

Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the veiling issue in Turkey. The first theoretical part is trying to map out the issues with an emphasis on the diverse interpretations and perceptions of the scarf / hijab. The work perceives the scarf as a symbol which represents more than just the Islamic religion. These multiple interpretations were caused primarily by the historical development of the country, especially the specific modernization process of Turkey which has been linked to the process of westernization. Mainly because of this the headscarf was for many years regarded as something obsolete, unfashionable. Many people perceived the scarf as something that does not belong in modern Turkey. This situation had affect the veilling issue a lot. Women were prohibited by law to wear a scarf in public areas. For this reason the work shows this issue also in the historical context which goes back to the 19th century – to the Ottoman Empire. The second part comprises the empirical part is devoted to qualitative research. For the purpose of this work interviews with Turkish university students were carried out which focused on their motivation of covering or not covering and other phenomena associated with this topic. Interviews were conducted both with veiled, and with unveiled girls because of the possibility to compare their statements about regarding this issue. Subsequently, the interviews were analyzed using Grounded Theory, which is the method that works with qualitative data.

Key words: headscarf, hijab, Islam, modernization, Turkey, veil, Westernization