Perception Of Yazidis and Yezidism in Turkish Society Through Social Media

Assoc. Prof. Musa Yavuz Alptekin[1], Prof. Dr. Farida U. Egamberdieva[2], Prof. Oybek Rashidov[3], Dr. Rizaeva Nilufar Oblakulovna[4], Dr. Sagatova Ziyodakhon Bakhtiyarovna[5], Dr. Ezozhon Yuldashevna Rakhmanova[6], Dr. Burkhanova Sabo Tulanovna[7], Mirsagatova Nargiza Sayfullayevna[8], Dr. Beyhan Şan[9], Dr. Azimova Umidaxon[10]

[1.] Journalism and Mass Communication University, Tashkent/Uzbekistan. ORCID ID: https: 0000-002-6221-7913. E-mail: m.yavuzalptekin@gmail.com
[2.] Oriental University, Tashkent/Uzbekistan. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4601-5104. E-mail: faridaegamberdiyeva@gmail.com
[3.] Tashkent State University of Economics. Tashkent/Uzbekistan. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9178-8264. E-mail: oybek_rashidov@list.ru
[4.] Tashkent state university of Economics, Department of Social sciences. Tashkent/Uzbekistan. ORCID ID: 0009-0005-5690-1945. E-mail: n.rizayeva@tsue.uz
[5.] Tashkent State Medical University, Faculty of Pediatrics and Folk Medicine, Department of Social Sciences, Pedagogy and Psychology, Tashkent/Uzbekistan, ORCID ID: 0009-0007-8231-786X 6. E-mail: Z38331173@gmail.com
[6.] Department of Social Sciences, Pedagogy and Psychology, Faculty of Pediatrics and Traditional Medicine, Tashkent State Medical University (TSMU). Tashkent/Uzbekistan. ORCID ID: 0009-0000-7310-9988. E-mail: ezozafarzona@gmail.com
[7.] Tashkent State University of Economics, Department of Social sciences, Tashkent/Uzbekistan. ORCID ID: 0009-0006-6372-7153. E-mail: s.burxanova@tsue.uz
[8.] Senior Lect. Department of Continuing Education Pedagogy, Oriental University, Tashkent/Uzbekistan. ORCID ID: 0009-0007-6084-7683. E-mail: mirsagatov.92@mail.ru
[9.] University of Information Technologies and Management (UITM), Faculty of social science, Department of History, Qarshi/Uzbekistan, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1360-4121 E-mail: beyhansanx@gmail.com
[10.] Tashkent State Economy University, Philology Faculty, Tashkent/Uzbekistan. ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5329-7264

ABSTRACT

Yazidism, whose members today live in Europe and America rather than in this region, is a religion of Middle Eastern origin. ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham) came to the world agenda with the massacre of hundreds of people in Iraq in 2014, and even many people in the Middle East became aware of Yazidism and Yazidis with this incident. Some of the oldest homes of Yazidis are in the borders of the Republic of Turkey. Hakkâri and Mardin are among the most important of these regions. In this study, Yazidi's perception of Turkish Society was investigated. In Turkey, comments about Yazidis were investigated in dictionary creation platforms by making nationally accessible and up-to-date definitions on the internet to achieve this aim. In consequence of the study, it was determined that there are three such dictionaries in Turkey, and the data of the study were obtained by a total of 173 definitions and interpretations about the items "Yazidis," and "Yazidism" were classified in itself in each of these three dictionaries. The study determined the existence of a series of perceptions and images differing about Yazidism and Yazidis in Turkish Society. Among the most prominent among these, it was understood that the stereotype of Yazidis in Turkey is "demonists." However, the existence of a powerful humanist approach as a

separate pole has also been determined. The perception of Yazidism in Turkish Society, like its thing, is syncretic, eclectic, and unsteady.

Keywords: Yazidis, Yazidism, Turkey, Perception of Yazidism and Yazidis, Social Media.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, every country has a dominant society and a dominant culture. The nation-state is somewhat also about the emergence of one of the societies and cultures, becoming dominant. In this context, generally, two factors determine "dominance." The first is the quantitative multiplicity: a specific population being crowded compared to other groups and representing the majority. The second of these is that the state sees this Society and its culture of the country: the founder, host, and first-degree valid Society and culture in every sense.

Minority societies and their cultures lie opposite or below the dominant societies and cultures. The social and individual identities, culture, and values of these classes are generally treated in a secondary and inferior manner, except in advanced democratic countries and societies. Similarly, the perception of these second classes in the eyes of the first is generally negative, secondary, and inferior. While this negative perception in the Society may lead to maltreatment, this negative perception may occur in long times and historically due to the structure of the nation-state and as required by the rule that cultures other than one culture are inferior.

