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# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTICULTURALISM



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# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTICULTURALISM

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*“The more nations are united in a state, the richer it becomes, as each of them contributes to the world culture and civilization...”*

*Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev  
National Leader of Azerbaijan*



*"Multiculturalism is a lifestyle in Azerbaijan."*

*Ilham Heydar oğlu Aliyev  
President of Azerbaijan Republic*

## *Letter from the Editor-in-Chief*

**Dear Readers!**

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that Baku International Multiculturalism Center publishes biannual, international, double-blind peer-reviewed, open-access journal titled “International Journal of Multiculturalism”, covering the study of topics in the Social & Humanities aims to provide a forum for high quality research related to multiculturalism sciences and research.



The purpose of publishing the International Journal of Multiculturalism is to promote the traditions of tolerance that have been formed in Azerbaijan for centuries as well as to make a contribution to the environment of multiculturalism.

In Azerbaijan, multiculturalism is a state policy and a lifestyle. Azerbaijan is an example to the world with its own multicultural and tolerant style of life. The tolerance implemented by the government of Azerbaijan forms the foundation for even further strengthening of the friendship and brotherhood among the ethnic and religious communities living in our country. One of the ways in which the Great Leader, Heydar Aliyev, served our people was by developing multiculturalism in our country. The most significant value that Heydar Aliyev imparted to Azerbaijan was the ideology of Azerbaijanism, which has already become an important part of the ideology of multiculturalism. Azerbaijanism is what binds together all nations into one land and one ideology regardless of their ethnic or religious roots.

Today, President Ilham Aliyev resolutely carries on this policy. The policy of multiculturalism that is carried out under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev catalyzes integration processes within the country.

In 2014, the Baku International Multiculturalism Center was created to promote Azerbaijan’s model to the world and study other models. 2016 was announced as “The Year of Multiculturalism,” and 2017 was “Year of Islamic Solidarity.”



## Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

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The Baku International Multiculturalism Center serves to promote conditions of multiculturalism and diversity in Azerbaijan. Our main goal is to preserve cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity in accordance with the ideology of Azerbaijanism as well as to introduce Azerbaijan to the world as a center of multiculturalism and to apply and encourage existing models for multiculturalism.

We particularly encourage submissions resulted from meaningful and ethical collaboration among international scholars and practitioners. The aim of the “International Journal of Multiculturalism” is to promote scholarly, realistic and contemporaneous research in the field of multiculturalism. The journal publishes quantitative and qualitative empirical research and reviews of research literature. Our main goal is to publish the work of a vigorous, well-networked international community of scholars and expand the subject areas of the journal.

Members of the Editorial Board, selected by the criteria of their international scientific recognizability, will strive to contribute to the increase of the quality level and popularization of the International Journal of Multiculturalism as reviewers and consultants as well as authors of invited papers. The journal serves as a platform for communicating wealthy findings in the field of multiculturalism to the researchers and readers.

As Editor-in-Chief, I continue to welcome manuscripts on multiculturalism subject within that broad definition, especially articles that announce discoveries, present new information, and address methodological issues.

I also would like to thank those who served on the journal staff and its editorial board, and particularly the reviewers for providing the support and feedback necessary to find, develop and publish high-quality material.

We hope you will be satisfied with the new issue of International Journal of Multiculturalism, not only by the quantity, but also by the quality of the published materials.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter and we hope to hear from you sometime!

**With all the best wishes,**

**Ravan Hasanov  
Editor-in-Chief**



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## SCOPE OF THE JOURNAL

International Journal of Multiculturalism is an international, double-blind peer-reviewed, open-access journal covering the study of topics in the social & humanities that aims to provide a forum for high-quality research related to multiculturalism sciences and research. International Journal of Multiculturalism provides an interdisciplinary forum for scholars in the fields of multicultural psychology, multicultural communication, education, management cross-disciplinary, social welfare, sociology, organizational /community development, and related disciplines.

International Journal of Multiculturalism is published two times (April, October) a year by the Baku International Multiculturalism Center. The journal is published in English. To be published in the International Journal of Multiculturalism a paper must be substantial and original. The Editorial Board does not accept articles published or submitted for publication elsewhere the journal is published in both print and online versions.

We particularly encourage submissions resulting from meaningful and ethical collaboration among international scholars and practitioners. Submissions that advance from prescreening will be subject to originality-testing and double-blind review. The journal publishes quantitative and qualitative empirical research and reviews of research literature.

The voluntary service of international editors and reviewers has enabled the International Journal of Multiculturalism to provide open-access content to the global community with no subscription fees to readers and no article processing fees to authors. The journal is fully financially supported by Baku International Multiculturalism Center.

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### Archiving

All back articles are made available as full text on the journal website. In the event that the International Journal of Multiculturalism discontinues its publication, its archive of published articles will still remain available on the journal website, to be maintained as an archive website by Baku International Multiculturalism Center Press.



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UNDER THE PRESIDENT OF AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC

*By the decision of the Higher Attestation Commission under the President of Azerbaijan Republic, dated 01.12.2020, (protocol № -10) the journal has been included in the list of scientific periodicals in which the results of thesis works are published.*



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## VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2, 2022

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Elizabeth J. SANDELL, Luz Carime BERSH*

Impact of a multi-layered autobiography project for transforming intercultural competence among pre-service teachers.....12

*Aminul ISLAM*

Acculturation: A study of integrational aspects among international students in Tallinn, Estonia .....35

*Ulviyya HAJIYEVA*

Albanian cult symbolism .....61

*Seden KURTULUŞ, Ahmet Nazmi ÜSTE*

The perception of Turkiye of minority and non-minority citizens living in Bulgaria .....77

**BOOK REVIEW:**

*Ahmad GHOLI*

Sins of my father: A daughter, a cult, a wild unravelling .....92



## IMPACT OF A MULTI-LAYERED AUTOBIOGRAPHY PROJECT FOR TRANSFORMING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated how a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project impacts the intercultural competence for undergraduate students, many of whom were aspiring teacher candidates in the United States. For purposes of this project, the concept of “culture” was adapted from West and Turner’s (2018) definition: the norms, behaviors, standards, values, etc. shared by a group of people, and passed along to later generations. Investigators deemed that “culture” was composed of numerous microcultures among a smaller group of human beings (with their own language, communication strategies, behavior rules, and expectations), who are bonded together by similar experiences, values, characteristics, organization membership, location, or histories. Based on prior research findings, the results were expected to support the position that cultural self-knowledge is a necessary step to increasing intercultural competence. The Multi-Layered Autobiography Project was implemented in an undergraduate general education course, Human Relations in a Multicultural Society, at a medium-sized public university in the Midwest region of the United States. The project fostered development of: (1) knowledge, (2) experience, (3) coaching or mentoring, and (4) self-reflection. The assignments in the Multi-Layered Autobiography Project included: an interview with a family elder, a personal diversity story, a cultural partnership interview, a service learning experience at a culturally diverse organization, and an autobiography paper. Investigators used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Version 3, as a tool for quantitative data analysis because of its reliability and validity. The analysis of pre- and post-instruction data gathered from undergraduate students enrolled in the semester-long course indicated a statistically significant improvement in participants’ intercultural competence, according to scores for their Developmental Orientation and Cultural Disengagement.

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## Introduction

Based on currently available data, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2020) reports the proportion of school-age pupils represented by racial, ethnic, language, and social minority groups in the United States has increased since 2009. Factors such as immigration, birth rates, and economic mobility contribute to great cultural diversity in schools. For this investigation, the definition of “culture” was adapted from West and Turner (2018). The authors consider “culture” to be the norms, behaviors, standards, values, etc. shared by a group of people and passed along to later generations. The elements of culture could be related to ethnicity, language, religion, gender identity, and sexual orientation, geographic region, education, race, socio-economic status, or family structure. Data indicate that cultural diversity among primary and secondary pupils continued to increase, until in 2020, the ‘minority’ pupils outnumbered the ‘majority’ pupils in American public schools (NCES, 2021).

The core values of the U.S. have become polarized: Intolerance versus respect and inclusion; oppression versus democracy; hate versus intercultural understanding. As the U.S. population becomes even more diverse, marginalization of Black and Brown communities has fostered socio-cultural and racial unrest, manifested in increasing numbers of racist and xenophobic incidents (U.S. Department of Justice, 2022). Schools, as social institutions, reflect that unrest (Miller & Rivas, 2022).

Meanwhile, 80% of school teachers are of European American descent and middle-class (NCES, 2021). Limited life experiences with cultural diversity often result in teachers treating children of equivalent academic abilities differently based on the students’ native language, citizenship, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. McKown and Weinstein (2002) described how teacher bias accounted for nearly a third of a standard deviation of the ethnic and racial differences in educational achievement over the course of one academic year. Teachers need to be able to adapt to the increasing cultural variations of their local communities. This goal is complicated by the very diversity found among pupils and their families: education level, religious affiliation, first language, economic status, and other factors. Faculty in American universities find it challenging to prepare teachers for every possible element of their future pupils’ cultural backgrounds. Eventually, such attitudes and skills may be applied in any community culture in which teachers are teaching.

The research reported herein investigated the impact of a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project assignment on the intercultural competence of a sample of undergraduate students, predominantly pre-service teachers. The study asked:

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of intercultural competence for undergraduate students prior to the beginning of the course, before the students engaged with a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project?

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of intercultural competence for undergraduate students after engaging with a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project?

**Research Question 3:** What is the difference in undergraduate students' intercultural competence before instruction and after instruction that included a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project?

## Literature Review

### *Cultural Competence and Teachers in the United States*

In 2017 - 2018 (the most recent year for which data was available), approximately 79% of all public school teachers in the U.S. were non-Hispanic White; and approximately 76% of all public school teachers in the U.S. were female. For U.S. school-age children, that same year, only 51% were non-Hispanic White, 49% were female, and 23% spoke a language other than English at home (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020).

Scholarly research in recent decades has consistently and extensively documented the need for teachers to be culturally competent (Arsal, 2019; Barakat et al., 2019; Bersh, 2018; Brooks, 2015; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Denith & Maurer, 2011; Flory & Wylie, 2019; Kosleski & Waitoller, 2010; Lewis Chiu et al., 2017; Smith Kondo & Bracho, 2019; Villegas et al., 2012). A useful definition of cultural competence is related to teachers' ability to successfully teach students from cultures different than their own after "mastering complex awareness and sensitivities, various bodies of knowledge, and a set of skills that underlie effective cross-cultural teaching" (Diller & Moule, 2005, p. 5). However, researchers have documented the impact of American teachers' limited experience with and understanding of persons from cultures different than their own (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Nieto, 2013). American teachers, especially middle-class, White females, are unprepared to address the cultural diversity of their students (Gay, 2002, 2010; Fletcher, 2016; Walker, 2011; Young, 2010).

Greenwalt (2014) reported how teachers' childhood experiences and relationships with their own parents result in their maintaining conscious and unconscious biases and reproducing their parents' behaviors. Teachers' cultural biases are an important factor that creates a cultural gap that is detrimental to some children's academic achievement (Lewis Chiu et al., 2017). Villegas et al. (2012) highlighted the cultural gap between students of color and their teachers. This gap is unlikely to narrow, considering Dunn's (2010) assertion that a person cannot value or teach what she cannot understand.

### **Cultural Competence and Teacher Education Programs**

Individuals need time and experience to develop knowledge of different cultures, understand personal biases, and develop skills to engage with cultural diversity. Organizational support and systemic changes may be necessary to create processes to achieve cultural competence (Balcazar et al., 2009). For teacher education, these changes also take time to move through institutional decision-making processes in the U.S. Lin and Lucey (2010) called for focused attention to prepare teachers in developing cultural competence. Moretti et al. (2018) pointed out the valuable role of teacher educators as they create intervention projects to develop cultural competence.

Researchers have suggested self-reflection as a curriculum approach for teacher educators to use to encourage their students to become more culturally competent. Scholars have emphasized the critical role of self-reflection in student learning because "cultural self-awareness is a prerequisite to understanding groups from different cultures" (Spitzer, 2015, p. 49). Outcomes of many community-based, cultural immersion strategies have supported cultural self-knowledge as a necessary step to understanding others' cultural backgrounds (Balcazar et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005; Fletcher, 2016; Gay, 2010; Gunn et al., 2013; Morettini et al., 2018; Nieto, 2013; and Young, 2010).

This task is especially challenging for many American White teachers and pre-service teachers living in predominantly White settings, as they haven't had the need to question or define their cultural identities and how they relate to others (Bersh, 2009; Lin & Lucey, 2010). In self-reflection, teachers and pre-service teachers elaborate on their own cultural backgrounds, values and beliefs. Acknowledging their cultural backgrounds through self-reflection has prompted self-examination of prejudice, privilege and cultural biases against diverse cultural groups (Arsal, 2019; Balcazar et al., 2009).

The review of the literature provides clear evidence that engaging teachers and pre-service teachers in self-reflection about their own culture is a necessary steppingstone to the development of intercultural competence. There are multiple formats through which teachers and pre-service teachers have engaged in this experience. One of them is writing an autobiography.

### **Developing Cultural Competence through Autobiography**

Researchers have demonstrated that an autobiography can be focused on one or more purposes and shaped for curricula in many academic disciplines. Kozleski and Waitoller (2010) focused on using autobiographies to support teachers' self-reflection on their students' cultural diversity and disabilities. The experience shaped their responses, expectations and assessments for these students. Singleton (2020) engaged teachers in focused writing on racial identity. Lee (2012) used autobiography to facilitate pre-service teachers' examination and deconstruction of previously held beliefs, meanings and assumptions. Dentith and Maurer (2011) asserted that autobiography affirmed identity. It helped teachers understand the connection between self, community(ies) and "the other." Dentith and Maurer (2011) also found that autobiographies supported teachers in confronting student-teacher cultural gaps, leading to increased sensitivity to others' experiences and their position in society.

Writing an autobiography is a specific strategy to foster teachers' and pre-service teachers engagement in their own cultures (Bersh, 2018; Gunn et al., 2013; Hollinsworth, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Vavrus, 2002). For example, Amy et al. (2012) engaged pre-service teachers in sharing "cultural artifacts" representing an aspect of their cultural identities, followed by a learning narrative, through which they elaborated on the object's meaning and its relation to their cultural identities. Bersh (2018) examined the outcomes of an autobiography assignment that included voluntary participants' self-selected read-alouds and a semi-structured interview self-reflection. Schmidt's (1999) ABC Model included an autobiography, a biography (based on a case study of a child), and a cross-cultural comparison. Hernandez (2017) designed assignments with an autobiography, which focused on a linguistic profile and a PhotoStory, which was a cultural autobiography with family pictures. While the autobiographies offered extensive opportunity for self-reflection, several investigations found that the participants gained important insights from listening to others read aloud excerpts from their autobiographies (Bersh, 2018; Hollinsworth, 2013).

## Conclusions of Previous Researchers

Researchers have demonstrated that writing autobiographies can have several positive results. Brooks (2015) found that autobiographies enabled pre-service teachers to articulate their own cultural values and beliefs. Moloney and Oguro (2015) described a structured component of the autobiography assignment that supported teachers' focus on affirmations of their backgrounds and prior knowledge, which resulted in increased openness to intercultural understanding. Dentith and Maurer (2011) found that autobiography was a means through which teachers developed critical analysis, raised levels of consciousness about culture, values and subjectivity, and increased understanding of global issues, among other gains.

Bersh's study (2018) reported that a five-week autobiography assignment included the following gains:

1. self-cultural awareness and identification of cultural biases,
2. recognizing that unconscious biases impact interactions with students' cultural diversity,
3. and making conscious the unconscious as a steppingstone to develop culturally responsive competency.

An interesting finding in the same study was that some participants (teachers and pre-service teachers) uncovered cultural biases of their own, including social issues such as alcoholism, child abuse and neglect; bias against different denominations within the same religion; bias against one's own original culture; and bias against cultural bias itself.

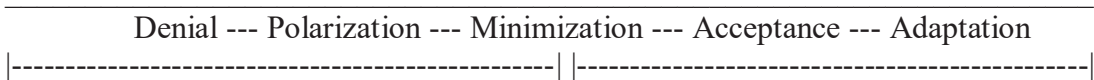
Self-reflection also supported pre-service teachers in identifying effective strategies for developing relationships with future students, co-workers, and school administrators from diverse cultural backgrounds. Hernandez (2017) reported that bilingual teachers gained a deeper understanding of their own cultural identities, leading to increased cultural knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach children from diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social class backgrounds.

## The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC)

The investigators reviewed several theoretical frameworks to understand the developmental processes of growth in intercultural competence (ICC). Eventually, the

investigators chose the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) as the theoretical foundation for course planning and assessment (Bennett, 1986; Hammer, 2022). Figure 1 presents an illustration of the IDC. There are five orientations or stages of the IDC: Denial, Polarization, Minimization, Acceptance and Adaptation. Denial and Polarization are within the Ethnocentric Category. Acceptance and Adaptation are within the Ethnorelativism Category. Minimization is a transitional stage between the Ethnocentric and the Ethnorelativism Categories, during which a person may become more experienced, empathetic, understanding, and adaptable. According to the IDC model, Ethnocentrism means that an individual believes her culture or ethnic group is superior to all other groups. In contrast, Ethnorelativism means that an individual believes her culture is one of many different cultures and that one is not superior to the other (Hammer, 2022).

