

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

VEILING AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT:
RELIGIOUS VALUES, SOCIAL NORMS, AND
INTEGRATION OF VEILED STUDENTS

by
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for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies
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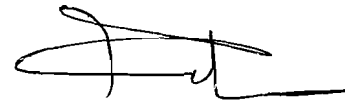
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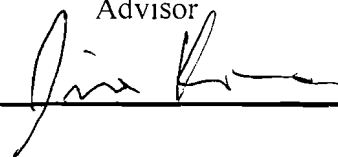
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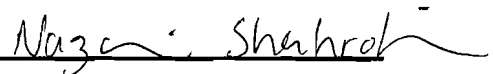
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Veiling at the American University of Beirut: Religious Values, Social Norms, and Integration of Veiled Students.

This study traces the history of the veil among Muslim female students at the American University of Beirut. Veiling on AUB campus has been in increase since the 1960s, and has reached its peak in the last few years. Nevertheless, veiled students are still a minority on campus. The increase in the number of veiled students is juxtaposed with the propositions of the institution's third president, and the first after it was renamed from the Syrian Protestant College to the American University of Beirut, Bayard Dodge. In Dodge's predictions, the exposure of Muslim youth to western liberal experiences would lead them to restraint Islam to their religion of birth and not of practice. Interestingly, he also extensively addressed the dress code of women suggesting that by unveiling Muslim women would reach modernity.

The study questions the correlation between religiosity and the veil, and the validity of the hypothesis that the degree of religiosity changes with the form of the veil worn. Three prevalent veiling forms at AUB (classic, mild, and fashionable) were identified. Interviews with twenty veiled interviewees are compared to other nineteen interviews with non-veiled females and males belonging to different religions. The analysis serves in comparing the different social norms, religious exposure, and dress code choices that interviewees adhere to. Most importantly, the larger question of the degree of integration of the veiled students at AUB is addressed, in light of the missionary history of the institution and Dodge's addresses, as well as the values attached to the veil in western liberal circumstances.

Six major findings are concluded in the study: 1) a correlation between religiosity and the veil, 2) a further correlation between the degree of religiosity and the form of the veil, 3) restraint in the dress code and avoidance of sharp and bright colors by veiled interviewees, 4) higher extent of participation in university activities and events by non-veiled females and males is noticed, 5) veiled females selectively surround themselves with a circle of friends from similar socio-religious atmosphere, and lastly, 6) many veiled students perceive that AUB is either an unreligious or anti-religious space, and have shared examples that lead them to perceive so.

Keywords: Muslim women, liberal education, missionaries, modernism, religious values, seclusion, veil, religiosity.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

“Take the work of this American College at Beirut, as one example among many. A visit [to the campus], I say, establishes the irrefutable conviction that here has been created ‘a psychological climate’ from whose influence no student can escape. He is not, indeed, always aware of the changes in himself. With perfect sincerity he would probably deny that he is being affected so powerfully by his environment. The fruitage of this seed may not come till long after he has left the College campus. But a change is being wrought...”

-Howard Bliss, the modern missionary (Penrose, 1970: 192-193)

I wore the veil at the age of 10, when I was in sixth grade. I was just like any other girl in the family and in the classroom. On that day, the mid of Sha’aban month in the Lunar Muslim year, me and another classmate came wearing the veil. I attended an Islamic school, coming from a religious conservative family. Veiling was the expected custom for the youngest of seven veiled sisters. Yet, wearing the veil was a voluntary and a personal choice. Neither my parents nor my school instructors compelled me to take this step. When I decided to wear a long topcoat just two years after veiling, my parents hesitated. They thought I was still young for such a step. In my view, however, I was practicing what I was learning is the most virtuous and best for me as a Muslim woman.

I was, as it were, living inside my own box, not only by surrounding myself with people from the same orientations, but also by letting my introvert personality dominate my life. I never had a friend as a child or as a teenager. I recall that I was only approached if my classmates wanted to ask the first ranked student in class a study-related question. The prevailing view in school was the celebration of love and solidarity. Somehow, I never felt them.

My disappointment at school made me insist upon my parents to change my school. That was very unconventional, since my sisters were successfully pursuing their high school degrees there. My insistence led to a change, but not a remarkable one. The decision was to accept my request to change my school, but that the new school was another branch of the initial one. At the new branch, classes were mixed but the veil was a mandatory part of the custom. There were only four unveiled students who used to wear it and then drop it by the end of the school day.

Upon finishing grade 10, my parents were considering enrolling me in a nearer school, and I was very determined not to return to the older one. My parents and I finally agreed to seek admission into a secular private school, which is sought by relatively wealthier Sunni residents of Beirut. I was the first among my sisters to attend a secular high school; my younger brother is currently completing his studies there. My new school introduced me to new people, of very different backgrounds, many diverse opinions, and more religiously liberal beliefs. The most pious males in classroom ordinarily shook hands with their female friends. The prayer room was fairly small and almost empty. The only four veiled fellows questioned my conservatism. Although I dressed in the official school uniform, pants and a chemise, my conservatism showed in many acts and attributes I made. I never put eyeliner on my eyes as majority of the female students did by the end of the school day. I made sure to pray in the small almost empty room, and –most obviously- never fixed my eyebrows at the coiffure. The time I spent at school, however, never bothered me; I was learning a lot from these new surroundings even though I did not make friends. The most uncomfortable and awkward times for me were those when we went trips and my classmates danced to popular songs. That was not only a matter of my conservative background; it was also due to my personal preferences of more moderate choices. The first trip in my new school was to the screening of a documentary film, that turned out to be sexually explicit and intended to a more mature audience. It happened to be, as well, the first time I go to a cinema.

In fall 2006, I started my first semester at the Lebanese American University, which has a relatively similar history as the American University of Beirut and is

considered its competitor. In my first semesters there, I kept on wearing the long jilbab, but gradually I shifted to skirts and, by the time I graduated, to pants and long blouses. In my social sciences courses, I was exposed to many other religions and started to question the things I have always taken for granted. My participation in university extracurricular activities and, to a lesser extent, in the university's choral, made me further rethink my dress choices. Upon finishing my undergraduate degree, my instructor selected me to travel to do a paid internship at a European Union entity. It was a scholarship awarded on a yearly basis to one student in the journalism program. I was then engaged and suggested to delay my wedding for a while so I go. Unfortunately, I was not allowed to travel by myself at such a young age to a non-Arab country and for a relatively long period of time.

Upon admission to the sociology program at the American University of Beirut, I was so determined to transfer to media studies soon as the program officially inaugurates. Yet, attending few sociology courses made me realize how much I need sociology to understand what I was going through and the society around me. My interest in doing a research related to the veil is a reflection of my interest in understanding myself and in investigating how similar or dissimilar the stories of young ladies like me may be. Few months after I started reading for my thesis, one of my older sisters informed me of her decision to unveil soon as she was about to move to the United States a while later. That was a big shock to me, and to my other sisters. My sister, Malak, who received a medical degree from AUB, did not only give up on her veil. She was much upset by the prevalence of veiling, especially in the Muslim world. For her, Islam is the religion she was born to, but a basic set of moral values is what she identifies with today. My parents were very disappointed to hear my sister's decision, but they welcomed her home for a visit and are considering to go visit her soon. When my aunt heard of Malak's decision she asked me, "Is it true that the American University disrupts the religious morals of its medicine students?" I said, "Who said that? Students in social sciences are more prone to such a change."

On a personal level, this research is an attempt to understand what has happened to me and to my sisters, and why the veil, which I always unquestionably wore, is my

current everyday challenge. That I am hiding my outmost beauty, my hair, but still want to be beautiful, is comparable to the point that I am in a liberal institution but do not feel free enough. The veil makes me comfortable, but the meaning attached to it and the experiences I have passed through in light of my veil do not.

On a wider level, I am trying to investigate what the veil means in a liberal Western institution like AUB. The two concepts sound contradictory for many people in Lebanon, who assume a correlation between veil and conservatism, and it is very important to find out how students within AUB negotiate different sets of values. The research is also concerned in finding how students are reconciling these values, and what are they taking from each of the two poles, liberalism and conservatism.

These values, and the meanings attached to the veil are changeable and evolved through history. I will be particularly interested in the writings of the third president Bayard Dodge (1923-1948). Dodge addressed the dress code of women in the region, and considered modernization attained when women unveil. Given the increasing number of veiled students on campus, is the institution today adhered to the modernization mission its third president, Bayard Dodge, announced?

The research will present the veil within the American University of Beirut in light of symbolic interactionism theory. By questioning the background of the students and their closer social circles, the manifest appearance and latent beliefs and behaviors can be further analyzed.

This thesis is composed of eight chapters, and a conclusion. The second chapter addresses the methodology adopted to categorize the veiled students at the university, and how these interviewees were approached. Chapter three discusses the theoretical approach that is used in the study, namely symbolic interactionism.

Basic literature review on the veil in general is the subject of chapter four. The veil at the American University, however, is not discussed until the end of chapter five.

After briefly recalling the first three presidents of the institution, excerpts from the writings of the third president Bayard Dodge are introduced in chapter five.

Chapters six and seven include respectively the analysis of the manifest and latent features accompanied with veiling. The qualitative analysis is based on the interviews done with veiled students. Chapter eight compares the findings of the previous two chapters with the answers of non-veiled females and male students interviewed.

Finally, chapter nine sums up the study and questions the larger themes of religiosity, public piety, social inclusion, and Islam's reconciliation to modernity.

Chapter II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study builds on the juxtaposition of the historical background of the American University of Beirut and the increase of veiled students on campus. The study builds on two main modes of methodological inquiry, qualitative and quantitative.

A. Qualitative Research

The initial aim of the study was to base its findings on interviews with a non-representative sample of fifty AUB students, including Muslims and non-Muslims, males and females. The topic, veil, may not be directly related to the daily life of males, non-Muslim, and non-veiled Muslim students. Yet, these interviews allow for a comparison between the latent values and manifest behaviors among the different categories. The veil, as it can be observed, is not a monolithic entity on campus. As elsewhere, it appears in many shapes; hence, it serves a variety of functions. We have been able to identify three different categories of veil, in addition to two non-veiled categories on campus considered in this study:

1) Classically veiled

This category includes veiled females who are classically veiled, or, more concretely, who wear long topcoats rather than skirts or pants. The term ‘classical’ is used as a description of the physical appearance of the veiled females. This does not necessarily mean that they are traditional or conservative in their beliefs and behaviors. Interestingly, Khalaf (1987: 17-18) notes,

“The fact that an agency is traditional in form or structure does not imply that it must espouse traditional values, or that it must devote itself exclusively to passing on sacred levels or preserving traditional lore and skills. Conversely, a seemingly modern institution, or exposure to modern values and practices, is no guarantee that man will undergo a drastic transformation in his spirit and that he will, after all, acquire modern life styles.”

The initial aim of the study was to interview classically veiled students, divided evenly between the two major Muslim sects in Lebanon, Sunni and Shia. For the Sunni, the standard was a topcoat and a veil. While for the Shia, the standard was a black gown *abaya*. The total numbers of conducted interviews in this category is six.

2) Mildly veiled

This category includes veiled females who cover their hair and necks, but wear skirts and/or pants rather than topcoats. The majority of veiled students at the American University of Beirut fit into this category (94%).

Ten interviews were conducted in this category, divided equally between Sunni and Shia female students. An 11th non-veiled student who used to wear the veil mildly was also interviewed.

3) Fashionably veiled

The initial study mentioned a third category, fashionable, referring to females who cover only their hair, without hiding their necks or ears. The number of students who fit into this category was minimal. More concretely, only 2% of the veiled photographed students in volume 37 of the yearbook fit into the category.

Going to the fieldwork I realized that some specifications of the fashionable category should be modified. Instead of using the shown neck as a standard for the fashionable veil, this was been substituted by covering the neck but putting a considerable amount of makeup.

Two unveiled students who used to wear the veil fashionably were interviewed as well as a non-AUB student who veils fashionably. The total number of students interviewed in this category is three.

4) Males

Nine males, from four different religious groups (Christians, Muslim Shia, Sunni, and Druze), were interviewed on their perceptions of fellow veiled students, as

well as their behaviors when introduced to one, i.e., if they shake hands, communicate as comfortably, etc.

5) Non-veiled females

Ten non-veiled females, from four different religious groups (Christians, Muslim Shia, Sunni, and Druze) were interviewed. The questions explore their perceptions of their fellow veiled students, and inquire about their social conduct and physical appearance. This allows for a further comparison between the lifestyles of the veiled and non-veiled female AUB students.

1. Recruitment criteria

The 39 interviewees were approached using personal contact and snowballing as the two recruiting criteria. In addition, two student clubs, the Insight Club and the Cultural Club of the South, were contacted to ask whether any of their members is interested in taking part in the study. The reason behind contacting these two specific clubs is that they are known to be the place for the veiled students on campus for the Sunni and Shia respectively.

2. Interview process

Two in-depth interview formats were developed, one for the veiled interviewees, and another for the non-veiled. The interviews addressed the personal attributes of the interviewees, their educational background and religious background, dress code choices, and perceptions of their experiences at AUB (see Appendices A & B). Generally, interviews aimed to explore how the students on the one hand are balancing between their values and those of the university, and how on the other hand their exposure at the university is affecting their values. This requires studying how students think and act on two levels: the manifest; the apparent and stated, and the latent features; the unintended, covert, or hidden.

As the forthcoming chapters will show, the analysis of the data was based on the categorization of interview questions on whether they tackle the latent or the manifest. Questions related to personal, educational, and religious attributes, as well as dress code

and social activities the interviewee engages in account to manifest attributes. On the other hand, perceptions of the American university of Beirut, to the veil, and to the effect of liberal education on one's value account to the latent features. It is worth to note that the analysis only classifies the interviewees based on the sample they belong to, (the non-veiled or veiled sample), and on the form of their veil in case they belong to the latter. The sect of the interviewees is disregarded, given that there is no substantial difference between the findings on shi'a and sunni veiled interviewees.

B. Quantitative Research

Copies of AUB Yearbook were employed to identify and trace the incidence of veiling throughout the past five decades. In noting the trend, an attempt was made to identify the different types of veil in increase- namely; the classic, the mild, and the fashionable. Variations in major and class were also noted (see Appendix C). It is to be noted, however, that this method does not accurately document the number of veiled students at AUB, because there have been years where the yearbook was not published, and there is a possibility that not all students are photographed in the yearbook. Yet, these numbers are still reflective of the increase in veiled students throughout different faculties.

Chapter III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As mentioned earlier, the study aims to explore the dichotomy of the veil at a Western liberal institution. This requires investigating micro sociological information about the interviewees, including their personal history, their perceptions of the veil and of the western education offered at AUB. The veil is a particular experience for each individual. My veiling experience is very different the experiences of my sisters or friends. Even if two individuals are raised in similar circumstances, veiling remains an individualized experience. This is why social interactionism is the guiding theory for this study, because it considers the micro society in which the individual lives in. Moreover, social interactionism stresses the activity, not passivity, of the individual, without denying the role that social norms and customs have in modifying the identity and behavior of the individual. Yet, it is the personal interpretation of these norms and customs that stimulate the individual to react in a specific way, and the different interpretation of these same customs by another individual that makes him or her react in a totally different way.

As Blumer puts it, “the peculiarity [of social interactionism] consists in the fact that human beings interpret or define each other’s actions instead of merely reacting to each other’s actions” (Blumer, 1969: 79). In what follows we focus on the approaches of three sociologists belonging to the social interactionism thought and introduce them in light of the topic under study.

A. Mead’s Theory of the Self

Mead’s *Mind, Self, and Society* explains his theory of the self, which is on the basis of symbolic interactionism. The self for Mead is not a passive being or an object that responds in an expected way to specific outer variables. Rather, the self is an active process operating consciously and communicating with itself regularly (Morrione, 2004: 65). Ahead of the dyadic and triadic interactions with the people, the person

experiences self-interaction whereby he interprets situations for him or herself and decides on specific actions. Self-interactions, or internal conversations, “are the means by which human beings take things into account and organize themselves for action” (Wallace & Wolf, 1999: 200). The daily life experiences affect our future actions, and this self-interaction affects our daily life activities in turn,

“the human act is formed through self-interaction, in the course of which the actor may note and assess any feature of the situation, or any feature of his involvement in the act...the subjection of the act to the process of self-interaction imparts a career to the act-the act may be stopped, restrained, abandoned, resurrected, postponed, intensified, concealed, transformed, or redirected.” (Wallace & Wolf, 1999: 201).

Under symbolic interactionism, objects are different than things. As a thing, the veil is a piece of cloth, but as an object, it may be a sign of religiosity, a tool of empowerment, or a gesture of submission. The object, be it the veil or any other object, cannot have a fixed meaning, even if it is as plain as a chair or a lamp. Rather, the meaning of any object is that designated to it by the individual after internally communicating with oneself. “No object exists for a person except in terms of a meaning it has for the person” (Morrione, 2004:42). Here, it is possible to have similar or close meanings to some object in specific social circumstances. Meanwhile, the veil in a Muslim religious village may mean piety and religiosity of the women. In non-Muslim societies it may, however, be meaningless or mean ignorance or submissiveness.

In the context of this study, the dress code choices of the interviewees may be perceived in light of the acts proposed by Mead. As the analysis will show, some interviewees mentioned an intention to postpone wearing the veil until they graduate from AUB. Others mentioned that they decided to wear the veil concurrently with their admission fearing that if they do not, they might never do so in the future.

An interesting component of Mead’s theory is his view that the self cannot exist without a primary community, or what he conceptually labeled ‘generalized other’. From the generalized other, the person realizes the roles and conducts assigned to every individual in the society, and thus can deduce how he or she as an individual should act. Considering that many of the veiled interviewees wore their veils at an early age (8-12

years), the generalized other is reflective of the primary communities that the veiled females were first exposed to, whether religious families or schools. This is also related to Cooley's 'looking-glass self' as we will discuss later on.

Another important aspect of Mead is the notion of 'gesture', which is a symbol that has a common meaning for the community. In Mead's word, "gestures are significant symbols because they have the same meaning for all individual members of a given society or social group; i.e., they respectively arouse the same attitudes in the individuals making them that they arouse in the individuals responding to them." (Wallace & Wolf, 1999: 203). Gestures are symbols, and thus stimulate the receiver to respond in a specific way. For instance, the veil is a gesture in our society and can stimulate males to respond by not shaking hands when introduced to a veiled female. If, however, the veiled female is in another social setting where women veil for tribal or medical reasons, the meaning of the same gesture would be different.