Yazidism is known as a religion of Middle Eastern origin, and those who believe in this religion are named Yazidi ("Ezidi" in their own words). In some sources, while Yazidism was previously called *Şemsiler* in the sense of sun worshipers, it started to be called Yazidism in the 13th century. More importantly, it is not about the origin of the issue, but what kind of treatment Yezidis have been treated in the states in the Middle East from the recent past to the present. The main proposition of this study is that Yazidis, like thousands of minority cultures that remain outside the dominant culture in the world, are people with a negative image and receive secondary treatment. In this study, the perceptions and interpretations of Turkish citizens about Yazidis, who have a very deep-rooted past, even if their population is limited in the southeast of Turkey, will be investigated.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

NATION-STATES, ETHNIC DIFFERENCES AND MINORITIES

The definition that it is the modern version of the six-thousand-year-old state can be made for the Nation-State. In the literature, three primary features of the Nation-State are stated. These are Nationalism, Sovereignty, and Citizenship. Even though sovereignty seems like an ancient fact, it can be said that these elements are all products of modern Society and modernism in their new and final form. To the extent that the principles governing the whole are singular and inclusive, some elements are forced to be excluded or assimilated. Similarly, it is stated that Modernism is also standardizing and has a marginalizing approach in this way (Giddens, 2006, p. 6). Thus, the nation-state, which is essentially the product of modernity, in addition to all its other features, turns into a tool of standardization and for the same way of marginalization. This situation mostly suffers from ethnic and religious differences and other social minorities and disadvantaged groups (Taylor, 1997; Spinner, 1994; Macartney, 1934; Brubaker, 1996; Miller, 1995; Kymlica, 1995; Kymlica, 1998; Gilbert, 1998; Horowitz, 1985).

OTHER AND IDENTITY

Identity is the perception of the individual, group, community, or Society of oneself. This perception is mainly formed over the "other." The coexistence of individuals and people of all dimensions designs and creates first what is not I and us, that is, the "other," to create

and define "I" and "us." At this juncture, the identity of "I" and "us" is primarily what is not *"I and us."* Societies build their own identity through what is not us (Brewer, 1999; Silverstein & Holt, 1989). With this, it is understood that the self for the individual and the identity for the Society is essentially a fictional and constructed fact. As long as they base the identity on the abstract rather than the concrete and the fictional rather than the natural, the negative thoughts of societies about others can also become commonplace. Some of these are Prejudices, Stereotypes, Stigmatization, Discrimination, Marginalization, and Hate Speech.

Prejudice: Negative opinions of the individual, group, or Society that are not based on knowledge of others are called prejudices (Pettigrew, 1982; Allport, 1954; Nelson, 2002; Quillian, 2006). The term "others" as used herein can be an individual, group, or community in social life and may also be a particular ethnic group or a specific minority in all its appearances within a nation-state.

Stereotype: Stereotypes are collective and often opposing opinions and judgments formed by individuals, groups, or societies about others and often do not rely on factual information (Smith, 1991; Farley et al. 1994).

Discrimination: Discrimination means that solid and superior individuals, groups, or institutions put someone above, privileges, or prioritize others (Quillian, 2006; Craig, 2005; Petersen & Saporta, 2004; Heckman, 1998; Merton, 1970; Kymlica, 1998).

Stigmatization: Stigmatization is when a particular group is characterized as a negative feature of a segment of the Society or a community and is mentioned with this negative feature (Brewer, 1999; Gadd, 2010).

Othering: It is to show a negatively qualified group, a segment of society or community as the cause of all problems, negativities, and evils in daily social life and in general, to be excluded and declared enemy (Horowitz, 1985; Rothschild, 1981; Logan et al. 2004).

Hate Speech: The term hate speech is the verbal encouragement and encouragement of acts directed at its existence in a way that does not give the group, segment of society or community that is seen as the cause of all problems or specific problems and is excluded the right to life (Gadd, 2010; Jefferson, 2014; Feshbach, 1994; Opotow, 2005; Sternberg, 2003; Horowitz, 1985).

RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

In this study, the Interpretative and Critical Social Science method, two of the five methods valid in Social Sciences, was used. The events and facts will be investigated accordingly, with their context and background, and critically. On the other hand, obtaining data is a technique that is rarely used but is becoming popular day by day in this study. The data of this study were obtained by classifying the comments made on Yazidi, Yazidism, Yazidis items in three open-access internet dictionaries in Turkey. These dictionaries on the internet are Ekşi Sözlük (URL-1), Uludağ Sözlük (URL-2) and İnci Sözlük (URL-3). These dictionaries represent the most prominent cyber pages in the *New Media* lane in Turkey since 1999, when Ekşi Sözlük, the oldest of these three, was established. Similarly, these dictionaries, which contain the comments of registered authors on all kinds of topics and concepts, are web pages in the form of *participatory dictionaries*. In these three dictionaries, 173 comments were made on the three items mentioned above, the oldest of which started from 2000 until 2024. Of these 173 comments, 100 were made in Ekşi Sözlük, 63 in Uludağ Sözlük and 11 in İnci Sözlük. Analogically, 85 of these comments were made between 2000 and 2013, 62 in 2014, and 26 in 2015 and later. As can be guessed, in 2014, when Yazidis in Iraq were subjected to ISIS cruelty, massacre and genocide, there was a marked increase in comments. Some entries written as comments are more than a few words or sentences, some more than a page or two, very few more than a page or two.

