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The Boundaries of Belonging: Hajj and the Transnational Experience from the Turkish Perspective

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Introduction

This work aims to take the sociological and anthropological narratives of Turkish pilgrims as a point of departure in discussing the experience of Hajj through its capacity to address the senses and evoke emotions. So, this project will argue these senses and emotions to be related to the spiritual experience of the pilgrimage to Mecca and to be motivated by the interactions of Muslim pilgrims belonging to diverse backgrounds and nationalities. The Hajj itself brings together Muslims as representing the global nation beyond the differences that might exist within Muslim communities and national boundaries.

The "Islamic Pilgrimage" is the only supranational organization and gathering in the world as it is repeated every year with the large number of participants. Writing extensively about the global pilgrimage to Mecca is, of course, difficult. This difficulty is due to the fact that the subject is too complex and multifaceted in terms of content for one person to cope with, as well as the responsibility of being one of the first writers. Because when it comes to pilgrimage, it is certain that there will be elements and aspects to be discovered from the treasure of humanity. It corresponds to an organization with wider participation in terms of people who cannot get out of their local ties most of their lives. With the pilgrimage, which provides the opportunity to read all aspects of the realm of existence over a single time and space, pilgrims undertake to witness this event firsthand (Sardar, 2014). So, Hajj ultimately means finding salvation and truth for many pilgrims and their candidates (Hammoudi, 2006).

However, this project will also argue, that the use of senses in descriptions of the pilgrimage at the personal level enables the individual Turkish pilgrims to gain an ongoing awareness and sense regarding the time and place of the pilgrimage upon their return to Turkey. This transnational experience generally becomes part of the narratives that pilgrims tell family and friends upon returning home. At the group level, sharing the experience through the senses allows religious sentiments to emerge and triggers feelings and emotions to be stimulated in those listening. In this sense, sharing the Hajj experience is a cultural act that also influences people's expectations of certain physical and emotional responses during the pilgrimage. Both those who have performed the Hajj or Umrah and those who will may, whether consciously or unconsciously, anticipate certain emotions related to the various rites involved in the pilgrimage. With regard to this in their book *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* Victor and Edith Turner argued that liminality produces a sensation of unity, *communitas*, and anti-structure as integral features of a pilgrimage (Turner & Turner, 1978, p.). They used the concept of *communitas* to refer to "a relational quality of full unmediated communication, even communion" with other individuals that "combines the qualities of lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity, and comradeship." With their narratives about their feelings, pilgrims expressed the emotions they had during the pilgrimage, while at the same time evoking, communicating, and reinforcing these emotions. The pilgrimage itself is an emotionally powerful experience because of its effect and the impact it is able to leave on the senses of both those who performed the Hajj as well as those who listen to their narratives and stories. In her work "The Hajj and the Anthropological Study of Pilgrimage" in *Hajj: Global Interactions Through Pilgrimage* (Mols & Buitelaar, 2015), Marjo Buitelaar points out the importance of understanding specific instances of Hajj performances within their wider

historical and cultural contexts, each of which testify to the Hajj as a changing tradition. As a religious experience, the sensual experience the pilgrims have may be perceptible, visible, and audible, as well as provide a framework of emotions. From this point of view, this work tries to reflect on the narrative experiences of Hajj through the senses of sight like sound, smell, taste, and touch and will also reflect on how the transnational relations during Hajj become part of these pilgrims' sensory experience.

Hajj; Meaning and Definition as Transnational Action

Hajj/Pilgrimage, in Islam is often discussed as a central aspect of religion that includes both beliefs and practices (Rahimi and Eshaghi 2019). Thus, the as a practice is not limited to several rites that pilgrims engage in when they visit Mecca. The practice is also related to how they bring to it their understanding of the pilgrimage, framing the ways in which they engage with other religious, social, and cultural practices.

In theory, in terms of the content of the discourse of Hajj, in terms of Islamic belief, a single God is believed, and all people are divided into race, language, class, status, gender, etc. It is a sacred meeting that makes a person composed of individuals a member of the Global Muslim Community- Ummah - by melting it in servitude, which is a universal pot, without discrimination, and takes a person, who is made up of individuals, to the place of worship over history and time (Vitray-Meyerovitch, 2011). However, in practice, pilgrimage has a function of bringing more status (meanly pilgrim) for people with a certain social status, which we can describe as the *traditional elite*. Due to the obligatory conditions of hajj and the fact that it is for people with a certain class belonging, being able to go on pilgrimage also indicates a class situation in Islamic society. Thus, while the pilgrimage symbolizes the status of the middle class, it also serves as a confirmation (McDonnell, 1990). However, there are some contradictory definitions about Hajj. According to Michael Sallnow, the fact that the pilgrims have different languages, that Islam itself includes and therefore the worship of the pilgrimage together brings out the differences with the introduction of national/cultural differences and sectarian differences, despite the unifying discourses that unite the differences over Muslim identity (Sallnow, 1991).

