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Ethnography of Naming as a Religious Identity: Case of Antakya

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Abstract

Antakya is the central district of Hatay Province located in the eastern Mediterranean Region. Once populated by a variety of different ethno-religious communities, today it is still a place where Jewish, Christian, Sunni Muslim, and Arab Alevi (Nusayri) communities live together. This study is aimed at gaining insight into the naming preferences and naming rituals among different religious communities with a comparative perspective. The key question this study seeks to answer is how the religious belief to which people belong affects the names they are given and how the religious community draws a line between "self" and "other" based on the name. Names given to children or avoided as a taboo in different communities give the hints of a faith-based cultural memory a community established with its past. In this study, which is built on ethnography, field study method was utilized, and interviews were conducted with people from different communities. These interviews provided detailed insights into the variables people consider in naming their children, whether or not the religious identity to which they belong is influential in choosing a name, the naming experiences and rituals.

Keywords: name and naming, religious identity, Antakya, symbol, ritual

1. Introduction

Every child is regarded as a unique individual with their own name, and also these names generally reveal a child's place within the society, sex, class, ethic origin, religious community and relations [1]. According to Yonge (1863), "we shall find the history, the religion, and the character of a nation stamped upon the individuals in the names they bear" [2]. What Yonga suggests here is the very point this study intends to make that names not only refer to

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people but also to the religion. When we look at our cultural and natural environment, there is nothing—living or non-living, concrete or abstract—without a name. In daily life, we mostly take these already given-names granted and continue using without focusing on where these names come from. Each person has their own proper name, and these names serve like an identity card both in private and public life. According to Goethe Dichtung and Wahrheit, "The name of a person is not like a jacket which just hangs down the shoulders and tug at the sides to fit, but on the contrary, like a perfect-fitting dress which fits in like a skin and cannot be taken or pulled off without a damage" [3]. Although proper names are personal names, social scientists regard the naming concept as "symbolized identity" [2, p. 3]. Anthropological personal naming (or anthroponomy), ethnonym and toponymy studies had not drawn attention before 1960s, yet a limited number of early anthropologists addressed the subject [4]. The study of personal names is referred to as anthroponomy and anthroponomy is related to genealogy, sociology and anthropology [5]. The subject of names has attracted ethnologists, philologists and ordinary people in accordance with different theories as well as these disciplines [6]. A personal name is symbolized version of identity and attachment by words. As names have been evolved out of collective memory and cultural memory, they embody the changes occurred in the social structure and culture. Hence, names and naming conventions vary from culture to culture. In brief, the naming preferences of people and societies is affected by such variables as popular culture, media, family, ethnic identity, religion, ideology, and politics. Generally, besides the fact that naming has distinctive function from other groups, the use of selected names is effective in reflecting ethno-religious identity [7]. The changes of a nation's beliefs and values immediately reflect on the names [8, p. 2347]. In other words, the changed version of daily life for different reasons materializes in names. Cross-cultural ethnographic studies show that names are abstract symbols drawing cross-cultural borders. In this respect, the key factors which make names an identity and differentiation means and turn them into symbolic elements are religious beliefs and perceptions as well as ideological assumptions [9]. According to Geertz, religion is a system of symbols [10]. In order to convey the meanings relevant to the cultural processes and relations, symbols represent a "being" with which they are culturally associated in a way they can use within a context variety [11]. Tayfun Atay, who defines religion as cognitive attitude and behavior patterns toward supernatural beings and powers, suggests that cognitive attitude refers to belief (faith) and behavior pattern refers to ritual (worship-religious ceremony) [12]. Hence, ritual is one of the key elements through which sacred symbols and religious conventions are conveyed and maintained. Ritual-symbol relation and religion-based traditions caused by this dualist structure reveal the intercommunal differences, ethnic groups, religious communities, and class structure. The fact that naming ritual is conducted in accordance with religious beliefs and conventions brings along certain expectations. For instance, the names are "expected to bear special meanings including future attributes and wishes for the name holder; and the name holders to identify with the historical, cultural, and religious meanings attributed to the names" [9, p. 8]. The category of religious names greatly varying in the Muslim Turkish society includes Allah's attributes, Prophet and Prophet's relatives, names of Prophet's companions, quotations and words from the Qur'an, names of entombed saints and religious scholar who lived and fell martyr for their faith, and times and places which have religious meaning and importance [9, p. 14]. Likewise, in Judaism, the names are quoted from the Holy Scripture,