Mead considers that interactions take place between gestures not acts, and this explains the importance of gesture in human interactions. Given that some gestures are a symbol for one thing in a given social context, acts take place accordingly (Morrione, 2004: 18-19).

B. Blumer's Three Premises of Interpretation

Blumer asserted the basic ideas of Mead, and addressed the interpretation process that individuals experience as part of internal conversations to explain situations,

"In Blumer's estimation interaction involves something more than simple stimulus-response. Blumer explains that symbolic interactionism inserts a middle term into the stimulus-response couplet so that it becomes stimulus-interpretation-response." (Wallace & Wolf, 1999: 206)

Blumer explains that gestures are very essential in the interpretation process, and their varieties along societies. Starting from this, he proposes three basic premises that guide the interpretation process and thus affect the action of the individual:

- 1) Individuals act on things based on the meanings they attach to these things

- 2) Social interactions dictate the meanings of the things in a given social context
- 3) The interpretation of the individual to the meaning of these things modify his or her action

For example, in a Muslim religious conservative setting, the veil is a symbol of modesty and religiosity. The separation of men and women in special occasions, the endorsement of women to keep their voices low and not to look at men in the eye, is examples of the social interactions that attach the veil to this meaning of modesty and religiosity.

At the same time, not every female amongst veiled women may confirm to this socio-religious position she is placed within by her generalized other. Here comes the interactive role, versus the social role, where the individual engages in covert self-interaction, and interprets for herself that the veil may be a symbol of isolation or submission rather than modesty or religiosity. Blumer asserted the role of ‘interactive roles’, although he admitted that ‘social roles’ do exist but do not define what line of action the individual takes (Wallace & Wolf, 1999: 212).

Social interactionism did not deny the presence of social structure and social systems. However, they asserted that people do not act accordingly to social systems, but rather in response to specific situations (Blumer, 1969: 84). Blumer sees social and cultural structures as straitjackets that are present but do not reflect the interpretation process that each individual experiences internally. This is why people from similar sociocultural background may end up acting in totally different ways and live under very different circumstances.

C. Cooley’s Looking-Glass Self

Cooley’s theory of individual and social behavior, including his concept of ‘looking-glass self’ is very interesting in the context of this study. Cooley speaks of a triadic relationship between the primary group, the ‘human nature’, and the ‘looking-glass self’. What is meant by ‘primary group’, as explained earlier, is the first group that the individual gets in contact with; the one which is “fundamental in forming the social nature of the ideals of the individual” (Meltzer et al., 1975: 10). Given that, the

individual turns out to identify with this group as his or her own larger social group. By human nature, Cooley classified three levels related to the nature of the individual. The first and second levels are biological and heredity related. The third level, however, is more like the social nature, which Cooley focused on extensively in his writings.

The social nature is the link between the primary group and the ‘looking-glass self’, since it is changeable and reflects the social changes that the individual passes through as life progress. The primary group of the individual is not changeable, for it is the first social group he/she experience life through at birth. The set of social interactions that the individual experiences affect their interpretation of the self and of the society’s interpretation of them, and this is where the concept of ‘looking-glass self’ emerges. The person thus sees him or herself through the eyes of the society, and the change of the social surrounding of the individual may greatly affect his/her self-perception.

In Cooley’s perspective, the primary group and social groups that the individual is part of, have a role in developing his or her self-image, and in modifying the identity of the individual. Meltzer et al. (1975: 13) note in this regard,

“The identity is obtained when the child becomes aware of the fact that the picture of who he/she is reflects the imaginations of others concerning him/her. Thus, as with the bonds of the social order, the self exists in the minds of the members of society and, for Cooley, constitutes an ‘imaginative fact’.”

Like Mead and other sociologists who share similar perspectives, Cooley suggested that the individual develops his or her awareness of the self based on the individual’s awareness of the other selves at the first place. To be more concrete, it is based on the others’ judgment of what is perceived as good or bad in the surrounding community that affects what the child will develop to perceive as good or bad. If a small girl sees that all her aunts and teachers are veiled, and that those who veil are applauded and appreciated in her surroundings, she will turn out to believe that her self will be more worthy or appreciated if she veils. If this same child moves to a non-religious society as she grows up, she might feel as an intruder in her new society if she is the only veiled person, and if she heard comments appreciating freer women. But, again, this does not mean that she will unveil due to these comments, for she may

interpret them in very different ways, and may not necessarily choose to change her attitude or reconcile to the new society.

D. Merton's deviance theory

Another important sociological theory that may help us explain the veiling phenomena is Merton's deviance theory and his typology of modes of adaptation to culturally set goals with the available institutional means to achieve them. Interestingly, the cultural goals and institutional means of religious groups in Lebanon are very different from those of secular liberal education institutions. This is why the interpretation of individuals of the societal group that they identify with is important in what mode of adaptation they refer to.

The table below summarizes the basics of Merton's theory as stated by Clinard (1964: 16). In what follows we explain each mode in light of this study:

Table 3.1: Different modes of adaptation proposed by Merton

Mode of adaptation	Cultural goals	Institutional means
Conformity	Accepted	Accepted
Innovation	Accepted	Rejected
Ritualism	Rejected	Accepted
Retreatism	Rejected	Rejected
Rebellion	Rejected	Rejected

1) Conformity:

In the conformity mode, both the cultural goals set and the institutional means utilized in the society to achieve these goals are accepted and adapted by the individual. Let us assume that the cultural goal is to preserve the modesty and seclusion of the two sexes, and the veil is the mean set by the religious group to achieve this goal. If the female believed in this goal, and believed that the veil is the right mean to achieve it, then this is conformity.

2) Innovation:

In the innovation mode, the individual subscribes to the cultural goals set by the society, but does not perceive the institutional means as suitable ones to achieve these

specific goals. Thus, the individual innovates new means to do so. To use our earlier example, the female may adopt modesty and seclusion of sexes as goals, but does not think that the veil is helpful in achieving these goals. She innovates new means to do so, by refusing to veil and adopting the new means that she believes are more suitable, like not raising her voice in public places, or not wearing bright colors. Or she might rearrange the veil and convert it into a more fashionable entity.

3) Ritualism:

The ritualism adaptation mode is when the individual does not agree to the set cultural goals, but still conforms to the available means. Here, in light of our example, the female does not believe that modesty and seclusion of the two sexes are cherished and worthy goals. Yet, she veils because this is what the society around expects of her. The veil here becomes a ritual. Many of the females who choose to unveil pass through this ritualism phase in the months where they decide to unveil in their own self-interactions, but still wear it until a specific time. To refer back to the introduction of this study, my sister continued to wear the veil until she moved to the United States, though she does not believe it is righteous. Her choice of veiling in front of her religious primary group is categorized under the ritualism mode of adaptation.

4) Retreatism:

In retreatism, the individual neither adopts the cultural goals nor the institutionalized means. Rather, “[the individual] adopts escape mechanisms as defeatism, quietism, and retreatism.” (Clinard, 1964: 21). Generally, the individual who adapts to this mode suffers internally, and is considered non-productive in the society, unlike those who adapt to the other modes. Interestingly, this could apply to some non-veiled females or those who removed their veils, because they did not believe in this cultural goal or cherished the institutional expectation of wearing it.

5) Rebellion:

Under rebellion, the individual rejects the set cultural goals and the means to achieve these goals altogether. However, unlike retreatism, the individual does not retreat and struggle privately, but rather rebels trying to set new cultural goals and to

find the means to achieve these new goals. The individual does not only refuse to wear the veil but actively aims to mobilize the public opinion against veiling. The difference between retreatism and rebellion, though both reject the cultural goals and institutional means, is that those who rebel work actively to change the goals and/or the means, while those who retreat choose to passively reject them.

E. Conclusion

Adopting the symbolic interactionism thought in addition to Merton's theory allows us to study veiling in its diverse forms. Each person has their own interpretation of religion, of means to apply religion, and of the goals of the social group they identify with, etc. Although a group of females may look the same on the manifest level, their mode of adaptation may be different.

Moreover, education may be perceived as the same means to achieve different cultural goals. By educating my sister at AUB, my parents aimed to make a Muslim veiled role-model doctor. At the same time, this same education, as mentioned in the mission statement of the institution, aims to make individuals "committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity, civic responsibility, and leadership" (AUB: Mission Statement, n.d., para. 1).

The liberal education that young youth are receiving is no more seen as the importation of Western values, but rather as an inspiration for modification of the East own culture and enhancement to it. Khalaf interestingly quotes Fernea in this regard,

"No longer is the example of the West seen as the answer to problems of the Middle East...People are attempting to improve their lives through indigenous traditions and customs; through the dominant religion of the area, Islam; and through their own kinship and family patterns. They are improvising and combining the new and the old, adapting, changing, building, trying to create their own form of independence." (Khalaf, 1987: 9)

The next chapters will focus on the literature on veil and the history of veiling at the university, before presenting the analysis, which highlights the interpretations of the interviewees to their identity and their choice of veiling or non-veiling.

Chapter IV

SOCIO-HISTORICAL DISCOURSES ON THE VEIL

The veil, which constitutes a small piece of cloth, has dozens of names, comes in various shapes and colors, and has been a subject for hundreds of studies for decades. There have been many discourses analyzing the meaning of the veil, either justifying it as an empowerment tool in some circumstances, or documenting how limiting it can be for women in some others.

The veil which this research is addressing, is equated with the Arabic term ‘hijab’, stemming in turn from the verb ‘*hajaba*’, literally meaning to block or to conceal. Different Quranic verses refer to the veil as the suitable dress for Muslim women, and a dress code that makes the women of the prophet unidentifiable, and, thus, protected. Of the clearest verses on the veil is that in Surat Al-Nour, verse 31:

“And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male attendants free of sexual desires. Or small children who have no carnal knowledge of women; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! Turn ye all together towards Allah in repentance that ye may be successful.”
(The Holy Quran, 1410 AH: 1012-1013)

This chapter will trace the different religious, social, and cultural meanings attached to the veil in different socio-historical contexts. Moreover, the different styles of veiling and the notion of Muslim fashion that are increasing today are briefly tackled. The status of Lebanese women and the assumed correlation between education and unveiling are also addressed.

A. Questioning the veil

Religious authorities have accepted the veil for decades as an essential religious rite. Recently, however, emergent interpretations are oriented otherwise. In 2012, a thesis dissertation at Al Azhar in Egypt, a leading worldwide Muslim authority, concluded that the veil is not a religious rite (Saidi, 2012). The dissertation perceived that considering the veil as a religious rite is a literal adoption of the text and not the true interpretation of it (Saidi, 2012).

In an alternative interpretation to the Quranic text, Mohamad Shahrur (2000: 355) also proposed that the veil is not a religious rite. Rather, it is a cultural artifact adopted in specific social context, and thus changes with social change. It is noticeable here that the veil was present ahead of Islam, and it was not a religious obligation in the prophet's time until the fifth year of Islam (Golley, 2004: 524). Even the prophet's granddaughter, Sukayna, was of the earliest women who discarded the veil (Golley, 2004: 527).

Due to imposing the veil on Muslim women at a young age among many Muslim communities, the veil has been radically perceived as a dress code "that covered not only their bodies but also their minds" (Shaaban, 1995: 65). Fatima Mernissi (1987: 89-90) considered the veil an essential artifact of a Muslim social order, for it greatly affects male-female relations and to some extent control the women in the society. On the other hand, the veil, and in many Gulf countries the long black *abaya*, have been linked to chastity, honor, and respectfulness (Shaaban, 1995: 65).

In rural Lebanon, the reputation and values of different families were constructed based on their women (El-Guindi, 1999: 88). Describing modern Lebanese women back in 1957, Marie Karam Khayat and Margaret Clark Keatinge (1957: 131) wrote,

"She [modern Lebanese woman] dresses smartly in the western manner. Her head is bare. Her shining hair is dressed in the latest fashion and her face is beautifully made up.....How different she looks from the average Lebanese woman of 70 years ago, who wore a long, somber dress, draped her head with a thin veiling scarf, covered her legs with cotton stockings."

Although Lebanon is perceived as of the freest Arab countries, there are many rights that women in Lebanon have not been granted (Mansour, 1996: 212). For instance, Iraqi women have the right to equal inheritance shares, while Tunisian have the right to marry someone from different religion. In Tunisia and Morocco, polygamy is legally banned, what is also perceived as advancing to the status quo of women. Research on Lebanese Muslim women proposed that the Quran was still literally explained in Lebanon, what contributed to the preservation of the patriarchal system, despite the political rights granted to women (Mansour, 1996: 213).

In Egypt, the public appearance and behavior set the identifiers to whether a person is religious or not (El-Guindi, 2005: 73). “To some Egyptian men, Western [dressed] women were by definition and appearance ‘whores’: women with lowest status and deserving the least respect” (Barthel & Mule, 1992: 327). This presumed connection between the veil and reputation provoked many scholars and observers to criticize the veil. Accordingly, the veil meant, to many, the control of the males over their females, and the submission of the veiled females to the patriarchy inherent within social and religious structures. Nazira Zin al-Din suggested that by obliging their mothers, daughters, and wives to wear the veil, men were inclined to distrust the closest women to them (Shaaban, 1995: 68).

There is also the proposition that the veil, in addition to other religious rites (praying, fasting, and pilgrimage), have revived after the failure of the nationalist and leftist elites who govern Arab countries to reach people’s aspiration in democracy and development through their modernization projects. The veil, thus, served as an escape from modernization and as a political symbol to object to the adopted western modern values (Shahrur, 2005: 42).

The appeal of religious and Islamist movements to women in Egypt was extensively studied by Saba Mahmood (2005). Mahmood (2005: 155-161) distinguishes between the virtue of modesty and the practice of veiling. Yet, as participants in her study noted, the veil is perceived as a tool that helps in acquiring this virtue. She noted, “...participants regarded outward bodily markers as an ineluctable

means to the virtue of modesty, the body's precise movements, behaviors, and gestures were all made the object of their efforts to live by the code of modesty" (Mahmood, 2005: 161).

B. Beyond Religiosity

The veil in the Arab world has been particularly linked to religiosity and honor. However, many people have been historically veiling for sociopolitical and cultural considerations, and not as part of religious commitment. Mounira Charrad, for instance, distinguishes between the cultural and the religious types of veils that appeared in Tunisia. Interestingly, specific tribes such as the Tuareg had a tradition that males are the ones to cover up after puberty, while women stayed barefaced (Brooks, 1995: 22).

In fact, the veil can be both, empowering and disempowering, depending on how it is being used by the person (Abu Odeh, 2005: 92). This particularly happens in Algeria, where the veil is linked to patriotism and to the resistance of the French colonialism (El-guindi, 1999: 170). On the other hand, the veil in France after 2004 was a very disempowering dress code. Wearing it meant that the girls could not attain their education, specifically in public institutions. Scott specifically focused on the veil crisis in France after the ban in 2004, suggesting the law primarily addressed the increasing veiled community, by considering the veil as a threat to the liberal secularism of the state (Scott, 2007: 4-5). In 2011, France banned further veiled Muslim women from fully covering their faces or wearing the *niqab*, though the number of Muslim women who wore it in France was less than 2000 (Cole, 2012: 218). Likewise, the veil in other western countries has been perceived as a barrier to the proper integration of the Muslim minority group into the larger society, and a visible statement of difference (Dwyer, 2008: 140). Nawar Al-Hassan Golley (2004: 522) notes here,

“It is true that, for most Westerners, even today, the phrase ‘Arab woman’ conjures up heavily veiled, secluded women, whose lives consist of little more than their homes, their children and the other females in the ‘harem’ or immediate kinship circle.”

In light of the calls to ban the veil in public spaces in some western countries, as the case in France, Muslim groups framed the veil as a religious choice that is protected by the constitutions of the western countries, which assert the freedom of choice and

religion (Moore, 2007: 238-239). Concurrently, those who are against veiling, perceive it humanitarian to ban the veil, in accordance with the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, that calls to the elimination of “practices based on inferiority of women” (Freedman, 2007: 29-30). Many women who wear the veil in France or Europe though, do this as an “affirmation of identity” or as a reassurance to their parents “that they will not be corrupted by the liberal culture” in the wider western society (Freedman, 2007: 41-42).

In her discourse on veiling, Fatima Mernissi (1985: 19-20) considers the veil one of the institutionalized means of oppression of women. Mernissi emphasizes that “traditional Islam recognizes the equality of potential” between both sexes, but Muslim societies disempower their women and grant religious authorities the privilege of legislating secular matters. Moreover, what holds women in Muslim societies from reaching ‘modern state’ is the absence of governments or women spokespersons to protect them (Mernissis, 2002: 164).

C. Aims and Trends

Generally speaking, the veil has been adopted as a dress code for very different reasons, including religious ones. Different aims for veiling were identified by researchers, including identifying group members, placing the individual in a certain gender or social category, indicating a specific social conduct or status, controlling sexual activity, and other social, psychological, revolutionary, or cultural aims. (El-Guindi, 1999: 56-57; Zuhur, 1992: 79-80). These several reasons proposed by different researchers reflect the diversity and ambiguity of the veil as a cultural artifact. It is clearly not a monolithic entity, but rather varies with the culture and background of women wearing the veil.

Women are not a unified block that can be grouped by gender. Rather they are classified by many other attributes including ethnicity, class, and religion. Similarly, Muslim women are not a homogenous group. They come from different countries, races, and cultures. Within Islam, these women identify with different interpretations and schools of thoughts. Most importantly, many Muslim women are unveiled, and

many women wear the veil for non-religious considerations (Itani, 2013). It is this very hybridity displayed by women that makes studying the veil interesting. As long as the affiliations and beliefs of these people vary greatly, despite that they are under the umbrella of Islam, then the social behaviors and public appearances of the females are found to vary. As inferred earlier, the veil is not the only artifact that affects and reflects these women's identities, but also the social behaviors they engage in or avoid.

Moreover, the veil brings to the forefront the issue of the public and the private, by offering those who wear it a privatized public. El Guindi considered veiling a reaction to the marginalized personal space in the public sphere (Zuhur, 1992: 65). Lara Deeb, likewise, speaks of public piety in Lebanon in the 1990s, particularly in Beirut's southern suburb of Dahiye.