The Hajj takes Muslims out of their regular everyday environment and places them amidst new surroundings where they perform a set of rituals, both individually and collectively. In addition to its importance as a personal religious undertaking of devotion for Muslims, the Hajj is also a global annual event that involves political, social, economic, and intellectual aspects (Ryad, 2017). Therefore, the Hajj is the most important journey Muslims will undertake on both a communal and personal level (Sardar, 2014; Eickelman & Piscatori, 1990).

On the other hand, to Bayyığit , pilgrimage as a form of worship, has a social character rather than an individual one as one of the most concrete examples of traditional religious life with its emphasis on unity (Bayyığit,1998). Pilgrimage manifests itself as a religious, cultural and sociopolitical phenomenon (Tagliacozzo & Toorawa, 2016). Despite the fact that the pilgrimage, together with other Islamic worships, "*deserves to be included in a different socio-cultural framework in addition to all the meanings it carries in the Islamic tradition with its various characteristics that it refers to in social memory*" (Çakmak, 2010). From the perspective of Turkey, such an event/phenomenon, which affects so many people directly or

indirectly, due to their de facto pilgrimage every year, needs to be examined in multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary ways through its different aspects. While such a need exists and is essential, pilgrimage as a matter could not go beyond being the subject of studies conducted in the fields of theology, which examines the practice and creed, or works that examine the Hejaz Region from a historical and political point of view.

Sociology of Hajj, Literatures and Challenges

The biggest difficulty I faced when I started to search the literature about pilgrimage was that the writings on pilgrimage were mostly out of the perspective I aimed at, that is, sometimes in the literature, which were written to provide information about the region or those who will perform the hajj to fulfill the purpose of worship. It has emerged as an excess of works described as *memoirs*. However, out of all this writing, to be able to provide material for the field that can be described as *Pilgrimage Sociology* and what information from the pile of information created by the memories corresponds to the field of interest. In these rare moments, scholars focused more on the ethnic or political form of the pilgrimage, and they wanted to evaluate the pilgrimage only on these features. Anthropological and sociological studies on pilgrimage could not escape the influence of two main schools. These are the Durkheimian method that can be described as the mechanical solidarity model on the one hand, and the Turnerian *communitas* method on the other (Turner, 2011). In the Durkheimian method of mechanical solidarity, the differences in both pilgrims and pilgrimage were ignored, focusing on the function of the pilgrimage to establish the social, and generalizing on certain characteristics of the pilgrimage in a reductionist way (Durkheim, 2014). In Turner's *communitas* method, pilgrimage is handled as a phenomenon to include a journey to holy places, and it is underlined that the most important aspect of pilgrimage worship is individual experience, since it includes the pilgrim in a *communitas* or an *anti-structure*. (Turner, 2011). Many studies, however, critiqued the Turnerian approach for being too totalizing in its depiction of pilgrimage rather than taking into account the variety of pilgrimage experiences and the range of motivations for performing a pilgrimage (Eickelman and Piscatori 1990; Eade and Sallnow 199). For example, Michael Sallnow, studying group pilgrimage among Quechua Indians in the Andes, finds that pilgrims do not encounter one another in the manner described by Turner (Sallnow 1987; 1981). Sallnow critiques the notion of *communitas* as characterizing accurately the behavior of pilgrims; indeed, far from expressing a sense of unrestricted fellowship, pilgrimage might be characterized by nepotism, factionalism, endemic competition and inner-community conflict. Examples from Muslim pilgrimage sites as arenas for competition among individuals and groups can be seen most clearly in studies focusing on local pilgrimages to a lodge of a saint or local shrine (Flaskerud and Natvig 2018).

When sociologists and anthropologists mostly focused on the phenomenon of pilgrimage, they considered the phenomenon of pilgrimage an exception to their familiar behavior with regard to the society in which they were concerned (Eickelman, 1976). This actually points to a very understandable situation. Because in every society, especially in Islamic societies, the pilgrimage, as a worship that is performed/repeated every year, corresponds to an exception for the small minority who do, considering the large majority who do not participate. With all these aspects, hajj has an effect that exceeds that of a minority in terms of its results and areas of influence. Secondly, anthropologists believe that the community that will host the subject

they will study should not be a stable, small and homogeneous community in such a way that every member can be recognized closely.

In summary, there has been a shift in the study of pilgrimage over time mainly from ideas of *communitas* to those of conflict and contestation and more recently towards looking at the experience from the perspective of its embeddedness in everyday life. It is also important to situate this study within the broader framework of the anthropology of Islam since it takes an anthropological and sociological approach when looking at the lives of pilgrims and the socio-cultural dimensions of the everyday lives of Muslims. So through the anthropological ethnographic narrative, this paper reflects on how pilgrims in Turkey express their Hajj/Umrah experiences as a form of feelings and sensations.