The first orientation is Denial. At this stage, individuals are unaware of differences among cultures and may try to reduce their exposure to different cultures. Individuals within the Polarization orientation (stage two), mostly perceive differences with other cultures and may use statements such as “us and them.” The third orientation, or transitional stage, is Minimization. At this stage, individuals minimize differences among cultures and get along together. The following orientation in the continuum is Acceptance. At this stage, individuals view their culture as one of many complex cultures in the world; they deeply understand the meaning of cultural differences and learn respect for those differences. The last orientation, or stage five, is Adaptation. At this stage, individuals can put themselves in the other’s “shoes” and adapt their behaviors and communication style to better fit into that culture.



**Figure 1.** Intercultural Development Continuum (adapted from Hammer, 2022).

### Cultural Competence through Multi-Layered Autobiography Assignments

The studies reviewed in this section lead to the conclusion that writing autobiographies supports teachers’ development of a variety of aspects in their cultural and intercultural competence. The studies also may lead to the conclusion

that writing an autobiography in combination with other related assignments produces a more robust learning experience for teachers and pre-service teachers. Instructional designers should note that, as knowledge is amplified, students' experiences are more meaningful and purposeful. As a result, learnings are drawn from several sources and multiple connections are made, often resulting in increased ICC.

Arzal (2019) designed a four-category intervention model that embedded several strategies for intercultural competence development in methods courses:

1. Learning about cultural diversity through materials such as biographies, stories, and drama.
2. Discussions about prejudice, self-reflection and peer dialogue.
3. Generating questions to explore biases.
4. Designing content and instruction reflecting cultural diversity.

The program was found to be effective in improving pre-service teachers' multicultural attitudes.

Other researchers commented on specific teaching strategies designed to foster ICC. For example, Bersh (2018) found that listening to peers reading aloud excerpts of their autobiographies, along with a post-autobiography self-reflection, triggered students' application of metacognition. Results showed more intercultural reflexivity among participants than simply writing the autobiography itself. Brooks (2015) complemented the teachers' written autobiographies with writing biographies based on a case study of a child. The follow-up intervention strategy focused on developing a cross-cultural comparison between the two. The conjunction of the three assignments produced more notable outcomes in raising teachers' understanding of cultural diversity and improved ICC.

Amy et al. (2012) used journals to connect affective experiences and cognitive frames, not just for the stories' sake, but to propel critical engagement with experiential knowledge toward intercultural competence. The researchers used a longitudinal approach, incorporating autobiographical information in multiple ways across a curriculum. These opportunities could happen periodically, formally or informally, in a learning journal and a reflective paper. This investigation also used guided activities in small groups for the exchange of autobiographical information. Discussion enabled teachers to connect their experience-based knowledge to course concepts and texts.

Darling-Hammond, et al. (2005) identified four teaching and learning categories as foundations to engage teachers in developing cultural competence: knowledge, experience, coaching or mentoring, and self-reflection. Sandell (2020) conducted a meta-analysis of 287 peer-reviewed articles to identify specific strategies that improved undergraduate students' intercultural competence. The analysis identified autobiography as a self-reflection tool that "includes elements of knowledge, experience, coaching, and reflection" (p. 25), leading to an increase in cultural competence for undergraduate students. As a result of the meta-analysis, Sandell used Darling-Hammond's theoretical framework to design her autobiography-centered, multi-layered assignment targeting ICC development among undergraduate students, including pre-service teachers.

## **Methodology**

### *Institutional Profile*

This investigation was conducted at a mid-sized public university in the Midwest region of the United States. The University is an applied research institution, with approximately 14,000 students enrolled in more than 200 academic programs, from bachelor's through doctoral degrees. The University is a diverse and global campus with 18% students of color and more than 1,175 international students from 95 countries. Education and support are provided by 1,600 faculty and staff, including 700 teaching faculty. In addition to programs in the local community, the face-to-face programs include partnerships in the major metropolitan area of the state of Minnesota. The University has a growing number of online programs to accelerate educational access and opportunity.

### *Course Design and Delivery*

This investigation examined archived data from a semester-long course, Human Relations in a Multicultural Society. The course provides education in self-awareness and skills that are essential for living and working in a democratic and socially just society. The course addresses issues of oppression and social justice related to race/ethnicity, gender, age, class, religion, disability, physical appearance, sexual orientation and nationality, especially focusing on groups that have been historically excluded from the western power and decision-making (Sandell, 2020). Class meetings and discussions featured panel presentations, guest speakers, video recordings, small group discussions, and other activities, such as fishbowl

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conversations (Facing History and Ourselves, 2021). These activities led students to consider their own cultural backgrounds, as well as those of others.

### *The Multi-Layered Autobiography Project*

The instructor organized and designed the Multi-Layered Autobiography Project to lead pre-service teachers in developing a foundation for their cultural competence. For purposes of this Multi-Layered Autobiography Project, the instructor used an adapted definition of “culture” from West and Turner (2018), which includes the norms, behaviors, standards, values, etc. shared by a group of people and passed along to later generations. The researchers considered “culture” as composed of numerous microcultures, among a smaller group of human beings (with their own language, communication strategies, behavior rules, and expectations), who are bonded together by similar experiences, values, characteristics, organization membership, location, or histories. Some examples of microcultures included: branches of religion or spirituality, the LBGTQ community, people who grew up in Iowa, etc. Some of the micro-cultures that were included in the Multi-Layered Autobiography Project included: ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic class, education, military tradition, family composition (adoption, blended families, grandparenting, foster parents, etc.), and more.

The objectives of the Multi-Layered Autobiography Project fostered the development of: (1) knowledge, (2) experience, (3) coaching or mentoring, and (4) self-reflection.

The assignments in the Multi-Layered Autobiography Project included:

- an interview with a family elder
- a personal diversity story
- a cultural partnership and interview
- a service learning experience at a culturally diverse organization
- an autobiography paper

Additional textbook readings, instructor’s coaching prompts and other class activities, such as Fishbowl class discussions, aimed at enhancing the holistic quality of the intercultural experience and immersing the participants in deep self-reflection.

**Table 1** lists the types of course assignments and activities for each type of the aforementioned objectives.

Knowledge	Experience	Coaching	Self-reflection
Information about micro-cultures.	Interview a family elder.	One-on-one meeting with an IDI-qualified administrator.	Autobiography paper
Speakers share their own diversity stories.	Cultural partnership to compare/contrast one's culture with others.	Instructor's class discussion prompts.	Description of personal micro-cultures.
Fishbowl class discussions.	Service learning to compare/contrast one's culture with others.	Instructor's prompts for exit tickets.	Anecdotes about one's micro-cultures.
Students sharing personal diversity stories.	Class discussions focus on cultural similarities and differences.	Individualized suggestions for student activities beyond class.	Projection of outcomes or consequences of one's micro-cultures.
Assigned readings in the course textbook.			Respond to prompts about textbook readings.

### *Knowledge about Family - Elder Interview*

Each student interviewed an elder from their family focusing on questions about their heritage, family's history and culture. The interviews were completed early in the semester. Students submitted interview transcripts. Figure 2 provides examples of the questions the students posed to their family elder.

- 
- *Who is the oldest living relative in our family? What have they told us about our family history?*
  - *Who is the youngest living relative in our family? What does their birth say about our family's changing values and living situations?*
  - *How old were you and how did you learn that there were people who were "different" than our family? How were those differences valued?*
  - *What does our family believe about gender roles? About sexual orientation? About religion?*
  - *What are our religious values? Where did those beliefs come from?*
  - *What individuals and events in history are sources of pride for my family?*
  - *To what extent is knowledge of my family's history preserved? In what forms and in what ways is it passed on?*
  - *Do any ceremonies or festive occasions commemorate historical events in which my family participates? What are these occasions and why are they important in my family?*
  - *How does my family identify with the history and traditions of their country or region of origin? What changes have taken place in the country of origin since my family ancestors emigrated?*
  - *For what reasons and under what circumstances did my family ancestors come to the new country? Where did they come from? Where did they settle? How did I get to my hometown?*
  - *What does my family believe is the purpose of education?*
  - *What methods for teaching and learning are used at home? Do methods vary with the setting or according to what is being taught or learned?*
  - *What is the role of language in my family for teaching and learning?*
- 

**Figure 2.** Examples of questions for elder interviews.

### *Personal Diversity Story*

The Personal Diversity Story could be completed in one of several genres: a story format, as an academic research paper, poetry, radio play, a graphic novel, or something else. Regardless of which genre was selected, students should have described their cultural background with rich detail, including descriptions of at least six microcultures important to their lives.

Throughout the entire semester, students shared their own diversity stories in a class meeting. The presentation had a duration of a minimum of five minutes.

### *Cultural Partnership and Interview*

Students were required to spend 10 hours of interaction with a peer, whose cultural background was different from that of each student. The instructor helped

matching-up the students with domestic or international peers. An important component of this partnership involved conducting an interview focusing on gaining knowledge about the peer's cultural background and experiences.

### *Service Learning Experience*

Each student participated in 20 hours of service learning at an organization where its members' cultures differed from the students'. Some examples of these organizations included: homeless shelters, community centers teaching English classes to adults, nursing homes for the elderly, the local Pow Wow from the Dakota American Indians.

### *Autobiography Paper*

Each student researched and wrote an Autobiography Paper focusing on their culture. Students collected information, brainstormed ideas, interviewed family members, read family scrapbooks, reviewed journals or diaries, and examined census data about persons who shared their characteristics. Students examined values and how their outlooks might have developed by actual lived experiences. The paper presented the context of their family and community backgrounds and addressed a minimum of six microcultures. The paper challenged students in deep self-reflection about the meaning behind those microcultures.

### *Population and Sample*

This university's elementary teacher preparation program enrolls up to 180 new students each academic year. This investigation included archived class assignments and scores from 127 undergraduate students enrolled in a prerequisite course for elementary education majors. The university's Internal Review Board for research with human subjects approved the use of previously collected data for this investigation (IRB log #1137599).

Table 2 presents the demographic information collected from the students. All subjects included in this chart were individual students; this is an unduplicated count. However, all subjects did not respond to all demographic questions, so there is missing data.

**Table 2.** Selected demographic information for sample (N = 127).

Characteristic	# with this characteristic	% of total responses
Female	99	87.6
US Citizen	112	99.1
Between 18 and 24 years old	101	89.4
Completed secondary school	101	89.4
Second year of university	56	49.6
Third year of university	33	29.2
Member of ethnic majority	102	90.3
Childhood in North America	111	98.2
Lived only in North America	107	94.7

## Variables

Investigators were interested in changes in two variables: an individual's orientation toward cultural differences and commonalities (Developmental Orientation or DO), and a person's engagement (or really the level of disengagement with his/her own culture; Cultural Disengagement or CD), according to Hammer (2009). Thus, the DO indicates an individual's or group's primary orientation toward cultural differences and commonalities; whereas the CD indicates an individual's or group's lack of engagement with his/her own culture.

## Measurement

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDIv3) was used to collect data (Hammer, 2009). Several faculty members at this institution use the IDI as a pedagogical and assessment tool with the goal of enhancing students' ICC and sensitivity. After individuals complete a survey, faculty or staff who are qualified administrators debrief the results with each participant. In order to become qualified to debrief students about the results of their individual IDI assessment, faculty and

staff must participate in a series of training sessions about the IDC and on administration of the IDI. This article's first author is an IDI qualified administrator who has used the IDI as a pedagogical and assessment tool since 2012. The second author was trained as an IDI qualified administrator in 2020.

The IDI is a 50-question instrument that uses the individual's responses to calculate an in-depth profile. The IDI also describes the stage of developmental orientation of an individual based on the answers provided and feedback on that particular stage. The questions are asked in the form of a response scale of five options. The scores of interest for this investigation were the Developmental Orientation (DO) and the Cultural Disengagement (CD). All results were exported and analyzed for significance using SPSS software (IBM Corp., 2019).

For this study, the IDI v3 was used as a measure of cultural competency because of its suitability for a university setting and ease of use. Developers have reported that the IDI is a cross-culturally generalizable (i.e., international and domestic diverse cultural groups), valid and reliable measure of intercultural competence that does not contain cultural bias. (Hammer, 2011; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003).

### **Data Collection**

IDI scores from two semesters of a course, Human Relations in a Multicultural Society, were sorted from archived data. The IDI as a course and program assessment was completed online during regularly assigned class periods. Students completed the online inventory during the third week and the last week of the semester. The online survey took approximately thirty to forty minutes for each participant to complete. To avoid having the students feel coerced to participate, the instructor provided class time for completing the IDI, so that students did not have to use their own "free" time for the survey. Students also earned points just for completing the survey (i.e., not based on their scores) that were applied toward grades in the class.

### **Data Analysis**

The dependent variable was student ICC, by two scores: DO and CD as reported by the IDI. The data was analyzed using the established protocols for the IDI version 3 (Hammer, 2009). The IDI software uses Microsoft Access add-on to generate reports about individual and/or group results. The data was de-identified and exported to

SPSS (IBM Corp, 2019) for cohort analysis using ANOVA tests. The researchers used paired samples t-tests to examine mean scores in DO and CD from the IDI to evaluate whether any significant indicators of change were observed.

## Results

Results of the statistical analysis were organized around the three research questions to describe the intercultural competence for undergraduate students at the beginning and conclusion of the course, as well as the difference therein.

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of intercultural competence for undergraduate students prior to the beginning of the course, before the students engaged with a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project?

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of intercultural competence for undergraduate students after engaging with a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project?

**Research Question 3:** What is the difference in undergraduate students' intercultural competence before instruction and after instruction that includes a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project?

## Beginning Intercultural Competence

As Table 3 indicates, beginning Developmental Orientation (DO) scores ranged from 61.80 to 121.80, with the mean of 87.14, indicating that students started the semester within the stage of Minimization. In this stage, members of the group see culture from their own viewpoints. They also tend to minimize cultural differences and focus on similarities instead of differences. The students' Cultural Disengagement (CD) scores ranged from 1.80 to 5.00, with the mean of 3.81, indicating that students in general were not well-engaged in their own cultural experience.

**Table 3.** Range and mean for beginning scores for Developmental Orientation and Cultural Disengagement.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Developmental Orientation	127	61.08	121.80	87.14	14.17
Cultural Disengagement	127	1.80	5.00	3.81	.87

### Concluding Intercultural Competence

Table 4 shows the levels of ICC among students at the conclusion of the course after completion of the Multi-Layered Autobiography Project. The Developmental Orientation scores ranged from 54.69 to 136.77, with a mean of 94.21, indicating that students were still within the range of the stage of Minimization at the conclusion of the semester. The Minimization stage is twice as wide as the rest of the stages. The lower half of the Minimization stage is within the Ethnocentric orientation and the upper half is within the Ethnorelative orientation. The students started in the Ethnocentric Minimization orientation and ended in the Ethnorelative Minimization orientation. Therefore, the participants increased their DO within the Minimization stage from Ethnocentric to Ethnorelative. It is possible and did happen. This is where the statistical analysis is important.

The students' Cultural Disengagement scores ranged from 2.20 to 5.00, with a mean of 4.41, indicating that students increased their engagement with their own cultural experience.

**Table 4.** Range and mean for concluding scores for Developmental Orientation and Cultural Disengagement.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Developmental Orientation	127	54.69	136.77	94.21	15.62
Cultural Disengagement	127	2.20	5.00	4.41	.64

### Change in Intercultural Competence

Data analysis included a paired samples t-test to reflect the statistical significance of differences before and after instruction with a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project. Table 5 presents information about the changes in students' Developmental Orientation and Cultural Disengagement.

**Table 5.** Changes in students' Developmental Orientation and Cultural Disengagement.

Variable	Mean Dif	sd	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)*
<b>Developmental Orientation</b>	7.07	15.03	5.30	126	.000
<b>Cultural Disengagement</b>	.60	.83	8.14	126	.000

\*  $p < .000$

ANOVA analysis found there were statistically significant improvements in Developmental Orientation and in Cultural Disengagement between the beginning of the semester and the conclusion of the semester ( $p < .001$ ).

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how a Multi-Layered Autobiography Project could impact the level of intercultural competence for undergraduate students, many of whom were aspiring teacher candidates. Investigators expected that the results would support the position that cultural self-knowledge is a necessary step to understanding others' cultural backgrounds and increasing ICC (Gay, 2010; Gunn et al., 2013; Hernandez, 2017; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Balcazar et al., 2009; Morettini et al., 2018).