For this topic, collecting data from an open access dictionary on the internet may seem attractive, as it is popular turning to such a technique is essential for practical reasons, namely because most of the people in Turkey do not know and do not recognize Yazidism and Yazidis. Achieving a good data set for this subject would have been possible with neither the questionnaire nor the interview method. Because people would end the questionnaire/interview by saying, "I do not know Yazidism and/or I do not have a Yazidi familiar and therefore it is not possible for me to express an opinion!". However, in this technique, those who know about this issue or at least voluntarily want to express an opinion on this matter only turn to the relevant articles of these sites, meet here, and discuss this issue and express their opinions. It is considered that investigating comments on websites for issues that most of the Society does not know about is much more efficient and healthier than questionnaires and interviews. The reason is that beyond making it easier to reach the person concerned, the other aspect that is superior to questionnaire and interview, as for that, does not interpret the request of the researcher and for comment, but as a wholly self-directed and voluntary reason. Another superiority of this technique over questionnaires and interviews is that there is no referral. Therefore, the data can be considered as subjective opinions of people who are presented in a completely free environment

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were examined according to the value they involved. While about half of the 173 comments attribute a positive or negative value to their comment, about the other half of the commentators also speculated that they included neutral information and descriptions in their interpretation that did not contain any value or could not be evaluated as positive or negative.

As half of the comments were neutral and speculative, the other half (49%) of the valuable comments were evaluated in the study. Positive and negative comments vary within themselves. As can be seen in Table-1, it is divided into five subgroups as othering, raillery, hate speech, hate-grudge, and Kurdish reproach. Positive comments were examined under ten sub-headings as humanistic approach, support and praise, respect for difference, emphasis on exclusion and othering, rebellion to othering, criticism to othering, rebellion to genocide, praise to cultural motifs, wisely humanism, humanism, and criticism of Muslims.

COMMENTS THAT ATTRIBUTE VALUE

TABLE-1: TABLE OF COMMENTS THAT ATTRIBUTE VALUE				
	Nature of Comments	Number	%
Negative Approaches	Othering	19	10.9
	Raillery	6	3.5
	Hate Speech	5	2.89
	Hate-Grudge	1	0.57
	Kurdish Reproach	1	0.57
	Total Category	32	18.4
Positive Approaches	Humanist Approach	21	12
	Support and Praise	7	4
	Respect for Difference	5	2.89
	Emphasis on Exclusion and Othering	5	2.89
	Rebellion to Othering	4	2.3
	Criticism to Othering	4	2.3
	Rebellion to Genocide	3	1.7
	Praise to Cultural Motifs	2	1.1
	Wisely Humanism	1	0.57

	Humanism and criticism of Muslims	1	0.57
	Total Category	53	30.6
	Speculation About Ezidism	13	7.5
	Neutral-Descriptive Comments	23	13.2
	Valueless Information and Identification	52	30
	Overall Total	173	100

NEGATIVE APPROACHES
OTHERING:
Nineteen of the commentators (10.9%) were used othering statements about Yazidis in their interpretations. The commentator (C.53) was commented on "a tribe with a kind of satanic belief." (C.103) was commented, "They worship the sun or something." Another commentator (C.105) was described the Yazidis as follows: "If you see old Kurdish wives with tattooed faces, dressed as sorcerers, they are Yazidis." A similar other comment was made by (C.151) as follows: He/she was started as "members of this reprobate faith" and gave some information in his/her way. Another commentator who unable to slow down (C.121.1) could say "Another form of satanism. Its soft version". Commentators will be impressed by each other that the next commentator (C.122) used similar expressions: "It is the peasant version of satanism." Yet another commentator (C.133) was made the qualification "another version of the satanic." (C.160), as for that, was described as "Old world satanism." As mentioned before, (C.142) declared, "... well it will say X on identity cards. After all, how is it different from satanism in terms of mentality?" in his interpretation. As can be seen, the last four commentators have introduced Yazidism and its believers as a version of Satanism or Satanists with almost the same expressions. As for that, some of the commentators associate Yazidis and Yazidism not with Satanism but directly with devil worship. (C.137) was used a contradictory expression such as "... they return to the sun and pray three times a day, they worship the devil". It is not explained how it is done both praying to the sun and worshiping the devil. A similar other comment was made by (C.150) as follows: According to him/her, Yazidis are defined as follows: "He/she is an initiate that says God is good somehow, better let's cringe to the devil." (C.157) was commented as "... Yazidis worship devil indirectly". (C.146) was made a similar comment and mentioned that the Yazidis prayed "towards the sun" when he started his words as "These heretics…" and that they blessed and deified every "thing" in the universe. Another commentator has opted to othering on religious memories: "It is the community that suffers their punishment for martyring the Prophet Ali. Worship both the devil and kill Prophet Ali, then plead for mercy". Though, it is known that the death of Prophet Ali, as claimed, was the result of the separation between Muslims. According to (C.166), who commented on the ethnic and religious affiliation of the Yazidis, "although the Yazidis were both Kurdish and non-Muslim, they received more attention from the Turkmens who are both Turkish and Muslim, our intellectuals defended more, and our state protected more." The next commentator (C.167), as for that, would have been inspired by this comment that he/she claimed: "If they were already Muslim, the United States would not have lifted their warplanes." According to (C.89), who commented by associating the issue with politics and terrorism, Yazidis were defined as "a society in Turkey that has escaped from their homeland, ISIS, and is a PKK supporter." Finally, another commentator was defined Yazidism as "a belief with a heterodox nature" and preferred to treat marginalization over the word "heterodox," which has a negative meaning in Turkish Society. There is no doubt that all of these comments are interpretations and definitions that othering Yazidism and its believers. The relatively favorable situation is that the proportion of those whom othering is deficient compared to the humanists.