Approach and Method of the Study

In this kind of works, the phenomenon of religion is examined in terms of the meaning that the participants attribute to their worship. Therefore, in the sociology of religion, the universality or specificity of the concept of belief is not in question. Although it is thought that the worships have not changed in terms of both form and content, ignoring the historical course in popular understanding, there have always been differences in practice. It is necessary to interpret and evaluate these differences within the historical context. The issue of understanding religious experience occupies an important place in the literature of sociology and anthropology. Clifford Geertz (2012), who puts the meaning of religious experience at the center of his anthropological studies in particular, has paved the way for the application of the hermeneutic anthropology school to Muslim societies by arguing that it is possible to understand the insight and meaning of behavior made through individual events with the ideographical approach he has adopted. According to Geertz (2012), the main factor that determines the target and content of human behavior is the meaning attributed to it by the individual who performs this behavior. Thus, Geertz thinks that the meanings he attributes to his behavior as an acting actor can only be revealed through the intense description of symbols. In addition to this, ethnography, which is of vital importance for Anthropology, is the inside reporting of human knowledge. That is, it is based on the experience of the phenomenon in writing. The writing of life knowledge that belongs to human societies is called ethnography (Akın, A.Y. & Kürker, M. 2021).

On the other hand, according to Buitelaar, the *sacred* always constitutes the center of all anthropological studies related to religion, especially pilgrimage. As a journey towards the sacred, pilgrimage literally divides the lives of pilgrims into two different lives, before and after (Buitelaar, 2015). In today's Turkey, it is about discovering the expansions of phrases we are accustomed to hearing such as "*the old Hatice died with the pilgrimage, now there is a new one*" (Hatice), and "*I became a brand new person after the pilgrimage*" (Mehmet), Some of the questions asked are the lives of the pilgrims, the selves they become when they return with their previous selves", their daily social and cultural life worlds, their personal stories about their modern pilgrimage, and how they affect their religiosity, social identities and self-identity references and habits. And on top of all this, the question of how much of what they have experienced/accumulated about themselves really belongs to themselves, and how much

belongs to the narrators of the pilgrimage stories, remains crucially in the middle (Buitelaar, 2015).

However, the results obtained without filtering or sifting through real experiences are worthless in terms of anthropology. For an anthropological study to be conducted, the relationship between the researcher and the people to be addressed is expected to be primary and direct as much as possible. Because the reliability of the information obtained after each indirection becomes doubtful. At the beginning of the factors that make the relationship between the researcher and the participant people indirect from being direct, the person who will do the research does not know the language of the participants or does not have a command of that language (Gamson, 1991). Of course, the language here is not only the formal language (here Turkish), but also the dialect (idiom) that weaves the meaning world of the participants, and the use of language as metaphors, idioms, aphorisms, smiles, etc. It is a "language" in a broad sense, including its specialized form, which includes many subtle elements. In this sense, my ability to use the "language", in which these traditional and religious concepts and notions, in which the participants were involved, was the dominant factor, was one of the factors that helped me during the whole field research (Ricoeur, 2016). In other words, according to Buraway (1991), more than *observation by participation*, the *observation of participation* is expected from the researcher. On the other hand, through ethnography, how individuals cope with the religious phenomena they experience in certain social contexts reveals the possibility of discovering the meanings of all these religious practices by taking a closer look at their level of belonging (Holmes, Marcus, 2005). It becomes easier to understand how the symbolic language of worship is included in a construction process by associating meanings and norms with the personalities of those who act through ethnography.

After all these, it is necessary to say something about how the pilgrimage was studied and the method applied in this study. First of all, it was necessary to narrow down the subject to be studied. Because the issue of how to study the subject stood as a vital question corresponding to the research problematic. And the answer to this question, as well as the question itself, would greatly affect the course of the study. Narrowing the subject would set a constraint on both the question and the answer, that is, how to approach the subject and from which end of the subject it would be dealt with. In this context, in my study, in-depth interviews were conducted with 17 people who had previously performed Hajj in the framework of this work. Of these 17 people, 10 are men and 7 are women. While determining both male and female candidates, names with different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds were tried to be determined. However, it does not seem very possible to perform Hajj at an early age like before 40s in Turkey, and it is usually performed at an advanced age like after 60s. (In this context, the people I interviewed are mostly older people. However, as much as possible, young and middle-aged people have also been tried to be identified for this research.

Considering what the participants told in the interviews held with the participants in the after, it is noteworthy that they did not describe their experiences in a purely chronological order. The events were told not in the order in which they happened, but rather as a "*representation of pastness*" (Tonkin, 1995). The transfers made in this way by the listeners and the project holders are exactly "what, how do they remember and why?" I did not intervene because they

constituted the answer to my questions. Because how the participants structured what they would tell or convey, what they preferred or did not choose to talk about was as meaningful as what they said. In addition to all of these, their body language, sitting positions, movements and behaviors (such as hand signals and facial expressions) and tones of voice, their breathing were as valuable as the subject being conveyed. Against all these issues, I only intervened as a listener. During the interviews, ways of informing, concealing and making it feel implicit when appropriate were tried. Each of them was applied when it was considered functional in order to increase the depth of the interviews.

