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*HICAB, TÜRBAN, AND DEMOCRACY:  
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM VERSUS POLITICAL PROTEST*

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*Abstract*

This paper addresses the controversial issue of Turkish women wearing the (*türban*), which is now before the Turkish Constitutional Court. Almost simultaneously, the governing AKP party, which won the 2007 election, has been indicted on the grounds of engaging in anti-secularist activities, including the promotion of the *türban* as a political symbol of Islam in democratic politics in Turkey. This paper analyzes data from the 2007 Turkish Election Survey to determine to what extent Turks perceive the *türban* as an issue of religious freedom of the pious women or a political symbol of an Islamic movement, and perceive it as a high priority issue. The paper also examines the role that the *türban* played in determining voting behaviour in an election won by the AKP, all of whose leaders have wives who wear the *türban*. The paper concludes with an assessment of how far this potent symbol of Sunni religiosity influences democracy in Turkish society.

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The attire of women, in particular the style of donning of the headscarves to cover the head, neck, ears, and the shoulders of women (*türban*) by pious Sunni women has once again become the center of controversy in Turkish higher education and politics soon after the general elections of July 22, 2007. In fact, *hicab* (or *tesettür* as it is more commonly referred to in Turkey) and the *türban* have become persistent valence issues in Turkish higher education and politics since the early 1980s. Therefore, at the spur of the moment any such matter may crop up in Turkish politics. When a Turkish High Court or the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) hears a certain case pertaining to the *türban*, the media and press coverage of the court case becomes imminent in Turkey. It is also quite natural to expect a political debate to emerge over whether *türban* donning is no more than an exercise of the freedom of conscience or of a religious right, or a violation of the dress codes of the universities and an attempt at eroding the secularist principles of the Republic.

However, when asked right before the general elections of July 22, 2007 what constituted the most important problem facing Turkey, 99.9 percent of the voters seemed to mention economic woes, increasing threat of terror, and social welfare related matters and concerns.

Unemployment	35.4
Terror/National Security	21.4
Inflation	8.3
Economic Instability	7.2
Education	6.2
Personal - Family Related Problems	5.3
Health, Social Welfare	3.3
Housing, Environment, etc.	2.7
Political Instability	2.4
Corruption, Bribery	2.1
Southeast / Kurdish Problem	2.0
Crime	1.7

When further probed as to what constituted the political campaign issues aired and debated by the political parties in June and July 2007 a huge majority indicated that it was the economy or terror that captured their attention the most, while only 0.4 percent of the respondents mentioned the *türban* (see Table 1). Finally, the press reported that the then deputy Prime Minister M. Ali Şahin argued that the *türban* was the concern of 1.5% of the population prior to the July 22, 2007 general elections,<sup>1</sup> and that they would be safe to ignore that issue throughout their election campaign. In the election manifesto of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) neither the *türban* nor any other issue pertaining to *hicab* appeared.<sup>2</sup> Under the circumstances, there were hardly any expectations that the *türban* would capture the headlines in the aftermath of the national elections of 2007. To the amazement of many pundits and students of Turkish politics by October 2007 Turkey was again in the grips of another *türban* debate, which soon climaxed into a crisis.

A declaration by the Prime Minister (PM) Recep T. Erdoğan in Spain precipitated the process that led to the tabling of a motion by the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in the Grand National Assembly (TBMM) to amend the article 10 of the Constitution. Article 10 was on the equality of the citizens before the law, which the AKP considered as less than adequate to help the *türban* donning students to attend the universities unhindered. Negotiations between the MHP and AKP resulted in tabling an amendment that also included article 42 of the Constitution, which pertained to the right of the Turkish citizens to higher education. The MHP had been arguing for a long time that the *türban* issue was specifically exploited by the AKP to mobilize support at the polls. Therefore, the MHP, by tabling an amendment of the Constitution, wanted the upper hand among the Sunni Muslim and conservative voters in Turkey by making its image that of the party that “solves the *türban* issue.” The amendments were aimed at rendering

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.haber7.com/haber.php?haber\\_id=255141](http://www.haber7.com/haber.php?haber_id=255141).

<sup>2</sup> See [www.akparti.org.tr/beyanname.pdf](http://www.akparti.org.tr/beyanname.pdf) and also for its coverage in the media at the time of the election campaign of July 22 2007 general elections see <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20070624/AKP-secim-beyannamesini-acikladi.php>.

