threat to your freedom?**

Yes. People who were against my hijab, was threatening my freedom.

**Do you ever feel like an outsider when you wear the headscarf?**

Yeah, how can I say? I was trying to be a proper Muslim, so I wore it. I was living life accordingly. How I was understanding religion and they were trying to stop me. This was my personality. I remember in first year university I wanted to be a part of the Erasmus student club and the people in it didn’t let me because of my headscarf. They said people are coming from Europe because you are representing us, and they don’t like these things. Yet I was one of the top students, I spoke fluent English. The way they were acting were limiting my freedom. They had a problem with my appearance.
Does the headscarf hinder you from being modern?
No. Definitely no. Like, the hijab stopped me from learning something? No. I don’t know. I’m doing anything I want. I watched movies, I read books, I graduated university, I got my masters. I did everything. The structure of society was hindering me. Like I said before, being modern is about improving yourself. Those that were judging us thought it was hindering us. It wasn’t. Thank God they didn’t attack me. I’m always thinking about that. I don’t like the AKP but they protected us during that time. So no, it wasn’t stopping me, other people tried to stop me. But they couldn’t.

Do you think it is common for Muslim women in Turkey to experience negative things when wearing the headscarf?
Definitely. But I could handle it. I was strong. I tried to change their perception. Maybe you have stereotypes from my appearance, but I knew when they got to know me they would love me. Actually one of my best friends originally had a problem with the headscarf because she told me that when she looked at me she felt pressure to wear as well. She felt threatened. Not every woman who is wearing hijab is against you, we don’t want to force anyone because we ourselves are being forced. We know how it feels? How could we impose this feeling on anyone else when we know how horrible it is? I changed her mind. We became so close. My story might not be the worst, because I tried to turn it around. Other women were experiencing the same humiliation. And it affected them. We were coming together with my hijabi friends and I remember, we were crying. We were not doing anything to them, so why are they acting like this towards us? I didn’t have a problem with these classmates that were verbally attacking me, and declaring me dumb. I graduated as one of the top students, and still they were surprised. I remember, at least one of us were crying every week because of this behaviour. The bus for example, it’s not just about the university.
Interview 4, Participant D

Can you tell me a little about yourself?
I’m 30 years old. I’m married and I have a little daughter. And I’m a medical doctor. I came from Turkey to Sweden three years ago. Now I’m studying more exams in Sweden to convert my degree, because Turkey is not a member of the EU so Sweden doesn’t accept our medical degree, so you have to take a board exam. I passed the Swedish exam and now I’m studying for the board exam.

How was your life in Turkey?
In general, it was stressful. The last five years. There is political tension, also before the coup. Then the coup happened and everything became much, much worse. We moved to Sweden. In Turkey I was working in the Health Department and I was the supervisor for our region. I was working. I had a social life...And yeah...

When did you start wearing the headscarf?
I started to wear it when I was thirteen years old. It was the last year of primary school.

How was it?
I decided before. It didn’t mean much. I accepted my limitations, because for example there was hijab ban in university and high school and we had to take it off at the gate of the school. But I had a life outside of school and I wanted to preserve myself then.

Did anyone ever tell you to take off your headscarf in public?
Of course. So many times. There were some leftist aunties in Turkey, they were waiting in the bus stops in the stations or around the university and they were yelling to hijabi girls. They were waiting. Yeah, they tried to humiliate by yelling that we were the enemy of the Turkish republic, we are the bad people, cockroaches. They called us names, really weird ones, they called us – there is this candy that’s round, it’s called Topitop – they called us “Topitop heads”, for example. Just on the streets. It was happening almost every day. My school was in Kadiköy, and Kadiköy is the most secular region in Istanbul.