While most of the previous studies cited in this manuscript used qualitative methods of analysis (predominantly narrative analysis), the present study used the IDI as a tool for quantitative data analysis because of its ease of use and because it provides a valid and reliable measure of ICC (Hammer, 2011). The data analysis reported herein indicated a statistically significant increase in participants' ICC in their Developmental Orientation and reduction of their Cultural Disengagement. These findings replicate those in Sandell's (2020) study.

These findings were also congruent with previous research indicating that writing autobiography has led to increased cultural awareness, as well as other dispositional and academic gains (e.g., Dentith & Maurer, 2011; Gunn et al., 2009). Increased cultural competence was notably an evident gain for pre-service teachers, which concurs with findings in earlier studies that used autobiography assignments, such as Bersh (2018) and Hernandez (2017). The difference between pre-course and post-course data also indicated a significant increase in participants' knowledge and

beliefs regarding cultural diversity, in accordance with earlier research (Hernandez, 2017; Lee, 2012; Moloney & Oguro, 2015).

Although writing an autobiography has led to increased cultural awareness, an isolated autobiographical assignment within a teacher preparation program, or even within a single course, might not trigger outstanding teacher reflexivity regarding cultural self-knowledge and understanding of other's cultural diversity. An assignment to write one's autobiography alone does not have a major impact on raising understanding of other cultures. Noteworthy, previous studies focusing on writing autobiography alone have not shed statistically significant results regarding an increase in ICC.

Indeed, investigators have found that writing an autobiography in conjunction with other related assignments produced more significant increases in ICC among pre-service teachers. The Multi-Layered Autobiography Project in this investigation included several culturally-engaging assignments as an intervention strategy. The project included a family elder interview, a personal diversity story, a cultural partnership and interview, a service-learning experience, and an autobiography paper. The impact of this Multi-Layered Autobiography Project for transforming intercultural competence among pre-service teachers corroborates prior research, which used several intervention assignments in conjunction with, or as an extension of writing autobiography (e.g., Amy et al., 2012; Arzal, 2019; Balcazar et al., 2009; Bersh, 2018; Brooks, 2013; Hernandez, 2017; Morettini et al., 2018; Sandell, 2020).

A salient conclusion is that autobiography-centered, culturally related, multi-layered assignments produced a more robust intercultural learning experience for pre-service teachers. This finding was supported with a statistically significant improvement in intercultural competence. A major implication for teacher preparation programs is that engaging teachers in writing autobiography, especially with a cultural focus, has the potential for setting a foundation for activating ICC. However, additionally participating in other culturally related assignments or autobiography-based reflective activities can generate a more significant impact in Developmental Orientation and Cultural Disengagement.

The authors recommend that writing an autobiography should be combined with other culturally-focused intervention strategies. Such strategies would include engaging assignments to address a broad scope of diverse intercultural experiences. A family elder interview, a personal diversity story, a cultural partnership and interview, and a service-learning experience, are specific examples from the present study.

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### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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## ACCULTURATION: A STUDY OF INTEGRATIONAL ASPECTS AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN TALLINN, ESTONIA

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### ABSTRACT

Due to globalization and ever increasing human movements, number of international students in Estonia have been increasing over the last one decade. International students are facing various challenges in a new environment. Despite of the increasing numbers, very few scholarly works attempted to address international student's integrational aspects. The Purpose of this study was to examine acculturation preferences among International students in Tallinn. The survey sample comprise of 151 International students from Bangladesh, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ukraine, Nepal, India, Pakistan. Data were obtained through survey and analyzed by using Berry's (2005) model of acculturation. Due to the sample size, the results cannot be generalized. Using Berry's original model of Acculturation, results showed that Integration was the most preferred strategy and the tendency towards integration varies when analyzing different socio-cultural domains of Marriage, Language, Education, Friends etc. Interview data to know the reasons of choosing different acculturation domains however suggests that even though integration has been the most preferred strategy, it can have different point of understanding for respondents. This study finally suggests that more in-depth study is required in order understand international student's integrational aspects.

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## Introduction

International students worldwide have been on the increasing side. In the year 2008, 3.3 million students moved from one country to another only to study their tertiary -level education (OECD 2010). Only the USA accepted more than a million international students in the year 2018 ( IIE, The power of international education , 2018). In Europe the trend is also the same where the United Kingdom is being the most attractive country for international students followed by Germany, France, Spain and Belgium (Study international, 2018). This trend is visible for other countries in European Union and the number of international students are rising. In Estonia in the year 2005 there were only 840 International students, in the year 2010 the number was 1282 and in the year 2017 the number of international students were 4395. It means the growth rate is very high. It also indicates that the number of foreign-born people has been increasing in Estonia. If a country contains number of immigrants and if the number is on the increasing side, their policymakers will have to pay special attention on these particular phenomena (Robinson 2005). International students however not only is significant for the universities that host them, they are also important for the country and society which hosts them as they enrich these countries with their different cultures and perspectives, which also brings cultural awareness and appreciation (Ghuman, 2003). International students not only add their value to the society in terms of workforce but also contribute to the intellectual aspects to make into capital for the host society. This is where the concept of acculturation comes into the entire discourse of international students. It is a process of changes that occur as a result of two or more cultures getting into contact on a regular basis (Berry 2005) When international students move to a new country they may face challenges and acculturation stresses (Berry, 2005) due to adjustment problems etc. There have been studies based on the acculturation concept concerning refugees or immigrants but the previous studies have somewhat neglected their focus on International students and their acculturation ( Zhou 2008, Clore and Gaynor 2018) Even though international student go through different psychological problems and adjustment stresses. Considering all these aspects into account, this study aims to enhance our understanding of Acculturation preferences of International students in Tallinn, Estonia.

In order to achieve the aim of this study, which is to enhance our understanding of acculturation preferences among international students in Tallinn, Estonia. This study asked the following research questions: What are the acculturation preferences among international students in Tallinn, Estonia? How do these acculturation preferences play out in different social-cultural domains? What are the reasons of choosing these different acculturation preferences?

## **Theoretical Framework**

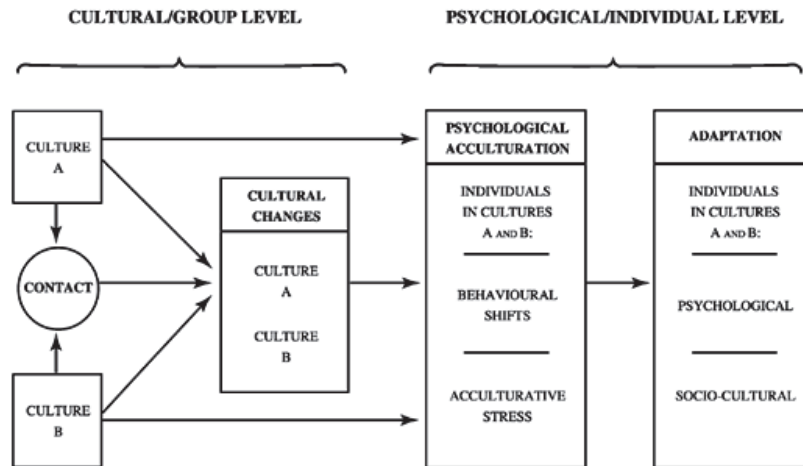
### *Acculturation*

The Initial conceptualization of acculturation has been viewed as uni-dimensional model and the focus was only on the migrants and it was theorized that migrant goes through a process of discarding cultural heritage and coping with the host country's values (Schwartz, 2010). From uni-dimensional, acculturation has been conceptualized as bi-dimensional over the last few decades, Berry (1992, 1997, 2005) for instance came up with the idea that acculturation as 'dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between more cultural groups and their individual members (Bery, 2005).

Several models on Acculturation have been formulated in order to indicate acculturation process. Ward and his colleagues (2001) formulated a framework to distinguish between different approached like how to learn culture based on cultural approach, coping approach and societal approach as a whole. However coping and stress framework was first developed by Berry (1997) where he explained factors that affect acculturation and adaptation.

Berry (1992, 1997, 2005) designed his framework in a way which linked psychological and cultural acculturation focusing on two different groups which are living together and closely associated each other. Both group and individual level has been emphasized in this frame. On the group level, the formulation of different cultural groups and their core contacts and changes in behaviour have been highlighted, whereas on the individual level, psychological changes and eventual adaptation have been focused as Berry (2005) stated that "these changes can be a set of rather easily accomplished behavioural shifts or they can be more problematic, producing acculturative stress as manifested by uncertainty, anxiety, and depression"

Acculturation strategies based on groups and individuals can differ on their preferences in the acculturation process (Zhang, 2011). Two components are core for these strategies: behaviour and attitude, attitude is the individual's preferences and behaviour is an individual's activities. When it comes to conceptualizing these strategies and adaptive on both cultural and psychological aspects, Berry (2005) developed the model to measure acculturation preferences.



**Figure 1.1:** General Acculturation Strategies Framework (Berry, 2005)

This can be illustrated by referencing each component highlighted in the figure 1.1. Berry has suggested that acculturation strategies of ethnicity can be described in terms of two independent dimensions: one is the retention of one's cultural tradition and the other is the establishment and maintenance of relationships with the larger society. One can conceptualize a framework when these criteria are considered simultaneously and it posits four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry 1997). From the point of non-dominant group's view, when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the assimilation strategy is defined. Here individuals prefer to shed their heritage culture and become absorbed into the dominant society, in contrast, when individual's place value on holding onto their original culture and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the separation alternative is defined. Here the individuals turn their back on involvement with other cultural groups and turn inward toward their own heritage culture. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's heritage culture in daily interactions

and with other groups, integration is an option. In this case, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained while at the same time seeking, as a member of an ethno cultural group, to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. Finally, when there is a little possibility or interest in heritage cultural maintenance (often reasons for enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) marginalization is defined (Berry 2005). Islam (2008) in his research on acculturation preferences among migrants in UK and Sweden stated that acculturation preferences varies because of immigrants' policy of host country. Therefore, it is also significant to have a framework of empirical studies based on acculturation process and strategies.

#### **4.2 Acculturation model by Berry (1997, 2005, 2011)**

As mentioned above Berry (1997, 2005, 2011) suggested that acculturation strategies can be explained from two dimensional ways: Retention of someone's cultural tradition can be on one side and the other side maintaining relationships with the larger society. This framework can be conceptualizing within four strategies: Assimilation, Integration, Separation and Marginalization (Berry, 1997,2005, 2011).

These strategies are from the non-dominant point of view it means it carries the names from the immigrants who live in a different cultural (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2011). When an individual do not want to maintain his or her own culture and seek to daily interaction with other cultures Assimilation is defined. Individuals in this strategy chose to shed their own culture. On the other hand when an individual only wants to maintain the original cultures and do not wish to interact with any other cultures, separation is what it is called according to the strategies. Here, individuals only prefers to maintain their heritage culture. Maintaining both heritage and host cultures and other cultures and maintaining daily interaction with other groups is called Integration. So, here some degree of integrity in cultures can be found. When an individual or individuals do not maintain both heritage culture and other cultures, often because of social exclusion or discrimination, marginalization is defined (Berry, 1997, 2005 , 2011)

#### **Empirical studies on Acculturation**

When a student move from one academic environment to another it has the relocation aspects to a new country and this relocation is becoming common

phenomena in the recent years. This in one hand gives intellectual and cultural enrichment for the students but at the same time, it also has many challenges and difficulties. Brisset and his colleagues (2010) did a study on Vietnamese international students in France to know their Psychological and Sociological adaptation. In this study they came up with an understanding that International students go through increasing number of psychological pressure than the local students. Yeh and Inose (2003) stated that Chinese International students may encounter considerable amount stress in their academic and social sphere. In a study of the Role of Identity, discrimination and acculturation among international students in American Classroom, Brooke and his colleagues (2008) came up with findings that Acculturation and perceived discrimination were related to international students' educational satisfaction. Identity gap has also been another aspect which relates educational satisfaction and mediate the relationships among acculturation and their study satisfaction. These challenges however often results less in satisfaction in their university experiences ( Zhau, 2008) Utilizing the concept of acculturation Jenny and Charless (2007) explored the experiences of international students in the US southeast university. In this study they found that not all of the issues of international students that they can be problematized in the context of adjustment, as the other researchers do, but some more serious issues need to be taken into account due to inadequacies within the host society.

From home to any host society, this transition can be exiting for students but many students experiences homesickness during their transition ( Naeem and Gul 2010) This homesickness however is viewed as psychological problem that students suffer during their transition period ( Wei, 2007) Among the Irinian students studying in Malaysia 43.3% faces homesickness and 33.8% faces depression while pursuing their studies in Malaysia (Majid, 2014) those who are homesick usually miss their parents , friends and family members. This prolonged homesickness could lead to psychological disorder and many students experienced this during they study period (Lee and Smith 2008 ) This depressive symptoms may lead to negative mood, loneliness and students sometimes become pessimistic in their thoughts about the host society (Orzechowska, 2013). Depression affects an individual's social functioning and affects his or her basic daily activities. Even though depression is a serious mental health and is imperative to go under treatment but very less number of people can recover from it (Naeem et al 2004) Students who suffer this problem, it can become major issues in their future life though studies have not explored this issue as much as it should be given emphasized (Lee and Smith 2008, Majid, 2014, Levine and Sanaka 2010).

Sometimes various environmental factors influenced students during their transition period. Factors which includes low social support may influence to bad mood and negative attitude towards host country, which can also produce homesickness. Sometimes when certain demands are to be fulfilled or met in the new environment it leads the feeling of separation or being marginalized which also leads to homesickness (Naeem and Gul 2010)

Individuals do cope into a new environment their own ways. However, there are two main types of coping strategies, one is problem focused coping strategies and the other is emotion focused. Problem focused strategy is more associated with adaptation where an individual focused on overcoming the problems and to get engaged with the society. This strategy tries to take control of the stress (Folkman and Lazarus 1985) Emotion focused coping try to involve emotional support from relatives and friends. One of the good examples of emotion focused strategy is to keep individuals busy with other activities. (Folkman and Lazarus, 1985)

Often universities or mental health professionals provides psychological treatment and many universities also have counsellor to support students (Roberts and Bottonari, 2007) many students however are not willing to consult and get treatment for their depression and homesickness and some students do not even want to recognize it due to the social stigma related to it (Clore and Gaynor, 2008). These students do not want to reveal their problems to their teachers, friends and mental health professionals and very few students have been able to overcome this situation themselves by using their self-help techniques (Roberts and Bottonari, 2007) Saravanan and Alizi (2017) did their research on International students in Malaysia and came up with the results that most of the students suffer from acculturative stress and many of them even face marginalization during their transition period.

Many studies came up with the fact that higher education institutions need to have the understanding and the implications of synthesis and choices of international students. For a multicultural environment it is particularly important who believes in internal values and culture of differences (Howard, 2018) Many studies however found out that Asian students do not use counselling system compare to non-Asian students (Hazan, 2006). Many international students only seek from their known ones but do not turn to university counselling and any other social support (Sue 1981). International students have different degrees of acculturation, which results different levels of satisfaction. Social adjustment and unfamiliarity is also one aspect to consider in their acculturative process (Berry, 2005)

Studies have shown that Asian and African students encounter many difficulties when they try to acculturate into the host society (Saravan and Alias 2019) Many students informed that they do not feel welcome by the host society members (Tan, 1994 ) Islam (2008) came with the fact that Asian and African students do not endorse emotional social issues but they are more associated with practical and career issues, which can also be at some point be measured as acculturative stressors and could lead psychological disorder as it sometimes leaves the individual alienated from their friends and society. Asian community maintains their history and cultural values (Islam, 2008)

Islam (2008 ) in his study on Acculturation stated that the term ethnic identity has often synonymous used with acculturation but these are two different aspects and should be distinguished. Acculturation is focused more on changes when individuals come into contact with different cultural groups and more associated from group aspect whereas ethnic identity may be an aspect of acculturation and more concern of individual level.

Ghuman (1997, 99, 03) did a research on acculturation on Asian immigrants in the UK and came up with the findings that “Majority of young Asian people prefers integration and rejects assimilation, marginalization, and separation strategies. Thus the majority of young Asians are bi-lingual, and bi-cultural. They have maintained some aspects of their own culture and at the same time adopted some of the majority cultural norms, they defined personal identity in a ‘hyphenated way’, for example, ‘Indo-English’ However it is to state that many studies have shown that integration is the most adaptive way of acculturation and can be conducive for immigrants while marginalization is the worst adaptive way of acculturation (Lee and Smith 2008, Majid, 2014, Levin and Sanaka 2010).

## **Methodology**

This study took its departure point to enhance our understanding of acculturation preferences among International students in Tallinn and how these preferences play out in different socio-cultural domains. One of the reasons of choosing Estonian context is because the number of international students are increasing over the last few years. This study took its data from three different universities in Tallinn and they are Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences, Tallinn University of Technology and Tallinn University.

These universities were selected because of the fact that these are universities that have large number of foreign students in Tallinn.