Table 1: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE DISCUSSED IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN PERIOD OF JULY 22, 2007 GENERAL ELECTIONS? (OPEN ENDED QUESTION)

Campaign Issue	Frequency	Percent
Unemployment	273	13.5
Terror	237	11.7
Presidency	137	6.8
Party Propaganda / Ascending to Power	133	6.6
Gasoline Price Cut	85	4.2
Economy (Unspecified)	84	4.2
Empty Promises	61	3.0
University Entrance Exam / Education	52	2.6
Formation of the New Government	38	1.9
Agriculture / Farming	38	1.9
Inflation	33	1.6
Laicism	17	0.8
Democracy	11	0.5
<i>Türban</i>	9	0.4
Other domestic and local issues	167	8.3
Don't Know / No Response	643	31.9
Total	2018	100.0

Source: Pre - election national survey of 2007.

unconstitutional the denial of enrollment in the institutions of higher education on the grounds of attire brandished by the students, without making any references to *laïcité* (*laiklik*), the broader issue of secularism. However, the Republican People's Party (CHP), as the party of secularism in Turkey, appealed to the Constitutional Court and challenged the constitutionality of these amendments. The CHP argued that the new versions of article 10 and 42 were a breach of the secular principles of the Republic, and thus violated article 2 of the Constitution, which can neither be amended, nor can there be any motion to amend it in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM).

Although the Turkish Constitutional Court (TCC) could only consider a constitutional amendment by reference to its procedural correctness (form), and could not examine the substance of the

amendments of the Constitution made by the TBMM,<sup>3</sup> in a historical decision the Court concurred with the CHP and declared the amendments as violations of article 2 of the Constitution. Almost simultaneously, the AKP, which won the most votes and seats in the National Assembly after the July 22, 2007 elections and formed the government, was also charged with becoming the focal point of activities against secularism by the Public Prosecutor of the Republic. The Public Prosecutor requested the TCC to ban the AKP as well as 71 of its members, including the Prime Minister, from all forms of political activity. The Public Prosecutor's indictment made lavish use of the arguments of the AKP frontbench that promoted the the *türban* in universities. Indeed, the TCC also decided that the AKP constituted a focal point of activities against *laiklik*, though did not go so far as to ban the party, but imposed a minor financial punishment by banning the party from getting funds out of the state budget for 2008, which seemed not to perturb the financial capabilities of the AKP much. Once again the *türban* emerged to capture the headlines and determine the political fortunes of politicians and major political parties in Turkish politics.

In this paper, I will present data collected between June 23 and July 16, 2007 in a nationally representative survey of voter attitudes, beliefs, values and reported behavior, and determine to what extent the adult population in Turkey perceives the *türban* as a religious right of the pious women and also as a symbol of religious freedom. Some studies have so far been conducted by Arat,<sup>4</sup> Çarkoğlu,<sup>5</sup> Göle,<sup>6</sup> Kalaycıoğlu,<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The article 148 of the 1982 Constitution states that "... The Constitutional Court shall examine the constitutionality, in respect of both form and substance, of laws, decrees having the force of law, and the Rules of Procedure of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. **Constitutional amendments shall be examined and verified only with regard to their form...**".

<sup>4</sup> Yeşim Arat, *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), Yeşim Arat, "Feminists, Islamists and Political Change in Turkey", *Political Psychology*, vol. 19, no. 1, (March 1998): pp. 117 - 131, Yeşim Arat, "One Ban and Many Headscarves: Islamist Women and Democracy in Turkey", *Hagar: International Social Science Review*, vol.2, (1), 2001: 47 - 60.

<sup>5</sup> Ali Çarkoğlu, "Religiosity, support for şariat and evaluations of secularist public policies in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.40, No.2, (April 2004): pp. 111-136.

Özdalga,<sup>8</sup> Pusch,<sup>9</sup> and Toprak<sup>10</sup> to examine the role of *türban* in Turkish politics and society, but none so far on the role that attitudes toward the *türban* play in the decisions of the voters at the polls. I will examine the role the *türban* played in determining the party preferences of the voters at the polls on July 22, 2007, and thus contributed to the election victory of the AKP, all of the leaders of which have wives who don the *türban*.