RAILLERY:

Six of the commentators (3.5%) were used acrimonious expressions about Yazidis or Yazidism in their comments. One of them, (C.60), based on the sound resemblance of the word "büzülmek," which means shrinkage of clothes washed at high temperatures in Turkish to the name "Yazidism/Yazidis," made a derisive characterization for the Yazidis as "the brother tribe of the büzüdüler." Based on almost the same logic and can be thought to be inspired by an earlier comment (C.56), (C.77), as for that, made an acrimonious comment with a smear that "they do not have been the subject of a poem called Ezidiler/Ezildiler/Ezmediler/Ezidiler." There are other similar comments. Finally, a commentator (C.172) was commented on "People of the Middle East who should be grateful to ISIS for their contribution to our knowledge of their existence. Boy, we did not know these men existed, whoa". Although he has an acrimonious and orhering and devaluing approach, there is no doubt that Turkey and perhaps the majority of the world are in a similar position with this community and many other communities. However, no ethnic community or minority will want to be known in this way. This ignorance and obscurity are much more preferred in the name of human kindness. However, It is controversial that modernity (van der Loo & van Reijen, 2006), positivist science (Horkeimer, 2005), and especially capitalism (Sennet, 2015) will make the same choice. The commentator's statements are all the more meaningful from this point of view.

HATE SPEECH:

Five of the commentators (2.89%) were made hate speech about Yazidis or Yazidism. Among these, the comment of (C.78) is as follows: "… they are not such a cool religion and community. I guess they were stoning their daughters to death after 2003 in the image of stoning to death because the Muslim or Kurd ran away. It is the product of the same shit region". (C.109.1), as for that, probably produced the following hate speech in reaction to the commentators before him/her: "Why did not your later comment that could not become Yazidis and that all these devil worshipers courtesan were Kurds? ". Another commentator (C.124) says the following regarding the chances offered to the Yazidis with the claim that they were not offered to the Turkmen: "While Turkmens are not admitted, they go to Istanbul or something to visit relatives. There are no words to reflect the hate in me. Finally, (C.159) was commented as below: "Let's keep in mind when ISIS attacked them, the western dogs were furious. Later, when they put the peshmerga and PKK into the doggy position, the attacks started. Always the game of the West, fuck!".

HATE-GRUDGE:

What a commentator wrote is a comment that can only be seen in hatred and resentment. This comment, written on August 14, 2014, on the days when ISIS in Iraq massacred Yazidis, is one word, and this one word is a word similar to the name of the Yazidis, but at the same time, it is an expression that rudely describes the defeat of the Yazidis as a negative meaning. The comment of (C.56) is briefly "They were crushed :(. "

KURDISH REPROACH:

One of the commentators (C.65) says in his/her comment: "they are the representatives of ancient religions that reveal how many theologians there are in the dictionary. Interestingly, if the men are mentioned as Kurds, the interest will not be half that. These statements are a Kurdish reproach or even rebellion. According to his/her claim, he/she cannot tolerate the social media's interest in these Kurdish people, primarily based on their being Yazidi, not their Kurdishness, and they rebel against it. This commentator cannot think that religious differences can often produce ethnic differences and that it is no longer possible to define them as Kurdish.