religious figures, and prophets; in Christianity, the names of saints; and among Nusayris, the names of religious figures and prophets are maintained in the course of nonsacred daily life. As is stated, in Christianity, "The given names are associated with the belief of hereafter in our religion." In Judaism, "Name of a person is in fact a representative of the society and religion they belong." or "We will be called by our names in the hereafter world, and unless our name is an appropriate Muslim name, no one would call us," it is focused on the child naming rituals and names among Christians, Jews, Sunnis, and Arab Alevis in Antakya. This study suggests that in different religious beliefs, religious identity construction first starts with naming based on the rules of the religious-cultural community to which they belong. The main question to be addressed in this study is the relation between naming rituals and identity construction in different religious and sectarian communities.

2. Scope and methodology

Located by the Syrian border in the eastern Mediterranean region, "Hatay Province, Antakya District in particular, is one of the city centers where different ethnic communities live together" [13]. With a long history, this city has had a strategic importance with the Amik Plain through which trade routes have passed and which have served as a border. Reşat Kasaba depicts Antakya—where a variety of ethno-religious communities live together along with a plenty of subcultures—as follows: "These multi-identity and multi-religious character-istics can be observed in many cities. However, unlike the other cities, Antakya preserves its multi-identity characteristics despite wars and occupations" [14].

Şalom, a weekly political and cultural newspaper, published in Turkey and targeting the Jewish community in Antakya notes in its issue of June 22 1994 that: The history of the Jews dates back to 2000 years ago and the origin of this community is assumed to be the Jewish people emigrating from Syria and the Rhodes Island. Aside of the Jews, the Christians—Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—also preserve their identity. The Orthodox in particular is the largest group in number. What makes Antakya so important for the Christians is that St. Pierre Church, the first cave church, was declared as a pilgrimage site by Vatican in 1963 and that "Antakya" is the place where the Christianity was adopted by other groups than the Jews for the first time and the name of "Christian" was first uttered here [15]. Another community addressed in this study is the Arab Alevis. Alternatively known as Alevis, Arab Alevis, and Nusayris, this community is referred to as the Arab Alevis (Nusayris) in this study. Despite regarding themselves as Muslim, the Arab Alevis practice different customs from the Sunni Muslims as the Arab Alevism embodies a number of syncretic religious patterns due to the conditions it first emerged and currently existing customs. As for the period when the Alevism first emerged, it is noted that "In those days, the Shia movements were disseminated and became popular among public by the efforts of intellectually elite groups who were interested in philosophy and hence quite familiar with the pre-Islamic religions and particularly the ancient Greek philosophy which had a great influence on the Pre-Islamic religions and provided intellectual ground for the sectarianism in these religions" [16]. Aside of the Arab Alevis, Sunni Muslims is the largest group in population in this region. This study

focuses on the Sunni-Hanafi community. The introduction of Islam in Antakya dates back to seventh century AD. Today, there are two large groups as Arab Sunni and Turkish Sunni in Antakya. The Jews, Orthodox Christians, Arab Alevis, and Arab Sunnis speak Arabic as their mother tongue. In daily life, both Arabic and Turkish languages are spoken, and as in many other cultures, there are certain similarities and distinctions in naming. As a part of this qualitative study, a number of interviews were conducted with the Jewish, Christian (Orthodox), Sunni, and Arab Alevi (Nusayri) people. In addition to in-depth interviews, semi-structured interview forms were used to keep a record of interviewees' statements with their permission. In interpreting the findings of the interviews, the interviewees were kept anonymous, while the data on their ethno-religious identity, sex, and age were utilized where necessary. In order to collect the relevant findings to the subject of this study, the following questions were posed to the interviewees: Do you regard the names you give your children at birth as a cultural symbol that represents your first ethnic-religious origin throughout your life? Do you think the names you give are related with your belief of hereafter? What are the names you choose for your children? Do you think your past experiences/memories/relationships are important in choosing a name? Are there any names you would avoid in naming your children? If any, what are they? Why do you avoid these names? Is there any family in your community who have chosen an avoided or undesirable name anyway? If any, could you tell us about their experiences? Is there any naming rituals? If any, could you elaborate these rituals? As in almost everywhere in the world, it is clear that in Antakya, religion and belief have an influence in choosing nicknames as well as names [17]. Also as a part of this study, "In Hatay, as the umbilical cord of a child is cut by a midwife, the child may be given such religious names as Muhammed, Mustafa, Emine, Ayşe, Fatma etc. as a middle name (*göbek adı*), and also as a first name, a child may be named after certain religious figures or some sections or verses quoted from the Qur'an" [18]. For instance, in a study conducted on the students of Mustafa Kemal University (Hatay) coming from all around Turkey, it is emphasized that the names chosen for children should comply with the religious beliefs or quoted from the Qur'an [8]. After the brief introduction of field and method of the study, the following chapters will focus on the religious origins of naming, differences among the communities, symbolism of the names, and the names that became a taboo due to historical events constructed and transmitted by cultural memory.