## I. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE *TÜR*BAN ISSUE

*Türban* has become the perennial valence issue in Turkish politics, which has fuelled emotional clashes between the government and opposition parties, the TCC and the TBMM, and between the editorial columnists of different dailies, magazines, journals, and the media since the early 1980s. In the recent years field research started to systematically probe into the attitudes of the voters toward the *türban*. In three national surveys conducted in 2002, 2003, and 2006 of the voting-age population in Turkey conducted by Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu<sup>11</sup> it was found that about two-thirds or more of voters say that women should be free to don the *türban* in the university campuses, and also as state

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<sup>6</sup> Nilüfer Göle, "Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey", in Augustus R. Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, (Leiden and New York: 1996): pp. 17-43.

<sup>7</sup> Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "The Mystery of the *Türban*: Participation or Revolt?" *Turkish Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, (June 2005): pp. 233-251.

<sup>8</sup> Elisabeth Özdalga, "Civil Society and Its Enemies", in Elisabeth Özdalga and Sune Persson (eds.) *Civil Society, Democracy, and the Muslim World*, (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 1997): pp. 73-84.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Pusch, "Stepping into the Public Sphere: The Rise of Islamist and Religious-Conservative Women's Non-Governmental Organizations in Stefanos Yerasimos, et. al. (eds.) *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism: Studies on Political Culture in Contemporary Turkey*, (Istanbul: Ergon, 2000): pp. 475-505.

<sup>10</sup> Binnaz Toprak, "Civil Society in Turkey" in Augustus Richard Norton (ed.) *Civil Society in the Middle East*. (Leiden, New York, Köln, E. J. Brill, 1996), pp. 87-118.

<sup>11</sup> Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Democracy Today: Elections, Participation and Stability in an Islamic Society*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007): passim reports the findings of the 2002 and 2003 election and political participation national surveys and defines the sampling procedure. For the sampling procedure used in the 2006 national survey of attitudes, values, beliefs and opinions in Turkey see Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Politics of Conservatism in Turkey" *Turkish Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, (June 2007): pp. 233-252.

employees in the public institutions in Turkey. Although the vast majority of the voting age population does not consider the freedom of women in covering themselves up and donning the *türban* as one of the important problems facing the country, nonetheless again a two-thirds majority of the public seem to be of the opinion that this is a practice that should be left to the women, who should be permitted to wear whatever they please, wherever they please. In the 2007 pre-election survey,<sup>12</sup> when the same issue is probed a similar set of responses have been given (see Table 2), which indicate that we are faced with stable attitudes toward the issue in question.

Table 2: PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TÜR BAN

*Question: Do you approve of women state officials wearing turbans covering their head, hair and shoulders in their workplace?*

	<u>2006 Survey</u>	<u>2007 Survey</u>
	Percent	
No, they should not wear the turban in their workplace	33.6	30.7
Yes, they should be allowed to wear turban in their workplace	65.1	67.5
Don't Know/ No Response	1.3	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	1846	2018

*Question: How about university students? Should they be allowed to wear turban in universities?*

No, they should not wear turban in universities	31.2	28.5
Yes, they should be allowed to wear turban in universities	67.1	69.7
Don't Know/ No Response	1.0	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0
Sample Size	1846	2018

Sources: Nationwide survey conducted by Ali Carkoglu - Ersin Kalaycioglu, 2006 and the pre - election national survey of 2007.

<sup>12</sup> See the Appendix of this paper for how the survey sampling was carried out.



Table 3: RELIGIOUS PRESSURE AND *TÜRBAN*

Q. Can people properly worship in Turkey?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
	%	%	
	63.3	33.8	(2002)
	68.5	27.1	(2003)
	74.2	22.5	(2006)
	<u>80.5</u>	<u>17.5</u>	(2007)
Change	17.2	-16.3	

Q. Are religious people under pressure in Turkey?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
	%	%	
	40.0	55.6	(2002)
	33.7	62.5	(2003)
	25.7	69.9	(2006)
	<u>27.4</u>	<u>70.0</u>	(2007)
Change	-12.6	14.4	

Types of Pressure (Asked to those who answered the previous question as "yes"):

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
	%	%	%	%
Firm resistance to " <i>Türban</i> -Headscarves"	67.7	74.4	68.8	77.7
Lack of freedom of worship	7.3	16.0	1.7	2.5
Status of the <i>İmam-Hatip</i> High Schools	4.6	2.6	1.7	--
Oppression in Schools	--	--	--	3.1
Banning prayer in Government Offices	--	--	5.3	4.5
Banning <i>Kur'an</i> Courses	--	--	3.6	2.9

Sources: Results of the Political Participation Study October 2002 and the Panel group of February 2003; survey on socio-political attitudes and political choices in Turkey by Ali Carkoglu - Ersin Kalaycioglu in 2006, and of the pre - election national survey of 2007.