“Embodied piety appeared in many ways in al-Dahiyya, but three areas stood out most strikingly on a daily basis. The most visible of these, in both my fieldwork and current scholarship on Islam, was dress. But before turning to dress, and its major signifier, the headscarf, I want to discuss two other practices that signaled *iltizam*. The first, prayer, is one of the duties of an individual Muslim, and the second, not shaking hands with members of the opposite sex, is a marker used to indicate religiosity.” (Deeb, 2006: 103)

Though the veil expresses piety, it is the total sum of public social behaviors veiled women engage in that specify how pious she is. Interestingly, the veil puts restriction on communication but is at the same time a communicative item (El-Guindi, 1999: xi). Meanwhile, many young females perceive veiling as a way to protect them when walking on the streets or using public transportation. Golley refers to Lama Abu Odeh to state, “unveiled women are supposed to feel powerless in the face of harassment” (Golley, 2004: 528). In fact, the veil is perceived as a tool of physical autonomy for women in patriarchal societies and gender-segregated communities (Barthel & Mule, 1992: 329).

Yet, today, the veil sometimes communicates meanings that are at odds with the social behavior of the person wearing it, especially after the appearance of more fashionable veils. More concretely, there has been a wave of moderately religious Muslim women, who are very normative in terms of shaking hands, wearing makeup, and in some rare cases acquire and support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

(LGBT) orientations. Naturally, as the veil is becoming a fashion, not all types of veil can be seen as restrictive for their wearers. More importantly, veiled women can no longer be taken for granted as necessarily more conservative or modest members. Certainly, the way the veil and other religious symbols are enacted deviate from the way they are imagined in religious texts (Davary, 2009: 48)

The engagement of veiled females in modern institutions in the society may have a role in this. Nilüfer Göle (2002: 174) interestingly observes that Turkish veiled women “blend into modern urban spaces, use global communication networks, engage in public debates, follow consumption patterns, learn market rules, enter into secular time, get acquainted with values of individuation, professionalism, and consumerism, and reflect upon their new practices.” Similarly, Mahmoud (2005: 156), lists two challenges that veiled working women face,

“...[women’s] discussions often focused on two challenges they constantly had to face in their attempts to maintain a pious lifestyle. One was learning to live amicably with people-both colleagues and immediate kin-who constantly placed them in situations that were far from optimal for the realization of piety in day-to-day life. The second challenge was in the internal struggle they had to engage in within themselves in a world that constantly beckoned them to behave in unpious ways.”

D. Muslim Fashion

“Where women wore the veil, there was money to be made in Islamic fashion.” (Brooks, 1995: 22) Today there are dozens of fashion stores and online websites for Muslim fashion. Traditionally, the color of the veil was restricted to a black or white piece, and in radical cases to a plainly light colored veiled. Not only the available colors of veils are multiple, but there is a wide variety of designs, fabric types, and veil shapes. Branding of Muslim clothes have also come to existence, and some popular fashion brands have started to include long-sleeve clothes within their collections to suit Muslim customers.

Some scholars, like Mohamed Kerrou, suggested that the spread of new veiling ways contributed to the increase in veiled females throughout different countries

(Rashik, 2012: 94). Stylizing the veil made it much more interesting to study the choices of young veiled women, as visibly seen in their variety of colors and negotiability of their dress codes. While some committed to the traditional dark colored long blouses or coats, others opened up to colors and less modest clothes. Some women not only wear a colorful veil, but restrict the covered area to their hair, and reveal their necks and ears. This, referring to the premises of symbolic interactionism, suggests that the veil is a socially constructed phenomenon.

Also, establishing Muslim fashion can be perceived as a way of adapting the traditional premise of veiling to the modern idea of fashion. This aligns with the proposition that Lebanon's path of adaptation encompasses the traditional and historical realities, and does not import the secular model as it is. In this regard Khalaf (1987: 17) notes,

“The adaptive path to modernity is not a resigned and nostalgic flight. Rather, it emanates from a given socio-historical reality; a reality that cannot be ignored or simply willed away by prophetic visions of a secular social order free of all primordial attachment.”

E. Educated versus Veiled

Like Dodge, Albert Hourani predicted back in 1955 that education will gradually contribute to the decadence of veiling, as quoted by Ahmed (2012:20); “Educated women would not accept veiling and seclusion, and educated men, who wanted their wives to be companions were similarly in favor of unveiling.” In light of this argument, it is questionable that the number of veiled students receiving a liberal secular education at an institution like the American University of Beirut should be more prevalent.

Referring to the AUB yearbook, there are 2460 veiled students that attended AUB between 1963 until 2011. The number of veiled students has been increasing since the sixties. The average number of veiled students at AUB per year in the 1960s was less than 1. This number increased respectively to 1.6 in the 70s, 5.6 in the 80s, 16.9 in the 90s, and to more than 185 students per year after the year 2000.

Table 4.1: the increase in the number of veiled students at AUB from 1963-2012

Form of veil	1963	1980	1985	1990	1995	2005	2012
Fashionable	1	0	0	0	0	3	17
Mild	0	1	9	24	18	184	422
Classic	0	0	0	1	0	5	8

A study done by Al-Amine in the 1990s on the religious commitment of university students in Lebanon revealed that AUB included the highest rate of atheist and/or secular students. In different universities over Lebanon, around 8% of students declared publicly that they are not committed to any religion. While, at AUB, this percentage increased to 19% of the students. Al-Amine notes that AUB is the university with the least percentage of religious students in Lebanon, and correlates the educational status of parents and the type of school the students attended in contributing to this percentage. (El Amine & Faour, 1998: 294).

The increased rate of veiled students at AUB suggests that the percentage of religious students has increased dramatically since the nineties. Even though the veil may not be accurately reflective of the religiosity of its wearer, it is a religious sign in the given circumstances of the Lebanese society. More concretely, it is not a custom for women in Lebanon to veil, as it is a custom for women in the Gulf to wear an *Abaya*. To have young ladies educated in a liberal institution choosing to wear a veil is an attempt by them to say something about their identities. Also, in light of the socio-economic conditions of the students who enroll at AUB, the argument that the veil is restricted to poorer or less educated classes needs to be questioned. Zuhur argues in this regard, “those who argue that [veil] wearers wish to attain social anonymity cannot fully explain the logic of upper-middle-class or elite women who adopted Islamist ideals.” (Zuhur, 1992: 14)

There are two significant features about the veil at AUB which need to be highlighted: the presence of a considerable number of veiled students on campus, and the continuous increase in the number of veiled students year after year. The veil may have been taken for granted in a society- or institution-whose orientation is in line with the ideas exposed above on the veil. A closer look at the history of the American

University of Beirut makes studying this phenomenon on AUB campus much more compelling.

Chapter V

FROM A PROTESTANT COLLEGE TO A LIBERAL UNIVERSITY FOR CO-EDUCATION

The historical context of the veil and of the education of Muslim women at AUB is essential in understanding the issue explored in this study. This is particularly present in the writings of Bayard Dodge, the first president to be appointed after the Syrian Protestant College was renamed into the American University of Beirut. President Dodge focused in many of his writings and speeches on the status of women in the region. He addressed the importance of women's education and of the reformation of men's perception of women. It must be emphasized that he considered the basic feature that determines if a woman is modernized and liberated is whether she is veiled or not. Dodge focused on the physical attributes of women more than the ideology behind their physical appearance. "Clothing styles represented for Dodge a key identifier of modernity coming to womanhood in the Middle East; in taking off the veil, women achieved modernity." (Anderson, 2011a: 99) Taking off the veil was equated with departing from ignorance and superstition that prevailed in many of the societies of the region back then.

When addressing the education of women in the area, the missionaries are to credit for introducing the concept and for considering that "any effective change in society could not be realized without educating women" (Khalaf, 2001: 244). By the time the institution was established in 1866, there were many educated girls by missionary schools. Yet, it was not until the 1920s that the females had access to university education under the administration of Bayard Dodge.

As we will see below, in contrary to former presidents of the Syrian Protestant College Daniel and Howard Bliss, who had asserted the missionary character of the institution, Dodge's presidency in 1923 marked the practical transformation of the academic institution from a protestant institution to a secular and more liberal one.

A. The early presidents

1. Daniel Bliss (1866-1902)

Daniel Bliss was the first president for the Syrian Protestant College, which was founded in 1866. He was an Amherst graduate, and served as a president and instructor of Bible and ethics. Hence, the endorsement of the religious character of the college appears in many of his addresses. Even upon the resignation of Daniel Bliss in 1902, the annual report of the Syrian Protestant College noted the following,

“The review of Dr. [Daniel] Bliss’ service is the review of the history of the college. It is a Christian College founded as a Missionary Institution in the fear of God and on the work of God. That it has been true to its original spirit and principles, it is largely owing to the fidelity and sound evangelical spirit of its President...” (Khoury, 1992: 12)

Even in his farewell speech in 1902, Daniel Bliss addressed faith and beliefs of men, where he mentioned that knowledge is the pathway to rationalize belief rather than accepting them superstitiously (Khoury, 1992: 20). He further briefed the sum of all good as: “the love of god and your neighbor as yourself”, and the final good as: “to do God’s will.” (Khoury, 1992: 20)

The academic curriculum throughout Daniel Bliss’s presidency highly exposed students to evangelical Christianity. “He [Bliss] required that all students, regardless of religious faith, attend Christian services and Bible classes.” (Anderson, 2011a: 4) Although freedom of religion was stated in his speeches, he endorsed that it is ‘impossible’ for anyone who joins AUB not to know the beliefs of the Christianity and the reasons for that belief. (Khoury, 1992: 38)

One of the major religious issues throughout Bliss’s presidency was the Lewis Affair in 1882, after one of the professors praised Charles Darwin in his commencement address. The speech was negatively perceived by Bliss and by many members of the board of trustees. It ended by the resignation of 3 senior professors and the suspension of 17 medical students (Academic Year Launched, 1999). This affair did not much affect the character of the institution then, but rather “marked the first step in the

school's transition from its missionary roots to its modern, secular future as it became a crucible that transformed Arab students, generating momentous consequences in years to come." (VanDeMark, 2012: 55)

By the end of Daniel Bliss's presidency, the number of students was greatly increasing and incorporating more nationalities and religions. From 1891 to 1901, the number of students increased by a 300% rate, from 196 to 611 students (VanDeMark, 2012: 71). Daniel Bliss retired at the age of 79, and was succeeded by his son Howard in 1902 (Penrose, 1970: 81).

2. Howard Bliss (1902-1920)

Howard Bliss introduced major changes to the orientation of the College; although religious requirements remained part of the curriculum, the Syrian Protestant College was becoming more secular (Anderson, 2011a: 5). Perhaps religious problems that affected the college throughout his presidency as well as the increase in the number of non-Christian students contributed to this. By 1908, the percentage of non-Christian students at the college exceeded 40%, with 128 Muslim students, and 242 Jews, Druze, & Bahai students (Penrose, 1970: 130).

In January 1909 a major controversy occurred, as 98 out of the 128 Muslim students -roughly 76%- submitted a petition to be excluded from the compulsory prayers and bible classes (Penrose, 1970:130). The petition was presented after Muslim students were offended in one of the sermons by Reverend James Nicol in the beginning of spring 1909 (Anderson, 2011a: 85). The faculty response was not satisfactory to the petitioners, for it endorsed the Christian character of the institution and did not perceive the prayers and bible classes as offensive to the religious liberty of non-Christian students. More students supported the petitioners, including all the 88 Jewish students then, in addition to a number of media outlets throughout the region. "With only two or three exceptions the entire press of Syria and Egypt either attacked the College or failed to give it any support." (Penrose, 1970: 136) The issue ended in March 1909, after a message from Bliss to the parents or guardians of the students that excused non-

Christians from attending the prayers but not the bible classes. Bliss made it clear that parents who are not satisfied with this decision can withdraw their sons from the school, which was the case for 8 students (Penrose, 1970: 138).

In 1916 a smaller religious problem erupted, after demands to establish courses in Muslim ethics and a room of services for Muslim students. The reply to these inquiries made it clear that this is a Christian institution, but yet all religions are respected and welcomed in the college. The response reasonably mentioned,

“The college has on its roll representatives of at least ten different sects and nationalities. If special privileges are granted to one religion, they cannot be denied to others.” (Penrose, 1970: 146)

In May 1920, Howard Bliss passed away after a struggle with tuberculosis and a great pain from the war in Lebanon. Interestingly, an article entitled ‘The Modern Missionary’ by Bliss was published in *The Atlantic Monthly* few days before his death (Dodge, 1958: 50). The article again emphasized that the Syrian Protestant College is a missionary institution, yet is dedicated to offer its students a modern sound education (Penrose, 1970: 181). Penrose noted,

“Like his predecessor, the modern missionary finds in the Bible the Great Book of Religion; but, spared the burdensome obligation of attempting to defend as errorless everything found in the Bible, whether in the realm of events, of science, of ethics or of religion, he is free to concentrate his attention upon its spiritual appeal.” (Penrose, 1970: 184)

B. From SPC to AUB

In November 1920 the name of the institution was changed from the Syrian Protestant College to the American University of Beirut. This change was discussed almost ten years earlier by the faculty, and Howard Bliss had recommended in 1912 that such a change be introduced on the semi-centennial anniversary in 1916 (Penrose, 1970: 71). Yet, this did not occur due to the war and president Bliss passed away months before this metamorphosis. Stephan Penrose, the fourth president of the institution, noted the following on the removal of the terms ‘Syrian’ and ‘protestant’,

“Syrian Protestant University was undesirable for two reasons. The institution was no longer Syrian, for its students came from all the countries in the Near East. It was inadvisable to continue the term Protestant because students and faculty now represented nearly every religious form in the Near East and there was no point in needlessly emphasizing sectarian distinctions.” (Penrose, 1970: 171)

Several changes accompanied the change of name, including for instance, the removal of difference between Anglo-Saxon and non-Anglo-Saxon Professors, the appointment of new faculty members, and securing around half-million dollars that allowed the university to recover after the war (Penrose, 1970: 200-202). The student body in turn increased from 695 students in 1917 to roughly 1001 in 1920 (Penrose, 1970: 237). Betty Anderson (2011a: 29) indeed confirms this trend by asserting that the new name of the institution turned out to align very well with the liberal orientation that the university adopted decades later. On a larger scale, most Protestant colleges worldwide had to introduce major changes after globalization, imperialism, and industrialization became the realm of the twentieth century.

In general, education at the Syrian Protestant College was an imposition of the idealistic American Christian character upon the students, and not a liberal education as the case is today. Betty Anderson (2011a: 89) identifies liberal education as one that “calls for active participation by students,” while before the 1909 controversy there was no remarkable dissent by students. The devotion of the two first presidents to Protestantism in its conservative conception helped in keeping SPC a Christian institution, while Bayard Dodge’s presidency marked a historical significant change, since for him “Protestantism means religious freedom.” (VanDeMark, 2012: 104)

Noticeably, many of the students addressed by the missionaries were Christian orthodox (Khalaf, 2001: 203). This justifies why there was no need to modify the curricula or change the strictly religious character of the university until the number of non-Christians considerably increased.

1. Bayard Dodge's Presidency (1923-1948)

Bayard Dodge was the son-in-law of Howard Bliss, and was formally announced the first president of the American University of Beirut at the commencement exercises of 1923 (History of the Office: Bayard Dodge, n.d.: para 2). Dodge was a firm believer in American modernity and inclusively education as the savior of the Middle East youth. "If the Blisses saw Protestantism as providing character lessons, Dodge extolled what he called 'America, a Light to the Nations'." (Anderson, 2011a: 68) Yet, in his inauguration speech, he comforted his audience saying, "we do not desire to Americanize the young men of the Levant, but rather to make them good citizens of their own lands." (VanDeMark, 2012: 105-106) Throughout Dodge's presidency, major changes to the curriculum were introduced, development plans for different schools were implemented, and new chairs were established (Penrose, 1970: 237-247). In brief, the institution was practically being transformed from a College to a University, with clear grounds for different certificates that can be earned.

Dodge focused in many of his speeches on the status of women in the region and the importance of their role in modernization and advancement of Middle Eastern society. In his recount of Dodge's achievement, historian Brian VanDeMark considered Dodge's admission of women to AUB as "the most revolutionary and far-reaching change" he made, and "a radical step" in a region that underestimates the capacity of its females (VanDeMark, 2012: 107).

What further distinguished Dodge from the Blisses is that he was keen to study Islam. He attended weekly interpersonal meetings with an Islamic scholar reading, discussing, and analyzing the Quran (VanDeMark, 2012: 108). For him, religiosity meant to abide by morals and ethics rather than to blindly recite the Bible (Anderson, 2011a: 73). Dodge was a profound believer in the freedom of inquiry, and much valued and encouraged religious tolerance (Anderson, 2011a: 73). In fact, he considerably had referred to verses from the Quran to make some points in his speeches.

Dodge retired in 1948 and moved to Princeton. He, however, continued his work on Arabs and Islam, and maintained close relations with the Arab world (Bayard Dodge: An Appreciation, 1973).

2. Dodge's Modernity

The definition of modernity has always been an issue of debate, for it is related to what the past and the present are. In the present today, there are societies with no water and electricity access, and at the same time, there are societies with wide technological achievements that some are labeled post-modern. Well-Known sociologists have noted their own understanding and perception of the modern. For Hegel, modernity started with the renaissance, for Foucault and Habermas it came to light with Kant's 'the Enlightenment', while for Sartre it existed when artists started to counter the bourgeois culture (Bedetti et al., 1992: 401-430).

It is important here to consider that AUB started as a missionary, and in turn, missionaries were perceived as transplanted organs that are meant "to touch but not be touched by the native culture" (Khalaf, 2012: 160). By admitting veiled students, AUB to some extent became part of a two-way stream unlike typical missionaries. Although veiled students had to adjust and adapt to the atmosphere on campus, the institution, in many of its decisions as we will see later on, contributed to accommodate them.

Khalaf (2001: 22-23, 61) extensively addressed the dialectics of modernity and tradition in Lebanon. Instead of totally giving up the traditional cultural artifacts, he considered that Arab countries, including Lebanon, are reconciling them with secular liberal western cultural components.