3. Names and name giving in Antakya

The names typically used and preferred by a community have a deep connection between the events happened in the past that affect the community life and people. This connection which has been transferred via cultural memory is symbolized with the names to tell the other communities passively about their religious beliefs, preferences and reactions. Hence, the names carry a special meaning for each nation as they carry the nation's history and culture remind the members of that nation's memories from the past [19]. Whether it is a prohibition or the result of a sacred verse or prays, names and naming are a great preference for most of the societies. Let's touch them briefly and alternately.

3.1. Names as a field of Taboo

There are especially some names which are not used among Arab Alevis (Nusayris). Although these names vary, Arab Alevis do not use the names of khalifas Osman, Bekir, and Ömer, and they do not use the names of Yavuz, Muaviye, Yezid, Harun, and Ayşe because they indicate that Halid bin Velid, Muaviye, Yezid, Harun bin Reşid, and Sultan Selim the Resolute persecuted Alevis in the past [20]. Since the name Ayşe is not preferred, the name Ayşegül is not preferred either. At this point, we should take a look at the history of the reason why some names are especially not used among Arab Alevis and what is left from the history in today's cultural memory. After the third khalifa Osman was murdered (644–656), a sectarian division, which still continues today, has occurred among Muslims. While some people wanted Ali to become the khalifa, some others blamed Ali for the murder of Osman. According to Sunni Islam, Ali is the fourth khalifa; and according to Shia Islam, he is the first of imams. He is also seen as the successor of the Prophet Muhammad. Caliphate of Ali (656-661 AD) proceeded in the struggle between his supporters and the ones who did not accept him as the khalifa. Ali faced with Âişe, around whom people that objected him gathered, in the Battle of the Camel and Ali won the war. The fact that Ali was stabbed and killed by his enemies, while he was praying in the mosque irreversibly marked the division between Sunnis and Shias. Then, Muaviye had the Caliphate, and Muaviye has become one of the reaction centers of Shia Islam. After Ali, the struggle for Caliphate continued. The subsequent events proceeded as follows: After Muaviye Imam Hasan was killed by poison, his brother Imam Huseyin went to Mecca. After the death of Muaviye, Damascus people obeyed Yezid; and, the ones in Kufe obeyed Imam Huseyin. Imam Huseyin left for Kufe and the new governor of Kufe, Ubeydullah b. Ziyad sent an army to Karbala. Ziyad prevented Imam Huseyin from taking water from Euphrates River. On the 10th of Muharram ul Haram, the war started and 72 of Imam Huseyin's supporters, who were dehydrated in the desert, died in the war. Imam Huseyin was also beheaded [21]. Thirteen days after the Karbala event, Yezid held Imam Huseyin's supporters captive in a mosque that had no roof, and he left them there without food or water [21, p. 75]. The Ottoman Emperor Sultan Selim the Resolute (1470–1520) settled Turks to provide the security of Egypt-Anatolia road, which was one of the places where Alevis densely lived; as a result of this, the oppression they experienced made Nusayris an introvert-closed community [22]. Alevis supported Shah Ismail in his struggle with Sultan Selim the Resolute and they have expressed that Sultan Selim the Resolute killed many Alevis without a reason [23]. Apart from these historical events, our information source with whom we made an interview in the field states the reasons and results of the resistance they show against the names as follows:

"Karbala and caliphate are extremely important in naming. The name of Yavuz is not used because of the slaughter he made. The name Ayşegül is not preferred either. Although there is not a strict resistance against the names Yavuz and Fatih, they are not used. Though it is rare, sometimes people go beyond the ordinary behaviour and these names can be seen. However, the names of Ayşe, Ömer, Bekir, and Osman are never used. If somebody is detached from the Alevi culture as belief, they can use the name Ayşegül and other names but these people are not considered from the religion and their children cannot get the religious education called unclehood." Again, people whom we interviewed said that although there are some exceptions, as one of the most common names, Ali should be used as the first name because Ali is the leader. They define the limits of the taboo

by expressing that as the name Muhammad is used as Mehmed, the Holy person's name Ali cannot be used as "Ali Can" because the second name, Can, seems to trivialize the name of Ali. In the community of Arab Alevis (Nusayris), the field of taboo against names is symbolized for ages with the Purgation Prayer performed in religious rituals. Purgation Prayer is as follows: "You protect us from the fire and the subjects of fire. God damns Ebû Bekir, Osman, Ömer, Muaviye, Yezid, Halid bin Velid, Amr-bin As, Harun Reşid, Sultan Selim the Resolute, and all others who claim power against God… Separate us from them and from their grandchildren like how the flesh is separated from the bone" [24]. Instead of the names mentioned in this prayer, the phrase 9 intriguer, meaning "9 people who make trouble," is also used. In some Nusayri (Arab Alevi) communities, this prayer is read by adding the statement "how the dough is separated from the hair" after the statement "how the flesh is separated from the bone" [16, p. 67]. Community members frequently mentioned of avoided names that are marked with Arab Alevis' "Arınma Duası" [Purification Pray]. Both male and female community members we interviewed have a common understanding about these names. They frequently state that names, such as: Yezid, Ömer, Osman, Yavuz, Bekir, Muaviye, Ayşe, shall be avoided; if not, they will get reactions from their community, and therefore, they are very keen on this distinction. A member of Jewish community member indicated the distinction between Sunnis and Christians accordingly: "*In our community never a child is given distinctive names such as Hasan, Hüseyin or Christian names—it goes against the grain—which is why children are hardly ever given undesirable names in our community; and if so, they get serious reactions from the community.*" Again, a member of Christian community member made the following statement regarding names to be avoided or preferred: "*Non-muslim Turkish names can be given to children. For instance, names such as Gökhan, Hakan, Engin that have no Muslim associations can be preferred in the national identity card and can also be used in everyday life. However, there is no way to use names such as Muhammed, Ömer, Mustafa that have apparent Muslim associations; otherwise you may get reactions. On the other hand, it is possible to use names—Ali and Murat. Also, modern Turkish names that are not mentioned in the Qur'an can be used. There is a person named Mehmet among us; however the baptize name is the true name. The name Süleyman appears in the Old Testament, still we name children as Solomun.*"

Regarding the undesirable or avoided names for Sunnis, resources state that it is forbidden by religion to use names to mean serving anyone other than Allah; thus, the Prophet advises to change the names that associate with idolatry and that contradict with Islamic customs [25]. Although it is not a complete taboo, for instance "As a matter of their respect to the Prophet Muhammed, Muslim Turks assumed to take his name directly to be impudent, instead they endorsed to name children after him as Mehmed" [25, p. 333]. A female Sunni interviewee we met in the field work stated that, "Our Prophet's name is Muhammed. Some name their children after him; however, some others avoid that, for people may speak ill of him or swear at him," stressing the fact that one should be very cautious with using the Muslim Prophet Muhammed's name. The common perception among the Sunnis who follow traditions is: "*If you name your child after another religion, she/he will not be judged in the last judgment day, and will have nowhere to go. Far too modern names are not favorable by religion. Names should not be fake/ invented. According to our religion we shall give meaningful names to children. We are Muslims and our religion cammands us to give beautiful meaningful names to children.*" Based on such statements,

these people have taboos regarding using names that not favorable by religion. Moreover, some community members stated that it is also unfavorable to use names of Allah directly—such as Kadir; rather it should be used as Abdulkadir. For instance, a female member of Sunni community is against—in her words—using modern names, questioning convenience of using these names: "Recently, people started to give non-religious names to their children. For example, they name their children Alev [*flame*]. Alev means fire—why would you give an unfavorable name to your children!" Another women from the same community stated that Christians dwelling in Antakya use the name Sara whereas her community uses Sare; thus, it is important to prefer using names with Muslim associations in order not to resemble the Christian community. Sara is the name of prophet İbrahim's wife; however, in the Koran, it is mentioned as Sâre.