When a series of separate questions are asked on whether people can worship freely in Turkey about 80 percent of the electorate seemed to concur in 2007, which increased from 63 percent in 2003 (see Table 3). When the rest of the electorate who believed that the religious people (believers) are under some form of pressure in Turkey are probed, they have been systematically registering the ban on donning the *türban* by

the university students, employees, and state and public employees as the most notorious practice of pressure on religious people in the country (see Table 3). The other responses are so small in terms of percentages that if somehow the *türban* issue is resolved in Turkey to the satisfaction of the majority, no other practice may be singled out by any sizable proportion of the population as an example of pressure on the religious believers.

This picture seems to indicate that the so called “*türban* ban” is perceived as an issue of freedom of expression by most voters, for only a small minority seems to consider it as pressure on the believers. Most voters seem to be of the opinion that the way women dress in Turkey is not an exclusively religious, but a folkloric or traditional matter, which pertains to habits, mores, and customs of the land, which often varies through communities and localities across the land. It seems as if most people do not to consider the *türban* as a political symbol of the the Islamist Movement (*İslamcılık Cereyanı*), though some politicians of various parties and the spokespersons of that Movement may think otherwise.

When a more strong yearning for a religious practice, such as the attitudes toward the re-establishment of the Sharia (Şer’i) law and a theocratic state are probed, we tend to get a similar picture. A small and diminishing proportion of the electorate seem to yearn for a state under Sharia rule in Turkey (see Table 4).

However, this time those who favor a theocratic rule in Turkey seem to be much smaller in size. It seems as if they have diminished over the years from about more than one fourth of the population in 1996 to about one tenth of it in 2007 (see Table 4). Although there is a correlation between attitudes toward the Sharia state and the attitudes toward considering the ban on the *türban* as a form of religious pressure on the believers, (Cramer’s  $V = 0.094$ , significant at 0.95 level of significance), it also buttresses the earlier findings that the attitudes toward the *türban* are not just a demand of political Islamists in Turkey. We need a more thorough and sophisticated empirical analysis of the sources of the attitudes toward the *türban* in Turkish society. In the following I will focus on the connection between religiosity, political Islam, socio-

Table 4: ŞERİAT BASED RULE IN TURKEY

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Response</u>
	%	%	%
2007	11.7	82.6	5.7
2006	9.1	76.5	14.4
2003	15.4	75.6	9.0
2002	16.4	74.1	9.5
2001	21.0	67.9	11.1
1998	19.8	59.9	20.2
1996	26.7	58.1	15.2
1995	19.9	61.8	18.4

Sources: 2007: Pre-election survey. 2006: Survey on socio-political attitudes by Ali Çarkoğlu - Ersin Kalaycıoğlu. 2003: "Political Participation Panel Study", conducted by Ustun Erguder, Ali Çarkoğlu, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu. 2001: Results of the survey conducted by Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak and sponsored by TESEV. 1995, 1998: Results reported in surveys conducted by TÜSES.

economic status, overall conservatism and political ideology and attitudes toward *türban* in Turkey.

## II. DETERMINING THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE *TÜR BAN* IN TURKEY

Preceding sections of this paper have reported findings on wearing the *türban* by state employed women in the offices of the state agencies and by female students in the university campuses – both of which are considered as acts violating the secular principles of the Republican by the high Courts in Turkey. It has also reported findings concerning the depiction of the policies of the state on the *türban* as a form of pressure on the devout Muslims. Therefore, we have two different sets of attitudes toward the *türban* as dependent variables. The former pertains to the legitimacy of the *türban* issue, and the latter to the *türban* as a symbol of religious discrimination.

## III. MEASURES OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE *TÜR BAN*

Attitudes toward the legitimacy of the *türban* issue are reported in Table 2. The legitimacy of the *türban* is operationalized through

assigning “1” to those who registered a favorable opinion to wearing the *türban* by students on Turkish university campuses and “0” to those who register the opposite unfavorable opinion to the same question. The second dependent variable on the legitimacy of the *türban* is operationalized through assigning “1” to those who registered a favorable opinion to donning of the *türban* by the state employees at work and “0” to those who register the opposite unfavorable opinion to the same question.

The attitudes toward the *türban* as a symbol of religious discrimination are presented in the preceding Table 3 of this paper. As a measure of *türban* as a symbol of religious discrimination, I propose the following measure: Those who indicate the *türban* as the sign of pressure on devout Muslims are assigned the value of “1” and the rest of the sample are assigned the value of “0”.