How did that make you feel?
So weird actually. Everyone knows you are wearing hijab normally. In normal life and when you are wearing hijab, you become ashamed when you take it off. Because you want to keep yourself modest, because it is the rule of wearing it, and you decided it. Some people force you to take it off, actually, there is no reason for it. There is no acceptable reason for it. When I was in high school we were living in a conservative city in the Eastern region, no one said anything about it. We didn’t talk about it. But when I was in university it was so embarrassing, because so many people were laughing at us, for example once it was raining and we were trying to wear it under the rain, in the street, and there were so many people on the street. I couldn’t forget this, there came a bus and people were all staring at us. This was the years of 2005 to 2011. This was happening in university.
Did you encounter any obstacles while wearing the headscarf?
The hijab ban started in the 80’s in Turkey, and we were born during that time. We accepted it first place. We knew the problems and the consequences. But of course...you become sometimes depressed or upset, but you know that from the beginning. You know the rough path. They tried to put a perfect shape on everyone. They think that if any person studied in university or more, they shouldn’t believe in religion so much. Because religion doesn’t fit modern life, they thought religion and science couldn’t be in the same room. If you are doing science, you can’t conflict religion. You have to choose, there couldn’t be both.

Did you ever feel like you were treated differently because of the headscarf?
Yeah, of course, we know each other with the hijab as friends, so from there wasn’t anything. In university, yes, as I told you.

What do you mean when you say secular? How can you differentiate?
I think it’s like defining leftist in Turkey, and leftist in Europe are the opposite. To be covered and differentiating religion and your job, is secularity in Europe. But in Turkey it’s not secular enough. In Turkey, meaning of being secular, you shouldn’t believe in anything, you should drink alcohol, you should pray to Ataturk. You become patriotic, that’s what it means in Turkey. Of course it’s not an official meaning. It’s almost the exact opposite in Europe. It’s so stupid. For example, for me until the end of university, I thought that being leftist was a bad thing, because if you are, you have to curse religion, and then I learn the real meaning of leftist, and I said that I’m leftist as well. But in Turkey you can’t say that. It depends on the meaning.

Do you feel like Ataturk’s ideas are still visible in society?
I mean, yes, it’s impossible to say it isn’t because it’s his country. Even though all the governments changed towards being more conservative, most rules were set by him. It’s still the Turkish Republic. The main rules and the main frame of the country is his. It’s still, at least, fifty percent of the country thinks he is the best thing that happened to us. Because Ataturk, tortured the other fifty percent. There is a huge difference between these two groups. Of course, the positive ones miss him, and the other half hates him. What he was trying to do, was that he was trying to establish a Western country and he did whatever he could do to this. During this time, he didn’t realise that half of the people were ready to be Western, and the other did not want anything to do with the West. He didn’t realise that there would be conflict. He saw these rules in the West and thought that this would be perfect in this country, and this is just like lifestyle, some people were ready to be in this lifestyle. But it didn’t work, for the other half. For example, I can mention just one law, he brought the hat law for men. Every men must wear a Western type of hat. But the country was in the war, almost a hundred years, so many people couldn’t find food to eat, but the government said that you have to wear a Western type of hat. They couldn’t afford it, they couldn’t even find many people who made it because it was so special, so Western. So what they were doing is every village hat one hat, so like the men, when they had something to do in the city they borrowed that hat, and did their work in the city, paper work and such things, and then they went back and then the next person came and took that hat when he needed to go to the city. I heard from so many people, they were waiting for the hat to return to the village, so they could go in the city. It was obligatory, you couldn’t walk in the city without it because you would be hung. So many people got hanged. He was being so strict, because he thought that he wanted to make a western country so he had to set firm rules. So yeah. So many religious guys, imams, we
call is sarik, a religious headwear, they wore it from childhood, it’s kind of a man hijab for them. After the hat law they don’t want to exchange their sarik for a hat, and Ataturk hung them. Just because of the hat. He thought they were going to be an example for everyone. He had to punish them so everyone would follow. He tried with violence, torture with power, a Utopic country. During his younger years he thought it was going to happen, but his last few years he was just like, he was feeling so depressed, and he didn’t do anything. I think he let it go, because he realised that it wasn’t going to happen. Even the hat law, that he hung so many people over, even when he was living he gave it up, he decided to not be so strict. Actually, in the constitutional law, the hat law is still there, but no one follows it. It’s still there, because it’s a rule set by Ataturk so they cannot change it.