The aspect of modernity this research tackles is the question of co-existence of Muslim women in modern circumstance, with their religious identity being reflected through their visual features, specifically the veil. Because the veil is historically and constructively linked to religion, tribes, and ignorance, and thus, conservatism, some has perceived it as contradictory in modern settings. Bayard Dodge, the first president to the American University of Beirut, adopted a similar perspective regarding

modernization of the Arab world. Dodge believed that upon the emancipation of women in the society the Arab world could reach the modern era (Anderson, 2011a: 103). In particular, Dodge considered that the veil and the traditional dress code hold women from being really free, and the Arab societies of reaching modernity.

In a lecture that Dodge presented in 1952 at the Program in Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan, he classified Muslims into three groups, the orthodox Muslims, the secularists, and modern Muslims. For him, the latter tries “to adapt religion to modern life, without losing the basic values of the ancient faith...[and] regard religion as matter of inner experience rather than external form, and change worship from a mechanical ritual to the service of mankind.” (Dodge, 1952: 23-29)

Dodge’s perception to modernity perfectly aligns with the mainstream orientalist approach in studying Middle Eastern societies. For instance, he correlated the veil with meanings of backwardness and oppression, and ignored its pre-orientalist meanings of piety, wealth, and status (Bullock, 2003: 26-29).

Dodge correlated Islam with medievalism, and in parallel, correlated modernity with materialism. He questioned, “Islam was geared to medieval life. Modern life is completely out of gear. Business offices and telephones, taxi-cabs and airplanes, movies and night clubs, laboratories and factories; how can a Muslim be pious in the rush of the 20th century?” (Dodge, 1952: 23-29). Like many other scholars, Dodge perceived Islam as a very bounding religion, that did not provide practical life matters for its believers, and thus Muslims would not be able to abide to their orthodox rituals when secularism and modernism provide better options (Dodge, 1952: 23-29).

Dodge also believed that the East has been medieval in its treatment of women, especially in covering them, making them marry at an early age, and sometimes honoring them by taking one as a ninth wife (Dodge, 1925). By education, Dodge proposed, this medieval regime can no more be enforced, for young men and women will revolt and think for themselves. This attempt to make religion, particularly Islam, more democratic and scientific, has made Western education the most influencing force

Islam ever encountered (Dodge, 1949). By lifting the veil, not abiding to prayers, and drinking liquor every now and then, Dodge endorsed that Muslim youth were not giving up their religion, but rather adapting to the practical secular nature of life. For instance, students at the American University were allowed, and “encouraged”, to attend Friday sermons, but only few did. By engaging in these modern life actions, youth become more tolerant to other faiths, and restrict Islam to their religion of birth not of practice (Dodge, 1952).

Dodge did acknowledge the negative implications of importing the Western culture blindly to the Middle East. Yet, he also praised the reforms it introduced to the region, of which the “emancipation of women from the veils, the harem and the communal family is the greatest reform.” (Dodge, 1951a) In describing how modern life changes Muslims, Dodge presents the following example,

“Suppose you are a young Muslim bride, who has never seen anything of the world, except from the harem window or through a heavy black veil. Your husband says “never mind what people say, let’s go to the movies”. And then you see Hollywood fashions and behavior and all sorts of wonderful things. Can you even be the same girl again? Did you ever stop to realize that a person may be illiterate by the eyes, but not by the ears?” (Dodge, 1951b)

This quote also exemplifies the negative terminology that Dodge used whenever talking about the veil or veiled women. When recalling the History of the institution in 1956, he described some women in ‘Abaih as ones “who still wore Medieval horned head-dresses” (Dodge, 1958: .10)

The way that Dodge frames his speeches and sermons implies that one of the aims of his administration was to divert the religiously committed students, from different religions, to non-practicing secularists. This can be inferred from his criticism of the veil as antithetical to science and logic, as well as from his direct statements that after engaging in specific western experiences, students will restrict their religion to their history (birth) not present (practice). I would further propose that by declaring so, Dodge was to some degree islamophobic rather than secularist. In secularism, a person can still be religiously committed and practice his or her religious rites.

What is interesting, however, is that the exposure to western liberal values did not affect students in a similar manner as Dodge predicted. It is true that many students have abandoned their religious rites and conformed to Dodge's notion of western logic and science. However, as our analysis will show, many other students became more conservative and cautious when being in spaces designated as liberal or western like AUB. By being very selective in university activities they engage in, and filtering their circle of close friends to include students from similar socio-religious backgrounds, religiously committed students found alternative way to collectively confront the controversial issues they tackled at the university.

Back in the 1920s, Dodge could not predict that some spots on the initially missionary institution would be used for praying by students, and that the number of veiled students will be in increase to reach its peak almost a century after his presidency. Yet, there are indeed many other factors that contributed to this including the rise of Islamist movements in many Arab countries, and the modification of the veil to have a more modern look.

C. Co-Education

Co-Education was of the most prominent topics addressed by Dodge's administration since his appointment. Female students have been long admitted to the nurses' training school established by SPC in 1905 (Penrose, 1970: 252). Yet, it was in 1921 that female students were admitted to the schools of Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmacy (Anderson, 2011b: 417-431). Co-Education was formally introduced in 1924, after female students were allowed to admit to sophomore classes, and later to junior and senior classes in 1927 (Anderson, 2011b: 417-431). This co-education decision is a historically remarkable one. Amherst College, the Alma Mater of the first two presidents, and the prototype that AUB sought to imitate, did not admit women until 1974 (Images of Coeducation: 25 years, n.d.). Similarly, the Alma Mater of Bayard Dodge, the University of Princeton, admitted female undergraduates in 1969 (Daniels, 1989).

In fact, before the early missionaries in Lebanon in mid 1820s, not a single woman in the country knew how to read. In 1824, two girls were attending the missionary school irregularly. This number increased to 120 girls by 1927, including 10 Muslim girls (Khalaf, 2012: 184).

At the university level, female students were admitted since the 1920s, specifically at AUB. Yet, the question whether the righteousness of the decision was further discussed until the late 1950s (Anderson, 2011a: 90). The faculty minutes after the allowance of women to join sophomore classes in 1924 mentions, “This vote [to admit women] was passed reluctantly, as the Faculty feared that Muslim girls would not be able to enter the University.” (Anderson, 2011a: 90) Penrose summarized the main three objections behind the reluctance to the co-education decision: (Penrose, 1970: 252-253)

- 1) The dress code of Muslim women, the veil, which could hinder them from entering classes with men.
- 2) The general perception that women’s place is home, and that their sole duties are to take care of their husbands.
- 3) The fear that admitting females may disturb the traditional male students, whom some have never seen the faces of females other than their sisters and mothers.

Coeducation officially started at AUB in 1924 (Dodge, 1958: 60). Seven female students enrolled that year, including one Muslim woman (Penrose, 1970: 253). In 1925, the first female student ever to graduate from AUB received her degree in pharmacy (Dodge, 1958: 60). This Muslim student was Mrs. Ihsan Ahmed from Egypt, who used to wear two veils. Her husband registered as a special student so as to accompany her in all of her classes ((Dodge, 1958: 60).

Though 1924 marks the year the first veiled Muslim woman was admitted into AUB, it is noticeable that the majority of female students at AUB, as co-education was introduced, were Christians. To be more concrete, 83% of female students in 1927 were Christians, and this percentage decreased to 64% by 1957 (Anderson, 2011a: 97). These numbers are in line with the increase of the number of student body at schools of Muslim females, where many of these students attempted to pursue a university degree. For instance, Al-Makassed Foundation, which is well known for educating Sunni Muslims in Beirut, offered scholarships to 19 female students to enroll at AUB in 1929

(Sbaiti, 2008: 275). Male students, on the other hand, were almost evenly divided between Christians and other religions since the 1920s (Anderson, 2011a: 97). What distinguished coeducation at AUB is that no home economics courses were specially designed for female students like other missionary and western institutions used to do. However, the perception that home is the best place for women was common, even within AUB walls. “The focus of women education at AUB was never on how to prepare for public positions as much as it was on the skills required to modernize home and society.” (Anderson, 2011b) In the first two co-education decades at AUB, women were subsidiary on campus, and the 1939-1940 academic handbook still included a section named ‘An A.U.B. Man’ (Anderson, 2011b).

In fact, female students constituted a minority at campus until the 1950s. Between 1921 and 1927, female students accounted to only 5% of the student body. This percentage increased to 9.5% between 1927 and 1952 (Anderson, 2011b). The increase in female students reached 26% in 1956-1957, and by 1958-1959 there were 476 female students at AUB (Report of the president, 1959: 12). It is notable that throughout this same period, the number of Muslim female students correspondingly increased, from less than 30 students in 1948-1949 to almost 100 by 1956-1957 (President’s Annual Report, 1959: 41).

It is noticeable though, that dormitory for females was not established until 1958, and female students were not allowed to dance in Dale Home and the Women Students’ Hostel until the early 1940s (Anderson, 2011a: 99). In the late 1920s, the only sport that was okay for women on campus was roller-skating (Anderson, 2011a: 99). These restrictions have all changed today, and female students are as active and engaged in university activities as their male counterparts.

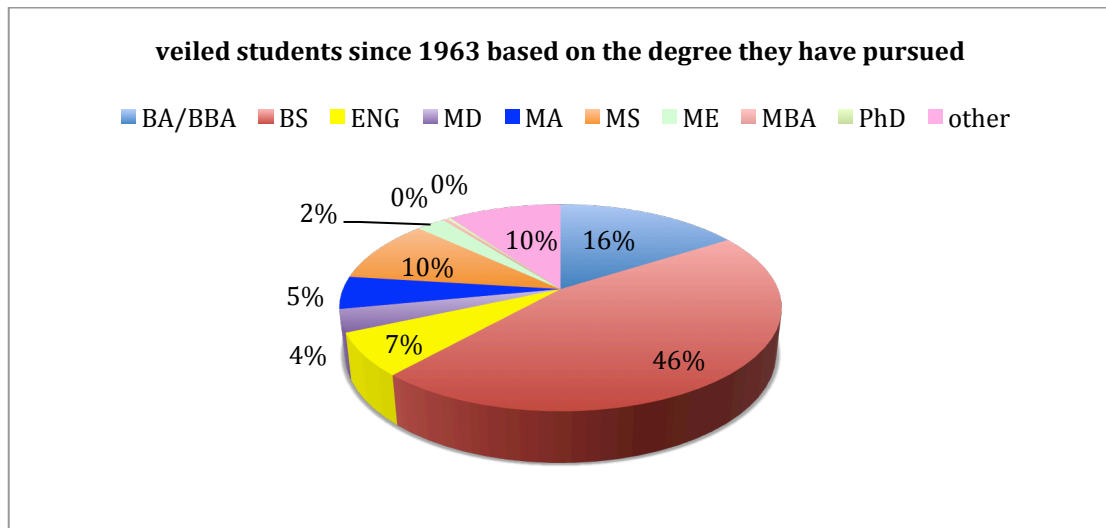
By 2001, roughly 48% of the student body constituted of females, and the number of women that have graduated from AUB by then exceeded 20,000 female students (Waterbury, 2002). Today, the student body is around 8,000 students divided evenly between females and males (AUB: About Us, n.d., para. 3).

D. Veiled females at AUB today

Four decades after Bayard Dodge, the institute that he believed will free Middle Eastern women of their veil, accommodated more than hundred veiled students in its body, in addition to fewer numbers in its faculty and staff. Based on available volumes of the university yearbook, AUB CAMPUS, veiled students existed in very few numbers between the 1960s and 1990s. Yet, the number of veiled students in 2005 exceeded 100, and dramatically increased to 447 veiled students in 2011. This accounts to only 6% of the student body, and suggests that veiled students are still a minority on campus despite their considerable number (see Appendix D).

With no present statistics on the degree of religiosity among Lebanese, or on the religious affiliations of Lebanese people, it is not very accurate to say that the increase in veiled students is a reflection of increase in religiosity in the society. However, it is noticeable that the first time veiled students exceeded ten students was in the late 1980s, by the time the civil war erupted. In more recent years, many Islamist movements emerged, “to a large extent, [as] a reaction to excessive modernization” (Khalaf, 2001: 54). It is possible too, that the number of scholarships awarded to lower and middle class students was in increase, as those given by Al-Makassed Foundation and others.

Figure 1: different degrees pursued by veiled students at AUB between 1963-2012



One of the important changes that have also occurred is that the veil did not preserve its traditional look, but rather Muslim fashion has grown. This, perhaps, makes it easier for young females to integrate in modern circumstances, because the colors and designs adopted in Muslim fashion are inspired from the regular international fashion. At the same time, some groups, specifically Druze, preserved their traditional uni-shaped black dress and white veil. A general observation of the veiled students at the American University of Beirut would show that veiled Druze students barely exist, while veiled Sunni and Shiite students considerably do. The manipulation of the veil from a lone religious item to one that integrates fashion may be one contributor to this. However, the AUB yearbook documents that the vast majority of veiled students are mildly, and not fashionably, veiled. Of the 477 veiled photographed students in volume 37 of the yearbook, 94% are mildly veiled, 2% fashionably veiled, and 4% classically veiled.

These three categories, classical, mild, and fashionable, have been the baseline for conducting this research. The first category, classical, includes females who have chosen to wear long coats or gowns. The second, mild, incorporates females who wear regular clothes, pants or skirts, while completely covering their hair, neck and ears. Finally, the fashionable, incorporates females who chose to cover their hair, but do wear makeup considerably. It is within these definitions that the percentages of veiled students were presented above.

The modification of the physical appearance of the veil is a reflection of the change in the interpretation of what the veil is. As noted earlier, some religious authorities have even considered the veil as an odd item to Islam. Interestingly, the modern interpretation of Islam was one of the topics that Dodge tackled, although his expectation was that it would result in eradicating the veil rather than modernizing it. He noted,

“As tens of thousands of children in the Muslim world are being educated in modern schools, in which science is being taught, and as they inevitably base their ideas of modern life on what they see in the “movies” and learn from scientific sources, these boys and girls are drifting away from the ancient institutions of Islam. The result is the historic interpretation of the faith is

rapidly becoming limited to two groups, the aged and the uneducated.”(Dodge, 1952)

Today, the veil in its ancient traditional form is most common among older females, and many young females show intention to veil or to wear more modest clothes few years in advance. On one hand, this suggests that despite the modernization of the veil, it is still problematic for veiled females to comfortably claim modern identities. On the other hand, the increase in veiled females implies that education did not foster the interpretation of the veil as a medieval item, but rather allowed Muslim women wearing the veil to rationalize their choices. To be more concrete, a girl who received a western liberal education at an institution as the American University of Beirut should have scientific rational reasons for veiling. The physical features of the veil, the degree of religiosity of the person wearing it, and the extent of her integration in the ‘modern’ atmosphere of the university, are all to be examined in the coming chapters.

Chapter VI

THE VEIL AS A MANIFEST ENTITY

The total number of veiled students interviewed is 20 students, six of them classically veiled, eleven mildly veiled, and three fashionably veiled. As noted earlier, three of the interviewees used to wear the veil and are unveiled now, and one of them is not an AUB student. In what follows we study the manifest features accompanied with the three types of the veil, on four manifest levels:

- The veil, prayers, religious education, and dress code
- Educational background
- Social interactions
- Integration at AUB

A. The veil, religious education, prayers, and dress code

Each of the six classically veiled interviewees has her own story of how and when she veiled. Five of them wore the veil between the ages 8-12, while only one interviewee wore the veil concurrently with her admission to AUB. She interestingly recalled,

“I wanted to veil as soon as I attend college. Yet, I kept postponing the decision to veil. I enrolled at the University of Saint-Joseph but wasn’t able to wear the veil. We were 62 students with only two veiled. I did not want to change to a less pious person or give up my decision to veil. Two months later, I transferred to AUB and joined it as a veiled student.”

When recalling how they veiled, the five other classically veiled interviewees mentioned that the atmosphere around in the family or school was religious. One interviewee mentioned that she and her best friend in class decided to veil on the same day. Another mentioned that the religious family atmosphere encouraged her to veil even though she was living then in a European country.

Similar reasons for veiling were mentioned by the mildly veiled interviewees. All of them, unexceptionally, veiled at some point between the ages 8-13. The religious atmosphere at the school or amongst family members was highly brought up by

interviewees when asked about the reason for veiling. Interestingly, one interviewee mentioned that her best friend wore the veil, so she decided to wear the veil on that same day. Another interviewee noted, “I always insisted on my mother to wear the veil and to let me wear a veil; we then veiled on the same day.”

Table 6.1: the veil as manifest in the families of the interviewees

Form of veil	age the veil was worn	veiled grandmother (father)	veiled grandmother (mother)	veiled mother	veiled aunts (father)	veiled aunts (mother)	veiled female cousins
classical	12	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
classical	10	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Not all
classical	11	yes	no	yes	yes	no	Not all
classical	11	yes	yes	yes	Not all	Not all	Not all
classical	18	yes	no	yes	Not all	yes	Not all
classical	8	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Not all
mild	12	yes	yes	yes	no	no	Not all
mild	12	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
mild	13	yes	yes	yes	Not all	yes	Not all
mild	10	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
mild	10	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
mild	10	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Not all
mild	8	yes	no	yes	Not all	no	Not all
mild	8	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Not all
mild	8	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Not all
mild	9	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Not all
mild	10	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
fashionable	8	yes	no	yes	yes	no	Not all
fashionable	15	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
fashionable	8	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Not all

The three fashionably veiled interviewees veiled for similar reasons. Two of them veiled at the age of 8, while the third veiled at the age of 15. Eventually, this happened after her parents transferred her from a missionary school to a religious one.

On the choice of wearing the veil, all veiled interviewees asserted that it was their own decision, and sometimes their parents were hesitant of the decision because of their young age. Yet, fourteen out of the twenty veiled interviewees reported attending religious sessions as young children. Of the six remaining interviewees, who did not use to attend religious sessions as children, five mentioned they were in religious schools and thus received regular religious education.

By engaging them in religious sessions and religious schools, specific cultural religious goals are being set, and particular institutional means to achieve them are proposed. That these goals are conformed by the females can be implied from what this mildly veiled interviewee noted,

“By veiling I am doing good to the society. If I do not veil there is a higher chance that I will be tempting. Even if I personally think that I am not, I have to consider that I am not living alone, and that my acts have an effect in the society.”