#### IV.INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Drawing on earlier research on the topic<sup>13</sup> gender, religiosity, urban versus rural residence of the respondent, socio-economic status of the individuals, formal education, and associational membership are incorporated. Religiosity is measured through a factor analysis of several questions about attitudes toward religion, state, and reported practices of worship (see Table 5). The factor solution presented below is used to calculate the corresponding factor scores per respondent and per

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<sup>13</sup> Ali Çarkoğlu, "Religiosity, support for şariat and evaluations of secularist public policies in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.40, No.2, April 2004, 111-136. Nilüfer Göle, "Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey", in Augustus R. Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, (Leiden and New York: 1996): 17-43. Ersin Kalaycioglu, "The Mystery of the Türban: Participation or Revolt?" *Turkish Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, (June 2005): pp. 233-251. Elisabeth Özdalga, "Civil Society and Its Enemies", in Elisabeth Özdalga and Sune Persson (eds.) *Civil Society, Democracy, and the Muslim World*, (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 1997): pp. 73-84.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Pusch, "Stepping into the Public Sphere: The Rise of Islamist and Religious-Conservative Women's Non-Governmental Organizations in Stefanos Yerasimos, et. al. (eds.) *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism: Studies on Political Culture in Contemporary Turkey*, (Istanbul: Ergon, 2000): pp. 475-505.

Table 5: RELIGIOSITY IN TURKEY (FACTOR SCORES) (2007)

<u>Items</u>	<u>Component</u>	
	<u>Religious Belief</u> (faith)	<u>Political Islam</u>
Picture of the Mescid-i Aksa at home	.804	.004
Picture of the Kabe at home	.763	-.100
Picture of Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi at home	.667	.049
Do you desire the establishment of a state that is based upon the Sharia in Turkey?	.073	.353
Self reported Religious identity	.083	.550
Do you consider yourself religious, irrespective of how frequently you worship?	-.123	.677
Participation in public prayer and worship	-.204	.741

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Source: Pre - election national survey of 2007.

dimension of religiosity as reported below (see Table 5). Both measures of religiosity are linearly independent of each other.

The type of residence of respondents at the time of the interview were also incorporated in the study, whereby those residing in a village were assigned the value of 1, small towns 2, cities the value of 3, provincial centers 4, and metropolitan areas 5. Women respondents are assigned the value of 0 and men are assigned 1. Respondents were presented with a seven point scale, shaped in the form of a ladder and were asked to select where they would place themselves on such a scale of socio-economic status (SES). Their self placement scores, which run from 1 as the lowest rung to 7 as the highest rung were used to measure the SES of each respondent.

Formal education has been measured as exposure to formal secular / science education. Those who had religious education were assigned the numeral of -1, with no education - illiterate as 0, those who are literate as 1, elementary school education as 2, middle school education 3, regular high school (*lise*) education as 4, science or Anadolu high school education as 5, and university and beyond as 6. Finally, those

who have reported that they were members of voluntary associations were assigned the numeral value of 1 and those who failed to do so as 0.

## V. DETERMINANTS OF THE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE *TÜR*BAN

*Türban* is a relatively new phenomenon, which has started among the urban or urbanized women of the Turkish cities, and eventually began to be transplanted to the Anatolian hinterland of the country.<sup>14</sup> It gained political notoriety with its introduction to the Faculty of Theology of Ankara University in the late 1960s, though it became a major issue of the Turkish college campuses from the 1980s onwards.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, there are grounds to assume that it is an urban phenomenon. We may therefore suspect that the urban attitudes towards it are more favorable, while rural orientations are neutral or even apathetic.

It has been argued with vehemence by social scientists as well as the pundits and journalists that the *türban* is a modern style,<sup>16</sup> which provides a shield of modesty for women living in conservative social milieu. Thus, by the help of donning the *türban* women can find safe passage out of their homes into the social space of the larger and public environment of the major cities of the country. It is therefore, a symbol of modernity and participation for women who live in conservative social milieu, who are most willing to participate in the larger social life of their surroundings. Therefore, the attitudes of women toward the *türban* are to be different than men. Women may not consider it as a religious symbol, while men would. In short, we should be able to detect some difference

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<sup>14</sup> For the role of proselytizing and proagating for a uniform garb for women see Demet Tezcan, *Bir Çığır Öyküsü / Şule Yüksel Şenler*, (İstanbul, Turkey: Timaş Yayınları, 2007): passim.