**Is being told to take the headscarf a threat to your freedom?**

People’s perspective stopped me. They tried. But I didn’t let it. It’s not changing anything. If I want to do something, I do it, the hijab is just a religious code for me. It’s not a restriction. I have freedom when I can wear it. When I can’t wear it I feel naked. Can you go outside without any clothes? Or your shirt? It’s a part of clothes for me.

**Why is the headscarf associated with modernity?**

I don’t know. I think the hijab is not related to being modern or not. It’s a lifestyle. It’s how you want to be...It’s not dependent on time, it’s a timeless concept, like religion. I cannot say that being a religious person is not modern. It’s a duty within the religion, and if you decide you want to do that, then you do it. It doesn’t have anything to do with religion. It also depends on who you ask. If you ask among the religious people, a lot of hijabis will tell you they are modern. It’s not only one type. If you compare between a woman wearing on hijab and one wearing burqa, you begin to compare. It’s personal. I don’t like this word. It’s hard to answer. I don’t understand this either: if you wear the hijab and lower part clothes is a burqa style, you are not modern, but if you wear only hijab, you’re modern and cool person. Just without the hijab, it’s fashion, as soon as you put it on it’s not modern. Who wants to be modern? Is it a thing we have to follow? In Turkey there are so many different styles of hijab. There are traditional, which is not associated with religion, it’s worn by older women. If you wear a big hijab more religious. If you wear it in a style, you’re a villager, and another type shows that you’re young and cool. It’s difficult to describe.

**What is modernity to you?**

For me, being modern is being in time. If you’re following your time, you’re modern. Being visible in the moment you’re living in. Feeling free in the time you’re living in is modernity. Being in the moment and being okay with it. It’s all in the head. It doesn’t depend on society. If you’re kind or smart, respectful, you’re modern for me. It’s enough for me. It doesn’t depend on clothes. Feeling free without bothering anyone. Freedom and modernity is the same for me. Love and respect everyone.

**Does the headscarf hinder you from being modern?**

I graduated. I got my medical degree. It was the first time someone got into medical school in my big, big family. How can someone say a woman wearing the hijab can’t do anything? It’s unfair. Nothing can stop any woman if they want to do something?
Do you think it is common for Muslim women in Turkey to experience negative things when wearing the headscarf?
I think yes. They did much more things in Turkey when I was young. But you can’t let it stop you. Life goes on, things change, I am myself. It’s my business. Unfortunately, people want to frame women. In the country we’re living in now, being a hijabi is not good. But now in Turkey, the conservative people are taking revenge of the secular people. It’s a positive thing now, now it’s good when you try to get a job, what they’re doing is they wear it just to get a job. And I experienced a lot of things. Trying to be proper because I represented my religion by wearing the hijab. They’re doing an opposite thing now. Power relations have changed. Now they’re using the hijab as a symbol, just a symbol. It turned the other way around. Also among the real believers it’s so sad, because it hurts me a lot. What did they do to us? You cannot use something so sacred for so many people, for your own business. They keep using women. They play games through women. The hijab is a symbol for tortured women. They keep thinking this way. People always find something for women. In the West too. You never know where to fit. Being a hijabi is so hard in the West, but it in our countries it’s also horrible, in Afghanistan for example you have to wear it. It’s horrible.
Can you tell me a little about yourself?  
I’m 29 years old. I studied in physiotherapy in Turkey. My university was relatively small. My city wasn’t that big, it was moderate.

How is your life in Turkey?  
It is good. I lived with my family. I went to high school. I was loved by the teachers because in Turkey there is a system to record each city and its students test result. I was one of the top students in my city, so the teachers loved me and I loved them. I attended university. I was eighteen years old. I studied physiotherapy.

How was it?  
It was difficult for me. Physiotherapy is something difficult, a difficult line. We had a lot of practical work in groups or in two’s. We had to give each other massages and it was difficult.