OSITIVE APPROACHES

HUMANIST APPROACH:

Twenty-one of the commentators (12%) were made comments about Yazidis with a humanist content and agenda. Among them, (C.51) was expressed his/her thoughts as "It is the community that stands at the top of the "hierarchy" of victimization in Anatolia and Arab geography. Their grievances cannot be compared with that of Kurds, Arabs, or Armenians in terms of identity. Everyone has a defender; Yazidis do not. Because, according to monotheistic religions, they worship the devil and the melek taus according to them". (C.55), in his comment dated 14 August 2014, points out that at a time when ISIS massacred Yazidis, dictionary commentators kick somebody when they are down, and he/she expresses his/her reproachful feelings as follows: "have you lost your humanity so much? There is a massacre there now. We should talk about it, bring it to the agenda, send aid for basic needs, but the belief is that it is, worshiped the devil, was the son of the devil, I do not know what else to comment... Both Kurds, Satanists, Yazidis, and devil worshipers, but let's not ignore what they went through, unfortunately, we cannot eliminate their losses and grievances by othering them. I wish it was so, is that so? They'll even settle for that, they have been marginalized for a long time, and now they want to be abolished". (C.59), one of the commentators, expresses his/her feelings in the face of the gravity of the events with the words "child, old, woman, sick… they are one of the oppressed peoples of the twenty-first century. Humanity dies as the maps take shape". Comment of (Y.63) seems to rebel against the inhuman nature of total identities and abstractions: "They are mothers, they are children, they are young, they are old, they are fathers, they are babies, they are unborn offsprings. They are human. But they are killed by inhuman people. By those who say it is a great sin, none can take the life given by Allah except him. Don't kill! it is a sin". Similarly, (C.66) expressed his/her feelings briefly with the striking phrase "They are people. That's all we need to know about them these days". (C.66), as for that, used the expression "... the persecuted community in need of help" and explained how volunteers could help in the rest of his comment. (C.71), as for that, made his/her "Yazidis are the abandoned nation of Mesopotamia and the Middle East. Just yesterday, ISIS killed 500 Yazidis. I hope the God help them" comment and wish. On the other hand, (C.76) was commented "… but what matters right now is not what they believe in… What matters right now is the hunger and thirst of the Yazidis who are stuck in an area where there is no life safety. Some are tortured to death or raped. Enough ... won't it end, the cruelty of human beings to human beings ..." after trying to explain that the false perception about the beliefs of the Yazidis was not true. (C.94), as for that, was commented on "I had no idea until Zülfü Livaneli told his rather sad stories in *Huzursuzluk*. Humans are awful, my friend". On the other hand, (C.171) was expressed his observations with the sentence "... we live in the days when people are murdered by the oppressors because of their beliefs and origins and are applauded by others if it suits their interests".

SUPPORT AND PRAISE:

Seven of the commentators (4%) wrote comments supporting and praising the Yazidis. One of them (C.38) was started with the emphasis that the name was mispronounced: "It is an incorrect use. … It must be Yazdism or Ezidism. As associated with this belief, it has nothing to do with Yazid or devil. (C.85) was stated that the Yazidis were separated from the "coward" Muslims of the region by fighting against ISIS, and (C.86) was stated that the Yazidis are the "moral, brave people" of the Middle East. (C.144) was made a short positive comment on religion: "It is the most original religion I know." Similarly (C.155) was commented "the most beautiful religion among all religions. Because the religion of my beloved. Yezidis love be different". Finally, (C.154) also pointed to stereotypical thoughts that Yazidis do not "worship to the devil."

RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE:

Five of the commentators (2.89%), directly or indirectly, raised respect for differences regarding Yazidis in their comments. The first of (C.19 and 93) emphasizes the respect by the Republic of Turkey not accepting Yazidism as a religion; the second emphasizes the respect for the difference due to the persecution of ISIS in 2014. Another commentator (C.149), as for that, brings out respect for differences in defining Yazidism as follows: "it is literally its way of belief that it is sacred to the believer and respecting beliefs, but it is far from me."

EMPHASIS ON EXCLUSION AND OTHERING:

Five of the commentators (2.89%) were emphasized that Yazidis were marginalized in their comments. One of them (C.162) was shared an opinion of Yazidis about themselves. According to this, Ezidis thought it was intended to insult them to be called "Yazidi" by adding the letter "Y" to the beginning of their names. (C.119) was commented on "... Muslim Kurds also ostracized them in the villages where they lived because of their beliefs". (C.55), as for that, brought his feelings to the agenda with the expressions of "they have been already othering for a long time." (C.26) was used the expression "Yazidis were scattered, exiled and excluded from the oppression and cruelty they faced from time to time." (C.93), as for that, was emphasized: "Yazidis have been massacred by Arabs, Persians, Turks, Christians, and even Muslim Kurds throughout their history." Sources confirm that Muslim Kurds committed massacres against Yazidis. W. Jwaideh (2016, p. 123-155) reveals in all its nakedness the unprecedented and unprecedented Yazidi exiles and massacres committed by the Emir of Rewandız, Muhammet Pasha, a devout Sunni Muslim Kurd, and the Emir of Botan Bedirhan Bey, who has Kurdish ambitions in the first half of the 19th century in his book, in which he describes the history of Kurdish nationalism.