<sup>15</sup> For a more thorough analysis of how covering up of the head ears, shoulders, the necks of the women students emerged as a political issue in Turkish society see Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *The Rising Tide of Conservatism in Turkey*, (New York, London: Palgrave – Macmillan, 2009 Forthcoming): Chap. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Nilüfer Göle, "Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey", in Augustus R. Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, (Leiden and New York: 1996): 17-43, and Binnaz Toprak, "Civil Society in Turkey" in Augustus Richard Norton (ed.) *Civil Society in the Middle East*. (Leiden, New York, Köln, E. J. Brill, 1996), pp. 87-118.

between male and female attitudes toward the *türban*, if such a variance in orientations toward the *türban* exists.

We would also expect long exposure to secular and science education would cause the respondents to view *türban* as a sign of religiosity, anti-secular, traditional symbolism, and hence make the respondents come into greater agreement with the High Courts of the country. Though, it is uncertain as to how formal education influences perceptions of wearing the *türban* as religious discrimination.

If *türban* is a religious symbol, and more specifically a symbol of religious right and expression, we should expect to find some covariance between religiosity and attitudes toward the *türban*. However, if it is dissociated with traditionalism and religion, and correlated with modernity, we should not expect to find much of a relationship between religiosity and the *türban*.

Finally, since the very beginning in the 1960s there was wholehearted support of the *türban* wearing women by conservative and Islamist student and other socio-political associations. If *türban* is a symbol of an organized Islamist movement we should be able to find some covariance between political Islamist orientations as well as organizational affiliations and attitudes toward the *türban* in Turkey.

## VI. FINDINGS

The two attitudes toward the *türban* as a legitimacy issue seem to be most closely related with our measure of political Islam. Those who are just faithfully religious (*mütedeyyin* or *mutekit* in Turkish) seem to be less inclined to support wearing the *türban* in state employment and the university campuses (see Tables 6 and 7). The more secular formal education respondents have the less inclined they are to have a favorable attitude toward the legitimacy of the *türban* (see Tables 6 and 7).

There seems to be some evidence indicating that attitudes toward the *türban* as a legitimacy issue resonate favorably in such big cities as provincial centers and the small towns of the country, whereas no such sentiment can be found in the villages or the metropolitan areas. *Türban* does not seem to be attracting much attitudinal support as a dress code in the metropolitan areas in Turkey now. Although it seems to be

Table 6: STUDENT SHOULD BE FREE TO DON THE *TÜRBAN* IF SHE SO WISHES

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Exp(B)</b>
Gender	.111	.323	1.117
Type of Residence		.000	
Village	-.340	.016	.712
<b>Small Town</b>	.405	.054	1.500
<b>Provincial Center</b>	.388	.052	1.473
Metropolitan	-.218	.162	.804
SES		.113	
SES(1)	.179	.725	1.196
SES (2)	-.129	.792	.879
SES 3)	.281	.557	1.324
SES (4)	.316	.505	1.371
SES (5)	.001	.998	1.001
SES (6)	-.071	.892	.931
Formal Education		.005	
IHL(1)	20.084	.998	527558427.213
<b>No education(2)</b>	.598	.043	1.819
Elementary(3)	.409	.242	1.506
Middle School(4)	.146	.460	1.157
High School(5)	.311	.206	1.365
Super / Anadolu / Private High School(6)	-.174	.412	.840
<b>University + (7)</b>	-1.061	.012	.346
<b>Religiosity (Faith)</b>	-.162	.004	.851
<b>Religiosity (Political Islam )</b>	.392	.000	1.480
Constant	.646	.192	1.909

**Note:** 72.2 per cent of the cases correctly estimated.

**Source:** Pre - election national survey of 2007

supported as a legitimacy issue in the small towns and the provincial centers of the country, it does not seem to attract any support as a legitimacy issue in the villages. Gender, SES, and membership in organizations do not seem to make any impact on these attitudes (see Tables 6 and 7). Women and men, rich and the poor seem to think along the same lines on wearing the *türban* by state employees at work and by female students on university campuses. The major finding so far is that