Another mildly veiled interviewee mentioned that when she first veiled as a child, she did it because everyone around was veiled. Her veil was categorized under ritualism if we want to refer Merton’s theory. “When I grew up, I realized I am convinced of my veil, and if I found otherwise I would have unveiled,” She noted. Her veil thus transformed from a ritual act to a conformation act.

1. Prayers and religious education

Nineteen out of the twenty interviewees abide by the five prayers a day. The exceptional fashionably veiled interviewee, who later unveiled, mentioned,

“I have had an interesting relation with religion. Most of the times I did not pray, and used to feel guilty. I believed but I do not know why I still did not pray.”

A study done on university students on Morocco showed similar observations, where not all the students who wore the veil or were bearded prayed regularly, while some non-veiled and non-bearded students did that (Abed Al Ghani, 2012: 106). To refer to Merton’s deviance theory, this is an example that not all institutionalized means are adopted, even when an individual believed in specific cultural goals. Although this interviewee was a believer, she was not convinced of praying as a mean to achieve them. Most importantly, this anecdote brings to the forefront the issues of piety and public piety. The veil, no matter what form it takes, signifies that its wearer is religiously committed to a certain degree. The veil communicates a message that the person is of specific religion and that she preserves a certain degree of religiosity; though this may not necessarily turnout to be.

Regarding prayers, it is interesting to observe how the veiled students manage to practice their prayers in line of their university commitments. Students were asked, “When excused to pray, do you mention your intention to your colleagues?”. Eleven interviewees mentioned they report their intention to others even if they are not close friends or of the same religion or sect. Six interviewees said that this is relative to the circumstances, while two answered that they get excused without mentioning the intention. Interestingly, the two who answered no and five out of the six who answered that this depends on the circumstances belong to the mildly and fashionably veiled categories. This suggests that the classically veiled are more comfortable in publicly showing their religious values.

Speaking of prayers, many religiously committed students of the larger sample of the study, showed their disappointment that no prayer room is available for students. The interviewees, both veiled and the non-veiled females and males who pray, allowed us to locate different spaces on campus where they pray. They are listed hereby:

- 1) Jaffet Library, stacks: an isolated area at the stacks was known as the praying area for some students. There were praying mats placed there. Later on, the university administration prohibited praying in the area, “claiming that much noise was coming from that area,” as an interviewee mentioned.
- 2) West Hall, rooms of student clubs: certain student clubs at AUB allowed their members to pray in the room that is granted to the club by the university administration. Yet, praying inside club rooms was prohibited by the university administration.
- 3) Raymond Ghosn Building, roof: an engineering student reported, “Back in 2006, I used to pray on the roof of Raymond Ghosn Building, there is an isolated area where many pray; there are too praying clothes and mats.”
- 4) Other locations on campus: many interviews reported praying in empty classrooms, corridors, or department rooms. I add to these praying in the parking behind Fisk Hall where I used to pray, as well as on the roofs of different building on the lower campus. A classically veiled interviewee interesting noted,
“While pursuing my teaching diploma, an instructor gave me the keys of a room to pray in, though he was Christian. Now that I am doing my

masters, I pray in the five-minutes break during the seminar, in the corridor next to the classroom.”

Another classically veiled student questioned, “What will the administration lose if they allowed students to pray?” She mentioned that she used to pray at the stacks, but now that it is prohibited, she added, “I am managing my university schedule in a way to be at the house at prayer times.” Similarly, a mildly veiled interviewee noted,

“If the courses are required I register them. But when taking electives, I keep in mind that I should note their time and the prayer time. I like to pray directly as the call to prayer (azan) is raised. Thus, I pray anywhere I am comfortable around campus. AUB is pro freedom of expression, so I pray as long as I am not extracting from the space allocated to someone or something else.”

The issue of prayer is remarkable in the context of this study. It brings to the forefront the issue of public piety, and questions the correlation between the veil as a sign of public piety, and praying as a potential public religious ritual. By choosing to pray on campus, even in closed offices or empty classrooms, we are exposing ourselves in public spaces. An interviewee noted,

“We [me and my friends] prayed once in a spot behind the main library, Jaffet Library, and the spot was alarmed by motion sensors. The alarms went on and many security personnel hurried to see what prompted the alarm.”

This public exposure is a decision preferred –despite risks- over other alternatives, like postponing the prayers, or praying in nearby mosques. Princeton University, which is of the prototypes of AUB, has a Muslim Life Program in the Office of Religious Life. Within the activities of the program, Friday prayers are organized on campus on weekly basis as well as other religious activities (Muslim Life Program, 2014: para. 2). Similarly, Amherst College has a center for religious life, and advisor for Muslim students, aside to advisors to students of the various other faiths (Religious Life at Amherst College, n.d.: para. 1). The Muslim Life Coordinator and Chaplain at Princeton University, Sohaib Nazeer Sultan, clarified,

“There is a dedicated Muslim prayer room inside the Office of Religious Life for the five daily prayers. And, on Fridays for *jummah* [Friday prayer] we use one of the multi-purpose rooms in the same building for two hours that accommodates a much larger gathering.”

In Lebanon, religious affiliations and politics are much interrelated. It is feared that having a prayer room will pave the way to more sectarian or religious-political gatherings. The Dean of Student Affairs at AUB, Dr. Talal Nizameddin, clarifies that the American University of Beirut is a secular institution, as per a decision taken by the board of trustees. “This, however, does not prevent the freedom of religion,” he asserts. Nizameddin distinguishes between praying singularly between two classes in a suitable place on campus, and between collective gatherings on campus for praying or other religious or political purposes. The latter is prohibited and feared to be the desired goal of establishing a prayer room, while, “praying singularly is not prohibited but rather welcomed on campus; we never prevented a student from praying on campus,” Nizameddin declares.

Nizameddin justified the presence of prayer rooms in institutions like Princeton to the absence of nearby mosques or locations for students to pray. A religiously committed male interviewee addressed this,

“The presence of a nearby mosque to the campus is apparently of the justifications given by the administrations to deny establishing a praying room. This is an invalid argument; there are nearby restaurants to the campus, so why they’ve established a cafeteria?”

Given the socio-political reality of Lebanon, religious gatherings can often be manipulated and aligned to political affiliations. Mere religious education by different socio-religious groups is also linked in an indirect way to larger sectarian groups with specific political standings.

Half of the veiled interviewees reported attending religious sessions in the meantime, and some accordingly hinted to their political alienations. Of the other interviewees who do not attend religious sessions, six said that they read religious books or watch lectures on television and YouTube. One mildly veiled interviewee noted, “Religious sessions are not the reason for the religiosity.” Two other interviewees mentioned that although they do not attend religious sessions, the religious atmosphere among the family help them preserve their religiosity. The familiarity of many veiled

females with religion since childhood formed the social religious roles in which they adhere to. Though this is possible to change, being in similar social circles will sustain these values and promotes them. In this regard Blumer (1969: 19) considers, “it is the social process in group life that creates and upholds the rules, not the rules that create and uphold group life.”

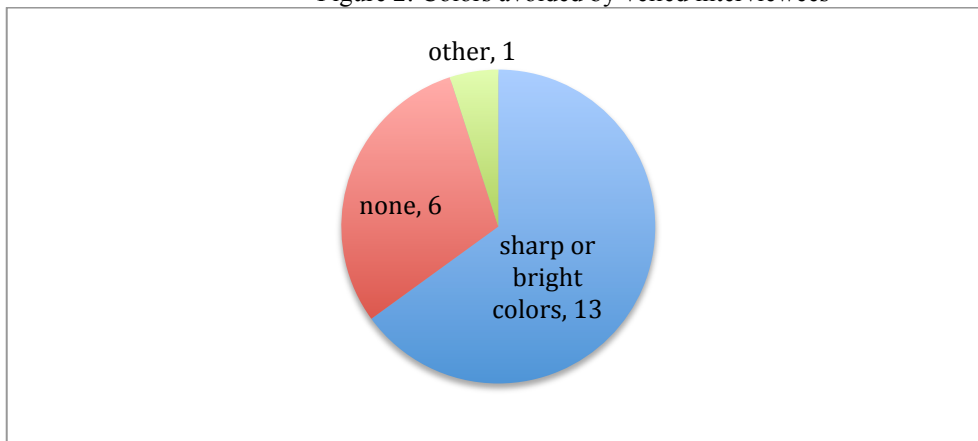
Table 6.2: how exposed to religious sessions the interviewees are

Form of veil	Answer	Religion regularly studied at school	Attend religious sessions as a child outside school	Attend religious sessions now
Classical	Yes	4	5	4
	No	1	1	2
	Slightly	1	0	
	Total	6	6	6
Mild	Yes	9	6	5
	No	0	5	6
	Slightly	2	0	
	Total	11	11	11
Fashionable	Yes	1	3	1
	No	1	0	2
	Slightly	1	0	
	Total	3	3	3

2. Dress Code

Dressing choices are the most manifest attributes of veiled women. In this study, each of the veiled interviewees as well as the female unveiled interviewees were asked on what colors they avoid or recurrently wear, whether they put make up regularly, and if they go to the beach at summer time and wear a two-piece bikini. Thirteen out of the twenty interviewees said they avoid either sharp or bright colors, or both of them. By these, they meant sharp red, yellow, or sparking colors, as well as very bright colors like fuchsia or phosphor. One classically veiled interviewee noted that her dress code consists most of the time of a black gown *abaya* and a white veil.

Figure 2: Colors avoided by veiled interviewees



Interestingly, the three fashionably veiled interviewees reported wearing makeup in regular circumstances. One mildly veiled interviewee reported applying slight make up on daily basis, while three other mildly and classically veiled interviewees said they put makeup only occasionally.

For religious considerations, most of the veiled interviewees mentioned they do not go to the beach or wear two-piece bikini. Only two of the twenty interviewees said they wear two-piece bikini, one fashionably veiled and another mildly veiled. Another fashionably veiled interviewee said she went to women-only beaches but wear Muslim swimwear that covers the area between her breasts and knees. When asked if they smoke cigarette or hubble-bubble, none of the mildly and classically veiled interviewees said they do. The fashionably veiled, on the other hand, reported they hubble-bubble, and one of them reported that she smokes.

Looking at the wider picture, the dress code of the fashionably veiled interviewees is to some degree looser than the mildly and classically veiled ones. More concretely, two of the three fashionably veiled said they avoid no specific colors of clothes or veils; the three of them reported putting makeup on daily basis; and two of them going to women-only beaches.

Yet, as one interviewee noted, “it is not an issue in terms of colors [of clothes], but in terms of freedom of movement.” This interviewee unveiled, but she still avoids some areas when hanging out with her veiled sisters, for she knows they won’t be

comfortable there. Examples of these spaces in Beirut are areas like Gemmayze, which is known for its nightlife, as she suggested.

Table 6.3: dress code of the interviewees in light of different forms of veiling

	Total no. of interviewees	Avoid colors	Wear accessories	Wear two-piece bikini	Smoke cigarettes	Hubble-bubble
Classical	6	4	1	0	0	0
Mild	11	9	6	1	0	0
Fashionable	3	1	2	2	1	2

A last interesting point to note, is that the three interviewees who later unveiled, all preserved a degree of ‘modesty’ in their clothing choices when around their parents or people from religious circles. “I still wear long sleeves in front of my parents, even in summer,” an interviewee mentioned, saying she does it out of respect. Another noted,

“I do not think my clothing has become less modest by wearing pants instead of a long *jilbab* [topcoat]. It was only more practical. I still do not dress in a show-off was and wear jeans on most days. Even though I am not veiled now, I still dress modestly.”

It is probable that those who preserved a modest dress code after unveiling still respect the values of modesty and chastity, but no more believe the veil is the means to keep their modesty, since it is a sign of specific religious affiliation.

B. Educational Background

It is well known that schools have a role in contributing to the system of values of the children and in affecting their social self. Given the considerable amount of time that children spend at school, many parents enroll their children in ones that are in line of their sociocultural atmosphere.

Referring to our first section in this chapter, all the mildly veiled interviewees in this study wore the veil indirectly due to the surrounding religious atmosphere at the school and the family, between ages 8-13. These sayings, combined with the type of schools that the mildly veiled interviewees attended show a noticeable pattern. Ten out

of the eleven mildly veiled interviewees were in religious schools, and the eleventh interviewee was in a secular private school in an Arab country and thus received slight religious education within the curricula. Also, all of the mildly interviewees learned in gender segregated classrooms at high school. In fact, only three of the twenty veiled interviewees were in co-ed schools. Out of these, two are classically veiled and one is fashionably veiled.

The importance of school on the topic under study can be implied the story from one of the fashionably veiled interviewees, as she says,

“Me and my sisters were in a missionary school. The female preacher, who used to give us religious sessions outside school, was also a teacher in a religious school. She encouraged my mother to register us in that religious school. We did not like the school but after we got adapted to the atmosphere it was fine. We wore the veil few months after that. I was fifteen year-old then.”

This unveiled interviewee felt odd at her new religious school, and saw herself through the eyes of a new generalized other, which is very different from that in the missionary school. I will juxtapose this anecdote with my personal experience, where I was in a religious school for most of my childhood except high school. This interviewee became firmer in her dress code to include a veil and skirts when she first veiled. On my side, the opposite occurred, and my clothing choices became less modest when I socialized with new classmates from secular background. I remember that at some point, in one of our after school picnics, I was wearing a pink blouse and a black skirt instead of a long topcoat. A friend told me, “This is much nicer, always dress like this”. I assume that by recalling her exact words until today, they have had an effect.

Some assume that those educated in secular or missionary schools would not be as modest as those educated in religious schools. This is invalid assumption in light of the results in this study. Of the thirteen interviewees who attended religious schools throughout childhood, only three are classically veiled. The other three classically veiled interviewees attended secular and missionary schools. One interviewee recalled that she and her sisters were the only veiled students in the whole school. Moreover, of the seven interviewees who attended non-religious schools during childhood, six mentioned they used to religious sessions outside school. Again, this tells that there are

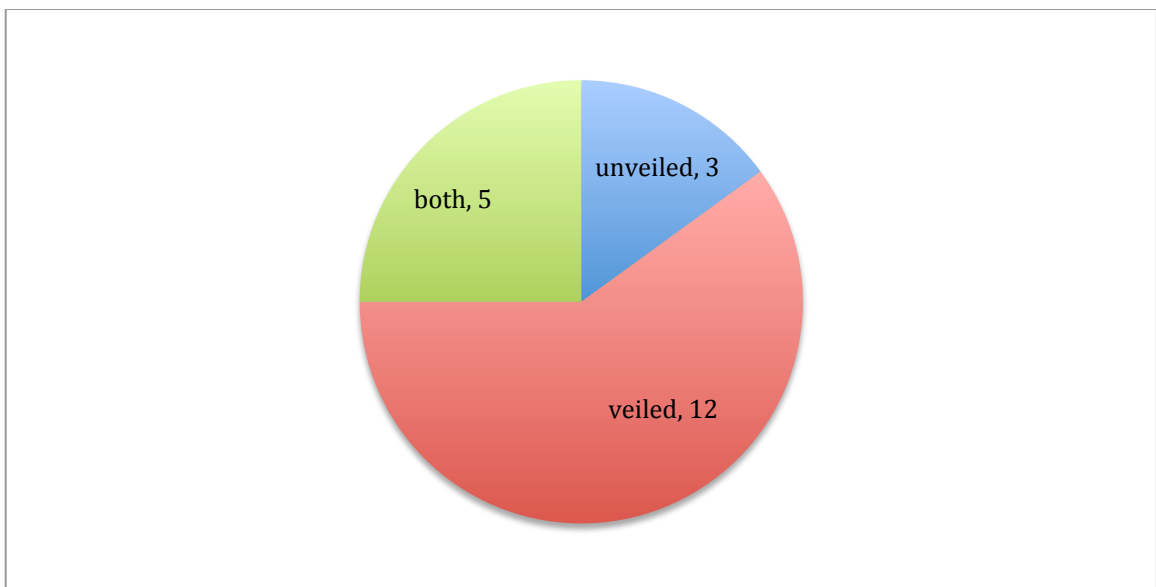
factors aside of school that affect the modesty values and overall religious values the interviewees adopt.

C. Social Interactions

Not only the type of school attended matters; the peers around have a considerable role in recommending what choices or behaviors will make the person look or be in a better shape. Most importantly, verbal and non-verbal attributes peers make affect the perception of the individual t him or herself, as symbolic interactionism suggests.

Thirteen out of the twenty veiled interviewees reported in this regard that their close friends are veiled. All of the interviewees in the mildly and classically veiled categories had veiled closed friends, or friends divided into veiled and non-veiled. The close friends fashionably veiled interviewees, interestingly, constituted only of non-veiled females. Socializing with unveiled fellows may have a role in the more fashionable choices of the interviewees. It is also worth to note, that the fashionably veiled interviewees mentioned they have close friends from different religions.

Figure 3: Most of the veiled interviewees said their close friends are also veiled



On the other hand, eleven of the seventeen mildly and classically veiled interviewees said that their close friends are of the same religion and of the same sect. Even when these close friends are unveiled, there is a specific implication of having friends from similar religious-sectarian background. A mildly veiled interviewee recalled her first years at AUB,

“As you enter the campus you look for your own [sectarian] group. Now I see that this was a very stupid thing to do; it is a very unhealthy environment to restrict your social surroundings to people from similar affiliations.”

A further aspect when discussing the social life of the interviewees is their encounters with males. The table below summarizes some of the answers of the veiled interviewees on these interactions.

Table 6.4: extent of interaction with males in light of the form of veil

Form of veil	Answer	Used to hangout out with male friends as teenager	Shake hands with males?	University experience affected the way of interaction with males
Classical	Yes	1	0	4
	No	5	6	2
	Total	6	6	6
Mild	Yes	3	4	7
	No	8	7	4
	Total	11	11	11
Fashionable	Yes	1	2	1
	No	2	1	2
	Total	3	3	3

Of the six mildly and fashionably veiled interviewees who said they shake hands with males, three used to hang out with male friends as teenagers. The others were firm on not shaking hands with males but gradually turned out to believe it is okay to do so. One mildly veiled interviewee noted,

“I did not shake hands when I started AUB. Later on I started to shake hands only with no hugs or kisses. I was raised to avoid contact with males in order to avoid having non-marital relationships (as a general rule) but my experience at AUB showed me that males do not have to be only potential sex-makers. They

can be regular humans, just like females, and many relationships and interactions can be done with them safely without a chance of risking a woman's integrity."