To answer the first research question: What are the acculturation preferences among International students in Tallinn, a quantitative methodology has been used by utilizing survey questions as prescribed by Berry (1997, 2005, 2011) To answer the second research question of how these preferences varies in different socio-cultural domains, a quantitative methodology has been deployed by constructing survey questions as prescribed by Lathi (2002) and to answer the third research question of what are the reasons of choosing these different acculturation preferences, a qualitative method has been used by conducting semi-structured interviews as prescribed by Islam (2017)

### **Advantages and limitations of the chosen methodology**

One of the advantages of chosen methodology is to have the flexibility of data sources, which gives the researcher the convenience to collect data, and it can be utilized for both informal and formal interviews and discussion. Though interview method may not give us statistical understanding but can give us rich textual data, which can provide in-depth understanding of how preferences play out in different socio-cultural domains and the reasons of choosing them. It is also conducive to use interview method to understand complex behaviours and people's emotion.

It is however to note that there were some limitations in collecting data through chosen methods. Due to time constraint, it was difficult to select large number of respondents for both survey and interview. However, it is also to note that out of the population, large number of sample may not always give us good results as some in-depth understanding can also bring rich data which can be analysed through relevant theoretical context.

### **Sampling**

To be able to have diverse and representative number of respondents a simple random sampling technique was utilized. With this technique, all participants have equal chance to be involved in the same of this study. Samples were selected from three different universities: Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences, Tallinn University of Technology and Tallinn University and the

participants are from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Ukraine. This is here to note that, this study took only the full time students into account as they often face the acculturation stressors than the short time exchange students and mentioned groups are the dominant nationalities that are studying in Tallinn as an International student. In total 151 participants attended the survey questions out of 295 that were prescribed by the international coordinators from three different universities. In the beginning, the questionnaires were sent to the respondents where the objective of the research was mentioned to give them the idea of the study and their there was an option whether or not they want to take part of Interview session. These way interview respondents were selected to have in-depth understanding.

### **Sample size and data collection**

For the survey, there were 151 participants and they answered questions through on line questionnaire. Participants are all full time current students from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana and Ukraine. Since these study will not analyse their preferences based on nationality, rather this study will analyse only their overall preferences in acculturation strategies and how it plays out in different socio-cultural domains, that's why participants demographic information have not been provided in this dissertation, however all these information were taken for another study and was part of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire questions were made from Berry's (1997, 2005 , 2011) model and contains 16 close ended questions. First section is designed in a way where students overall preferred acculturation can be found and the second section has been designed to have understanding how it varies in different socio-cultural domains.

Respondents have been approached through the international coordinators from three different universities. Tallinn University of Technology's international students coordinator prescribed 60 students mail list, who were willing to participate on line survey. Tallinn University's international students coordinator sent 55 students mail list and EUAS's hostel coordinator sent 80 participants list. So, all together 295 students mail list have been prescribed from three different universities and out of them 151 respondents answered and filled in the on line survey form.

Semi- structured interviews were conducted among 11 international students who are all at the moment studying. The interview questions were formulated based on the Acculturation stressors mention in the theoretical framework; hence the

Academic stressors, Language stressors and Socio-cultural stressors were in foundation of the interview questions. Among interview participants, 3 were from Bangladesh, 3 from Nigeria, 2 from Cameroon, 1 each from Pakistan, India and Ukraine. This is to note that interview respondents have been selected from the on line survey where it was mentioned whether or not respondents want to participate a face-to-face interview. 11 respondents answered yes, and they all have been interviewed. However, interview data have been analyzed to get in-depth ideas about the reasons of choosing different acculturation domains as prescribed by Islam (2017). Interview gives us rich textual data, despite of the fact that this cannot be generalized.

### **Data Analysis**

Interview data were analyzed through Narrative analysis. Initial data were transcribed and then double-checked and then the next step was to code them and the coding has been made through theoretical coding and then they were categorized and through the categories the narratives were formulated. Survey data have been analyzed through simple mean and percentages using several tables.

### ***Ranking of the variables***

In this study, variables are ranked Low, Moderate and High scale (Lathi 2002) Where low being 1, Moderate being 2 and High being 3 in order. Here Integration will be ranked as Independent variable using different socio-cultural domains (Islam, 2008) the descriptions of what this rank means are as follows

**Low:** Intention to integrate is low or no Intention.

**Moderate:** Intention towards integration is minimum.

**High:** Intention to integrate is high.

This scale will be used for different socio-cultural domains as prescribed by Islam (2008)

### ***Marriage (M)***

**Low Intention:** If an individual does not want to get married outside his or her own community.

**Moderate Intention:** If an individual says, he or she does not mind to get married outside the community but prefers to get married inside the community.

**High Intention:** If an individual says he or she does not want to get married inside their community.

### *Social Activities (S)*

**Low Intention:** If an individual says he or she organize or join to their community based activities but do not participate any other activities organized by other communities.

**Moderate Intention:** If an individual says he or she participates their community activities but do not mind participating activities outside the community.

**High Intention:** If an individual says he or she does not like participating activities inside their community, rather prefers participating activities outside the community.

### *Language (L)*

**Low Intention:** If an individual says he or she does not want to learn or speak the host society's language.

**Moderate Intention:** If an individual says he or she knows the host society language but prefers to speak own language and wants to practice both.

**High Intention:** If an individual says he or she wants to speak only host society's language.

### *Educational Activities (E)*

**Low Intention:** If an individual says, he or she does not want to study further in Estonia

**Moderate Intention:** If an individual says, he or she wants to study further in Estonia but would prefer to study in some other European countries.

**High Intention:** If an individual says he or she wants further in Estonia.

### *Entrepreneurial Activities (En)*

**Low Intention:** If an individual says he or she doesn't want to establish a business in Estonia

**High Intention:** If an individual says, he or she wants to establish a business in Estonia.

### Number of International students in Estonia

The number of international students increasing in Estonia quite rapidly. Below table will illustrate the rate and the exact number of international students from the year 2005 until 2018.

The number of international students increasing in Estonia quite rapidly. Below table will illustrate the rate and the exact number of international students from the year 2005 until 2018.

Year	Number of International students
2005	840
2006	901
2007	885
2008	908
2009	1072
2010	1282
2011	1573
2012	1876
2013	2230
2014	2287
2015	3476
2016	3917
2017	4395
2018	5047

(Table 1, Number of international students' science 2005, source Statics Estonia)

In the year 2018 the total number of international students in Estonia were 5047. Among them 1740 students were BA level students, 2129 were at MA level and 516 were at PhD level and integrated level were 322 and students of applied sciences were 340. The top 10 countries of foreign degree students are from Finland, Russia, Nigeria, Ukraine, Turkey, India, Bangladesh, Georgia, USA and Latvia. 21 BA level programs are taught in English in Estonian, 65 MA level programs are taught and 68 PhD levels are taught at the moment all over the Estonian universities. Currently, eight universities are offering International degree programs, among them 6 are located in Tallinn and two in Tartu.

## Presentation of Acculturation Strategies among International students in Tallinn

### *Acculturation preferences among International students in Tallinn*

Acculturation preferences	Percentage
Integration	79.7 (118)
Assimilation	20.3 (30)
Separation	0
Marginalization	0

Using Barry's (1992 Typology ) Results consistently indicated that high number of respondents 118 of 148 (79.7%) preferred Integration as there preferred strategy, followed by Assimilation 30 of 148 (13%) as opposed to separation and marginalization. 3 Respondents out of 151 however preferred no comments. What is significant here is that the number of respondents who preferred assimilation as their mode of acculturation which is different than host country's strategy as Estonia follows Integration as the mechanism to adapt to foreigners in the society. It would be interesting to get an analysis by the socio-cultural domain discussed below.

### *Integration Strategy Marriage (M)*

Integration Strategy (M)	Percentage
Low Intention	55 (83)
Moderate Intention	23.8 (36)
High Intention	21.2 (32)

More than half of the respondent 83 of 151 (55%) had low intention towards integration and they do not prefer getting married outside of their own community members, whereas 32 of 151 (21.2%) had the opposite view and they preferred to get married someone from the host society. A significant number of respondents 36 of 151 (23.8%) had moderate intention towards integration, they do not mind getting married someone from host society but would prefer someone from their own community. This data shows how foreign students want to lead their life at home as marriage as socio-cultural domain remains or reflects the daily lives at home where partners need to interact every single moment and everyday activities.

### Integration Strategy Social Activities (S)

Integration Strategy (S)	Percentage
Low Intention	6.6 (10)
Moderate Intention	16.6 (25)
High Intention	76.8 (116)

A significant number of respondents 116 of 151 (76.8%) preferred high intention towards integration and they do attend social events organized by the locals and they want to organize events with local friends and people. 25 respondents (16.6%) however preferred moderate intention as their mode of adaptation as they don't mind attending events organized by host society members but prefer attending events organized by their own community members. However 10 respondents among 151 (6.6%) percent had low intention towards integration as they do neither attended at events organized by host society member, nor they expect to attend any events organized by host society members.

### Integration Strategy Language (L)

Integration Strategy (L)	Percentage
Low Intention	14.6 (22)
Moderate Intention	23.8 (36)
High Intention	61.6 (93)

High number of respondents wants to learn Local language, 93 of 151 (61.6%), so they preferred high intention as their mode of acculturation, whereas 22 respondents of 151 (14.6%) had no intention to learn local language and 36 respondents or 151 (23.8%) do not mind learning local language but would prefer communicating in their own language. If we combine both moderate and low intention, it shows a significant number still had confusion whether or not they should learn local language and the benefit of it which can actually reflect ultimately how they want to integrate with the host society members and it would be interesting to know in depth of their view from the interview data.

### Integration Strategy Educational Activities (E)

Integration Strategy (E)	Percentage
Low Intention	19.5 (29)
Moderate Intention	24.2 (37)
High Intention	56.4 (85)

More than half of the respondents 85 of 151 (56.4%) had the intention to continue their studies in Estonian and somewhat satisfied with whatever educational services they have received, whereas 29 respondents had low intention towards integration as they do not intend to continue their studies in Estonia nor are they happy with the services that they have received. However, 37 respondents (24.2%) remained moderate as their mode of acculturation as they do not mind continuing their studies in Estonia but would prefer to continue their studies to some other European countries.

### Integration Strategy Entrepreneurial Activities (En)

Integration Strategy (En)	Percentage
Low Intention	30.2 (45)
High Intention	69.8 (104)

A high number of respondents wants to establish a business in Estonian, 104 respondents of 149 (69.8%) preferred high intention as their mode of acculturation as opposed to 45 respondents of 151 (30.2%) preferred not to establish any business in Estonia and would like to do any kind of business activities to some other countries than in Estonian. Two respondents preferred no comments to answer for this particular domain.

### Respondents View

**Impose Narratives:** *'I am an international student, if I were to settle in Estonian I have to learn the Estonian Language'*

Narratives concerning language accounts respondent's own language, English as an international language and host country's language. Own and international language is emphasized by many respondents, can be the reason that learning a new language can be time-consuming at the same time importance of learning language appeared strong as a narrative as X, a 24 year man from African continent (exact identity has been avoided due to ethical reasons) stated his concern on language.

#### Extract 1

1. I am from Africa, was living with my family members in village
2. Then moved to the capital city because of my education purpose
3. Had to learn English language
4. Before it was good enough to communicate with my tribal language
5. Now I am in Estonian again for higher study purpose
6. To be settled here, I need to learn again another language.

This respondent described about his country of origin (1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4) quite elaborately while asked about Estonian language and what he thinks about learning this language. Hence the narratives of his own language and English as an international language were strong, it appeared his own native language narratives are well formulated (1.3 and 1.4) and English as a foreign language narrative appeared as something he had to learn (1.4) for his study purpose, hence forced narrative appeared evident in this regard. Learning Estonian language is something respondent wants to learn, as he wants to be settled in Estonia (1.6). it is not for any amusement, nor out of respondents own willing to interact with host society members or to get adapted with the society, but to get a an objective full filled, which is to get settled in a country (1.5 and 1.6), hence it appeared as impose narratives.

#### Extract 2

1. Learning any language is good.
2. But you decide to learn a new language; you need to think of its utility.
3. Estonian language does not have utility even in Tallinn.
4. Rather Russian language can be utilizing.
5. You learn Russian language, communicate with many locals.
6. And even in some foreign countries Russian language is spoken.
7. I still have to learn this language, as I am told to learn it to get permanent residence.

Respondent from Asian continent aged 22 (exact identity has been avoided due to ethical reasons) shared his sense of learning language. Respondent shared why it is not necessary to learn the Estonian Language (2.2, 2.3, 2.4,2.5,2.6) and at the same time, learning a new language has been shared as good aspect in life (2.1) whereas less valued narrative appeared very strongly when it came to learning host country's language (2.3,2.4). Wider social aspect of diverse language and its conflict has been shared by the respondent (2.3), as this respondent has mentioned the utility of local language is even questionable in the context of Tallinn (2.3, 2.5) which gives the respondents valid narratives not to learn local language. The necessity of learning local language however has been shared by the respondents (2.7) but no wider context of integration in terms of having friends and engaging any social activities or finding a job, rather getting permanent residence permit appeared as strong narrative (2.7) which can be viewed as impose narratives.

**Own linking narratives:** *'I have Estonian friends, they are nice but I would prefer to have my life partner from my own community.'*

Since language narratives in terms of having, friends and social activities or getting married was almost non-existent; follow up questions were made to illustrate their activities. However, respondents and their willingness to answer questions and express their opinion was well respected even when follow up questions were made. It can be understood that, international students sometimes go through tough situation while being abroad and studying in a different country with different situation, therefore some additional questions were directed to abort their emotion from the entire context. Concerning having friends and partner from host societies, many of the respondents own linking narratives appeared stronger and differed from the language narratives in some extent.

#### Extract 3

1. I have local friends
2. They are nice
3. Sometimes I get some advice from them which is also helpful
4. To spend time, one needs to have friends
5. I have friends who are also from my country
6. But you need variation
7. They are nice but I don't think I can think of having a life partner among them

Respondent's narratives towards friends and choosing partners appeared not yet developed from this extract, as local and country friends (3.1 and 3.5) have been categorized as friends. Own likings and willingness to have local friends appeared strong from this extract (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6) willingness to have variation to choose friends appeared strong narrative (3.6) also it suggests international student's loneliness while being abroad. One significant aspect of choosing friend however can be viewed as to get advice in many regards to get adapted in a new country can be found from this extract (3.3), which is somewhat different from previous extracts. Own likings of choosing partners from same community appeared strong (3.7), which can also be associated with family and home life that can be viewed somewhat different than social activities.

Concerning social activities, respondents own linking appeared strong. Respondent aged 28 from Asian continent expressed her opinion.

#### Extract 4

1. I like attending events and enjoying my life
2. Going out to any events are OK for me
3. I like dancing, sometime my community members do not see it as good for female members, that's why I sometime prefer even to go out with my local friends
4. Social events arranged by my community members are also very nice and interesting.

Own liking narratives appeared strong to attend events and social activities (4.1, 4.3 and 4.4). Attending event arranged by the locals however can be viewed something extra or doing as an external factor as the respondent mentioned "that's why I even prefer" (4.3), the word "even" (4.3) can be illustrated in a way where respondent described these kind of events as an additional activities on top of the activities arranged by her community members. However, own linking narratives appeared very strong from this extract, especially when it came to attending social activities arranged by her own community members as she mentioned, "social events arranged by my community members are also very nice and interesting" (4.4). The word "also" (4.4) illustrated her own linking quite significantly but at the same time not being able to perform dance when she likes most also appeared as differ narrative.

**Double identity narratives:** *'I want to be a humble and integrated Estonian citizen but I am still an Indian.'*

Double identity narratives are evident for the overall acculturation strategies. Indian respondent of 25 aged described.

#### Extract 5

1. I want to learn Estonian norms and values
2. I already know many of them
3. As I want be an integrated Estonian citizen
4. It doesn't mean I will give away my own culture
5. I have an uncle who has been living in UK for more than 40 years, he is a British-Indian, he practice all the Indian culture in UK
6. I think it is not a problem to practice my own culture
7. I am still an Indian
8. I want to be an Indian-Estonian just like my uncle.

In this extract respondent illustrated his identity in a hyphenated way to be recognized for future as he mentioned, "I want to be an Indian-Estonian" (5.8). Significant part of this extract represents of double identity narratives (5.4, 5.5, 5.6 5.7, 5.8) despite of a strong wish to become an integrated Estonian citizen (5.3) respondent here illustrated his double identify by making his remark- it does not mean I would give away my own culture (5.4). It also signifies the chosen acculturation strategy where integration has been overwhelmingly the most preferred one, but in different socio-cultural domains, it varies quite significantly. The strong wish of keeping own culture can be extracted from this extract as the respondent spontaneously gave an example of his uncle's case ( 5.5) while it was asked by the interviewer, not only suggests the strong wish but also to illustrate the double identity practice at home and away from home.