Table 7: STATE EMPLOYEE SHOULD BE FREE TO DON THE *TÜR BAN* IF SHE SO WISHES

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Exp(B)</b>
Gender	.157	.155	1.170
Type of Residence		.001	
Village	-.260	.062	.771
<b>Small Town</b>	<b>.493</b>	<b>.017</b>	<b>1.637</b>
<b>Provincial Center</b>	<b>.373</b>	<b>.054</b>	<b>1.453</b>
Metropolitan	-.084	.590	.920
SES		.141	
SES(1)	-.031	.950	.969
SES (2)	-.235	.632	.791
SES 3)	.186	.698	1.205
SES (4)	.184	.699	1.202
SES (5)	-.134	.782	.874
SES (6)	-.049	.925	.952
Formal Education		.000	
IHL(1)	1.683	.112	5.382
<b>No education(2)</b>	<b>1.064</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>2.897</b>
Elementary(3)	.445	.193	1.560
Middle School(4)	.233	.226	1.262
High School(5)	.282	.237	1.326
Super / Anadolu / Private High School(6)	-.075	.719	.928
<b>University + (7)</b>	<b>-.872</b>	<b>.037</b>	<b>.418</b>
<b>Religiosity (Faith)</b>	<b>-.179</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.836</b>
<b>Religiosity (Political Islam )</b>	<b>.457</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>1.579</b>
Constant	.505	.309	1.657

Note: 71 per cent of the cases correctly estimated.

Source: Pre - election national survey of 2007.

*türban* is relatively closely correlated with politics and religion, in larger cities, but not the metropolitan centers of the country, and covering up matters the most for those inclined towards political Islam and the less exposed to formal secular education in Turkey.

Those who believe that *türban* is the most important indication of religious pressure in Turkey also seem to be coming from the ranks of those who are most distinctly inclined toward political Islam. However,

the overall impact of formal secular education on the attitudes concerning the *türban* as a symbol of religious pressure or discrimination is also consistent with this image, for only those with religious education seem to be registering such an attitude. It seems as if although those who have been exposed to formal secular education tend to believe that the decisions of the High Courts are right, and the high school and university educated do not seem to be of the opinion that *türban* is a sign of discrimination. Except for the provincial centers, where most support for the turban issue seems to reside, the place of residence of respondents, gender, SES, organizational membership or religiosity as faith seem not to have any statistically significant impact on the attitudes toward the *türban* as an indication of political pressure.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Attitudes toward the *türban* constitute a persisting complexity in Turkish politics. It is established through our surveys that *türban* and *hicab* are not considered to be a problem area that requires urgent solution in the eyes of the voting age public in Turkey. However, huge and increasing majorities tend to think that there should be much more tolerance toward the donning of the *türban* than is legally permissible. Large majorities of the Turkish adult public seem to argue that the High Court decisions that render *türban* wearing by state employees and university students as unconstitutional are either illegitimate or just unacceptable. However, a large majority of the same population do not seem to consider that *türban-wearing* women are under pressure. Correspondingly, we have no evidence that the majority of voting age adults in Turkey consider the *türban* issue as one of the most important problems of the country.

The preceding data analysis unearths that the public attitudes toward the *türban* are mainly determined by religiosity and formal education, and to a lesser extent attitudes toward the *türban* resonate well among those voters who reside in the larger city centers of the provinces. Those who register opinions toward the *türban* are neither peasants, and nor are they the residents of the metropolitan areas. *Türban* seems to be an issue of the provincial centers and of the small town folks

Table 8: *TÜR*BAN IS A SYMBOL OF RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION (PRESSURE)

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Exp(B)</b>
Gender	-.222	.080	.801
Type of Residence		.333	
Village	.147	.373	1.158
Small Town	.121	.582	1.129
<b>Provincial Center</b>	<b>.421</b>	<b>.033</b>	<b>1.523</b>
Metropolitan	.105	.564	1.110
SES		.002	
SES(1)	.545	.295	1.725
SES (2)	-.433	.404	.649
SES 3)	-.354	.479	.702
SES (4)	-.203	.680	.817
SES (5)	-.454	.371	.635
SES (6)	-.304	.589	.738
Formal Education		.000	
<b>IHL(1)</b>	<b>1.126</b>	<b>.045</b>	<b>3.082</b>
<b>No education(2)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.233</b>
	<b>1.456</b>		
<b>Elementary(3)</b>	<b>-.930</b>	<b>.023</b>	<b>.394</b>
<b>Middle School(4)</b>	<b>-.498</b>	<b>.021</b>	<b>.607</b>
High School(5)	-.280	.287	.756
Super / Anadolu / Private High School(6)	-.048	.836	.953
University + (7)	-.924	.149	.397
Religiosity (Faith)	-.052	.397	.950
<b>Religiosity (Political Islam )</b>	<b>.375</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>1.455</b>
Constant	-.847	.103	.429

Note: 81 per cent of the cases correctly estimated.