Another point is, research was carried out on *semi-structured questions* in all interviews that were the source of the study, and it was aimed to reach in-depth and meaningful data that would reflect the phenomenon of pilgrimage in its naturalness. The common question asked to me by the participants in the research was *"whether I went to hajj/umrah or not"*. After the "yes" answer I gave to this question, the narrators said "you know" or "you've seen it" etc., which I think has a positive contribution to sharing a common experience. As a conclusion, a result has emerged that brought me to the *"affirmative authority"*. Through the snowball method and the conversation-sized interviews carried out, albeit partially, through purposeful sampling, the research topic was developed and shaped. At this point, what is meant by formatting is to make the subject matter of the person more understandable. It was expected that the participant would emphasize what he understood and how, by being involved as little as possible in the interviews. An effort was made to conduct interviews with questions created with a semi-structured content based on the participants' own true stories, so as not to disturb the naturalness of the interview.

Preparations and the Motivations of Hajj

In Turkey, the first real material preparation or condition after the pilgrim's wish to perform the pilgrimage is the application of the lottery or the quota application for the pilgrimage. To give a brief information about the application of the lottery, the quota system, which was introduced and provides a quota for pilgrims to every country up to the population of the countries demanding pilgrimage, has begun to be implemented (Hammoudi, 2006). In Turkey, where anyone could go on pilgrimage until the 2000s, the quota was put into practice as a result of the increase in demand for pilgrimage as of this date. As such, due to the quota, the General Directorate of Hajj and Umrah Services within the body of Presidency of Religious Affairs draws lots every year among the pilgrim candidates and determines two lists, the main and reserve lists. After the pilgrimage draw, exciting days begin for every pilgrim candidate in Turkey. Days chase days after preparations, notifications, getting halal to each other. Although this process is exciting for the pilgrim candidates, it is felt even more intensely for the older pilgrim candidates, as if it turns into an increasing process (Çelik, 2011). Candidates for pilgrims are simultaneously intricately involved in joy and sadness, hope and anxiety, as two sides of a coin at the same time. However, those who have the thought of including this acceptance or preference themselves in pilgrimage worship, consider this process, that is, leaving their loved ones behind, as one of the torments and sufferings in the pilgrimage worship, and go to the path of motivating themselves.

When I asked the pilgrims the reasons that motivated the pilgrimage or Umrah, it was one of the issues that caught my attention: A substantial group of people among those who go on pilgrimage openly express that they are not pious. It should be noted here that my interviewees mostly think of being a devotee as deed centered. *“What is the motivation that leads you to Hajj?”*, *“Why do you want to go to Hajj?”*, *“What is the factor that motivates you to perform Hajj?”* The answers to my questions were concentrated in the answer of "Allah's command". The reason why I deliberately asked my questions in singular rather than plural was an assumption that the first answer that came to mind of the participants would be the most vital and realistic answer. In the subsequent interviews, I made some revisions with both the uniformity and the superficiality of the answers I received. Yes, people may be going on pilgrimage as Allah's command, but this alone was not a factor. I had more than one interview with my participant named Yusuf. In the second of our private and unrecorded conversations, Yusuf half-heartedly uttered the phrase "Yes, God's command, but...". I felt the need to go over this and arranged a few more meetings with him based on explaining this "but". Although he considers himself a good Muslim at the religious level and tries to perform the five daily prayers without missing them at home or in the mosque, he is the only one of his childhood friends who has no experience of hajj/umrah due to his age. Even if it was a joke, he felt that this shortcoming was hit in the face as "infidel Yusuf" in the environments he was in and said, "I am as much a Muslim as you!" reached the stage. While explaining the main motivation behind his pilgrimage story with such candor, Yusuf did not neglect to say, *"but when I went there and saw it, I made a lot of repentance, I hope it was accepted"*. Another participant, Sinan, stated that he lost his reputation due to the lack of "pilgrims" in the small and middle-class artisan community, because "the quality of pilgrimage creates a sense of security in the business sector". After he became a pilgrim, he conveyed that he was put in the first place both in this artisan community and in the eyes of customers, with the phrase "business has been blessed, alhamdulillah". In these examples, we have seen once again the central role of religion in making sense of status and class positions in traditional communities, as Weber points out (Weber, 2019).

It was witnessed that many of the pilgrim candidates interviewed before the pilgrimage saw their personal pilgrimages as the jumping-off point of their piety: *"Forgive me, I had my shortcomings in both prayers and covering, but when I learned that I will go to the pilgrimage, I went to the mirror and said to myself, "What face will you come out with in this state of yours? Across the Kaaba?" So, you see, it was having an effect before the pilgrimage took place. So, I made a decision, now that we can no longer be the old Meryem, we will be pilgrims, let's not make any mistakes, shall we?"* (Meryem). Until the stage of intention before the pilgrimage, there is a spiritual distress due to the fact that doing the acts that are declared as wrong, forbidden and haram according to Islam is a sin and it is desired to be a complete believer. As one of the rare participants who openly revealed their mistakes before the pilgrimage, Kasim said: *"We drank and gambled when we were young, may Allah forgive us. Oh, were I atheist at that time, no, I was a Muslim again, but I said, we made a lot of mistakes because we were young. Do I regret it now, of course, but should we learn from human mistakes? Maybe if I hadn't had so many sins, I guess I would have been one of those pilgrims who didn't know where they were going. But since I know and face my past, I hold on to my pilgrimage with all my hands and I appreciate its value, thank goodness..."* Although not as much as Kasim, there