International students often try to remember the country's education system sometimes to heal out the overall situation that the faced in the beginning of their study abroad and in many extent identity themselves as trained differently than the ones who only have education back home. A respondent from African continent mentioned.

#### Extract 6

1. Education system here in Estonian is different
2. I had to cope so many things
3. I even suffered a lot
4. I don't know whether it is good or bad
5. But now that I am finishing my studies I am happy

6. I will have a foreign degree
7. This will give a different identity back home

While asked about how is trying to get integrated, respondent from Africa kept on mentioning about his studies in Estonia and keep on visiting back home while stating the study system in Estonia (6.1, 6.26,6,6.7). This also illustrate double identity quite strongly as the respondent viewed his degree in Estonian will give him different identity back home (6.7). Respondent at the same time mentioned quite clearly how difficult it was to cope with the new study system (6.2, 6.3), this also emphasize the strong desire to cope with the new system while at the same time desire of having foreign degree is stated (6.6). The word foreign degree (6.6) gives the impression the double identity of living in one place and at the same time mentioning the place as foreign land, when the strong wish of adapting and integrating with society is evident.

**Avoid Narratives:** *"I can easily get integrated with the society, I have many friends; do I still need to learn language and all other cultures?"*

Avoid narratives appeared strong from many respondents. While integration can be termed as most preferred strategies followed by assimilation, avoid narratives remained quite strong among many respondents. A respondents aged 27, doing her masters stated.

#### Extract 7

1. I have many friends who are either Estonian or Russian
2. I can easily communicate with them
3. I go and celebrate many events
4. Many of them I think consider me as their good friends
5. Do I still need to learn the language?

While asked about learning language and having friends in order to get integrated with the host society, respondents seem to have reluctant strategies on it by avoiding the long term effects of these domains to accepted to cope with the host society as she addressed (7.1, 7.2,7.3,7.4,7.5). Stressing the point whether or not learning the language or values are part of integration, as she already have many friends and many of them consider her as friend as well (7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4). This is to address that, she is expecting her friends to know her language that she speaks and this should be first basis to communicate, where she herself is trying to avoid their language to learn. Another aspect to address from this extract is- she is even asking

the interviewer by pointing- “do I still need to learn the language” (7.5), gives a clear indication, she wants to avoid this part of integration aspect.

Despite the fact that participants expressed their experiences their daily lives, friends, life partner and other aspects of acculturation, yet they expressed a point of disclosure to get into detail. A respondent of 31 years of age expressed his narratives.

#### Extract 8

1. I am living here for over one and half years
2. You are doing research on international students and their adaptation issues
3. Good to know that someone at least thinking about it
4. Well, I am happy here in this country
5. I have things that I need
6. I have work, school and friends here
7. So I am happy
8. But please I do not want to share details, as I might feel stressed afterwards

Respondent expressed his daily lives and how he is finding in in Estonian in a way that one can find the sense of being neglected (8.3), as he mentioned the word “at least” by stating that at least someone is doing research on it, while at the same time mentioned twice he is happy (8.3, 8.7). In the first place, might give an impression that he is indeed happy. When one categorize this sense of happiness is the expression of getting away from the mental stress that one might go through as a foreigner as it can be found from extract (8.5, 8.6) respondent has work, school and friends and according to the respondents these are the things which should make him happy. This also the impression of avoid narratives (8.8)

### Conclusion

The study of acculturation preferences among the respondents in Tallinn, Estonian revealed that Integration is the most preferred strategy by using the Berry’s (2005) model. There are differences when one uses Lathi et al (2001) framework from different socio-cultural domains. Respondents showed low intention towards integration for the domain Marriage, on the other hand for the domains Language, Friends and social activities had high to moderate tendency towards integration. The models which have been used to investigate, validates to study acculturation preferences among international students in Tallinn. However, from interview data, there were some in-depth understanding of why students want to learn language and

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the reasons for that suggests that there is a need to study in-depth understanding of what the respondents mean by their preferred strategies. In future, scholars can investigate qualitative study in order to understand their point of view.

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## ALBANIAN CULT SYMBOLISM

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### ABSTRACT

This article gives a brief overview of the Albanian cult symbolism found on objects of material culture (ceramics, items of decoration, weapons, and cult relics) during archaeological excavations on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the 20th and early 21st centuries and studied on the facades and inside the interiors of Albanian Christian temples, on tombstones, as well as on the facades of residential and religious buildings constructed presently. The multi-ethnic and multi religious nature of Azerbaijan's population enabled a syncretism of pagan, Christian and Muslim religious beliefs, rituals, rites, and traditions. Some elements of pre-Christian beliefs are still preserved in the genetic memory of the country's population and are an integral part of the modern Christian and Muslim beliefs of Azerbaijan's ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. A number of national traditions have emerged as a result of the syncretism of faiths. This is evidenced by the celebration of Nowruz holiday (which honors the four primary elements: water, air, fire, and earth), the preservation of reverence for the Moon cult, the honoring of the sanctity of trees and stones in various shrines, and other commonly accepted rites. The Albanian ethno-cultural heritage, which undeniably also includes cult symbolism, is the most significant part of Azerbaijan's rich historical and cultural heritage, reflecting the mutual influence of various ethnic and cultural processes that have occurred in this region over the centuries.

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## Introduction

Azerbaijan's Albanian cult symbolism starting from the 4th century BC allows us to trace the syncretism of pagan cult beliefs with other traditions and beliefs. It is a repository of valuable information about the religious worldviews of the Caucasian Albanian population (4th century BC–early 8th century AD), which were traditionally passed down from generation to generation over the centuries with some elements surviving to the present day.

The majority of the cult symbols were carefully studied by scientists such as S.M. Gaziyeu, I.M. Jafarzadeh, T.I. Golubkin, R.M. Vahidov, O.S. Ismizadeh, D.N. Rustamov, F.M. Muradova, J.A. Khalilov, I.H. Narimanov, F.L. Osmanov, A.B. Badalov, A.I. Alakbarov, G.O. Goshgarli, I. Babayev, G. Jabiyev, G.M. Aslanov, N.I. Rzayev, R. Efendi, N.B. Guluzadeh, F.S. Khalilli, G.K. Akhundova, S. Rzayeva, and T. Aliyev.

## Albanian cult symbolism in objects of material culture

According to image types, Albanian cult symbolism signs dating from the 4th century BC to the 3rd century AD are classified as **anthropomorphic, astral, geometric, zoomorphic, floral, polymorphic, brands, and signs** (Pзаева, 2013, с.280-292; 2015), and according to the method of representation, as two-dimensional graphics (both as individual symbols and combined in compositions) and plastic three-dimensional figures.

The **anthropomorphic type** includes the following: 1) graphic composite cult images (priests in front of the fire altar; a man in front of the tree of life; a man next to an animal; a man with a star); 2) plastic monumental stone sculptures, chamber sculptures made of limestone, clay, and bronze; anthropomorphic vessels, and figurines on pottery. Monumental stone anthropomorphic sculptures have been found in the village of Shatirli near Barda, as well as in the villages of Khinisli, Dagh Kolani, and Chiragli of the Shamakhi region. The full-body or knee-to-head statues were carved from large processed blocks of stone, and many of them retained their heads and had crudely depicted facial and body features. According to J. Khalilov, tombstone statues of gods and ancestors with cult characteristics were produced in Albania. N. Rzayev postulated that plastic figures of brave and noble warriors were

used as grave markers. An anthropomorphic vessel has been found in the village of Khinisli (Shamakhi, 3rd century BC–1st century AD) (Ахундова, 2020; Akhundova, 2021, p.57-68; Rzayeva, 2021, p.206-208).

**Astral cult** symbols have been present on ceramics, metal artifacts, and rock paintings since ancient times.

Strabo's Geography contains the earliest recorded information about the religious beliefs of the Albanian people (1st century BC–1st century AD). "Of the gods, they revere Helios, Zeus, and Selene, especially Selene," the ancient geographer writes (Strabo XI, IV, 7). It's intriguing that some of the grave goods, including ceramic vessels from the Yaloylutepe culture (Rzayeva, 2021, p. 208), are decorated with depictions of the Moon in the shape of a crescent, indicating the existence of a cult dedicated to the goddess of the Moon. Strabo mentioned a temple area of the goddess of the Moon, which included a temple of Selene, on the territory of Albania, close to Iberia. There still exist traditions in Azerbaijan and Eastern Georgia to make crescent-shaped amulets for children as well as for adults to wear gold decoration items, amulets, and beads against the evil eye (Malikov, 2021, p.160-170).

Researchers associate signs of a circle (a simple circle, concentric circles, and three types of a circle with rays) (Müseyibli, 2004, s.75-76) or a spiral (on bronze pendants) with the Sun cult and the flow of life. The symbol of a star (one with eight rays on a ceramic vessel found in Mingachevir near the figures of geese and deer, and one with six rays on a seal found in Mingachevir next to a man-figure) signifies worship of celestial bodies (Rzayeva, 2021, p.208).

The symbols of a cross and swastika, which are associated with the Sun cult, the passage of time, the spread of solar rays to the four cardinal points, and the "tree of life," have been found on the following: Gobustan and Gamigaya rock paintings (Müseyibli, 1998, s.15; Müseyibli, 2004, s.75-76); ceramic tableware (in Kultepe, Nakhchivan; 2nd millennium BC), vessels of Khojaly Gadabay culture (14th–7th centuries BC), kurgans Borsunlu (13th–12th centuries BC) and Sarichoban (12th–11th centuries BC) in Karabakh (Əliyev, 2005, s.61; Aliyev, 2022); decoration items (on a ring and next to a sideways image of a bird on a bead found in Mingachevir) (Rzayeva, 2021, p.208).



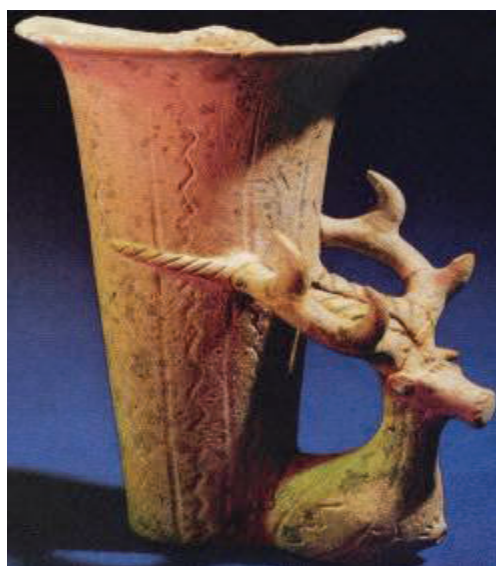
**Figure 1.** Earthenware with symbols of Sun, swastika, deer, and mountains found in Garajamirli village of Shamkir region. The National Museum of History of Azerbaijan

Among the cult symbols on ceramics and decoration items (Ахундова, 2020; Akhundova, 2021, p.57-68), **geometric signs** used as talismans were common: straight or wavy line decoration on ceramics, triangles (gold earrings found in Mingachevir, 7th century BC–5th century AD), rhombuses (ceramic vessel found in Galatepe, 3rd–2nd centuries BC; a seal found in Mingachevir, 3rd–8th centuries AD) (Рзаева, 2015, с.13-14; Rzayeva, 2021, p.208-210).

**Zoomorphic cult** symbols of a bird, snake, deer, horse, bull, goat, ram, dog, feline predatory animals, wolf, and hare, which are linked to totemism, sun cult, and other pagan beliefs, have been found on Gobustan rock paintings, in the decoration of ceramic dishes, on clay rhytons, seal rings, items of chamber plastic arts made of clay, and decoration items (bronze pendants, a bone comb, and a bronze medallion) (Ахундова, 2020; Akhundova, 2021, p.57-68), in zoomorphic clay vessels and their details, terracotta chamber figurines and graphic images, a clay tableau, and on a silver platter. Images of birds and animals were the primary elements of the religious and mythological ritual system, whose semantics changed in accordance with shifts in people’s religious beliefs (Rzayeva, 2021, p.210-211).



**Figure 2.** A bird symbol on a 5th-6th century stone capital of a column of a Christian church with an Albanian inscription discovered near Mingachevir in Sudagilan settlement. The National Museum of History of Azerbaijan



**Figure 3.** Zoomorphic vessel. Mingachevir, 1st century BC–1st century AD

**Floral cult symbols** were associated with the Sun cult, fertility, and the overall unity of nature (images on a ceramic vessel found in Mingachevir, 1st century BC–1st century AD).

Graphic and plastic **polymorphic symbols** in the Caucasian Albanian art included a winged man, a winged dog, a griffin (a silver dish found in Garabulag, Gakh region, 2nd to early 3rd centuries AD), and a centaur. Anthropomorphic plastic terracotta figurines from the Albanian period included a human body with a bird head as well as a frog-man, a snake-man, and a three-headed dragon. These symbols combined pagan religious and mythological beliefs with Zoroastrian elements.

In a Mingachevir settlement from the 3rd to 5th centuries, images were found on ceramics - apparently personal seals of potters - which R. Vahidov categorized into about 20 **brands** (quadrangle, circle, oval), **200 signs, and seal rings** (Vahidov, 1961). They featured cult-magical, astral (circle, crescent, cross, swastika, spiral), geometric, anthropomorphic, zoomorphic (deer, aurochs, etc.), floral and pictographic signs, bows, and arrows.

According to N. Rzayev and S. Rzayeva (Рзаев, 1976, с.190; Rzayeva, 2021, p.212-217), the art of Caucasian Albania reflected all the religious and mythical beliefs of the country's population linked to Zoroastrianism and pagan beliefs in astral cults, the cult of nature, personified in the figure of the goddess of fertility, and totemic cults (animals and plants). As previously stated, Albanian religious symbols were present in the daily lives of Caucasian Albanians in everything: ceramic dishes (which were used daily), decoration items (which was frequently worn), monumental and chamber sculptures, seal rings (used to imprint objects of material culture and to brand horses), and so on. This was reflected in a variety of funeral rites and rituals. The symbols that expressed these beliefs were polysemantic, changing their semantics at various historical stages. Subsequently, as Christianity and Islam spread, some of these ideas were syncretized with them and survived for centuries to the present day, existing in Azerbaijan as cherished age-old national traditions and rites.

### **Syncretism of Albanian symbolism in architecture and tombstones**

The following three Albanian temples were constructed over the centuries in the village of Tugh, the administrative center of the Dizak melikdom, (Qarabaği Mirzə Yusif. Tarixi-safi, 1991, s.15-16; Гаджиева, 2021, p.93-105) which is now a part of the

Khojavend region of Karabakh: Church of the First Martyr St. Stephen, Anapat <sup>1</sup> (dating approximately to 12th–13th centuries), and St. John’s (St. Hovhannes) Church (18th century) (Бархударянц, ч.I, с.72, 74). The St. John’s Church shares exterior architectural characteristics with the 18th-century Albanian Church of Saint Eliseaus (Jotaari Church) in the village of Nij, Gabala region, demonstrating the commonality of the architectural traditions of Albanian religious structures on the right and left banks of the Kura.



**Figure 4.** St. John’s Church before restoration. Tugh village of Khojavend region



**Figure 5.** Church of Saint Eliseaus (Jotaari Church). Nij village of Gabala region  
The more ancient graves behind St. John’s Church are arranged in a specific

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<sup>1</sup> An unnamed church, chapel, or skete built outside the village was referred to as anapat.

order. Some of them have tombstones with tops that, when carefully examined during archaeological excavations, can help accurately determine the direction in which the corpse is buried. The drawings on some tombstones are typical of Albanian burials found throughout Karabakh and on the Kura's left bank. This indicates that the individuals buried here belonged to the same ethnocultural community.

Some tombstones have images on their sides framed by ornaments of a repeating pattern of flowers with three petals that resemble a grape leaf or woven waves with a Sun symbol in the center of each wave. In general, the drawings depict the Sun symbol, horsemen, women, and men holding jugs and bowls used for wine (considering grape bunches occasionally depicted nearby), as well as a sword in the shape of an Albanian cross.



**Figure 6.** Sun symbol



**Figure 7.** Images of horsemen



**Figure 8.** Sun symbol and Albanian cross

It should be noted that symbols of a grape leaf and the Sun are depicted inside two crossed triangles (similar to the Jewish symbol of the Star of David) on the Albanian cross of the temple in the Nij village of the Gabala region, on the 9th-century mouflon-shaped tombstone in the Boyuk Mazra village of the Basarkechar region, and on the tombstone in the Gandzasar monastery of the Kalbajar region.

Given the presence of Jewish communities in Azerbaijan since ancient times (Гаджиева, 2018, p.110-119), symbolism resembling the Star of David is quite understandable. The preaching of Christianity in Albania was associated with the missionary activity of the Apostle Bartholomew, as well as St. Elisaeus and St. Dadi, disciples of the Apostle Thaddeus. For centuries, the Albanian Apostolic Church maintained contact with Jerusalem, where the Albanians built nine monasteries (Каланкатуйский, 1861, II, с.230).