The fashionably veiled interviewee who does not accept handshaking noted,

"I would only shake hands if it is an embarrassing situation; let's say an 80 year old Italian professor who is unfamiliar of Islam is greeting me. But this never happened to me."

Personally, I believe that the very controversial issue of shaking hands does not touch the core or basics of the religion. The classically veiled interviewees were yet very firm in saying that they do not accept shaking hands even in embarrassing situations.

Fourteen out of the twenty veiled interviewees agreed that male colleagues interact less with veiled females. A mildly veiled interviewee replied, "they do not talk less [to veiled students], but it is a more reserved form of interaction." A classically veiled interviewee noted,

"I feel they over respect me. When I pass by a group laughing, they unconsciously stop. I do not mind speaking with male colleagues as long as there are limits to this relation, and they do not ask about my private life."

A fashionably veiled interviewee further states that the veil urges males to treat her as a human being rather than a female. "I should be a human with all people and a female with only one person," she says. A mildly veiled interviewee similarly said,

"I appreciate the values of modesty and privacy. Only one person will have access to you. You are for one person."

Another mildly veiled interviewee suggested that the background of the male plays a role in whether he interacts with veiled fellows or not. Another interviewee perceived that there is this "discrimination based on physical appearance" in the Lebanese society, in which within males approach veiled females much less. One of the interviewees who unveiled noted,

"People attribute values to the scarf, and thus are more careful and hesitant. When I unveiled, everything changed. A male even bluntly asked me if I'd sleep with him."

Another interviewee who also unveiled stated,

“[When veiled], you are treated differently, males look to you as the cute beautiful veiled friend, but do not transcend to sexual thought. When unveiled, you are no more the odd person, and it is much easier for males to get to know you.”

Some interviewees suggested it's their introvert personality that hindered males from communicating with them, and others endorsed that they have open friendships with males. There are indeed many factors that affect what type of interactions the veiled females engage in or avoid. The veil, however, is an important factor. Covering one's hair, or part of your beauty, dictates a message. Add to this the sum of stereotypes associated with veiling in our society. One of the interviewees who unveiled noted,

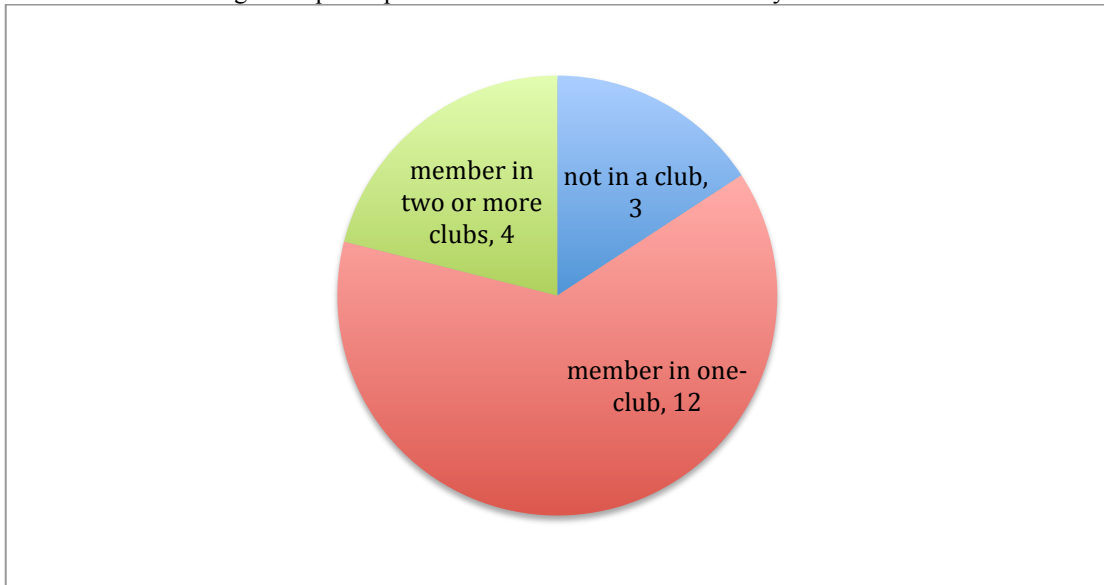
“A friend of mine told me that I invalidated all the stereotypes she had of veiled females. Then, I unveiled!”

D. Integration at AUB

The degree of integration of veiled students at the institution is not literally measurable. The degree of participation of students in clubs and varsity teams as well as volunteering at university events was briefly investigated. Nancy Hirschman (1997: 474) suggested that the veil is “a tangible marker of separateness and independence”, and “serves as a statement that the wearer is intent on preserving herself as separate from others, emotionally and psychologically as well as physically.” The following will study the validity of this statement in context of AUB.

Many of the interviewed students reported they are members of a single student club. This aligned with the religious and sectarian of the students; the Cultural Club of the South for Shia students and the Insight Club for Sunni students. Some of the students said they are not officially registered members of the clubs, but they regularly attend their events. Commenting on this, a moderate student noted, “as you are admitted to AUB, you search for people who are like you, and usually you find so in that specific club.”

Figure 4: participation of veiled students in university student clubs



Within social interactionism, Blumer noted that the generalized other may be “one’s particular segment or circle in a society” (Morrione, 2004: 117). By avoiding participation in student clubs where different social and religious values are celebrated, the veiled students are, in a way, “going back into the past to justify the new,” as Mead puts it (Morrione, 2004: 115). Of the nineteen AUB students interviewed, only two were members of varsity sport teams. These two, noticeably, both unveiled at a later stage. One of them states in this regard,

“While at AUB I stayed outside the house until sunset. This changed when I joined a varsity team with another veiled friends, as most trainings were from 6 to 8pm.”

When asked if they ever volunteered at university-organized events like the outdoors or the commencement, or participated in Speaker’s corner or similar activities, only eight students said they did. Some students mentioned their time did not allow them to volunteer or they are not interested. Others said they like to volunteer but the different atmosphere hinders them of doing so, as this classically veiled interviewee stated,

“I once volunteered in an association. I left because the atmosphere was very incorrect. Half of the time there was alcohol. I felt they abusing me.”

That the veil plays a role in the extent of participation of students in various activities, can be inferred from what this interviewee mentioned,

“The veil did not hinder me from fulfilling my academic/educational responsibilities successfully. Yet, there might have been more things that I would have done if I was not veiled while at AUB. The overall atmosphere [at AUB] is less welcoming or less fit for a veiled student.”

I personally never volunteered in an event or registered in a club. Even in my undergraduate institution, the only activity I was part of is the student choral society. I quit because my school friend who used to attend with me left, and the trainings were late in the evening. Needless to say, there were no veiled students other than myself. Imagine seeing a female wearing the Muslim veil singing in a Christmas concert; this sends contradictory dual messages for the audience even if personally I think otherwise. By having your hair covered, a manifest statement is being made, even if the person is not that religious or wants others to treat her as if she is not wearing a veil.

E. Conclusion

This chapter briefly tackled manifest features accompanied with the veil; particularly prayers, education, dress code, and integration at the university. Based on the presented analysis, at least three points can be deduced. First, there is a clear correlation between religiosity and the veil. Except for one interviewee, all of the respondents said they prayed regularly. Most of them as well were very cautious and reserved in their dressing choices, by either restricting their color choices or avoiding to wear make up and accessories. Given that the classically veiled interviewees showed more reservation in dress choices and in shaking hands vis-à-vis a relatively less conservative preferences by the mildly and fashionably veiled, correlation between the degree of religiosity and the form of the veil can also be proposed.

Second, although no causality can be made between receiving religious education or being raised in a religious family can be deduced, this has been reported as a major reason for the veiling of many interviewees. This brings to the forefront symbolic interactionism’s notion of the generalized other; many interviewees said they veiled because it was what girls who grow up and want to be good and virtuous do. Considering this, veiled interviewees find a gap between the generalized other they are

familiar with, and the new one they are introduced to at AUB. This leads us to the third point, where as a response to this, veiled interviewees create their own in-groups. This can be inferred from the feeling of oddness that some interviewees reported when participating in university organized events or activities in the wider community. Moreover, the avoidance of veiled students in registration in student clubs and sports teams suggests that there is an indirect seclusion between them and the wider AUB community. On one hand, veiled students can be held accountable for this because they refrain from participating in university-organized activities and engaging with people from different backgrounds for mere social reasons. Yet, on the other hand, it is impossible that veiled students at AUB, including the interviewees in this study, have no interest in participating in social or sports activities, what thus suggests that certain realities in the AUB atmosphere hold the veiled interviewees from regularly integrating into it.

Chapter VII

LATENT ATTRIBUTES AND THE VEIL

In order to inquire more on the perceptions of veiled interviewees to veiling, religion, and the role of women in the wider society. Also, the overall evaluations of the interviewees' experiences at AUB in light of their veil are investigated.

A. Importance of veiling and religion

Expectedly, all of the interviewees consider Islam very important in their self-identification, with the exception of the three interviewees who unveiled and one mildly veiled interviewee. The veiled interviewee considers Islam moderately important, and explains,

“Now I see religion from a very different perspective than before. I much appreciate orientalist who know about the prophet more than many Muslims. The person who regularly prays or is conservative is not necessarily religious.”

Even among those who unveiled later on, an interviewee mentioned that Islam is still moderately important,

“For me as a separate person and in my daily life, it [religion] is of little importance. But as a social being, it is of moderate importance because of my family; my family is still very religious.”

Those who considered Islam very important defined it as the guider in their lives. “I believe religion is related to everything and it makes the roles to everything; I cannot separate religion and life,” a classically veiled interviewee noted. Another classically veiled interviewee suggested that the veil is very important in validating how vital Islam is for her; “it [veiling] is a huge step; each day you put it you are making a commitment to be a good Muslim.” Another mildly veiled interviewee considered the Islam is a sacrifice as well as the veil. Some students said AUB experience motivated them to rationalize their religious choices. A mildly veiled interviewee noted,

“Long ago, I used to take [religious] things for granted. Now, I am maybe read the Quran much less but I am taking religion and religious interpretations more reasonably.”

Another mildly veiled interviewee similarly mentioned,

“I am not more religious meaning that I pray or fast more, but more religious intellectually. I perceive my religion from a different perspective.”

These excerpts suggest that these females have re-questioned their cultural goals and institutional means, and still conformed to those of their primary community. But, just as AUB experience urged these young females to rationally consider their religious choices, those who were questioning the validity of their religious traditions and the efficiency of the veiled decided to remove it. An interviewee who unveiled stated,

“I cannot say the atmosphere [at AUB] is anti-religious. Maybe certain classes were, like cultural studies classes, because they trigger thinking.”

For many students coming from religious background, as myself, cultural studies classes are probably the first encounter with other religions and existential thoughts. These are not like the thoughts on other religions you hear from your religious preachers or family guardians. You are reading the Bible and you see how similar the stories you are reading from the Quran, if not the same; you are reading about the Buddhists and seeing the logic behind their thought. You read Gilgamesh and the professor will leave it up to you why was Gilgamesh a myth but Moses [for religious people] a reality. More concretely, you are exposed to the sum of basic religious and atheist ideologies and the context behind their formation. You cannot attend these classes and go home as if you heard nothing. You need an answer to justify your values or to run away of them. An interviewee recalled,

“The first time I thought of unveiling was my first year at AUB. This was after taking a cultural studies course that introduced me to different interpretations of Islam. The wider theme touched was the usefulness of religion and Islam.”

On the other hand, a classically veiled interviewee stated,

“There is a perception that if one is veiled then she is illiterate. This is of the reasons why to get into AUB; to make a point that there are Muslim people who reason.”

B. Role models and consecutive roles of Muslim women

All AUB students are asked to complete 33 to 36 credits of general education courses, including social science, humanities, language, and other topics (General Education Requirements, n.d.: para. 2). As implied from our previous section, however,

each student interprets what is instructed differently. Some of the interviewees interpreted what was taken in cultural studies as conducive to unveiling, while not.

Given this, it is interesting to find out what the veiled interviewees perceive the role of Muslim women is, and if they have a distinctive role from other non-committed ones. A mildly veiled interviewee answered,

“The role of a Muslim woman is basically raising up her children and taking care of her household. This does not mean that she is only a housewife. She should also educate herself and be independent from her husband. If her husband leaves her this should not be the end of her life.”

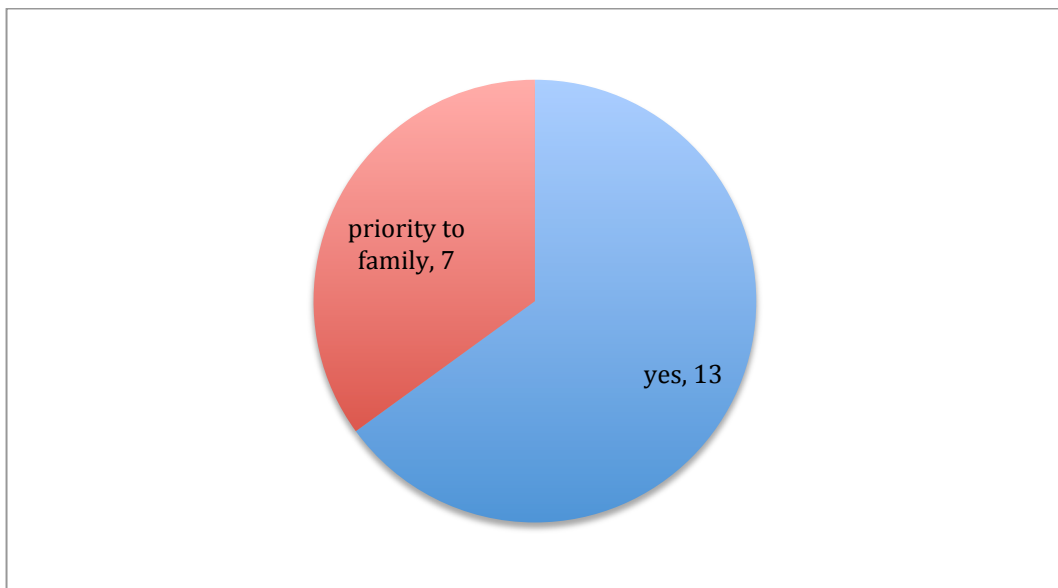
Yet, out of the twenty interviewees, only seven said they won’t work if they get married or had children. Some even noted the importance of having veiled females in work arenas. A mildly veiled interviewee noted,

“To have a Muslim engineer putting a veil is very important for the world to see that veiled women can be successful and have no limitations.”

Another mildly veiled interviewee similarly mentioned,

“I am glad to let the world see there are veiled women in prominent positions. I am the only one veiled in the company where I am, and this veil does not limit my employer or me. What matters is that my work is good.”

Figure 5: Almost two-thirds of the interviewees said they would still work after marriage/delivery



Of those who answered that the priority will be to their families, a classically veiled interviewee noted, “One of the roles of a Muslim woman is to raise her children on practicing Islam.” Many other interviewees asserted that the role of a Muslim woman is to serve her religion. A classically veiled interviewee mentioned,

“The role of every Muslim is to show Islam as it is through their acts and behaviors, and to make Islam more appealing. This is more effective than talking about Islam.”

Expectedly, the role models of the veiled interviewees ranged from the prophet, the prophet’s descendants and family, to recent preachers and clerics including Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, Amro Khaled, Imam Al-Khomeini, Tarek Suwaidan, and others. Some also noted that their parents, husbands, or teachers have inspired them. A classically veiled interviewee interestingly mentioned in this regard,

“Mohammad peace be upon him, of course [is my role model]. I do not think I consider other people to be role models. Maybe a certain aspect of them but not them as persons.”

A mildly veiled interviewee noted as well,

Many people around have inspired me, from my family and community. Not all of them are Muslims but many are creative and do good for their societies.”

C. Perception of AUB’s atmosphere and orientation

Previous chapters have briefly traced the missionary history of the institution, and the minimal presence of veiled students on campus throughout past decades. In light of this the veiled interviewees were asked how much compatible they feel their veil is with the general atmosphere of the university. Many students considered that wearing the veil fits the atmosphere and they freely move in the campus, while others noted that they feel they are a minority. A mildly veiled interviewee stated on her presence on campus,

“You feel strange. You do not feel the veil is compatible with AUB atmosphere. I fear to do a wrong thing and they’ll say the veiled female did this. I act as if someone is observing me all the time. I fear people will link what I do to the veil or to Islam.”

Another mildly veiled interviewee noted,

“Even though AUB claims to be a secular university, I feel it is biased to a specific religion and political party. I do not think it is a secular institution as much as it preserves a degree of secularism to prevent sectarianism on campus. This institution was basically a missionary since the 1800s until today. Superficially it is secular but on a deeper level it is a modern missionary.”

Personally, I think that AUB is a secular institution, but it is not a very pleasant space for a veiled person to be in. This does not only apply to AUB, but to the wider Lebanese society as well. Only in specific neighborhoods it is a positive thing to be veiled, while in many public spaces and private institutions including AUB, the veil is linked to a long list of stereotypical images. A mildly veiled interviewee mentioned here,

“I was not treated differently at AUB because I am veiled. Yet, an instructor was very surprised to see an excelling veiled student. He was impressed because my writing were very lively in the creative writing course, while most things written by veiled students were on death and religion.”

In light of social interactionism, I have met some of my friends who unveiled at AUB. One day, a friend who works at AUB came without her veil. I asked her, “you removed your veil?” She nodded. But when her fellows came and met her, most of them congratulated her on this decision. One of the unveiled interviewees noticed that after unveiling, her words “were taken more seriously”.

At the same time, this is not much related to the institution as much as to the identity of the staff working at AUB themselves. More concretely, if a person who stereotypically views the veil and works at AUB, the institution cannot be held accountable for his or her perception of the veil. We have already mentioned in the earlier chapter the story of an interviewee whose Christian instructor gave her a key to a private room on campus to pray in. A mildly veiled interviewee who does not hang out with males recalled that her classmates from different religions organized a girls-only event so she joins them. These are also positive signs of respect and acceptance that cannot be disregarded even if the majority of interviewees thought otherwise.

Yet, “some of the professors are judgmental,” as an interviewee noted. Some interviewees agreed that they are treated differently at AUB, but wondered whether it is due to their veil or something else. Some of them linked it to their introvert personality,

while others to the attitude of the AUB employees that they happened to encounter. A mildly veiled interviewee stated,

“Certain courses at AUB are either anti-religious or unreligious. There is a very small limit between what’s liberal and what’s anti-religious. I feel different at AUB, and I have conflicts with some instructors.”