In what ways was it difficult?  
It was difficult because I had hijab. In the university there was a ban. So my friends and I had to take it off when we entered the building. I had my own style, a long jacket that women who wore hijab often wore. It was difficult because my professors always told us to come to the classes in short sleeves and shorts. And I had long sleeves and loose pants. We were forced to take it off. If we didn’t, we would fail. Our grade depended on how we were dressed. It wasn’t like the other bachelors in my university.

How would you say that it differed?  
Studying physiotherapy is different because it requires you to work practically. It is obligatory. For example, studying to become a teacher, you read and you write, you write your exams. It does not require you to touch other students. Our exams were practical so we had to show what we learned on each other.

Did anyone ever tell you to take off your headscarf?  
In the beginning. The first four years. I studied in university for six years. The first year was preparatory English. And then I studied five years of physiotherapy. Normally, a bachelor’s is four years in Turkey. But it took a longer time for me because of the obstacles and problems with the professors.

What problems did you encounter?  
They were because of the professors. They made me stop loving physiotherapy because of their requirements in the classroom. For example, one time we had a practical assignment and we had to pick cards from a box. On those cards there was a body part, for example, shoulder. When I got this I had to take off my clothes, everything, even my bra. My partner was a guy so I couldn’t do the assignment. I didn’t get a grade. I failed and had to stay for an extra year.

Did you feel like you were treated differently because you wore the headscarf?  
For sure. Because our teachers were “modern” people.
Did you try to explain your position to your professors?
Yes, and they knew. We had 10 girls who wore the hijab. We spoke all together with the teacher, but it wasn’t just about the hijab. There were girls in the class that did not wear it and it was also problem for them. One of them spoke to the teacher and she asked her if it was possible to pair us the girls with girls and the guys with guys and the only thing the professor answered was the we have to be modern because we will have male patients. She did not let any of us. Okay, I understand what she means, it’s okay to do a message on a guy if he gives his consent, but it’s a completely other thing to force us to have a guy massage us in our exams when told her we did not want to.

Would you say that your professor knew that you did not want to do this because of religious reasons?
Yes. They knew definitely. Because we live in society where this isn’t unusual. My teachers were so irritated with me. I didn’t want to irritate them more. I wasn’t good at lessons because in the end I didn’t attend them. I just wanted to pass and graduate. I hated it. Once I had a class about manipulation where you kind of fix a muscle. My professor chose a girl who was originally covered and called her to the front to show in front of the class. And you cannot do manipulation on top of clothing so you had to undress. Everyone is staring at you and it’s so uncomfortable.

How do you feel when your professor tells you that you should be modern? What do you think?
I was used to hearing it. In Turkey if you had, not now, the situation has changed now, but in my time, when you had the headscarf, it meant that you were not modern, European, you didn’t have European thoughts. You were... how can I say? Old fashioned. You were dumb, you did not understand anything. You lived in older times. They thought in this way. It wasn’t the same in everyday society between people. Because before, in the 80’s, only the secular people were studying in university and they were the ones who became teachers. They others could not study. They had to leave university because of the headscarf. In the university there were mostly, I don’t want to judge someone whether they’re religious or not, absolutely not, but the fact is that most professors were not. And they hated those that were religious. It was obvious from the way that they treated the religious. It was as if we are idiots, we don’t think. They were the elite and we are not.

How long did this continue?
Actually 2008 was kind of the end of these times. It was the end results of it. This started in the 1970’s and continued. Those that studied during that time became teachers and most of them had that mentality. It was Western ideas.

In what way can you conclude that they were Western ideas?
Because if you look at Turkey’s history you can see it. For example, in the 70’s and 80’s, you could say that there were two large groups. Right and left. The right hated the left and the left hated the right. If you were left you hated religion and headscarf. In Turkey it was like that. They connected being secular with being modern. It was because the
headscarf was associated with Arabs. If you wanted to wear the hijab you should go to the middle east. Here was progression. A modern Turkey. You can’t wear the headscarf here. Most of them thought in this way. Not all, I don’t want to say all.