As for ram-shaped tombstones found in Azerbaijan, it should be noted that they are most typical of Turkic burials. One of the Turkic ethnic groups of the Albanian period, for example, were the Khazars, who attacked Albania more than once. The Albanian clergy attempted to convert them to Christianity by sending missionaries. The Khazars, however, as is well known, adopted Judaism.



**Figure 9.** Albanian-Udi cross. Nij village of Gabala region



**Figure 10.** 9th-century mouflon-shaped tombstone. Boyuk Mazra village of Basarkechar region



**Figure 11.** Tombstone of Prince of Lower Khachen Jalal III, a member of Hasan-Jalal family (1431). Gandzasar monastery. Vank village of Kalbajar region

The primary symbols - the Sun, a flower (or a grape leaf crowning three sides of a cross), an ornamental flower, and a representation of a tree - are identical when we compare the Albanian Udi cross image to the drawings on the tombstones of St. John's Church studied in the village of Tugh. This identity implies a shared set of religious rituals and traditions. Albanian cult symbols are very common in Christian burials on the Kura's left bank and throughout Karabakh.

The Sun symbols have survived to this day, both on ancient tombstones in Karabakh and on the Kura's left bank, and on wooden or stone elements of various buildings. This reflects the age-old genetic memory, as well as the continuous syncretism of religious traditions. The Abu Muslim mosque in the village of Griz in Azerbaijan's Guba region is one example. The Griz are descended from one of the 26 Albanian tribes. The mosque's wooden beam bears carved Albanian Sun symbols, which are frequently seen on structures in the Guba region's villages of Khinalug, Budug, and Dzhek, where the descendants of the Albanians, or the Shahdag group of ethnic groups, reside. As you can see, these Sun symbols are identical to the designs on the tombstones in the village of Tugh.



**Figure 12.** Abu Muslim Mosque in Griz village of Guba region  
Images of horsemen (sometimes holding a bird) and women and men holding

jugs and bowls can also be found. Viticulture was one of the economic sectors in Karabakh. Images of grapes and people with jugs and bowls make sense when we consider that Christian Albanians used wine both in everyday life and during religious rituals (communion, weddings, and funerals).

The family mausoleum of the Melik Shahnazarov was built in the Khojaly region of Karabakh, south-west of the village of Chanakhchi (Avetaranots)<sup>2</sup>, near the ruins of Kusanats Anapat (Maiden Hermitage), presumably dating back to the 5th-7th centuries, during the early period of the melikdom of Varanda. A typical Albanian tombstone design, including symbols of the Sun, a horseman holding a bird, and individuals holding wine bowls, has been preserved on a tombstone from the 18th century in the church's vestibule (Баратов, 1992, с.133, 135; Мкртчян, 1988, с.143).

The cult **symbol of a snake** seen on Albanian-era ceramics and jewelry likely served as an amulet or talisman and was linked to concepts such as the snake goddess, the underworld (Рзаева, 2015, с.8-10; Rzayeva, 2021, p.210), the flexibility of female nature, and secret forces unknown to man.

The 5th-6th century Albanian monastery Agoglan in the Lachin region of Karabakh is associated with a legend about a snake that got into the cauldron of food for the temple's builders and a bird that saved them from poisoning.

The carved relief image of a snake on the left side of the window in the central part of the southern nave of the 17th-century Albanian temple in the village of Hunarli (now part of the Khojavend region of Karabakh), formerly known as Tsakuri and subject to the meliks of Dizak, is of particular interest. It should be noted that proper name endings in -uri, -ori, and -ari are very common in the Udi language, so it can be assumed that the residents of the village were Udi. According to Bishop M. Barkhudaryants, in 1682, "Archimandrite Hakob, a disciple of the great Esayi, Archimandrite of Krtchevan, from the village of Taghlar, appointed by Bishop Yeremia<sup>3</sup>, the Patriarch of Aghuank, as the eparchial head of several Guz villages ..." <sup>4</sup> built the temple of Tsaghkavank in the center of the village (Бархударянц, ч.I, с.71). This church was part of the cult heritage of the Albanian Catholicosate until 1836.

Since ancient times, when a new moon appeared, people in Azerbaijan stretched their hands to heaven and prayed to the moon. This tradition, which is still practiced

<sup>2</sup> The center of the melikdom of Varanda

<sup>3</sup> Albanian Catholicos Yeremia Hasan-Jalal (1676-1700) (Nikonorov, 2005, p.182).

<sup>4</sup> Guz villages - villages located on the northern slope of the mountain

in many parts of the country, merged with Islamic ideology, and at the sight of the new moon, Muslim believers still recite salawat according to Islamic canons.



**Figure. 13.** Snake symbol in a 17th-century Albanian church. Village Hunarli of Khojavend region

## Conclusion

The study of Albanian cult symbolism allows for a more in-depth and comprehensive examination of the syncretism of pre-Christian, Christian, and Muslim religious beliefs and rituals of Azerbaijan's multi-ethnic and multi-religious population. This, in turn, enables a better understanding of the succession of religious traditions that have been reflected in the worldviews of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups residing in this territory over the centuries, and expressed in objects of material culture, architecture, and funeral rites.

It was the syncretism of all these beliefs that prevented any of the religions existing in this territory from becoming more orthodox, and was one of the factors in the establishment of tolerance amongst ethnic groups over the centuries. Tolerance has laid the groundwork for multicultural values in the relationship between ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in the Republic of Azerbaijan at this stage of our statehood's development.

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## THE PERCEPTION OF TURKIYE OF MINORITY AND NON-MINORITY CITIZENS LIVING IN BULGARIA<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Bulgaria is among the lands in the Balkans where the Turks live intensely. The Turks existed in the Balkans for five centuries, however, they became the minority there when Bulgaria gained its independence. There is a close interaction between Bulgaria and Turkiye in several political, social and military fields for a long time. The minorities in the country are directly affected as a result of these interactions that have contributed to the formation of various perceptions about Turkiye. It is observed that the minorities and non-minorities living in Bulgaria interact ethnically and culturally with each other and have certain perceptions about Turkiye. It is important for Turkiye to be aware of the perceptions here and to manage these perceptions in its own favor that may pose a risk for the policies it plans to realize in the Balkans, which have a rich ethnic diversity.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the perception of Turkiye of minority and non-minority citizens living in Bulgaria. In this context, providing information on the geography of Bulgaria, the perception, the factors affecting the formation of perception and the concept of identity, the historical background of the relations between Turkiye and Bulgaria has been examined. The survey methodology using questionnaire tool has been applied in the research and detailed findings have been obtained on the perception of Turkiye of the minority and non-minority citizens living in Bulgaria

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## Introduction

The societies in which individuals live teach them how to do what within the norms that they have developed. As long as the individuals act according to the norms set by society, they can be included in the category of “we”, and when they stand against these norms or do not comply with these norms, they become the “others”. Individuals are also under the influence of their emotions in connection with their perceptions, history, symbols and, the life that they live. There are various definitions of how citizens living in society perceive themselves ethnically or religiously. These different definitions and interpretations vary depending on the cultural codes that individuals have lived in the past and the common practices that they have experienced together. Therefore, individuals may perceive countries, symbols, and other individuals differently. (Türk, 2017).

Bulgaria is located on the Balkan peninsula, where Türkiye also has a part of its land. There are many different ethnic and religious communities in the country. The Turks constitute the largest minority in Bulgaria. One of the most important factors determining the relations between the two countries from the past to the present is the Turks living in the country. Bulgaria has an important but also multidimensional place in Türkiye's foreign policy. Türkiye's prominence in the international arena or the neighbourhood of two countries within the framework of political, military, and economic relations affects the minorities in the country. In other words, there is a mutual interaction between two countries and at the level of minorities. However, it was observed that it has been tried to form some negative attitudes on the mutual perceptions about each other between Türkiye and Bulgaria.

Using survey methodology, this study aims to research the effects of the developments in Türkiye on the perceptions of the minority and non-minority citizens in Bulgaria after the end of the Cold War.

## The Concept of Minority

Although the concept of the minority is one of the oldest notions in the literature, it has become more popular with globalization. Even though minorities have existed in every period of history, the protection of minorities has been raised for discussion

with the emergence of the nation state in the mid-16th century. While the first known minorities were religious minorities, ethnic/national minorities have emerged with the development of nationalism in later years. (Üste, 2020).

The minority issue is one of the vulnerable political and social problems today and it has been defined in many different forms in the literature. Scholars and researchers have had the various perspectives on the definition and classification of the concept of minority. The “minority” is the word from Latin “minor”, which means “few” and “small”. The concept of minority has been defined in three different forms by the Turkish Language Association ( Türk Dil Kurumu, 2022). The first of these is the situation of being different from the others in terms of their distinctive characteristics and less in number than the majority. The second definition is the state of being less in number during the voting. In the last definition, a few people from different races or religions in the country are defined as a minority. There is no legally accepted official definition of minorities. However, according to a definition offered in 1977 by Francesco Capotorti, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, a minority is: “A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being nationals of the state - possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language” (Inanç, 2004,p.54). As it is clear, the lack of dominance being low in numbers, being a citizen of the state and having minority consciousness are the main indicators of a minority and it can be considered as a smaller group which is dominated by the majority within the state. Two types of states can be mentioned in terms of this group. While the first state is the “host state”, the second state is the” relative state”. The host state is the state in which the minorities live and define as a homeland, while the kin state is the state in which minorities feel as ethically lost (Oran, 2018,p.137). The minorities accept the kin state as the motherland. For example, the homeland is Bulgaria for the Turkish minority living in Bulgaria, while the motherland is Turkiye.

In order to define the minority, it is important to consider the definitions together. Oran (2018) evaluates the mentioned main indicators as a “narrow (legal) definition”. He also sociologically identifies the minority. Although he accepted all disadvantaged - women, homosexuals and disabled people - as a minority, his definition does not correspond to international law (Oran, 2018, p.97).

## Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Bulgaria

Bulgaria has a multinational and multicultural society. In the last 20 years, demographic trends and increasing immigration affected the number of ethnic groups in the country. Today, there are Bulgarians, Turks, Romans, Greeks, Ukrainians, Armenians, Vlachs, Crimean Tatars and Pomaks in Bulgaria (Özlem, 2016). Considering the ethnic ratios in 2021, the population of the country consists of 6.520.314 people. %84.8 of the population define themselves as Bulgarian. Turks, the second largest ethnic group in the country, constitute %8.8 of the population. Romans constitute %4.9 of the population. The remaining %1.5 of the population do not feel any ethnic belonging (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2021).

There are differences in identity awareness along with religious and ethnic belongings in the country. While Islam is at the forefront as a religious identity for Pomaks, an ethnic identity differs from person to person or it is not preferred to be specified. For Jews, ethnic belonging is identified with religious belonging, so Judaism and Jewishness are perceived as a whole. The minority, which differs from other minorities religiously, is the Romans. While they prefer the Christianity in areas with an intense Bulgarian population, they prefer Islam in areas with a crowded Turkish population (Atasoy, 2010,p.13).

## Research Methodology and Measurement Sampling

As above mentioned, this study aims to measure the perception of minority and non-minority citizens living in Bulgaria about Türkiye. A questionnaire has been used as a research tool featuring a series of questions to collect useful information from respondents. It is proposed:

- *to determine whether there is a change in the views of the respondents about Türkiye according to whether they visit Türkiye or not;*
- *to measure whether their views differ according to whether they are a minority or not;*
- *to reveal whether there are differences depending on age groups and gender as a result of the relations and collaborations carried out.*

It has been conducted with the citizens of several regions in Bulgaria, however, %94.5 of them live in Ruse, Varna and Sofia. The questionnaires have been conducted in three different languages: Turkish, English and Bulgarian. Using all information

collected during research, the comparative data tables have been created in SPSS program and interpreted then. The 5-point Likert scale has been used in questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire includes the questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondents. %49 of whom are men and %51 are women. %11 of respondents are between 18-25 ages, %21.5 are between 26-33 ages, %14 are between 34-41 ages and %34.5 are over 50 years old. %55 of the respondents work in private sector, %14.50 of them work in the public sector. %13.5 are students, %9.5 are job seekers and %7.00 are retired. The education level of the respondents is also different: %3.5 graduated from primary school, %31 graduated from secondary school, %20.5 graduated from high school, %40 graduated from university and %5 have a postgraduate degree. Additionally, %62.5 of the respondents define themselves as a minority, %37.5 do not identify themselves as minority. %88 of the respondents are people, who have visited Turkiye at least once before. The remaining %12 consists of people, who have never been in Turkiye before. %13.1 of them visited Turkiye between 1989-2009, this rate was % 86.9 for those who travelled between 2009-2020.

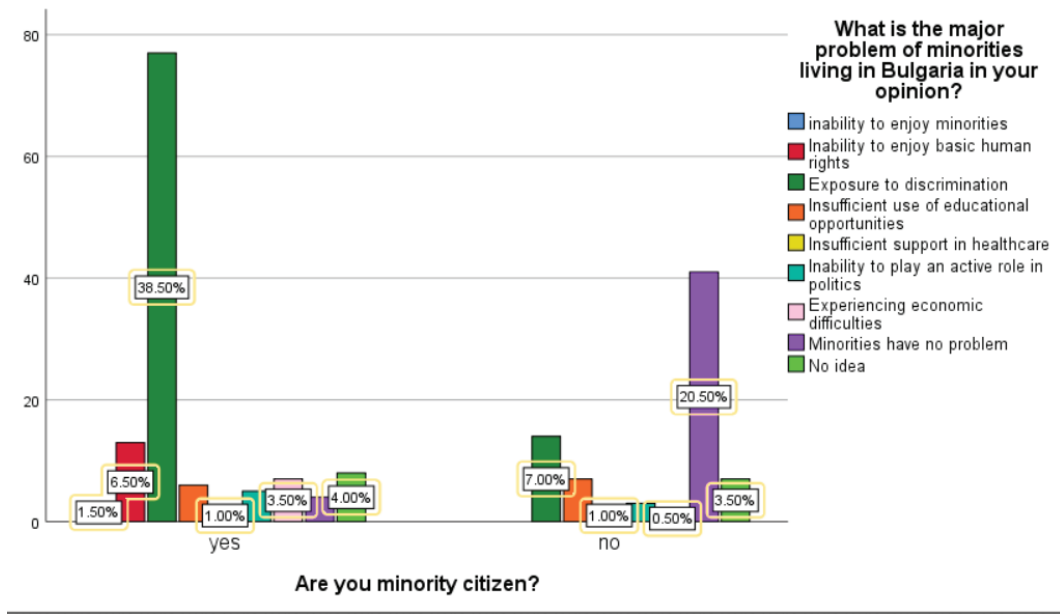
Considering the aim of study, which focused on the perceptions of Turkiye of minority and non-minority citizens living in Bulgaria, the ethnic and religious identities of the respondents have not been being questioned. This is the limitation of the research.

### **Analysis and Findings**

Since the Bulgarians gained their independence from the Ottoman Empire, under the influence of rhetoric of otherization and state policies against the Turks, the Turks have represented the others in Bulgaria. It has been observed that the policies and the anti-Turkish discourses during the Todor Jivkov period have negatively affected the visits to Turkiye from Bulgaria. The number of visitors to Turkiye and the rate of positive perceptions about Turkiye increased in the following years compared to 1989-2009 that which can be explained by some factors such as the lifestyle, accessibility to products, opportunities in the health field, young and dynamic population and strong infrastructures.

Since the rate of respondents, who visit Turkiye at least 1 and at most 10 times is high, their opinions about Turkiye are not only based on the sensations and emotional perceptions, but also on observations.

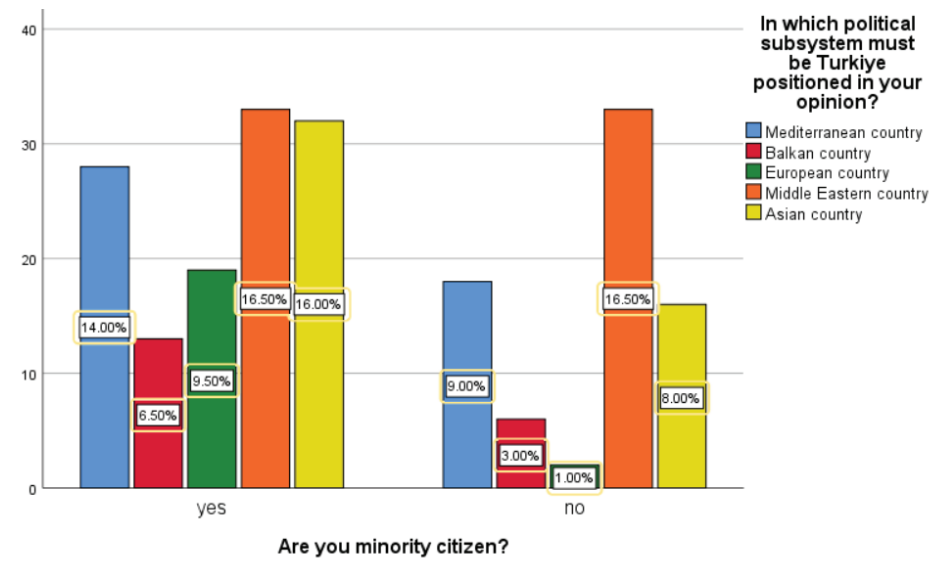
**Figure 1:** The most important problems of citizens living in Bulgaria by minority or non-minority status



While %38.5 of the minority citizens living in Bulgaria consider that they are exposed to discrimination, %20.5 of the non-minority citizens argue that the minorities living in the country do not have a problem (Figure 1). This question reveals that those who are minorities in the country have problems with discrimination.