Given that the veil signifies a certain degree of religiosity or piety, whatever form it takes, some interviewees said that when a discussion related to religion takes place in class, they feel the rest of the class is counting on them to reply and defend the religions point of view. A mildly veiled interviewee recalled this incident,

“Once we were discussing homosexuality in a sociology class. The professor asked who is against it and I was the only person who raised her hand, although there were others in the class who are against it. I looked down to those who stayed silent.”

Another mildly veiled student stated that she did not participate in class when discussions on Islam and religion take place. “This changed after my friend from the Insight Club encouraged me,” she added. A mildly veiled interviewee mentioned that in one of her social science electives, the instructor intentionally assigned her an article on the veil. Also, a mildly veiled interviewee perceived the university is anti-religious rather than secular; “When we used to pray in the library, some of the employees used to take the praying mats and to throw them in trash.”

Some students said their veil fitted the atmosphere, and others students said instructors positively treated them because they are veiled. A mildly veiled interviewee noted that an American professor treated her even better than the non-veiled fellows in class.

There can be no measurements to conclude whether a whole institution is secular or not. But the anecdotes presented above by a random sample imply that there is a judgmental stereotypical atmosphere. There are professors known for their anti-religious and anti-veiling positions. Yet, the administration of the university is aware of student clubs that organize religious activities and issue permits for these. As a mildly veiled interviewee noted, however, “if they do a dinner for the department, there will be alcoholic drinks.” At the same time, how many veiled students or employees belong to a

specific department? And what percentage do they account to? This is aside to the fact that AUB is adhered to liberal western atmosphere, and students who choose to enroll are aware that they are admitted to a liberal western institution. Yet, we can deduce from the latter that there are at least three factors contributing to the internal conflict that veiled students experience on AUB campus. First, the liberal western model on which the university is built on, and the general education requirements that are part of the curriculum. In other universities that are not linked to western models, general requirements may not be required of students or may be restricted to language requirements. Second, the fact that veiled students on the campus are a minority cannot be disregarded, despite their increase. Even if more religious or less liberal considerations are to be applied on campus, it is a fact that this is a western liberal institution, and the veiled students are the ones choosing to be enrolled in it. Lastly, not only the institution identifies itself as a liberal western one, but also most of its instructors have received their education in similar institutions abroad. Within these institutions, and in the west in general, there have been many discourses linking the veil to close-mindedness and medievalism.

Chapter VIII

THE VEILED VS. THE NON-VEILED

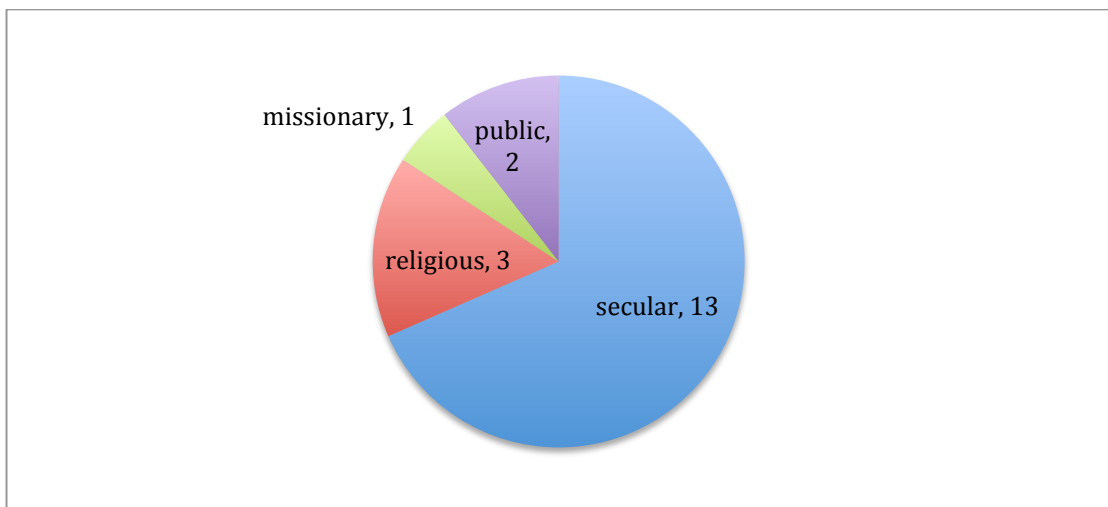
In the two previous chapters, we have discussed some of the manifest and latent features accompanied with the veil, starting from the twenty interviewees done with veiled females. In this chapter, we will present the interviews done with non-veiled females and males at AUB. I will call it non-veiled sample. The following will negotiate the importance of religion in the lives of interviewees, their integration at AUB, role models, and perceptions to the veil.

The total number of non-veiled interviewees is nineteen, of which ten are females. Students interviewed were randomly selected and come from different religious and socio-cultural backgrounds. Nonetheless, they are all AUB students.

A. Importance of Religion

The results collected from the interviewees interestingly show that religious values are very much endorsed at childhood. Even though over two third of the interviewees reported being in secular high schools, eight of the twenty interviewees mentioned they attended religious sessions outside school as children. Thus, out of the nineteen interviewees, there was at least eleven receiving religious education in their childhood.

Figure 6: Most of the non-veiled interviewees attended non-religious schools



When asked if religion is important for them in the meantime, most interviewees answered yes, including some who are pro-secularism. Some interviewees answered that religion is “the base of their lives” and “is very important”, others mentioned that it is important but it should be internal and not manifest. An interviewee noted,

“I do believe but I do not like it when someone urges me to go to church. I prefer to go when I personally want and decide to.”

Another interviewee noted, “I am religious but I think religion is spiritual, and not a physical cultural thing like the veil implies.” Considering religion important but not abiding by means of religiosity like praying suggest that many of the non-veiled interviewees fall under the categories of innovation, retreatism, and rebellion, in light of Merton’s theory.

Table 8.1: importance of religion and abidance by prayer of non-veiled sample

	Is religion important to you	Do you pray regularly
Yes	12	8
No	6	11
Slightly	1	0

As the table shows, only eight of the interviewees reported they pray regularly. It is to be noted here, that those who said they pray or consider religion important range between Muslims and non-Muslims. Here, it is also worth to note that only five interviewees said they attend religious session. Of the remaining some considered religion not important, while others reported alternative ways of preserving or enhancing their religiosity degrees. An interviewee noted,

“It is important for me to preserve a certain degree of religiosity. I like to attend religious sessions. I fear however, that the group I may attend may have political affiliations.”

Another interviewee said that she plans to veil as she graduates from AUB, while a third interviewee said she is planning to do so when she grows old. This again hints that AUB atmosphere, and the wider Lebanese, is not that in favor of veiling. In general, the interviews with the non-veiled sample reflected that religious values are of considerable importance for many students, even those who do not practice religious rituals regularly.

B. Integration at AUB

Unlike the veiled sample, most of the interviewees –fourteen out of nineteen– were either members of AUB varsity teams or of various student clubs, as classified in the table below:

Table 8.2: integration of non-veiled sample in AUB activities

	Males	Females
Volunteered and participated in a student club/varsity team	5	4
Never volunteered or participated at AUB activity	1	4
Either volunteered or participated in a student club/varsity team	3	2
Total	9	10

The clubs in which students are registered to ranged between ones related to their majors, and to other cultural artistic ones. Some of the interviewees were also on the University Student Faculty Committee.

Only six of the interviewed students agreed that the atmosphere is either anti-religious or unreligious. Of those who did not agree, some shared their thoughts on AUB being of a religious atmosphere rather than an intrinsically liberal secular one, especially when coming to activities. An interviewee recalled,

“When there are religious occasions there are many activities being organized by the religiously committed students. When we [seculars] organized an event on having a secular state in Lebanon some religiously committed students came particularly to dissent. On the other hand, when we organize a lecture on controversial topics like homophobia only few students attend. This tells that the number of religious students is in increase and this is a reflection to the religious extremism in the society.”

Many students similarly linked the existence of veiled students at AUB to the societal realities in Lebanon. Yet, “you do not see veiled females at AUB as much as you see in Beirut,” an interviewee noted. Another student thought AUB is more of a secular institution that focused more on academics and education. However, he questioned, “Why are there Christmas decorations and holidays that coincide with the occasions of a specific religion?” Other students considered AUB a secular and diversified place that accommodates people from different range of backgrounds and perspectives.

C. Role Models and Inspirers

Some students listed Jesus, the prophet, and the prophet's descendants as their role models. Yet, even those who mentioned religious characters listed other people from their academic and sociocultural circles. An interviewee said that "Jesus and people from the department" are her role models, while another mentioned that both "the prophet and Ziad Al-Rahbani" are his role models. Aside to religious characters, the veiled and non-veiled interviewees both listed family members and professors as inspirers or role models.

D. Perceptions to the veil

The opinions of non-veiled students of the veil as an artifact, and their interpretation of veiling in its modern forms do hint what the generalized other at AUB does look like. The interactions of students and staff with veiled females were also questions. Here, thirteen out of the nineteen interviews supported the proposition that males interact less with veiled females. An interviewee noted,

"I never paid attention that much to such details. But, it is more common to find veiled girls with a group of girls rather than boys."

Others thought that if veiled females engage in interactions with males, they would be from similar socio-religious background. An interviewee mentioned,

"Veiled girls are part of specific social circles. I suppose, for instance, that veiled girls in Insight Club do interact with males from the same club and vice-versa. But outside this specific context, males generally interact less with veiled fellows."

A male interviewee wondered, "when the lady is wearing a veil then as if she's putting limits." One of the interviewees who unveiled similarly remarked, "It [the veil] was an evident flag that prevented all males who are of different ideology of approaching." Yet, the veil was not the only factor that prohibited or encouraged males to interact with the veiled females; "this does not only depend on the veil but also on the personality of the female," a student noted. Another interviewee stated, "the veil puts limits but also the personality of the female plays a role; I know a veiled person who hug and kiss males." At the same time, it is possible that "veiled females also

communicate less [with males],” one interviewee suggested. The grouping of students by gender on campus was perceived as a sign of gender segregation on campus,

“If I see a veiled student with a group of men it will be a surprise for me. There is gender segregation here. You see a big group of boys, and a big group of girls.”

To some extent, the non-veiled interviewees perceived the veil as a barrier to communication with people from other backgrounds, but as invitation for interaction to people from similar ideologies. Some also reported being more brief or cautious when speaking with veiled fellows. An interviewee mentioned,

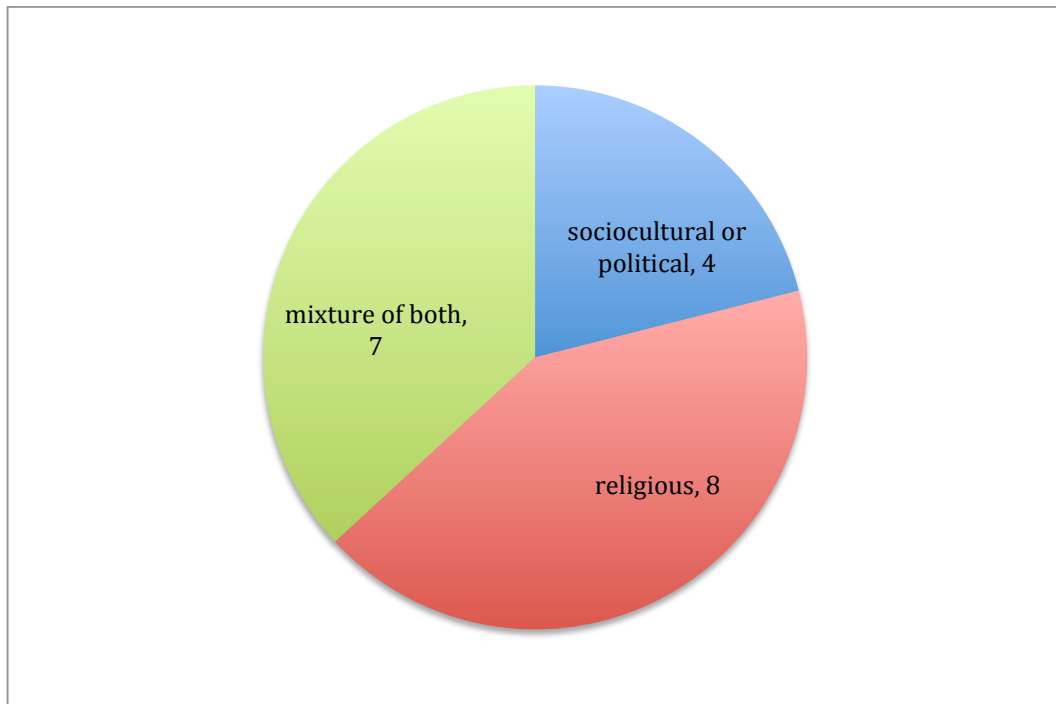
“I would expect that the veiled females are more reserved. I would not curse as much when I am speaking with one. The veil is a culturally loaded term here. But given that the veil is in different shapes, and sometimes girls do it because it looks good on them, these assumptions [that veiled are more reserved] may not be true.”

Another interviewee said she is more comfortable when dealing with fashionably veiled females than classically veiled ones. She stated,

“Subconsciously yes, I do feel more open when interacting with a fashionably veiled female. But without the veil these females can have better experiences. People discriminate against the veiled in an unconscious and subliminal way. At the same time, I feel most of the females are veiled because their family circumstances force them to be so. I am still shocked that once I saw a veiled lady in a pub.”

Yet, a male interviewee notes that no matter what form the veil takes, “you do not know what the limits are, and what is acceptable or not” for the female you are specifically interacting with. Nilüfer Göle suggests that by wearing the veil, females are sending a message that they favor Islamic values, and there are western values that they do not adhere to (Gole, 2012: 229). This angle is very interesting, for there are no boundaries that define for the male if the way he is interacting is accepted or not. Let’s take shaking hands again as an example; some mildly veiled interviewees mentioned they do shake hands, while one of the fashionably veiled interviewees mentioned she does not accept it at all. Of the other examples given by different interviewees is that some of their unveiled friends do not shake hands, while other veiled ones do hug and kiss male fellows. This hints that the manifest features may not necessarily draw the line of what the limits are when interacting with a veiled or non-veiled female.

Figure 7: What type of sign the non-veil sample perceives the veil as?



As the above charts shows, only four non-veiled interviewees perceive the veil as a solely cultural, traditional, or ideological sign. The other fifteen perceive the veil as a religious sign or a mixture of religious and sociocultural or political sign. Although some interviewees perceived that many veiled females are forced to do so, many interviewees, including non-Muslims, expressed their respect to veiled females. An interviewee thought, “The veil forces the person to respect the female wearing it. I see there is respect at AUB to veiled students; respect from the security, the professors, and the staff.”

The fashionable form of veiling was questioned and criticized by many interviewees. Only six of the nineteen interviewees said they are more comfortable when interacting with fashionably veiled females than classically veiled ones. An interviewee stated, “The point of wearing the veil is to be more modest and to give less attention to your physical views; now with the fashionable form we are seeing complexities.” Another interview noted,

“A proper veil does not have a single stable form, but is part of a range of forms. There is, however, a line that the female should not cross. I actually get repelled when I see a fashionably veiled female, wearing tight clothes, makeup, and a

veil. This is at odds with the idea of veiling. If a female is not veiled but wears flowing clothes I believe her dress code is better than a veiled female who wears tight clothes.”

“When a lady is fashionably veiled, she is sending a message that you can communicate more easily with her,” a male interviewee noted. “But not all the fashionably veiled are that open minded,” another remarked. A non-veiled interview added, “there are some veiled students at AUB who have reputation for beauty; the veil is no more to veil the beauty and is rather, at some points, a fashion statement.”

Here, it is worth to note that some of the non-veiled females in the sample were more reserved in their dress choices than fashionably veiled. For instance, three of the ten non-veiled females said they do not put makeup, and three others said they do not wear a bikini. These details further indicates that there is no pattern for measuring the choices of the females based on their religious or academic background, nor on the manifest veiling feature they may show. The peculiarity of the choices of each individual and the unique perception to the concepts of veiling and modesty support social interactionism’s proposition, that aside from all social structural factors, there is major role for how the person interprets the situation. Moreover, back in 1979 Blumer has spoken that with the formation of modern societies, there are so many subcultures that may be the ‘generalized other’ for the individual. What we deduce from the previous chapters is that the generalized other for the veiled females, specifically the classically and mildly veiled, is different than the generalized other for the rest of non-veiled females and males (Morrione, 2004:110).

Chapter IX

CONCLUSION

Although veiling experience is distinctive for each individual, this study traced some manifest and latent attributes accompanied with veiling at the American University of Beirut. Given that the sample of this study is relatively small- only twenty out of more than 400 veiled students, the following propositions can be further examined on a larger sample. The can be classified into major six findings. First, the analysis of this study suggests there is a strong correlation between religiosity and the veil. Most veiled students practice their religious rituals regularly and consider religion a very important or even a defining aspect of their lives. Many non-veiled students do consider religion important but not as much as the veiled ones. In addition, only few regularly practice their religious rites. Second, the hypothesis the degree of religiosity varies with the form of the veil (classic, mild, fashionable) was validated given the sample of this study. The classically veiled interviewees showed the largest degree of reservation regarding handshaking, make up, and bright clothes. The mildly and fashionably veiled were less reserved and few of them reported Islam was moderately, not very, important in their lives. Relating to Merton, these details also suggest that individuals do not adopt all institutional means for specific cultural goals. Rather, these means are manipulated and modified based on the individual's interpretation of the specific situation.

Third, in terms of dress code, there is avoidance to sharp and bright colors by most veiled interviewees and some non-veiled ones. Yet, most non-veiled females reported wearing make-up and bikini, which was an exception for few veiled females. This implies that the set of values that the veiled interviewees identify with revolve around modesty and religious restraint. In liberal western circumstance, however, having minimal amount of eye concealer and blush is seen as a must to females, and add to that the fact that Lebanese people like to show off, especially when it comes to outer looks. Fourth, regarding integration at AUB, non-veiled females and males find it

easier to integrate with the atmosphere of the university, and showed more activity level in student clubs, varsity teams, and volunteering communities. Only few veiled interviewees reported participating in varsity teams or registering in more than a single student club. Even those who showed willingness to volunteer in events were hesitant because the atmosphere there would be at odds with their religious values or make them uncomfortable.