3.2. Names and their sacred sources as a motive to prefer

Surveys show that those who maintain their identities prefer the names found in sacred books of all religions, names of important persons such as saints, prophets, religious leaders or companions of prophets and that religious identity is built in this way. One important point about naming is the belief in the hereafter. Jewish people believe that on the Day of Judgment, they will be called by their Hebrew names. Similarly, Sunni Muslims emphasize the importance of choice of names because of Prophet Muhammad's statement: "You will be called by your names and your fathers', so make your names beautiful" [26], which they think that they should use religious names for their children so that their children can be called by their names on the judgment day because after death people will be called with the names given to them. Apart from given names, there are middle names. Nusayris (Arab Alevis) living in Hatay give much importance to giving middle name to babies. They believe that people will be called by their middle names on the day of judgment after death and give babies their first names 3 or 7 days after the birth [27]. As Rinna Samuel (1972) has written, "For Jews, naming has always been e way of narrating history, demonstrating continuity, preserving the memory of those who have died, and celebrating significant event" [28]. Indeed, when names given to Jewish children are examined, it is seen that names are important in connecting with their history and maintaining their identity. Jewish people firstly give boys Hebrew names at circumcision. They are called by their Hebrew names in all religious ceremonies even if their names are different on birth certificate. Babies who die before their 8th day are still named [29]. A Jewish man interviewed explains their naming tradition, which has a function of establishing a relation between the old testament and daily life as well as presenting male domination, as following: *"Mose: Generally such names as Musa, Yakup, Davut, and Davit, which are found in Torah, are used. Names of Prophets are used. For example my daughter's name is Gila. We named her after my mother's name Gerez, which means soft-hearted, but modernized it."* Christians name their babies after grandmothers or grandfathers whose names are generally found in the Bible. They may also give their babies the names found in Torah. However, according to a Christian, congregant modern versions of names are used instead of their Arabic origins, as in the examples of girl's names Kettur;Katerina and Meryem;Maria. In the research area, there are many holy persons like St. Georgios, St. İlyas, St. Barbara, St. Antonios, St. Nikolaos, St. Dimitrios, St. Spiridon, St. Anna, St. Petrus and St. Pavlus and religious festivals for them [30]. Mar Curcos (St. Georges) festival is a

name festival at the same time, and those whose names are George are visited, given presents and congratulated with on May 6 [31]. Saint Barbara's Festival is celebrated on December 4 and people whose names are Barbara are given presents and congratulated with as it is also a festival for those bearing name of Barbara [31, p. 333]. Name festivals, arising out of common Christian tradition of naming babies after saints, strengthen the communication between people bearing the same names and increases communication in a congregation. That is because name festival days are shared with enthusiasm, joy, and excitement. If there is an icon of the saints, it is prayed and respected on the name festival day. The data we have gathered from a congregant man on this matter are as follows: "*Using saints' names as first names, naming girls after Mother Mary and naming babies after saints when their birthdays are on the same day of a Saint's Festival are common patterns of behavior in Christianity. Babies are given names of martyrs' or saints' at baptism and called by this name. If the day is a memorial day for a saint, his/her name is preferred. In addition, name day or name feasts tradition can account for acceptance of persons who participated in the community and its importance. It is an important event in congregations that people bearing the same names get together in the church and celebrate it with a religious ceremony.*" Sometimes babies' names at baptism are given by their godmothers and godfathers, which makes naming a sponsor-based relationship [32].