were some participants who stated that they achieved the Islamic life they desired, although they did not have a perfect Islamic life before the pilgrimage. As Bayyigit's (1998) study reveals, it has been witnessed that the individual religious lives of many of the pilgrim candidates are indexed to the pilgrimage. "Even though we cannot live the religion properly..., my sins, my mistakes, even if they do happen..., even if we commit haram..., I will leave all of them when I go on pilgrimage." Complaints, wishes, etc., that pilgrimage is considered as a means of "confession", that all these should be considered as an opportunity, implicitly, up to the pilgrimage, and that many things that should not be done after the pilgrimage, either because of the identity of the pilgrim or to avoid being polluted again, should be done before the pilgrimage. It can be said that there is an understanding that there is a license to do it or there is no objection. In this case, as an important issue, an improvement and care is observed in the intention of pilgrims to pilgrimage and fulfilling their religious obligations.

Coming to another very important issue, the first visual contact experience with the Kaaba constitutes an important part of the pilgrimage/umrah worship. Although it is not known that it is in the traditions of other countries, it is believed that the prayer made during the first sight of the Kaaba is accepted by those who come from Turkey. As far as I have heard from many pilgrims, it is the first time that the people who will make this contact are motivated by the talks of the group teachers before the encounter with the Kaaba. The concepts and descriptions chosen as the most common are generally the same (Mols & Buitelaar, 2015). The general feature of all these expressions is that they have an emphasis on the emotional intensity of the lived experience and similar to James Preston's concept of "spiritual magnetism" (2012?): *"Time stopped, space was rolled up, and the first threshold of the path to eternity began to appear. The eye of the Kaaba put me into a trance, and all the cells in my body began to revolve in the orbit of divine love."* (Uzunkaya, 2019). Many interviewees stated that they experienced an experience that would transcend the perception of time and space, with expressions such as "I was frozen" (Süleyman), "I couldn't breathe" (Ahmet), and "time seemed to have stopped" (Ayşe). It is underlined that there are compelling aspects of their physical existence. While conveying the physically challenging and impressive experience of his experience, on the other hand, refers to how familiar the encountered landscape is from the point of Islamic culture. He conveys in astonishment that the Kaaba is an ordinary structure in terms of material, but its effect on people is quite astonishing.

The Issue of the Belongings of Turkish Pilgrimages; Adaptation and Incompatibilities

One of the debates over the pilgrimage is the criticism against the universality of the pilgrimage against the symbols of belonging that the pilgrims of Turkey or any country carry on them. Small signs that indicate the belonging of pilgrims have vital and important functions, especially in terms of preventing disappearances and finding the group they belong to in such times of crisis. As I remember from the year my grandfather and grandmother went on the pilgrimage, pilgrim candidates were given a cloth, the pilgrim would have their clothes sewn in a certain type and the same color for all pilgrims, and the Turkish flag and Diyanet symbol were attached to the chest as a must. Nowadays, women and men are given bags that are the same in their genders, instead of clothes. By means of these bags, which are the trademark of each

company, pilgrim candidates can distinguish those who come with their own group or company.

One of the issues that Turkish pilgrims are very good at is their ability to adapt to the current situation. Turkish pilgrims, especially male pilgrims, who started to show up on the streets of Mecca and Medina as rare communities that did not have their own local and national clothes during the pilgrimage/umrah period, mostly wore the dress models and turbans they obtained from street vendors and tradesmen in a short period of 3-4 days at the beginning. However, despite the ihram in men, especially the women of the Islamic countries of Africa and Far East Asia reveal and display a kind of pilgrimage dowry that they have created during the years while waiting for the pilgrimage in a way that includes their own locality, and they almost blow the wind of an Islamic fashion. (Alkan, 2010) Looking at this table, I should point out that it is women from Turkey who disrupt the harmony with their monotony. As a matter of fact, in general, Turkey is almost the only country that is condemned to monotony regardless of the locality and colorfulness of each country, somehow far from locality, and which does not have its own clothes in the words of Mesut. Incidentally, let's not pass without mentioning the statements of Mesut on this subject: *“Look, let's go to the top floor of the Masjid al-Haram and look down. What do we see, you know? Everyone's clothing that includes the shape and color of their hometown, their own lifestyle. Only our Turks dress like this in a uniform military uniform. It's as if we don't have a history, a tradition or a tradition, so to speak, we've been thinking about shapeless and formless things...”*