Fifth, most veiled females surround themselves with a circle of similarly veiled fellows. And, on a more general level, there is an indirect segregation on campus as one interviewee suggested. Despite the liberal orientation of the university, and the less constraint social atmosphere, most females-veiled and non-veiled, said their close friends are of the same gender. Lastly, many veiled interviewees believed the university has a secret agenda or is in some way either anti-religious or unreligious. Interestingly, some secular students believed the opposite is true, and the increase in religiously affiliated student is indirectly restraining the freedom to organize events that would be accepted in liberal universities elsewhere, e.g. on homosexuality or secular state.

Aside to these propositions, it is very important to question the position of the institution and its role and effect on how its students perceive religion and modernity. The institution was established as a missionary, and some students said they believe it intrinsically is still biased to a specific religion and orientation. However, the accommodation of the institution to this number of veiled students, and its acceptance of practicing prayers on campus as mentioned by the dean of student affairs suggest otherwise. Most interestingly, social science and humanities courses, including cultural studies, do question the usefulness and validity of religions in general, and provoke students to critically think about their backgrounds despite what religion they belong to. Just as material in these courses may have led to the unveiling of Muslim students, it probably too led some Christian or Druze students to give up their faith and choose an alternative system of moral values.

I want to extrapolate that there is a subliminal discrimination against veiled students at AUB. The suggestion that veiled students in turn are to some degree responsible for their own isolation is sound, but this begs for some nuances.

First, veiled students are a minority, and they are not as a favorable minority as American or European students attending AUB. This can be explained by the set of values attached to their veil (discussed in the literature review part of this thesis), but also to more conjectural one. By the time I am writing this conclusion, there is an increase in the number of extremist Islamist movements; a phenomenon that does not suggest the veil would be any favorable in the region but rather linked to more medievalism and violence.

Second, veiled students, and religiously committed students in general, do face at some point in their AUB experience a clash in their value system. As we have noted, some students reported being more religious after attending AUB, while others gave up their veil and religion all together. This clash can be a reason behind the grouping of veiled females together on campus or in specific student clubs; ones that are affiliated to specific religious groups like the Insight Club and the Cultural Club of the South. Worth to note here, Islam is a religion that focuses on collectivity, like praying in groups, and there are several sayings for the prophet that ask people to befriend who help them preserve their religiosity.

From here I want to present my third point, where the religiously committed students act very cautiously when they are at AUB. By cautious I mean two things; first that they watch their acts and feel themselves representatives of a whole religion; and second they are very careful and selective in what activities and interactions they engage in. It is from here that the number of veiled students volunteering in university-organized events and participating in students clubs or varsity sports teams is very low. Veiled students seem to selectively surround themselves by people from similar socio-religious atmosphere, and try to find a sub-group from the new generalized other they are introduced to at AUB, where this sub-group aligns with their primary community or

the generalized other they have been familiar to. This deduction is also supported by the findings that the close friends of most veiled interviewees are also veiled.

Lastly, there are many reported stories in the analysis where veiled interviewees showed hesitance or disturbance from comments or acts by some AUB instructors or staff. I want to add to these a personal experience that I encountered at AUB. In brief, I was in a room with two fellows who both unveiled. An instructor arrived into the room, and identifying this he said, “so now your turn [to unveil] is next?” Having read Dodge I should not be so surprised for hearing this statement, when the president of the same institution have made similar or harsher ones decades ago. Whether veiled students who are admitted yearly to AUB are aware of these statements or not, their existence is in favor of the argument that there is subliminal discrimination against veiled students on campus.

To conclude, studying the veil at the American University of Beirut is a very complex topic that demands close examination. Such a study passes through different historical, social, and religious levels, starting from the history of the university, the social reality of veiling in Lebanon and its changes with geographical localities, and the different forms of veiling that are present nowadays. This study focused on the Muslim veil, which takes different forms. From here, we can question why the Druze veil is not as present on campus, and whether its static shape over time plays a role in this. The question of where the veil is worn also is very interesting. Our dress choices are much more cautious when we are in social atmosphere that are at odds with ours or include people from the larger society. I may wear a black gown to go to the nearby shop and get some groceries; meanwhile I will wear pants and a tunic if I am meeting a friend at that same location. But despite the extrapolation that I mentioned earlier, it is very important to assert that veiled females are not a homogenous group. The noted analysis does identify particular patterns or behaviors that are common, but the peculiarity of the experience and perceptions of each interviewee should not be underestimated.

I want to end, recalling an incident that happened at my sister’s graduation last year, when she shook hands with the professor who handled her the degree in that

formal occasion. My mother sent her an email, and interestingly carbon copied me; she wrote, "I am very disappointed that you shook hands with a male other than your husband; even though you see this a simple thing it fosters other prohibited things in our religion." I replied to my mother saying that I do as well shake hands, but the more important question is not whether she does shake hands or wear a veil, but whether one should focus on means at the expense of goals, to make an analogy to Merton's classification.

This approaches us to another dimension. As you look at my mild veil, or my sister's mild veil, you would not guess that this person accepts to shake hands with males. Some of my male schoolmates still did not realize that, even though it has been a decade since I have met them. I will end it here, with the unanswered question of what the limits are and what is acceptable to veiled females at AUB? And, if realized, is it possible to know what these limitations are from the manifest feature of the person?

Appendix A

Interview format
 For semi-structured interview with veiled students at AUB
 ‘Veiling at The American University of Beirut’:

Section 1: general questions introducing the interviewee

Name:	
Age:	Marital status:
Sect:	
Nationality:	Country raised in:
Major:	Minor or concentration:
Faculty:	Year enrolled at AUB:

The person is interviewed as:

- sample of traditionally veiled students
- sample of moderately veiled students
- sample of fashionably veiled students

Section 2: questions on the history of the veil

Year the veil was worn:

Age then:

Reason(s) for wearing the veil; direct and indirect:

If you can identify the factors and circumstances which, in your opinion, were important in leading you to veil, what are they? (list in order of importance)

Are females in your immediate and external family veiled? TABLE

Relation	Yes	No	Comments
Grandmother (father)			
Grandmother (mother)			
Mother			
Aunts (father)			
Aunts (mother)			
Female cousins			

When you first veiled, were the majority of females in your family veiled or not?

Section 3: educational background

What school did you attend as a child?

Religious	
Private	
Public	
Secular	
Other	

What high school did you attend?

Religious	
Private	
Public	
Secular	
Other	

Did you study religion or Quran regularly at school?

Why did you choose AUB to continue your studies?

What were your other university alternatives?

Why did you choose this major?

What other majors were alternatives?

Section 4: religiosity

Do you pray regularly five times a day?

When at AUB for the whole day, how do you manage to do your prayers?

When excused to pray, do you mention your intention to your colleagues?

Did you attend religious or Quran sessions as a child (outside school)?

Do you now regularly attend a religious or Quran session?

If yes;

- are your colleagues in the religious session only females (females/mixed)
- is the session given by a female
- how often is the session given? (once, twice, thrice a week, etc.)
- how did you get introduced to this group

If no;

- why not?
- How do you manage to preserve or enhance the degree of your religiosity?

Do you consider yourself:

- a) more religious than before
- b) about the same
- c) less religious

Section 5: The veil, clothing, and visual attributes

I wish to have an idea about your clothing, your color preferences, accessories, usage of makeup, perfumes, and ornaments. Are these choices religiously motivated or an expression of personal preference.

How did you veil when you first wore a headscarf? (traditional/moderate/fashionable)

What has been the impact of AUB on your clothing in general?

- a) make you more liberal
- b) make you more conservative
- c) no impact

Do you think the AUB atmosphere indirectly contributed in making your clothing more or less modest?

Where do you buy your clothes?

- a) stores for Islamic outfits
- b) ordinary stores
- c) both

Cloth/social behavior	Description	Personal pref.	Religious comm.
Color of clothes			
Color of veil			
Makeup			
Accessories			
Perfume			
Bikini			
Other (tattoo, piercing, etc.)			
Cigarette			
Hubble bubble			

Section 6: interactions with the same and the other sex

- Were the classes in your high school separated between sexes?
- Were you allowed to hang out with male friends as a teenager?
- How late do you stay outside the house at night?
- Do you shake hands with males? Kisses? Hugs?
- Do you have male friends whom you share with private and intimate concerns?
- Do you accept the idea of having a boyfriend?
- Have you ever had a boy friend?
- How intimate do you accept this relation to be?
- Was your religious commitment or veil an obstacle in developing a relationship?
- Out of your close friends today, what proportion are females?
- In general, do you mind being with a male alone in a private or public space (house, car, street)?
- Have your experience at AUB affected the way you interact with the other sex?
- Do you notice that male colleagues tend to interact less with you than other non-veiled fellows?
- Do you prefer to enroll in classes with a female instructor?
- Are your close friends veiled? (if yes what type of veil)
- Are your close friends from the same religion? (yes/no) sect (yes/no)
- When in a public space and you need something, do you tend to ask a veiled lady rather than an unveiled one?

Section 7: integration at the American University of Beirut

- Have you been a member of any club or activity (sports team, choir) at AUB?
- Have you volunteered or participated in university organized events (ex. Commencement volunteers, speakers corner, etc.)

Do you, at some points, consider the atmosphere and orientation of AUB anti-religious or unreligious?

Do you think your veil is compatible with the atmosphere of AUB?

Have you made new friends at AUB?

If yes;

- are these new friends veiled
- did this friendship transcend the campus?

If no;

- reasons
- do you think the veil contributed to this

Do you feel at some points that you are treated differently at AUB because you are veiled?

Is the instructor is less or more likely to comment on your veil?

When a discussion on Islam occurs in class, do you actively participate in the discussion?

Section 8: The veil and self-identity

How do you identify yourself today

How vital is Islam in your self-perception?

- a) very important
- b) moderately important
- c) of little importance

How important is the veil is in validating this self-identity?

Do you think the way you veil reflects this identification?

Has the veil advanced your sense of well-being? Does it make you feel better about yourself?

Did your choice of major was in light of this self-identification?

What is the profession you will pursue after you graduate?

Will you continue working if you get married or get children?

Do you aim to continue you graduate studies MA and/or PhD?

Do you consider traveling by yourself to continue your studies or to work?

What do you think is the role of a Muslim woman? can't this self-vision be without the veil?

Do you consider yourself a good/devoted muslim?

Who are your female role models?

Who in your life are the sources of inspiration? If you are to identify the local, regional, and global personalities that you admire and identify with...

Section 9: The veil and future prospects

Are you satisfied by the way you wear the veil today?

Do you consider or aim in the future to modify your dress to be more traditional or fashionable?

Do you think an unveiled female can still be a good Muslim?

Have you ever considered unveiling or think of yourself as unveiled in future years?

If the Islamic and Arab world is to be modernized, can the veil be part of this new world?

Do you think the meaning of the veil is changing especially in light of Arab uprisings and the Islamists' controversial control of power in some countries?

If you like to add a point, share an experience, or add something about your AUB or veil experience

Appendix B

Interview format

For an semi-structured interview on perceptions of veiled students at AUB

‘Veiling at The American University of Beirut’:

Section 1: general questions introducing the interviewee

Name:	
Age:	Marital status:
Sect/religion:	
Nationality:	Country raised in:
Major:	Minor or concentration:
Faculty:	Year enrolled at AUB:

The person is interviewed as:

- sample of non-veiled female students
- sample of male students

Section 2: questions on the veil in the interviewee’s background

Are any of your family members veiled?

Were any of your schoolteachers, private tutors, or housekeepers veiled?

At what age were you when you started to interact regularly with a veiled person?

Section 3: educational background

What school did you attend as a child?

Religious	
Private	
Public	
Secular	
Other	

What high school did you attend?

Religious	
Private	
Public	
Secular	
Other	

Did you study religion or Quran regularly at school?

Why did you choose AUB to continue your studies?

What were your other university alternatives?

Why did you choose this major?

What other majors were alternatives?

Section 4: religiosity

Do you pray regularly (no matter of which religion)?

Did you attend religious or Quran sessions as a child (outside school)?

Do you now regularly attend a religious or Quran session?

If yes;

- are your colleagues in the religious session of the same sex
- is the session given by a person of the same sex
- how often is the session given? (once, twice, thrice a week, etc.)
- how did you get introduced to this group of people

If no;

- why not?
- How do you manage to preserve or enhance the degree of your religiosity, if this is of importance to you at the first place?

Section 5: clothing, and visual attributes (only for female interviewees)

I wish to have an idea about your clothing, your color preferences, accessories, usage of makeup, perfumes, and ornaments. Are these choices religiously motivated or an expression of personal preference.

How modest your clothing is usually?

Do you think the AUB atmosphere indirectly contributed in making your clothing more or less modest?

Cloth/social behavior	Description	Personal pref.	Religious comm.
Color of clothes			
Color of veil			
Makeup			
Accessories			
Perfume			
Bikini			
Other (tattoo, piercing, etc.)			
Cigarette			
Hubble bubble			

Section 6: interactions with the same and the other sex

Were the classes in your high school separated between sexes?

Were you allowed to hang out with friends of the other sex as a teenager?

How often late do you stay outside the house at night?

Do you shake hands with the other sex? Kisses? Hugs?

Do you have friends of the other sex whom you share with secret and private matters?

Do you have or ever had a boyfriend/girlfriend; do you accept the idea of having one?

How far it is acceptable for the relationship with him/her to be?
Did religious, cultural, or social considerations affect how forward you go with a relationship?
Out of your close friends today, what is the approximate ratio of males to females?
Do you mind being with a person from the other sex alone in a private or public space (house, car, street)?
Have your experience at AUB affected the way you interact with the other sex?
Do you notice that male colleagues tend to interact less with veiled fellows than other non-veiled ones?
Do you prefer to enroll in classes with an instructor of your sex?
Are your close friends veiled? (if yes what type of veil)

Section 7: personal attributes

How do you identify yourself today, or in other words, where is religion self-perception?
Did your choice of major was in light of this self-identification?
What is the profession you will pursue after you graduate?
Will you continue working if you get married or get children? (for girls)
Do you aim to continue you graduate studies MA and/or PhD?
Do you consider traveling by yourself to continue your studies or to work?
Who are your role models?

Section 8: activism at the American University of Beirut

Have you been a member of any club or activity (sports team, choir) at AUB?
Have you volunteered or participated in university organized events (ex. Commencement, speakers corner, etc.)
Do you, at some points, consider the content or culture of AUB anti-religious or unreligious?
Do you think that the veil is compatible with the atmosphere and culture of AUB?
Have you made new friends with veiled students at AUB?
Did this friendship transcend the campus?

Section 9: The veil and the implied self-identity

What are the first impressions you get on a veiled fellow? (i.e. conservative, pious, religious, close-minded, submissive, inside plato's cave, etc.)
How do you behave when you are introduced to a veiled person? (especially to males, do you shake hands, etc.)
Do you think the veil may be an obstacle for those who wear it on achieving particular academic or professional achievements? (particular degrees or jobs in particular fields)
Do you identify the veil as an ideological/political or religious sign (or other)?
Are you able to identify the identity of the veiled female from the way she wear it? (ex. Druze, shia, sunni, etc.)

Are you usually more open and relaxed when interacting with a fashionably veiled person than a traditionally veiled?

What first impression do you have on fashionably veiled students vs traditionally veiled students do you have?

When in a public space and you need something, do you tend to ask a veiled lady rather than an unveiled one?

Section 10: The veil and future manipulations

Do you think an unveiled female can still be a good Muslim?

How compatible you think the veil is with modernization and globalization?

Do you think the meaning of the veil is changing especially in light of Arab uprisings and the Islamists' controversial control of power in some countries?

Anything to add.

Appendix C
Veiled Student at AUB from 1963-2011

Yearbook vol.	Year(s)	FAS	FEA	FM	FHS	FAFS	HSON	OSB	Other	Total
1	1963	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
2	1964	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	1964	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1966	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	1967	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	1968	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
7	1969	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8	1970	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	6
9	1971	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10	1972	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	1973	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
12	1975	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	1980	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
14	1981	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	4
15	1982	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
16	1983	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	5
17	1984	3	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	9
18	1985	3	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	9
19	1986	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	1987	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	1988	8	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	14
20	1989	1	0	3	0	2	0	1	0	7
	1990	15	0	3	0	2	4	1	0	25
21	1991	6	0	1	3	1	1	1	0	13
	1992	11	0	2	4	3	3	1	0	24
22	1993	7	3	2	2	3	2	1	0	20
23	1994	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	9
	1995	9	1	1	2	2	0	2	1	18
24	1996	8	1	2	3	0	0	1	0	15
25	1997	4	2	2	5	0	1	2	2	18
26	1998	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	8
	1999	8	3	3	2	0	2	0	1	19
27	2000	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	5

	2001	11	0	0	5	2	1	1	0	20
28	2002	8	2	4	3	2	2	2	0	23
29	2003	6	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	11
31	2005	94	24	10	17	27	7	13	0	192
32	2006	87	25	11	10	31	7	18	0	189
33	2007	124	25	10	31	43	8	18	0	259
34	2008	148	30	12	30	43	15	14	0	292
35	2009	159	41	19	32	65	23	21	1	361
36	2010	183	54	28	45	70	28	18	0	426
37	2011	188	68	26	47	62	35	21	0	447
Total		1100	288	148	259	363	145	138	8	2451

Appendix D

Comparative Statistics on veiled and non-veiled students at AUB 2005-2011

Year	Number of students*	Female students	% of females	Veiled students**	% out of females	% out of student body
2005	7330	3484	48%	192	5.5%	2.6%
2006	7048	3377	48%	189	5.6%	2.7%
2007	7310	3579	49%	259	7.2%	3.5%
2008	7446	3625	49%	292	8.1%	3.9%
2009	7833	3904	50%	361	9.2%	4.6%
2010	7985	3904	49%	426	10.9%	5.3%
2011	7943	3928	49%	447	11.4%	5.6%

*Number of students and female students are based on the numbers of common data sets issued by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at the American University of Beirut. The can be accessed online at:

http://www.aub.edu.lb/oira/institutional_research/Pages/dataset.aspx

**Veiled students in the AUB yearbook were counted and used.

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