**How was it in your daily life?**
Not that much daily. People were used to seeing religious and secular people together in the society. In university it was something else. If you were known to have a traditional style headscarf and clothing it was weird. People were staring and made fun of. You had to wear a modern style.

**What was the modern style?**
If you have a long jacket it means you are more religious. But if you only have a headscarf and normal clothes it’s better. I mean, it’s still not accepted. But there is a difference. You had to adapt. Either take it off or fight for yourself

**So you’re alternative was to take off your hijab?**
We already took it off. We had to. If we did not, we could not study there. So I always took it off. But I tried to fix my clothing so it would be good. For example, I wore the long sleeves. But it was still kind of obvious I wore the hijab because I did not wear the short clothes, and I wore the hijab as soon as I left the university. Our professors knew because they saw us put it on as soon as we finished.

**How long did it continue like this?**
In 2014 the ban ended. The funny thing is that 2014 was the hardest year. It was my last year. Now the teachers were seeing us directly with the headscarf. They didn’t like it.

**How can you say that they didn’t like it?**
They acted differently towards us than the other students. I had internships the last year and I did my best even though I wasn’t comfortable. I took care of the patients really good and they always came back to me. But the teachers did not like me. When I told them my patients were comfortable with my, she laughed in my face. When I spoke to her she did not look at my face. For example, during this internship time, we had the teacher’s numbers in case of emergency, but he didn’t give to a few students so I had to take from my classmate. When I texted him once he answered “why do you have my number?”. Okay this is a small thing. They did not like us. I was really sad because of this and I went to a therapist. She asked what our teachers are doing because I was not the only one from the physiology class to seek help.

**Why do you think it’s like this?**
To create a modern Turkey.

**What is modernity to you?**
I have never agreed with them. To be modern you can be good at academics, math, technology, science and such things. But in Turkey they only think about your
appearance. If you are a good student, why does it matter if you have *hijab* or not? Most of them think if you have *hijab* you are not smart. To be religious is not related to being intelligent. I think it’s because of Ataturk because he began to ban religious hat for men. He wanted to be a part of Europe and not a part of Middle East. He wanted to change everything. He did many good things, he advanced technological use in Turkey, but he did many bad things too. He made the people change and to think about appearance and judge.

**Do you feel like Ataturk’s ideas are still visible in society?**
Yes, for sure. Now maybe it’s less. But this mentality is passed from generation to generation. Now they don’t have the courage to speak against the current regime.

**How was it after university?**
There wasn’t any ban anymore. I was so happy. You can’t imagine. I could do what I want, I could wear what I wanted. I had the freedom which I didn’t have before.

**Did you work?**
After this I did not want to live in Turkey. I hated the society and the structure. I wanted to continue to study and didn’t want to continue in Turkey. People had this mentality and it ruined my self-confidence. This mentality doesn’t just change because the ban is gone. It’s not so easy to change something which has existed for so long. I left in 2014. I was so tired, so tired. I wanted to do something more, but in Turkey this mentality stopped me. There was no freedom for me.

**Is being told to take the headscarf a threat to your freedom?**
Absolutely! Absolutely.

**Does the headscarf hinder you from being modern?**
Absolutely not! You can’t weigh modernity with appearance. It’s the brain in the head, not in the appearance. If you have the headscarf and have tolerance towards others and you’re a nice human being who is developing always, can you say that person is not modern? No. But some who don’t wear the headscarf are actually not modern because they have illogical thoughts. If you can follow developments in the world and have tolerance, that’s so important, if you don’t judge others, that’s modern for me.

**Do you think it is common for Muslim women in Turkey to experience negative things when wearing the headscarf?**
Not everyone. We have different personalities and ideas. Some chose to take it off. Some didn’t want to. When I’m thinking back I was strict, I think back and I think I maybe should have taken it off. I wanted to stand up for myself but now I wonder why I was so stubborn.