While the way for people from different countries to come into contact with each other personally during the pilgrimage period is open, and this contact takes place physically, there are no cultural activities that will pave the way for a desired or expected kind of togetherness and therefore communication. According to Hammoudi (2006), most pilgrim candidates do not want to leave their country or group or convoy, or to contact with another alternative, for just or unjust reasons, regardless of the country they come from. Speaking specifically to Turkey, it is highly effective that pilgrims mostly come from an introverted environment, do not have the experience of the "other", not both this experience itself and the agents (such as language skills) that will facilitate such an experience, and that they are afraid of being lost, abducted. One of the factors that make the “experience of the Other” the most difficult is that the Turkish pilgrims do not know enough the languages of the countries where Muslims are common, such as Arabic, and the colonial languages that control these geographies, especially French. Çelik (2011) talks and gives an example about the difficulties they experienced in communicating with an Iraqi pilgrim who was next to a Dutch-born Turkish-origin young pilgrim while waiting for the prayer time in Mecca. While the Iraqi does not know Turkish, he mentions that they left without being able to get along because they did not know the languages that Iraqis know, namely Arabic and English. One of the citizens of two bordering countries speaks Turkish, the other speaks Arabic and English. However, for a Turkish person, why does the common language of communication have to be English, which is also a colonial language, when Arabic is both the language of the border country(s) (Syria, Iraq) and the language of worship? Regarding this issue, Halil said: *“I think we Turks are the ones who returned from this congress with the least profit, like a big congress of the Hajj world. We neither know the languages of the countries where the pilgrims come from, nor any foreign language that can be understood in common. What if you can only say and understand*

something with style-like hand-arm gestures? While you will be able to contact thousands of pilgrims during the whole day of pilgrimage, you return home without meeting two people. You can return to Turkey by realizing that you have thousands, millions of Muslim brothers whose backs you cannot break with at most two words."

As another important issue to be mentioned here, Turkish pilgrims are very assertive in the issue of criticizing different nations and cultures. During the pilgrimage/umrah period, "I would have done this or that", "this place is not like this", "this is missing, this is okay" etc. The moment you don't hear his words is rare. In the face of the excitement of Turkish pilgrims, especially elderly people, who do not leave ashes in the barbecue when it comes to criticism, Çelik (2011) states that he thinks that his education is an obstacle for him to experience these feelings. At this point, I should point out that those who made the most harsh and cruel comments about the pilgrimage, both about the architectural change, the emptiness of the pilgrimage, and the unqualifiedness of the pilgrims, came mostly from young men and women who had read it. On the one hand, there are determinations that see modernity as the cause of all kinds of mistakes, deficiencies and evils and throw everything out of the will of people / Muslims, on the other hand, those who read their personal role in every event either willingly or not preventing what is happening they try to make sense of material and spiritual change (Hammoudi, 2006). All the comments I heard before I came to be related to the pilgrimage as Gül says: *"the real pilgrimage is now a long time ago, now the event is just a touristic trip, and everything is indexed to shopping"*. I heard different version of this sentence before my other friends as well.

Tension Between Being a Turkish and Being a Member of Ummah

After the interviews I made about the pilgrimage, some of the Turkish pilgrims saw themselves as part of a larger whole, made their evaluations from this point of view, and defined themselves in terms of the Islamic Ummah and attributed a positive meaning to the Islamic Ummah. Recep's thoughts in this regard are as follows: *"The first thing that strikes you when you are there is how many people believe in God and how different these people differ from each other in terms of color, size, language and country. Since believers are declared brothers and sisters in the words of Allah, you feel in your bones how diverse our family is and that you, your Qur'an and your religion are not without an owner. You start to enjoy your long overdue reunion, while cursing those who keep us ignorant from each other so much, and you become happy."* The second part emerges as those who add themselves to a smaller whole, that is, "we Turks do not have a clean or good worshiper" (Fatma).

On the other opposite side, when the issue of cleanliness comes to the fore, a racist "Arab hatred" emerges. Rabia was very full on this subject, and she listed her criticisms: *"Millions of people come to this geography every year, these Arabs earn a lot of money from them. But every place is filthy except for a few spots. The sinks, the toilets and bathrooms all are very bad. Everything smells, from the hotel we stay to the buses we travel to. One thousand four hundred years ago, Allah had mercy on them, sent his Qur'an and Prophet, but in vain. I do not believe that there is any of difference in mentality between the Arab wandering around now and the Bedouin of that period. Look, these places would be in the hands of the Turks, you would have seen them at that time. Just as in Eyüp Sultan, Sultanahmet, Konya, Mevlana was in a clean*

and licked state, I swear to you, it would be the same here. But fate is destiny, you will get it, the world of testing, I try to look at our worship by saying patience, but it is really hard." Everdi (2005) states that with the time spent in the Hijaz, the social phenomenon that we can describe as "recognition and exclusion" (Saraçoğlu 2011) has come true, and Turkish pilgrims have come up with justifiable arguments about their own cleanliness and the pollution of others. Also, Ayşenur Hanım states similar things *"I have been superhumanly patient until now, I said to myself that such things happen, ignore it, be patient. What they didn't do: they tried to pile on the shopping, on the days when those buses were not running, they asked for 30-40, sometimes 100 riyals for a distance of 10 rials. I kept silent to all of them, but this last hotel in Medina broke the stone of my patience. Let alone the human being, they saw us in the filthy places where the animals could not stay, I passed out of their humanity and started to doubt their faith. Am I right, you are like this. Oh, not in one day and two days, look, I am saying this with what I have seen and accumulated on the twenty-seventh day as of today, huh."* Turkey's pilgrims at the level of discourse "we are members of the Ummah", "brothers" and so on. I should point out that most of his rhetoric does not go beyond a dry word. It is clear that the religiosity of a country that motivates itself to be the most religious, cleanest and most virtuous cannot view the practices of other countries and sects with a good eye. Criticisms are not limited to these, but are extended to Arabs in Saudi Arabia: "dirty Arabs" (Meryem), "Is it prayer that they also pray?" (Ayşe), "they don't shake their hands while praying as if they are dancing" (Halil), "they smell" (Mahmut), "they eat with their good hands" (Hatice) etc. I have experienced a lot that our pilgrims are extremely generous and open-handed in distributing judgments of disgust and contempt. Such marginalizing judgments are sometimes conveyed under political issues, interpretations, and sometimes through cultural codes.