Source: Pre - election national survey of 2007.

in Turkey. The single most important variable that contributes to favorable attitudes toward the *türban* is a form of religiosity, which I have called political Islam in this paper (see Tables 6 – 8). Political Islamism, which also includes demands for the establishment of rule according to *Sharia* (*Şer'î*) law in Turkey, seems to be singularly related to all types of attitudes toward the *türban*. Traditional religiosity plays a humble role relative to political Islamism, and formal education in

secular institutions also seems to curb such a favorable or relaxed attitude toward the *türban* in Turkey.

Political Islam also seems to function as the source of thinking that the actions to curb the *türban* are a form of pressure or discrimination against the female believers. Formal education seems to have a similar negative impact on that form of thinking as well. Those with some religious education seem to be most inclined to suggest that the *türban* donning women are discriminated against. It also seems as if similar *türban* related attitudes are more prevalent among the provincial city centers of the country. In sum, political Islamic value orientation of the individual voters seems to emerge as the primary source that determines attitudes toward the *türban* issue.

The findings of this paper, seem to coincide with the earlier findings that use similar data and statistical tests<sup>17</sup> that attitudes toward the *türban* issue in Turkey are deeply influenced by religiosity, and most specifically about Şer'i rule and related Islamism. However, religiosity is not the only source that fully explains those attitudes although it seems to be their most important or primary source or determinant. Formal education also seems to play some role though it is not comparable with religiosity, and residence in larger cities also seem to create a favorable attitude toward *türban* donning in state employment and university campuses.

We have not been able to find any empirical evidence that the attitudes toward the *türban* differ across different levels of SES. *Türban* emerged as an attire of the urban or urbanizing women in the 1960s and gained more notoriety since the 1980s. In fact, the attitudes toward it seem to be most favorable among the inhabitants not of the metropolitan areas but of the bigger cities of the country. Civic activism, in the form of membership in voluntary associations fails to influence the attitudes of the voters toward the *türban* in Turkey one way or the other. Men and women seem to be predisposed equally for or against the *türban*. This does not support the claim that men and women hold different attitudes

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<sup>17</sup> Ersin Kalaycioglu, "The Mystery of the *Türban*: Participation or Revolt?" *Turkish Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, (June 2005): pp. 233-251.

toward the *türban*, whereby women's attitudes are more instrumental to the issue than those of the more religious, ideological or conservative men.

## APPENDIX

### The Study's Survey Sample

The data for this study are collected in a national field survey of voter attitudes, values, beliefs, orientations, and reported behavior concerning party preferences during the July 22, 2007 general elections in Turkey. Our sampling procedure took target sample size as 2000. First, Turkish Statistical Institute's (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu-TUIK) NUT-1 regions are adopted and the target sample was distributed according to each region's share of urban and rural population according to registered voter records for 2002 election. We used TUIK's block data and decided to take the 200 blocks of equal size. We targeted to reach 10 voters from each block. We applied probability proportionate to population size (PPS) principle in selecting neighborhood and villages from each TUIK-1 region of urban and rural localities. All neighborhoods and villages are separated into NUT-1 regions and PPS selection was applied to select neighborhoods and villages.

For every one of these blocks we also picked a randomly selected replacement in accordance with PPS for cases where the 10 planned interviews could not be completed in the primary selected neighborhood or village. From each of these neighborhoods block addresses are obtained from TUIK. 10 addresses from each neighborhood were given to the fieldworkers and all addresses were asked to be reached. When 10 interviews could not be completed after two visits to each address the remaining interviews were completed from the replacement block via the same procedure. In rural areas the selected villages were visited and addresses were obtained from the village headman (*muhtar*). If 10 interviews from a village cannot be completed its replacement village was visited and the same procedure was applied. In selecting the

individual to be interviewed from each household an alphabetical list of all residents above the age of 18 was first formed. Then the alphabetically first name was selected for interview. If this individual was not available for interview in the household a second individual in the same alphabetical order was selected for interview. Individuals who were replacements of the first selection were noted in the dataset for tests of significant difference.

In order to take account of cancellations after the fieldwork controls at least two interviews were conducted from the replacement lists from each urban block and village. The surveys were conducted in the month before the general elections, in the heat of the election campaign period, when voter interest in political parties, candidates and political issues of the day was at a peak. A total of 2018 prospective voters were interviewed at their households, and the resulting sampling error was plus/minus 2.3%.

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