REBELLION TO OTHERING:

Four of the reviewers (2.3%) are rebelling against the othering of Yazidis. (C.93) deals with the issue with a historical perspective, gives the information of "The Yazidis were massacred 73 times, mostly during the Ottoman Empire, until the Anfal operations in Iraqi Kurdistan under Saddam's rule" and rebellions against this situation. Meanwhile, the same commentator was stated that Muslim Kurds were the ones who committed the most oppression, massacre, and genocide against Yazidis. This information is a particular example of the universal principle showing that it is someone or a group of the other of each Society itself (Alptekin et al. 2019, p. 285). (C.73), who took a more up-to-date approach to the event, found it appropriate to end his definition as "... community labeled as satanist" by these "ignorant" after rebelling against the marginalization in the dictionary and the ignorance of the commentators about Yazidis.

CRITICISM TO OTHERING:

Four of the reviewers (2.3%), as for that, criticized the othering of the Yazidis. (C.29), one of the comments, "They cannot go beyond repeating the dry memorization and deception they know as Yazidis are not Muslims, worship devil, etc." by a large part of Turkey criticizes this marginalization that is not based on knowledge. (C.74), as for that, defines the Yazidis as the last community of people in Turkey that is "obsessed with" by what he calls the "popular Muslim community" in his/her comment and criticizes the Islamist community in question as "no matter what they believe, what is it to you, why is it so sinking to you ..." in the continuation of his/her comment. Finally, (C.145) was started his/her comment with the phrase "religion that not to be equated with satanism" and later stated that the known rituals of satanism do not exist in Yazidism, and finished his/her comment with the phrase "… Yazidis worship Satan only to prevent harm to themselves".

REBELLION TO GENOCIDE:
Three of the commentators (1.7%) are in revolt against the Yazidi genocide perpetrated by ISIS in 2014. Among these, the comment of (C.68) is as follows: "The community of beheaders and proponents of the world of believers who can claim to believe in God and defend those who beheaded and beheaded claim to be devil worshipers." Another commentator (C.72) was commented on "abandoned people living in Karbala* of the century" with one sentence. Similarly, (C.79) almost revolts by asking, "Everyone stood up for what happened in Palestine as they should be, but is not this massacre, isn't it genocide?".

PRAISE TO CULTURAL MOTIFS:
Two of the commentators (1.1%) were made praiseworthy comments on the cultural motifs of the Yazidis. One of them (C.127) was expressed his/her praise with the phrase "depictions of devils are magnificent" shortly and succinctly. (C.134), as for that, states that the Yazidis turn to the sun three times a day, men, women, and everyone, big and small, open their hands and pray, and then continues as follows: "perhaps they are the most beautiful prayers the human race has ever said. Perhaps the most beautiful folk songs, the most beautiful poems came from these prayers. Perhaps these prayers are the basis of all the epics of Mesopotamia".

WISELY HUMANISM:
One of the commentators (0.57%) was reacted very consciously to negative attitudes towards Yazidis. His/her comment is as follows: "In every word we write, in every sentence, we have to think about what benefits these people are. There is no use in going deep into their beliefs. It also does not matter if their name has the letter Y at the beginning or not. The important thing is that these people are killed or condemned to death by terrorized terrorists. No word matters right now that would serve to change this situation or help people who were victims. Do not be afraid. Help them. Help "the people" who are in trouble, not with Yazidis, Turkmens, Arabs, Kurds. Forget the identities, names, nationalities, religion, parties. Help, even if small… Help for generations that will say 'We were deterritorialized, but they did not leave us alone, they took care of us' instead of generations that will say 'We were deterritorialized. Nobody came and looked in our faces' "(C.75).

CRITICISM TO HUMANISM AND MUSLIMS:
One of the reviewers (0.57%) was stated that he/she knew the Yezidis, that he met one of them in Moscow and that they were very good people, and continued as follows: "their current experience is unacceptable. They already have a handful of people left. The religion of peace that dynamites the Buddha statue in Afghanistan has also targeted these poor people" (C.82).

NEUTRAL-DESCRIPTIVE COMMENTS:
Twenty-three of the commentators (13.2%) did not express a positive or negative opinion about Yazidism or Yazidis and preferred to make completely neutral descriptions. (C.112), one of them briefly and succinctly expressed his/her description of the "Yazidis" as "the person of the Yazidi religion." Another commentator's (C.69) description is as follows: "In the language of the Kurdish, they are known as "Ezidis." "In the language of the Turkish, they are known as "Yazidis." It is the people who do not have a missionary mentality. They

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* Karbala: It is the name of the desert where the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed, the Prophet Hussein, and 64 of his entourage, were killed in Iraq in 680 by the order of the Second Umayyad King Yazid. For this reason, this place name later became the name of deep drama, negativity and ominousness among Muslims

have no tradition of spreading their religion and culture. They live completely their inside…
". Description of (C.118) in the context of beliefs is in the form of "they only believe that
they are descended from Adam." Comment of (Y.123) is as follows: "the group that buried
their dead and their precious things." (C.126) describes the issue related to the name as
follows: "They call it Yazidi within themselves." Description of (C.128) is as follows:
"Believing in the Yazidism religious view that we come across quite often in Germany.
They are very religious people". (C.148), as for that, describes the Yazidi belief as "a form
of religious belief with a long history whose founder is not fully known."