Another question aimed to determine in which political subsystem the citizens living in Bulgaria position Türkiye. %33 accept Türkiye as a Middle Eastern country, %24 accept as an Asian country, %23 accept as a Mediterranean country, %10.5 accept as a European country and %9.5 accept as a Balkan country (Figure 2). The total rate of those who evaluate Türkiye within a Middle Eastern and Asian political subsystem %57. This fact creates a contradictory perception with Türkiye's European Union vision.

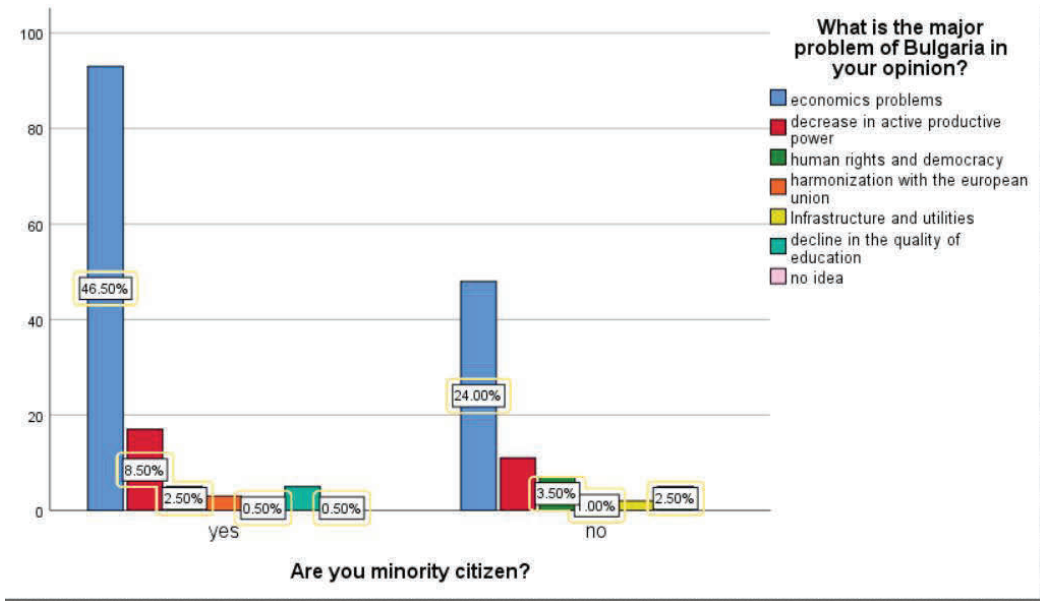
**Figure 2:** Political subsystem that respondents position Turkiye according to their minority or non- minority status



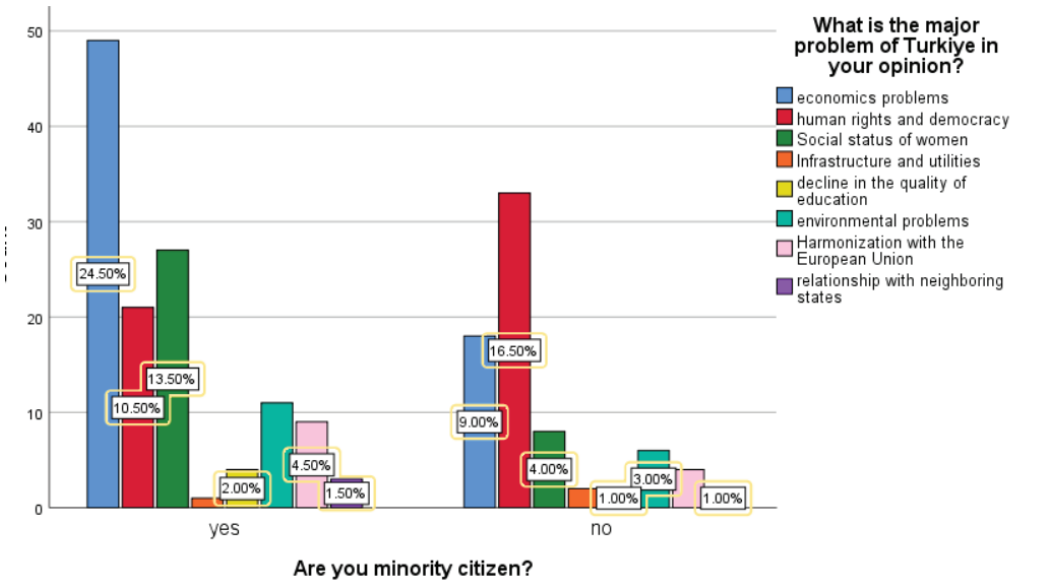
If to evaluate the respondents' opinions according to whether they are a minority or non-minority, it has been detected that they have the same opinions. %16.5 of minority and %16.5 of non-minority respondents accept Turkiye as a Middle Eastern country. While %16 of minority respondents accept it as an Asian country, %9 of non-minority respondents accept Turkiye as a Mediterranean country. These perceptions can be evaluated as a result of the education policies of the Bulgarian state. Because Turkiye is a candidate country for EU membership and historically has had close relations with Europe since the Ottoman Empire, compared to all other geographies. Thus, to define Turkiye within the Middle Eastern region is not real (Oran 2009, pp.19-29).

%96 of both minority and non-minority respondents support the bilateral relations between the two countries. %73.5 of both minority and non-minority respondents state that the two governments have established good relations. The mutual initiatives of both Bulgarian and Turkish governments in the post-Todor Jivkov period regarding the minority problems and the development of commercial and social interactions are the main motivations for such positive perceptions. The intertwining of the relations and the increase in the number of joint projects during the globalization era have also positive influence on perceptions.

**Figure 3:** The most important problem of Bulgaria for minority or non-minority respondents

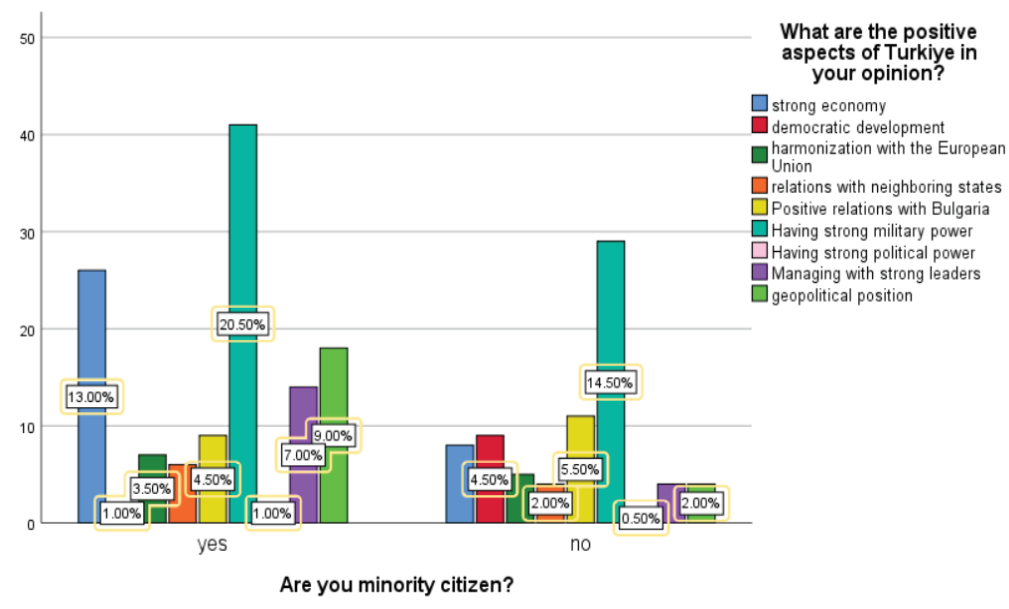


**Figure 4:** The most important problem of Turkiye for minority or non-minority respondents



The economic problem has been defined as the major problem of Bulgaria by both minority and non-minority respondents (Figure 3). Economic problems usually create an effect beyond the identities as a common difficulty area. The decrease of active labour force has been evaluated as a second major problem in Bulgaria by both minority and non-minority respondents. There is no difference in opinion of groups about Bulgaria’s biggest problem. On the other hand, minority respondents see the economic problem as a biggest problem for Turkiye (Figure 4). However, according to the opinions of non-minority respondents, the human rights and democracy are the most important problems of Turkiye. For minority respondents, the social status of women is the second most important problem in Turkiye, while non-minority respondents define the economic problem as the second most important problem in this country problems. As it is seen, there is a difference between the opinions of minority and non-minority respondents on the biggest problem of Turkiye. Especially the non-minority Bulgarian citizens highlight the problem of democracy and human rights in Turkiye that can be explained with the criticism directed towards Turkiye during the EU membership process.

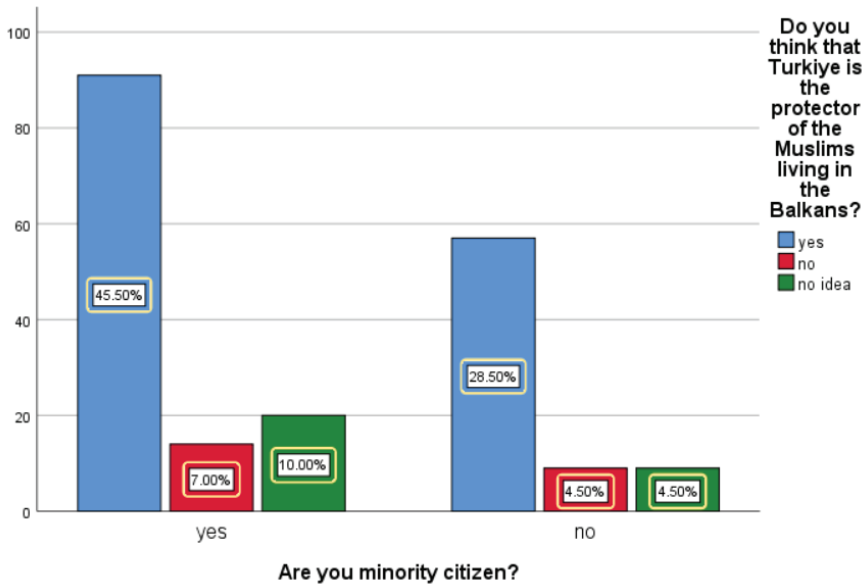
**Figure 5:** Turkiye’s positive aspects for minority or non-minority respondents



%35 of both minority and non-minority respondents evaluate Turkiye’s strong military power as a positive aspect of the country (Figure 5). %88.5 of the respondents recognize Turkiye as a militarily strong country. While for minority respondents the

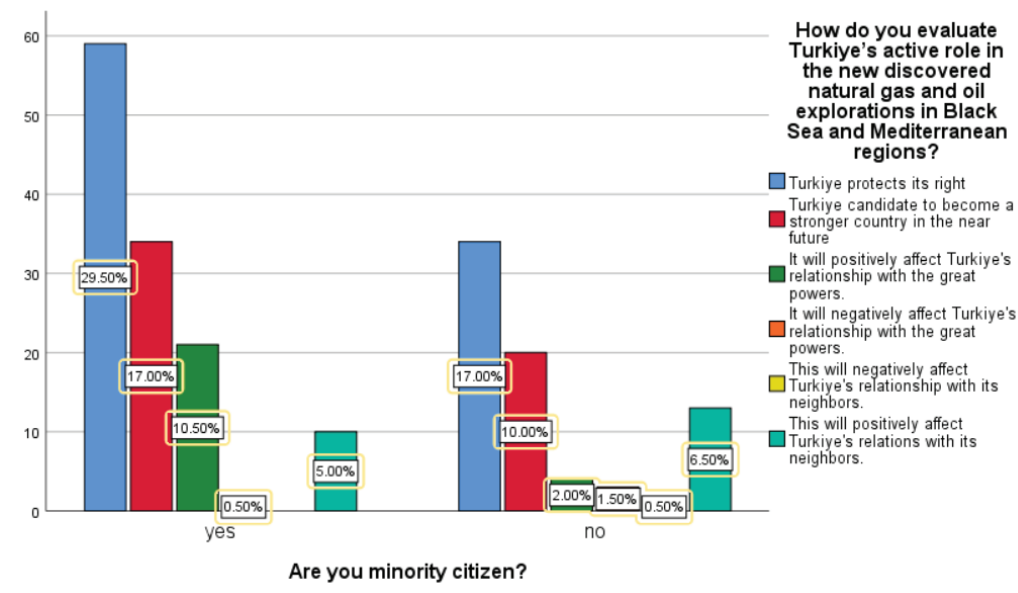
second positive aspect of Türkiye is its strong economy, for non-minority the second positive aspect is the good relations with Bulgaria. For minority respondents the third positive aspect of Türkiye is geopolitical location, however, non-minority respondents consider Türkiye's democratic development as the third positive aspect (Figure 5).

**Figure 6:** The opinions of the respondents on whether Türkiye is the protector of Muslims in the Balkans



The respondents recognize Türkiye as a protector of the Muslims living in the Balkans. Both minority and non-minority respondents accept the existence of Türkiye's protective power over the Muslims living in the Balkans (Figure 6). The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency's (TIKA) food support programs in the Balkans reached more than 10 thousand people in Bulgaria during Ramadan (TIKA, 2020). At the same time, the renovation and restoration of various places of worship by the TIKA (TIKA, 2019) show that Türkiye uses a soft power based on cultural and historical values over the people living in the country. These are the main factors in the formation of a common opinion of both groups.

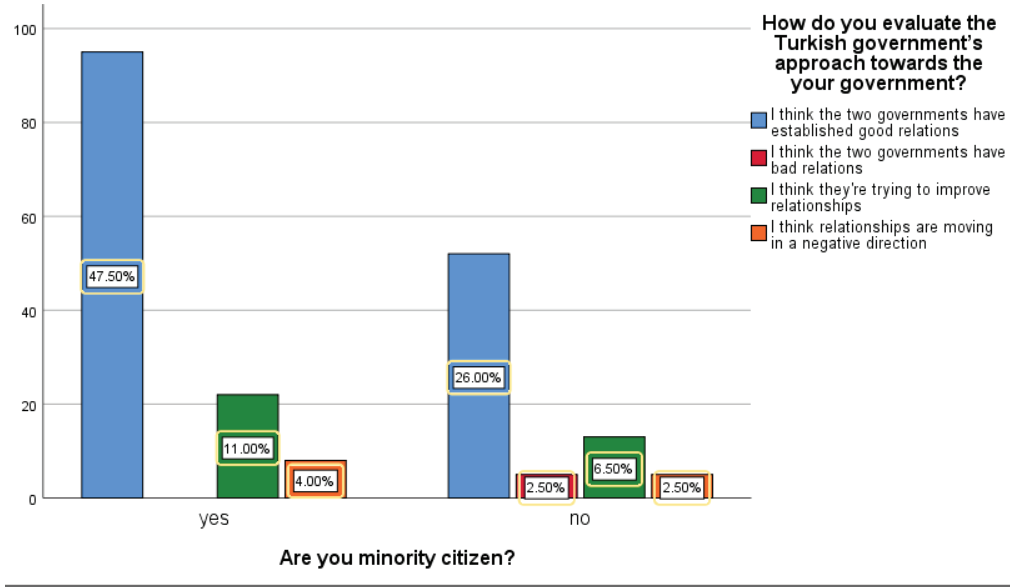
**Figure 7:** The opinion of the respondents on Turkiye's active role in natural gas and oil explorations



The respondents have been asked about Turkiye's active attempts to explore newly discovered oil and natural gas resources in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean regions. %29.5 of minority respondents and %17 of non-minority respondents consider that Turkiye protects its rights (Figure 7). %17 of minority and %10 of non-minority citizens recognize Turkiye as a stronger country in the near future. This fact explains the positive thoughts of both minority and non-minority citizens in Bulgaria about the future of Turkiye, not feeling pessimistic about its future.

According to the data, both minority and non-minority citizens think that the two governments have good relations. It can be considered that the steps taken between the Bulgarian and Turkish governments in the post-Todor Jivkov period regarding minorities and improving bilateral relations in several fields of cooperation have a great impact on the formation of such positive perception.

**Figure 8:** The opinions of the respondents on the approach of the Turkish government towards the Bulgarian government



## Conclusion

For Türkiye, the Balkans can be defined as an important part of the homeland for centuries with close historical ties and as a region where the cultural and historical influence of the Turks is still intense (Üste 2014).