A Sunni woman, one of our sources, states she heard it from her father that such names as *"Mehmet, Mustafa, Ahmet"* are Sunnah names. Even if Sunnis prefer to pronounce Muhammed as Mehmed, they also use the names of Ahmed, Mahmud, Hamid and Mustafa attributed to him as well as Muhammed [25, p. 333]. Congregants always stress the importance of naming children after companions of Prophet Muhammad, saints, religious people and leaders or using names found in the Qur'an. They think that it is being estranged from the religion that today Islamic names are not used as much as it used to be. A congregant says: *"In the past elders' names were all Islamic ones. As children used to be named after elder people, they had beautiful names in religious terms. If you name your child after Prophet Mohammed, it brings more abundance to into your house. This is what we believe. Ahmet, Muhammed, Mustafa, Mahmut, Ayşe, Fatma, and Havva are all names of holy persons and are commonly used among Muslims.*" Arab Alevis and Sunnis have both a lot in common considering their sources for naming. Ahl al-Bayt is the most important one. Literally, referring to "People of the House of Prophet Muhammad," the phrase "Ahl al-Bayt" has two different frameworks as narrow and broad. In broad terms, "Ahl al-Bayt" includes all people in the house of Prophet Muhammad and also people who are close to them. According to Islamic tradition, in broad terms "Ahl al-Bayt" refers to wives of Prophet Muhammad and the family of Ali and Fatimah. In narrow terms, as a common view of Muslim scholars, "Ahl al-Bayt" consists of Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn [33]. For Nusayris (Arab Alevis), "Ahl al-Bayt" means Muhammed, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, Husayn and Muhsin [24, p. 59]. Hasan and Husayn, who are included in Ahl al-Bayt, have a different meaning for Arab Alevis as their source for names because one was killed by being poisoned and the other was beheaded. Love for Ali and what he symbolizes are much more different and important. The most commonly used names are Ali, Hasan and Husayn [20, p. 134]. In particular, Arab Alevis or Nusayris living in Hatay have deep love and respect for Ali [34]. Another important source for naming among Arab Alevis is the Twelve Imams. According to Arabic Alevis, "the Twelve Imams are extremely important holy persons" [24, p. 59]. The Twelve Imams consist of Imam

Ali b. Ebi Talib, Imam Hasan el-Mücteba, Imam Hüseyin eş-Şehid, ImamAli Zeynulabidin, Imam Muhammed el Bâkır, Imam Cafer es-Sadık, Imam Musa el—Kazım, Imam Ali er—Rıdâ, Imam Muhammed el-Cevad, Imam Ali el-Hadi, Imam Hasanel-Askeri, and Imam Muhammed el-Mehdi [35]. Based on the information we get from the area "Names of *Musa, İsa, Meryem are used, Muhammed is not preferred rather Mehmet is used. Names of prophets are used. Ali is the most commonly used name. Mehmet Ali is quite common. People mostly prefer names like Ali, Muhammed, Zeyniddin, Fahriddin, and Nureddin. Among the most preferred names are Zehra, Zeynep, Hasan, and Husayn. There are people who especially name their children after Sikh. Considering the time in which the child grows up, they say names like İbrahim, Süleyman, Ali, Ahmet, and Mehmet are more appropriate. Names of the Twelve Imams are preferred. It is important to maintain the names of Sikhs. Their sons or grandsons are named after Sikhs. For example the name of Selman is preferred because it means new-born, the one who came to the world."*

3.3. Name-giving ritual

Aside of the preferred and avoided names, another important matter among Jewish, Christian, Sunni, and Arab Alevi communities is naming ritual. The rituals rules referred to in different names in different communities may also be seen as initiation rules to a relevant religion because it is the first time a child's identity boundaries are drawn by the selection of an appropriate name to their religious identity. Below is a brief explanation of these rituals.