It is a well-known fact that even Turkish Muslim intellectuals make sentences containing "buts" when it comes to the "Kurds". In the past, I considered such expressions as unwarranted sensitivities or exaggerations of the "Kurds". However, during the period when I was reading on the memoirs of pilgrimage and, of course, after the examples I encountered interviews for this study, I regret to state that there is a very big and unfortunately deep-rooted problem or, to put it mildly, a self-orientalism situation. I think that this situation is more common not only in the uneducated but also in the educated segment. More precisely, the positive attitude of those who have not received a formal education, such as "my son, you know, we have ignorance here" (Mahmut), by showing humility when reporting a mistake, a deficiency, a mistake, is rarely seen among those who have read it. Mostly, we are faced with what we can describe as "exclusion by recognition" (Saraçoğlu, 2011). "You don't know, I'm stuck in them. The situation is like this or that" etc. Starting with phrases and trying to discourage you from the direct line you believe in, a tough attitude is exhibited and never backed down. When they cannot attract you to their ideas, they call you "Kurdish-loving". On the other hand, the typology of behavior that can be summarized as "at least do not be divisive in the Kaaba of Allah" (Sinan) because they speak Kurdish during the Hajj evolves into a language that alienates and marginalizes, even in prayer. Witnessed that once, 3-4 people who took their place in the row in front of the Kaaba by putting their prayer mats on their waistcoats pointed to the "Kurdistan" inscription on their vests and said, "If they had come to me, I would not have let them sit next to me or I would have left" (Sinan) I had been. Since Çelik (2011) experienced a similar event, it can be concluded that such issues are not an isolated incident: *"My eyes scanned the rows again*

during the morning prayer. I saw a group of northern Iraqi Kurds. They are immediately apparent from their clothes. I will not hide what Allah knows from the servant, because I thought that they supported the invasion of Iraq, I felt cold inside, but I went to the Prophet's house saying this would not work, and I prayed the morning prayer among them." The same author said after a few pages of the book, he writes "We are all one in this human ocean, but Kurds and Turks, we are even more one. Even though we have the same big family as the others, our home is one with the Kurds,". But many times, we do not think about this marginalizing language that permeates our heart and veins. Regarding the Arafat Vakfe, the same writer said, "I saw this in our Kurdish grandmothers. As we said to the foundation, to meditate on existence, they must have perceived it as rumination, because they take their cigarettes and think like that." sentence is exemplary as it sets an example for our subject in a meaningful way (Çelik, 2011).

Another fact that has taken a place in the memories of the Turkish pilgrims is that they witnessed the people coming from other countries showing honor to the Turkish pilgrims as an example of their love for the Ottoman Empire. Although the question of how our people, who do not speak a language other than Turkish, find the opportunity to communicate in such depth, awaits an answer, I think it would be more enlightening to dwell on why Turkish pilgrims feel this way. It is a matter of debate whether such transfers, which should be considered as a "lament for a lost past", are a general feeling seen in the citizens of countries that have ruled large geographies for a long time, or whether they belong to people who see themselves in the center of the universe, like Turkish people. But the events that are reported to have happened are actually there (Kavurmacioğlu, 2017, p.150, kaynakçaya eklemek lazım veya başka bir kayna).

Experiences After the Haj; Reflections and Emotions

There are some behavioral and physical changes in general in people who have gone on pilgrimage. In the religious sense, more attention is paid to religious practices like beard growth is frequently seen in male pilgrims depending on their age, because as Bayyigit (1998) states, there is a situation where the beard is left as a declaration of pilgrimage in men after the pilgrimage. Halil conveys his experiences about beard as follows: "I went to the pilgrimage, after I return many people said: "Well, a pilgrim's beard suits you now, you're already a pilgrim, you won't leave it, but who will grow it? sometimes with a smile and sometimes with a serious expression. Maybe I don't feel ready, or I don't see myself that old. And I think, no, not necessarily grow a beard. I'm going not going to have and I didn't have, let them see and learn how to become a pilgrim without a beard."