SPECULATION ABOUT EZIDISM:
Thirteen of the commentators (7.5%) were preferred to speculate about Yazidism. Among
them, the speculation of (Y.27) is very characteristic as "a unique belief in which Satanism
and Deism are mixed." Whereas, how can it be unique if mixed with other religions and
beliefs? They are purely speculative statements. Another related comment is "Faith that
purports to have much in common with Hinduism" (C.42). Another example of speculation
is as follows (C.43): "The most meaningful place for the Prometheus story. Worshiping
fire, directly the same, also gives fire to people". While fire worship is not a very central cult
in Yazidism, the ability to establish a relationship with Greek mythology points to complete
speculation. Comment of (C.102) is as follows: "The Kurds are Yazidi and Alevi. Turks and
Persians are Sunni and Shia. These two are true sects. There are 4 true sects. Others are
made-up". Whereas, in Sunni dogma, although Shiites are seen as Muslims, Shiism is not
seen as a true sect. Therefore, the comment is speculative, regardless of where it is held.
(C.158) keeps his/her comment short and says: "It is not a separate religion. It is a separate
branch of Zoroastrianism". Finally, (C.105), as for that, cannot stop himself from
speculating like this: "It is Kurdish religion: … it is my personal opinion that Alevism
derives from Yazidism".

TABLE-2: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS THAT ATTRIBUTE VALUE		
Categories of Comments	Number	%
Negative Comments	32	18.4
Positive Comments	53	30.6
Neutral Inputs, Information, Description, Speculation, and Others	88	51
Overall Total	173	100

DISCUSSION

What does it mean to be different and minority in a state and country, which is the heir of
a vast and great state like the Ottoman Empire, whose lands spanning 20 million square
kilometers like Turkey and where more than 50 ethnic groups lived side by side but carried
the trauma of losing all these lands and sovereignty in a short time? Analogically, after six
centuries of imperial organization, what is it like to be a different ethnic group in a unitary
nation-state like Turkey? The data of this study can essentially answer these questions
through the measurement of perception about Yazidis.
When the comments that reached 173 in total are analyzed thematically, it is seen that 39
percent of the comments are related to the *religious, theological characteristics, and worship* of
Yazidi. In this category, it was observed that the first three titles that attract the most
attention of Turkish Society and have the most comments are Melek Taus, Worship to
Devil, and Religious Syncretism. Although worshiping a bird may have seemed attractive
to Muslims, it can be thought that the eye-catching beauty of the peacock also played a role
in this interest. Similarly, "worship to the devil" or "blessing devil" for the followers of a
religion accustomed to stoning the devil seems to be very interesting. Finally, the fact that

Muslims followed specific ways and methods to avoid resembling other religions and their followers made the Syncretism of Yazidism extremely interesting in their eyes.

The second most crucial thematic comment category was the *Social Organization, Traditions, and Culture* category, with a percentage of 26.5. The top three titles in this category are Endogamy, Born as a Yazidi, and Closed Society. It is thought that endogamy is no longer a rule, as Muslims have started settled life neither in their religious principles nor in Turkish culture and tradition, and since tribal structuring has already been surpassed. For this reason, endogamy seems to be interesting. In general, it can be said that any domestic activity of minorities is of interest. This curiosity can be expected to be even higher in nation-states.

Religious-Traditional Symbols, Taboos, and Superstitions category represented the third largest group of thematic comment categories with a percentage of 19.6. The top three titles in this category are Interesting Superstitions, Main Symbol: Sun, and Holy Day Wednesday. The taboos and superstitions of minorities and especially closed societies have always attracted attention. The interest in sun symbolism may be related to finding close to oneself, beyond finding it very interesting. It is a trend that the people of geography in a temperate zone like Turkey can be expected to deal with the sun and the sun symbol. In conclusion, for a society whose holy day is Friday, the acceptance of Wednesday as a holy day has attracted significant attention, unlike any other known example.

The smallest cluster of thematic comments was represented by the *Relationship of Ethnicity, Language, and Religion* category with 13 percent. The most prominent topics in this category are Ethnic Origin, Ethno Religion, and Kurdish Religion. While commentators of Turkish origin probably refer to Yazidis as Kurds in terms of exclusion, Kurdish commentators may also have emphasized ethnicity with a sense of ownership. On the other hand, the idea that Yazidism is the particular religion of an ethnic group and that this ethnic group is Kurds is quite common in Kurdish thought. Accordingly, the fact that the language of worship is Arabic in Islam, due to the belief that it functions as a barricade to nationalism in the Kurdish approach, for Kurdish commentators and Kurdist, the fact that Kurdish is the language of worship of Yazidism seems to honor nationalist sentiments.