3.3.1. Brit Milah and 'Zaved HaBat or Vijola in Judaism

Among Jewish people, naming a child requires a series of important rituals. Despite causing some distinction among different Jewish communities today, naming ritual—requiring to follow different procedures for girls and boys—remains to be important. One of the interviewees, a member of Antakya Jewish Community, describes the ritual as follows: *"According to our traditions, boys are named during a circumcision ceremony called Brit Milah. Our ancestor who had been called Avram until circumcision became the first person to prove loyal to God after he fulfilled the God's circumcision order. And he was told that 'your name is no longer Avram but Avraham.' This is how the rabbis learned that a male new-born is to be named during Brit Milah as according to the Tora, when you perform a Brit Milah for a child, you complete the creation. God creates; parents and God, three partners shapes the body but the creation is completed in the day eight by means of circumcision. Brit Milah means 'agreement'. The agreement, 'Brit', made with the God symbolizes that the agreement between Avram and the God will be maintained for generations. When there is a baby boy to be circumcised in the eight day after birth, a rabbi is invited from İstanbul as Antakya community lacks one. This rabbi is both a religious functionary and circumciser. It is held as a ceremony in a Synagogue. After the prayers, what the name will be determined (grandfather is 'kirve' –the person who supports the child during circumcision- and bears the ritual expenses). When the ritual is completed, people say 'Besimantov' (meaning Good Luck). Refreshers are served. In this circumcision ceremony, there is no need for a special invitation as it is a grand religious service and whoever informed should attend. The Day Eight tradition is based on the 613 mitzvot (commandments) related with the Ten Commandments which were declared by God gave to Prophet Moses. One of these commandments requires circumcision on the eight day. During Brit*

Milah, Rabbis read some prayers they combine. In reading the prayers to wish a child good luck for the rest of their life, their name is pronounced. We make an agreement and child takes a name at that moment. We say "May he follow God's path, and his parents live long," and then "In the name of God, we call him ……." Of course, this speech is made in Hebrew in a proper intonation. Circumcision takes place at the same day with the naming ceremony because for boys circumcision is a symbol of initiation to the religion. Each person initiates to the religion is marked. For girls, naming ritual is a bit different. This ritual is mostly known as Zeved HaBat and also called "vijola" in Spanish. Based on the field data gathered, "After a baby girl is born she is named in 8 to 40 days. The baby is dressed up nicely and a rabbi says prayers and calls her name, holding the baby on his lap. In naming baby girls, naming ceremony held by Sholomo Hamelech (Solomon) for his daughters is taken as a reference. Sholomo Hamelech wrote a book entitled 'the Melody of the Melodies' (שירריהמיס, Şir ha-Şirim). Originally it is written by a man for his lover, but according to Jewish mysticism, it is in fact a narrative, a melody describes how a Jewish should love God. There is a part in this book that depicts and praises a girl. This part is read to the baby girl during vijola ceremony, and her name is given as these complimentary words are read. Baby girl wears wedding dresses and anadems; and people are served meal."

3.3.2. Baptism among Christians

Baptism is not only a cleansing ritual before admission to the religion, but also a name-giving ritual. Name-giving is attached great importance, and baptism is the basis of name-giving ritual. Generally, in Orthodox churches, children are given names on the 8th day and baptized in 8–40 days after birth [35]. As for the Christian community in Antakya, we can see various practices in terms of the day and time, the ceremony is held. Based on the data gathered on the field, Orthodox people give a name to their children even on the day they are born. According to the Jewish traditions, Jesus was given a name and circumcised on the 8th day after his birth. According to Luka (Bible) 2: 21, "On the eighth day, when it came time to circumcise the child, he was called Jesus. It is now that your angel gave it to Him before she fell into her mother's womb."

That's why, some Christians maintain only the name-giving tradition on the 8th day. Once in Antakya, "name-giving ceremony used to be held in forty days for baby boys, and in 60–80 days for baby girls" [30, p. 158]; however, this tradition has partly changed today because based on the data we gathered on the field, "a child can be given their name both on the day they are born and depending on the family's decision, baptism can be delayed from 2 months up to 1 year after the birth." As is stated by a man, a member of the Christian community: "*Baptism is held to give a child a name, a kind of registration. This ceremony symbolizes that a human being is purified, devoted to Jesus, and becomes a Christian. A child is born without a religion and become a Christian after baptism; hence, he/she has to take a biblical name. Church ceremony is followed by a festive occasion in the evening depending on the financial capacity of the family. In giving a name, relationships, memories, and culture play a role. Every Sunday is assigned as a Saint's Eve. Those who are born on Sunday are named after Mor Gabriel, and those who are born in during a feast called 'Mor Corcır' are named after George. If the baby girl is to be named on a female saint's day, she is named after her. And the relatives give crucifix necklace or such accessories as a gift.*"