Today, approximately 9% of the Bulgarian population are Turks. The Turkish minority in Bulgaria is one of the major factors shaping the relations between Bulgaria and Türkiye. The discriminatory discourses about the Turks since the independence of Bulgaria and the reflection of these discourses on the state policies have made the Turks “others” in this country. Besides, the fact that Turks are accepted as the “others” has also led to the formation of a negative perception of about their homeland, Türkiye in Bulgaria. However, it has been determined that the views of both minority and non-minority Bulgarian citizens have changed positively after visiting Türkiye. It has been found that being a minority in the country is the major factor of exposure to discrimination. Taking the necessary steps to improve the discrimination faced by minorities is necessary both for a human rights standard and for the sustainability of a multicultural nature in Bulgaria.

Particularly the non-minority respondents define Turkiye as a "Middle Eastern", "Mediterranean" country. These answers can be interpreted as a reflection of Bulgaria's efforts during the nation-building process to erase the 510 years of the fact that it has been under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Positioning Turkiye in geography far from Europe can also be thought of as an effort to keep the distance between it and the "others". However, Bulgari, which is the EU member, and Turkiye are bordered.

The findings about Turkiye's political subsystem of minority citizens living in the country are quite remarkable. According to them, Turkiye is far from the vision of the European Union. Since it is both a neighboring country with Bulgaria and a candidate country for the European Union, this perception should be changed as a country approaches European values.

The activities of institutions such as the TIKA and Yunus Emre Institute are the most important factors besides the historical background that allow the respondents to recognize Turkiye as a protective power over Muslims in the Balkans. TIKA is one of the soft power instruments of Turkish foreign policy. The respondents have delivered positive opinions about the relations between two the governments. Turkish schools opened by Yunus Emre Institute to promote Turkish culture constitute a soft power element in this sense.

The positive relations between the countries allow the Bulgarians to accept Turkiye as a stronger global and regional political actor. Both minority and non-minority citizens consider that with its active participation in the operations of newly discovered natural gas resources Turkiye protects its rights both in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. It can be argued that the respondents have a positive opinion and do not expect a pessimistic picture regarding the future of Turkiye. In general, in this research it has been determined that there are no negative attitudes regarding the social perceptions against Turkiye's more active foreign policy towards cooperation in the Balkans.

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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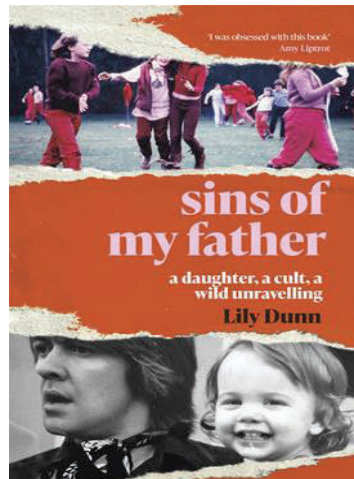
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## BOOK REVIEW: SINS OF MY FATHER: A DAUGHTER, A CULT, A WILD UNRAVELLING



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When Lily Dunn was just six years old, her father left the family home to follow his guru to India, trading domestic life for clothes dyed in oranges and reds and the promise of enlightenment with the cult of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. Since then he has been a mystery to her. She grew up enthralled by the image of him; effervescent, ambitious and elusive, a writer, publisher and entrepreneur, a man who would appear with gifts from faraway places, and with whom she spent the long, hot summers of her teenage years in Italy, in the company of his wild and wealthy friends. Yet he was also a compulsive liar, a delinquent, a man who abandoned his responsibilities in a pursuit of transcendence that took him from sex addiction, via the Rajneesh cult, to a relentless chase of money, which ended in ruin and finally addiction to alcohol and prescription drugs.

A detective story that charts two colliding narratives, *Sins of My Father* is a daughter's attempt to unravel the mysteries of a father who believed himself to be beyond reproach. A dazzling work of literary memoir, it asks how deep legacies of shame and trauma run, and if we can reconcile unconditional love with irreparable damage.

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## Structure

One of the key characters that frequently haunts the pages of memoirs is the father. The writers of these confessional texts look at their fathers from diverse perspectives, but the most popular one is the psychoanalytical one. In doing so, they attempt to examine the impacts of their fathers' deeds and worldviews on their children. The influences can be either beneficial or pernicious and at times an admixture of them. The authors' responses towards their fathers can range from sympathy, love, and understanding to indignation, hatred, and complaint. When the memoirist is female, she is uniquely well-equipped to scrutinize her father in great depth and capture the subtle nuances of his identity. This can be partly attributed to the natural attachment and instinctive love of daughters toward their fathers. Lily Dunn's *Sins of My Father* is no exception. In her memoir, Dunn sincerely studies her father and reflects on his selfish acts causing emotional traumas to his immediate family. She peels off the secret layers of her father's life to vainly exorcize her father's ghost from her soul because she believes that she is entrapped in her father. In this memoir, which is written painstakingly and with admirable honesty, she writes about his father's success and downfall, quixotic plans, the abandonment of his family, his betrayals, alcohol addiction, unfulfilled desire to be a novelist, his regression to childhood in his middle age, and eventually his lonely death. The memoirist also vividly portrays her father's counter-culture life in India, New York, and Italy when he is under the cultish spell of his Indian guru known as Osho or Bhagwan. As a dutiful daughter, she demonstrates her loyalty to her father despite his villainous indifference to his family and her throughout his life. Moreover, her memoir provides a glimpse of the writer's own life for her readers. To write her memoir, Lily Dunn borrows from William Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, Ted Hughes, Roland Barthes, Greek mythology, Indian philosophy, Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, other modern psychologists, movies, and documentaries.

In doing so, she renders her memoir scholarly and the process of reading for her readership pleasant and fruitful.

### Content

Dunn divides her memoir into ten chapters. In each chapter, she embarks on narrating and analyzing the main events in his father's life as well as her own life. She also shines a light on the consequences of his father's decisions and deeds and the way she and her family react to them.

Dunn entitles the first chapter 'Exile' in which she concentrates on the damaging impact of attending a boarding school on his father when he is only seven years old. By severing him from the warmth and bliss of home and enrolling him in boarding school, his parents, the memoirist thinks, send him into forced exile. At boarding school, the young, sensitive student experiences sexual abuse and remains reticent about it. He carries the pandemonium of his traumatic days at the boarding school to their home. It is no coincidence that he ruins his sister's innocence. Nonetheless, it does not damage the intimacy between the siblings. His father hopes that his son will get a good education and an appropriate job, but his dream does not materialize. The author attributes his father's failure in his later life to his bitter experience at the boarding school. She supports her claim by capitalizing on the views of psychologists that have investigated the adverse effect of boarding schools on young students.

The title of the second chapter is 'adultery.' It reveals how his father contaminates and adulterates the sanctity of his marriage in the early stage of his married life. His first adultery occurs as he secretly makes love to his American girlfriend in London. The illicit relationship develops when he flies to the USA to spend more time with her. Hiding his real motive, he deceives his family into believing that he is visiting her sister, recently married to an American artist. Stricken with remorse, he later confesses to his trusting wife who relents and forgives him. But his previous remorse does not deter him from his second adulterous affair. It takes place when the writer's mother is pregnant with her. The author's mother employs an antenatal teacher so that she can have an easy delivery with their second child. Her mother not only trusts her teacher but also treats her as her sister.

On the contrary, her teacher sleeps with her father while she is giving birth to her baby in the hospital and waiting for her husband to arrive and appreciate their newly born baby girl.

His father keeps the affair secret, but her mother discovers it after many years. The author is of opinion that her father has a split character since he simultaneously betrays his wife and loves her. Besides adultery, the memoirist dwells on her maternal parents, her childhood, fond memories, her parents' wedding ceremony, their trip to Greece, and her father's blooming publishing company. When she relates these events, she refers to their family album. By juxtaposing her sweet childhood memories with her father's adultery, the writer makes her memoir poignant.

In the third chapter, Lily Dunn describes how her father abandons his family home and travels to the alternative world of India to be part of the Rajneesh movement established by Osho (Bhagwan) who preaches free love, disdains the family ties, and promises his Western followers to liberate them from oppressive bourgeois selves. He genuinely believes his guru's words. Thus, he does not feel guilty about abdicating his family responsibilities resulting in the loss of his publishing company and its bankruptcy. His narcissistic escape makes his wife cope with enormous financial and family stress. After six months, he returns with his young girlfriend to England, thinking he is enlightened while the other is unenlightened. Their stay in London is not long because they travel to Oregon in the US to join Osho's new commune. The memoirist in this section rebukes Sheela, Osho's secretary and the mastermind of the commune construction in Oregon for dismissing the local people as yokels and the uneducated, for promoting violence, cultivating the culture of control and fear, and for silencing her opponents with poison and drugs. Unable to finance their stint in Oregon, the lovers come back to England and rent a house in London. Once more in England, they follow their unorthodox life in a commune called Media. He sometimes takes his children at the weekends to Medina where the memoirist and his brother observe how members and their children freely talk about sex and engage in sexual affairs.

The fourth chapter deals with paternal betrayal. Following the collapse of the commune of Medina in England, her father travels to Tuscany in Italy where he rents a villa and marries a like-minded beautiful eighteen-year-old girl.

There, he establishes his small free-loving commune and engages in publishing and writing books.

The writer and her brother join his father in Italy during the summer holidays. Naturally, she becomes jealous of her young stepmother who is the epicenter of his father's attention. She desperately yearns for her father's love and admits that she has suffered from 'father fixation.' She thinks her father has to be her lover rather than a caring father. Since her father does not nurture her with the desired paternal love, she seeks her desired love in others. Unbelievably, her young stepmother encourages her to enter into a relationship with older people on the grounds of their wisdom and maturity. It is worth noting that among the followers of Osho or Bhagwan, the love between a teenage girl and a grown-up is admissible. Thus, as soon as she strikes the eyes of her father's friend, she accepts his love, hoping to find her father in his arms, words, and body. But after some time, her old lover repels her, thus, she asks him to go away and leave her alone. When she finds out that her father has intentionally been indifferent toward her seduction by his friend, she feels that her father has betrayed her. Accordingly, she accuses her father of abdicating his responsibility. She also attacks the disciples of Osho (known as Sannyasins) for not protecting their vulnerable children against predatory and problematic relationships that can be traumatic in the future. Nevertheless, she still loves her father.

The main concern of the memoirist in the fifth chapter is not her father, but her relationships, grandmother, mother, exams, modeling, interest in painting, and the return of his father to London. The writer commences the chapter by relating her immature relationship with a thirty-two-year-old hairdresser-cum-womanizer who lauds her blonde hair and deflowers her despite her mother's discouragement and warnings, and curfew at home. She breaks off her relationship with him when she finds that the hairdresser has already impregnated his American girlfriend and kept ignoring her. Then, she befriends the Great Dane, a big-boned man, who owns a music studio. He introduces her to drugs and takes her to music festivals in England and Europe. She views him as her protector; however, she ends this relationship. She touches on it in the next chapter. Moreover, she familiarizes her readership with her maternal grandmother whose gusto for life and exuberant character the writer praises.

She links her passionate enthusiasm for life to her carefree childhood in South Africa. She believes that her mother inherited her resourcefulness and resilient character from her mother.

Thanks to her mother's support, she passes her A-level exam in English and Art despite her failure in other subjects. Before entering the university, she stayed with a good-natured artist, her mother's friend. She poses as a model for his Victorian paintings and accompanies him in his daily walking. Furthermore, she practices painting in his studio. Indeed, her stint with the kind artist is the most useful and least turbulent period in her life. At the end of the chapter, her father and new young wife return to London. Her stepmother who is only some years the writer's senior envies her freedom, appearance, and clothes. She also complains about the possessiveness of her husband.

In the sixth chapter, the writer focuses on her friendship, her father's luxurious life in the US, and her hospitalization after breaking her leg on the beach. In this section, the memoirist touch on the Great Dane, her boyfriend once more, explaining how they drift from one music festival to another and how they indulge in taking pills, drugs, and alcohol. She admits her life in her presence with him was meaningless and she has lost control of her life. To get away from him, the writer betrays him and leaves him despite his devotion to her. She connects her infidelity to her father's unfaithfulness. Then, she relates her reviewing job in a magazine and her friendship with Astra. They befriend Joe and the Viking, a worker in the oil rig. She becomes drawn to the Viking despite catching him kissing and hugging Astra. At Christmas time, she travels to join her father and stepmother who have recently received their US Green Cards and residency thanks to their successful publishing business. She shed light on her parents' extravagant lifestyle in California, the exaggeration of their European sophistication, their bohemian society, and her father's possessiveness toward his young wife who is keen on socializing. While in the US, the writer introduces the Viking to her father whom he does not approve of; she attributes it to his selfishness and inferiority complex. Back in London, she takes up running, wishing to be as fit as the Viking. The serious incident in this chapter is related to the fracture of her leg during Joe's annual beach party. It occurs at night as she tears herself away from the party and walks along the beach.

In pitch darkness, she inadvertently places her foot in the netting-wire snare and immediately falls, resulting in breaking her leg. It is her mother that looks after her in the hospital rather than her friends who are too concerned with their beach party to visit her. She names the chapter 'Abyss' to accentuate her closeness to death.

In the seventh chapter, the memoirist brings to the fore her father's stupidity. Six years after her bitter incident at the beach, her father's second wife leaves him, and he consoles himself with excessive alcohol consumption and the friendship of an alcoholic butcheress. The writer believes her father's alcohol consumption has rendered him gullible. This explains why he easily falls prey to a scam by Russians. Her father receives an email from some Russians, supposedly lawyers, in which they claim that he is the sole inheritor of his distant cousin. To make their design seem real, they buy him a plane ticket to London as well as book him a room in an expensive hotel. Her father hopes to be rich, so he travels to London and pays \$ 50000 to the Russians so that they will speed up the process of receiving his large inheritance. Even though the writer and her brother warn him about the Russians' outright deception, their father ignores their warnings. Soon after the loss of his money, he shamefully flies to the US without informing his children.

In the eighth chapter, the writer gives an account of her wedding ceremony held in her mother's house. His father promises to pay for her wedding expenses, but he fails to honor his promise due to his messy life in the US. He can only attend the wedding party with his disheveled hair and scruffy appearance, preferring to be alone. When she is on her honeymoon, she gets an email in which the butcheress requests the writer and her brother to look after their father whose neck is damaged due to falling down the stairs. She travels to the US without a second thought. She is secretly happy, thinking she will love her father without any rivals. Here she finds the distant echo of Myrrha's incestuous relationship in loving her father. She also censures his father in the light of Jung's perspective. According to Jung, human beings in the second part of their lives attain maturity, individuation, and integrity but her father in this stage has only generated wreckage which his children should clean up.

In the ninth chapter, not only does the memoirist delineate her father's addiction to alcohol but also demonstrates how his alcoholism corrodes his life.

The siblings have flown to Bolinas, a coastal community in California, to rehabilitate him in the alcohol unit. To their chagrin, he vehemently denies his alcohol problems. They find their father lonely, sick, abandoned, shrunken, and toothless. He is mired in dirt and financial mess, unaware of the world around him.

Unable to appreciate his children's nursing and attention, he demands his children must leave him alone. Her father's lamentable condition propels her to reflect on the catastrophic consequence of his addiction. She shows how his father's alcohol abuse robs his rational faculty and transforms him into a child unable to clean himself and intake his food. When their efforts to save him have proved futile, they fly back to London. Soon after, he becomes deported from the U.S. In England, the writer and his brother hospitalize him in a cottage hospital where he dies, and whose funeral only the writer and her family attend.

In the last chapter, the writer touches on her divorce. To cope with the pain of her divorce, she volunteers to teach creative writing to those recovering from their alcohol addiction. Among her students, Susie with her talent catches her attention. In the writing class contrary to her deeply-held belief, Susie discovers that she writes well in her sobriety. At the end of her literary memoir, Lily Dunn finally forgives her father and his sins, believing he has been misunderstood. Reflecting on her father's life makes her take a new direction in her life to live and love sincerely and engage productively with others. In other words, she wants to live meaningfully.

### **Future**

This literary memoir is written from the perspective of a devoted daughter seeking to come to terms with her father's narcissistic life and wrongdoings. Reading it is highly recommended to fathers and would-be fathers because it will enlighten them about the delicate world of their daughters and how their missteps and irresponsibility can cause irreparable psychological trauma. Furthermore, reading the book will inform the father how their sobriety, full responsibility, and affection will be invaluable emotional assets in the lives of their daughters. The memoir reminds us that fathers should lay a sturdy foundation for their families and shun self-centeredness.

Nevertheless, the fathers are not the only target audience of the memoir; the book can be enjoyed by anyone. This has been successful in achieving its goals because she backs her views by drawing on the world of psychology, literature, mythology, cinema, and direct observation of fellow human beings. She does it gracefully through her lucid and engaging prose.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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