Male pilgrims now make a special effort to perform their five daily prayers in congregation in the mosque. At this point, Yusuf describes the state of mind he was in as follows: "We went on a pilgrimage, a situation that is easy to say but difficult to practice. I see how difficult it is for my soul, I try to fulfill it out of spite. I felt it on my first pilgrimage. Azan was recited, the mosque was right next to our house, there was a conversation among the guests that we should go to the prayer, and someone else said, "Oh, we came to visit you, should we go to the mosque by being left alone?" When I heard them, I said: "Of course, we will not be left alone, let's go

together to the mosque". *Alhamdulillah, I did not leave the mosque or the congregation to this day.*"

As for female pilgrims, it is stated that, in their own words, "more care" is taken at the point of veiling. Ayşe: *"I try to give importance to make my clothes wider after Hajj. At this point, I should also mention that I get the most criticism from my own family and friends. They list their criticisms as "You are younger, beautiful, there is still time for these" and "Whatever is in your decision is beautiful, don't exaggerate", but I know that God's will and desire for me is to dress the way I do."* Some women, on the other hand, preferred to cover themselves with a topcoat like Ayşenur or a chador (çarşaf) like Hatice. At this point, it is quite remarkable that those who made a choice made statements such as "I completely get veiled myself, " and "I don't feel any remorse anymore" as a common expression.

It is observed that many pilgrims (especially old ones) after the Hajj act by seeing themselves as a stimulant in the daily lives of the people around them in Islamic and moral points. Although this is often met with understanding, it also paves the way for making the behavior of the pilgrim clear and questionable with the opposite of the same behavior. Events that are not looked at when others do it in the community, if they are done by someone who is a pilgrim, face significant social pressure or condemnation. Thus, it can be claimed that the pilgrimage mechanism has a bidirectional system (Çakmak, 2010). Proverbs and idioms expressing negative judgments about pilgrims in daily life and "pilgrimage" are considered as a phenomenon and those who do not fit into this context are condemned and judged (Bayyigit, 1998 and Çakmak, 2010).

Although the withdrawal from trade, which we can call human life after the pilgrimage, is less observed due to the decrease in the age range compared to previous years, the prevalence and dominance of the idea of "taking one's hand from the world" is still in question. The sensitivity of the pilgrims in fulfilling the farzs in the Islamic sense spreads towards the sunnah, mustahabs and known facts. Many pilgrims express the concern of "correcting one's mouth", which is seen as an integral part of a blessed pilgrimage among male pilgrims. Because, as one pilgrim stated, especially male pilgrims use the bad words expression with a great degree in Turkey: *"While Turkish people attach so much importance to physical cleanliness, I can't understand why they can use bad language so easily when their mouth is dirty (Kasım)."*

Conclusion

Turkish pilgrims leave their country, family, and friends to embark on their journey to Mecca where they perform the rituals of the Hajj, mixing with Muslims from other countries and sects whose nationalities, languages, and traditions may be as strange to them as theirs are to pilgrims from other countries. The Hajj holds an important place in the religious lives of most Muslims in Turkey, especially when discussing their experiences in Mecca itself. For many pilgrims, the Hajj is the journey of a lifetime. The pilgrims' narratives regarding their time in Mecca include descriptions of the places they visited, the people they met, the rituals they performed, and the feelings they faced, which were often articulated through the senses. The narratives show the Hajj to be a multi-sensory experience that extends over time and space with its wealth of potential sensory experiences. This paper tried to reflect on how Turkish pilgrims refer to their interactions with other members of the broader Muslim community. For

many Turkish pilgrims, their journey to Mecca was a momentous event, generally even as the first time leaving the country, let alone being a journey to the most sacred place for Muslims. To a considerable extent, therefore, my research data confirm that, although the pilgrimage to Mecca is an experience shared by different Muslim groups, pilgrims tend first and foremost to emphasize their differences within Islam to be resynthesized into Islamic unity within Mecca, thus supporting and illustrating Turner's hypothesis.

As a researcher to conduct a focused study of pilgrimage narratives, it is possible that many interesting and valuable topics have been overlooked that might have been overlooked by being an insider. This should be done by researchers who can be referred to as outsiders. Distance and looking away will contribute to the studies to be done in order to discover and reveal the details and facts that the researcher does not see due to his cultural belonging. Being an insider, which has been emphasized before, has advantages as well as disadvantages in reality. Unfortunately, it is men who are more visible and vocal about the pilgrimage, both in terms of science and in terms of participants. However, the majority of the experience is in women. Examples and descriptions of Hajj are mostly male-centered. For example, the term "*pilgrims wearing their shrouds*", inspired by the whiteness of the ihram garment and the two seamless towels/cloths, actually describes a situation that only covers male pilgrims. As it is known, while men are obliged to wear the ihram, women are not obliged to wear an ihram as mentioned. Nevertheless, mentioning a practice involving one gender as a valid expression for all pilgrims should be read as an example of this discourse.

Another issue that remains to be studied is the relationship between pilgrimage and self-perception. At this point, as a result of field studies to be carried out in the presence of raw information to be obtained from works similar to this study, the extent to which the experience of pilgrimage is decisive in the self-perception of believers or the positive or negative effects of what is experienced within the scope of pilgrimage worship should be evaluated. Although it is thought that the experience of pilgrimage causes significant changes in self-perception, it remains an important question as to which one a study following the footsteps of this change prefers in terms of national belonging and ummah awareness. The issue of whether the pilgrimage experience is an individual or a collective experience is the key to paving the way for the subject. Especially in the context of today's technological possibilities, the possible expansions of the experience of pilgrimage to the concept of transcendence are worth reading at the point of "self-technologies" and "self-discipline".

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