Considering the comments in terms of value attribution and value determination, it is also an interesting sight. Of the 173 comments posted on three websites about Yazidis, 51 percent consist of neutral information, description, or speculation that cannot be evaluated as positive or negative that does not contain any appraisal. The remaining comments are value-laden, and 18.4 percent of them are negative while 30.6 percent are positive. Most of the negative comments are about devil worship. As stated previously, it is easier to understand that a society that has become accustomed to stone the devil and "demonized" it in every sense of the word excludes and marginalizes an ethnoreligious minority through the issue of blessing the devil.

Although it can be said that negative comments are 18.4 percent in total, and the remaining roughly 80 percent comment either does not attribute any value or is directly positive, considering that under normal conditions, negative opinions should be absent or at an exceptional level such as 1 percent, the kindness of the scenery can be understood much better. Therefore, it is clear that the negative comment of 18.4 percent is exceptionally high, and it is a rate that cannot be tolerated or ignored. It can be argued that this situation has been caused by roughly a hundred years of social psychology resulting from a traumatic reactivity and intolerance to ethnic differences and nationalisms in Turkish Society that caused or are thought to be the cause of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

Recent perception studies about ethnic groups and minorities in Turkey provide the opportunity to compare them. For example, in the study conducted by Alp (2016) on Gypsies in Turkey and wholly based on Ekşi Sözlük, 55% of 633 comments corresponding to 340 are negative, 140 of them are positive, and 24% corresponding to 153 are neutral comments.

Comparing these data, a negative tendency of 18.4% about Yazidis can be considered much better off than 55% negative tendency towards gypsies and relatively. Nevertheless, it may be too optimistic, superficial, and misleading to interpret this result as Turkish Society's view of Yazidis more tolerant than Gypsies. This is because, after all, Gypsies are a well-known group, their selective lifestyle, although they are evident in daily social life, it can be said that the fact that Yazidis are much less known to the Turkish community, that they are settled, and their visibility in the Society is much more limited is compelling.

A similar situation has emerged in the studies of Yaşa and Öksüz (2020) on Syrians. In this study, in which 320 related comments in Ekşi Sözlük were included, 95% corresponding to 304 of the comments are negative, 5% corresponding to 16 of them are neutral, and there are no positive comments. It is observed that the rates for Yazidis are much better than those for Syrians. It can be argued that this is mainly due to the overpopulation of Syrians and, on the other hand, the open massacre of Yazidis by ISIS.

Hence, although it can be thought that Yazidis are not as bad as Gypsies and Syrians in terms of social exclusion and marginalization due to ethnic and religious differences and immigrants in Turkey, ideally, the 18.4 percent negation of any ethnic, religious group, immigrant, or any minority in any country is not a cheerful sight at all.

CONCLUSION

The data on Yazidis in this study are not external but internal. In other words, these data are not data that reflect the real and concrete situation of Yazidis in Turkey, but rather personal opinions of individuals belonging to the Turkish community about Yazidis, their ideas about them, and finally, their social perceptions about them. Although this opinion and perception are, on the one hand, purely internal and personal, in a way, it is external and sociological. Because these personal views are not the result of individuals experiencing the Yazidis individually, but rather the result of the social interaction, the transfer of the social perspective to the individual. In the last instance, these perspectives are not expressions that reflect the concrete situation, life, and culture of the Yazidis, but they are opinions and thoughts developed outside of them. On the other hand, these perspectives are the reflection of the individuals of Turkish Society, but also the overall social perspective.

When the study's data is reviewed, it will be understood that Turkish Society has some stereotypes related to Yazidis. The most prominent of these stereotypes is the label of "They are worship to the devil." Even if in most of the comments this verb is conveyed as a description, description, or a neutral presentation of information, highlighting this issue is in itself a process of social othering. While Yazidis have many other features and, more importantly, this verb is explained very differently by themselves, perceiving and explaining this subject briefly and directly as "worshiping to the devil" may result from a marginalizing social tendency. Other prominent stereotypes of Turkish Society regarding Yazidis are "they have interesting superstitions," "being polygamous," and their ethnicity is Kurdish, not Turkish.

Considering these data, it is understood that being the other in Turkish Society is mainly synonymous with being different. Having a different ethnicity, having a different belief system, and having a different culture can be seen as a sufficient reason to be essentially others and marginalized. In all these uniform approaches and cautious or even negative approaches to diversity, it is possible to see the uniform practices, education, and upbringing transferred from the Ottoman to the Republic. Although it has made an essential contribution to nationalization in a long time with the Ottoman Shayk al-Islam institution and the Religious institution in the Republic of Turkey, it has also produced a uniformization of religious issues stereotyping attitude towards religious minorities, and finally, a marginalizing perspective.

Despite all this, it was determined that a solid Humanist vein towards differences and minorities in Yazidis is also getting more assertive in Turkey. With multiple justifications for the development of this approach, it is possible to associate it with the multicultural tradition that Turkish Society inherited from the Ottoman Society and with the increase in the level of education, internet facilities, and the close contact and interaction established with the European Union and European culture, which is one of the advanced democratic blocs of the world.

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