3.3.3. Ezan and Kamet among Sunnis and Arab Alevis

Name-giving rituals practiced by Sunnis and Arab Alevis are similar. However, this similarity is observed among those who practice name-giving ritual in accordance with religious rules because among Arab Alevis sometimes the child's name is started to be used directly. In both communities, *Ezan* is read to the right ear and *Kamet* is read on the left ear, and the child's name is read to the right ear. Although the Islamic sources contain conflicting information on when to name a child, it is noted that Prophet Muhammad says for His son to whom Mariye gave birth that "I had a son tonight and I named him after Ibrahim, which is interpreted that name giving on the birth day is appropriate [25, p. 333]. As is told by a rumor associated by the Prophet, in giving a name to a child, *ezan* is read to the right ear and then *kamet* is read to the left one. It is known that the Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, read *ezan* to the ear of His grandson, Hasan [25, p. 333]. As is stated by a Muslim woman, "*Ezan is read to the right ear of the child, followed by 'kamet'. Then the name is pronounced, as is practiced by our Prophet. This name-giving practice is a 'sunnah.' A name is given right after the birth*", in name-giving practice, the Prophet's sunnah (Prophet Muhammed's teachings and practices) is maintained as a rule. In daily life practices, additional remarks we recorded among Sunni community regarding the name-giving practices are as follows: "*the name is read three times to the right ear and this should be done in 3-4 days after the birth. The name was given one month after the child was born. Ezan was read and the name repeated three times. My youngest son was given his name the next day he was born. The person to give the name performs an ablution. A man to practice the ritual holds the child, reads ezan and repeated three times that 'your name is…..' and then people say 'good luck, may he/she be worthy of his/her name, may his/her parent live long.*" There are a few differences between *Ezan* and *Kamet* reading practices of the Arab Alevis who prefer religious ritual and the Sunnis. For instance, in reading *kamet* to the left ear, it is said "*Eşhedü enne Muhammeden Rasûlullah*" (I accept that Muhammed is the prophet of Allah) and then "*Eşhedü enne Aliyyen veliyyullâh*" (I testify that Ali is the beloved servant of Allah). Hence, the love for Ali who is the center of Alevism is whispered to the ear, which indicates a religious difference. In Arab Alevi community, there might be differences in name giving rituals. However, adopted traditions are such: "After the birth, sikh is informed in one week. There is no obligation for immolation at that moment but the time their financial situation allows they must definitely sacrifice an animal for God. There must be blood. From the meat of the sacrificed animal, hrisi, boiled bulgur/meat is cooked. If the mother of child would be expected to join the sacrifice ritual, there must be 40 days passed since the birth. Nowadays, after the name giving, they give dessert to the neighbors and relatives. The ones who take the dessert say "may he/she live with the name of Allah."

4. Conclusion

The names used by people from different religious communities are originated from the names mentioned in holy books and the names of prophets, wives of the prophets, saints and patronesses, chief rabbis, and mahatmas. These religious communities living in Antakya show resistance both against expressing their beliefs and against using some names; and through naming; they make a reference to the beyond of social memory and to the Other. In different religious

communities, different religious authorities can be effective in the choice of names. Naming is more important especially among the members of religious groups and communities. In community relations, names and the action of naming complete the religious, ideological, and ethnic identity. Names are actually used as a kind of communication code in these communities in order to protect their differences and to strengthen the solidarity among members. Since there is a lineage-based tradition in Jewish communities, they especially prefer the names of mothers-fathers. Since the names of Jewish people's mothers-fathers are based on Torah, the source of naming is again based on the holy book and rituals. Jewish people, whose native language is Arabic, are deeply loyal to their naming rituals. Among Christian people, on the other hand, although the Bible, saints and patronesses, and holy people are considered as the sources of naming, non-Islamic names are also preferred. Baptism is highly important for naming. There are many common names among Sunnis and Arab Alevis (Nusayris). Names based on Ahl al-Bayt (أهل البيت) are frequently used in both communities. Although the name, Ali, is used by both Sunnis and Arab Alevis, its frequency and the meaning it symbolizes are associated with Alevi identity. However, in addition to this, there are some names which are banned in the division of Sunni-Alevi and symbolized by Arab Alevis (Nusayris) through the Purgation Prayer. The names met by resistance and the preferred names create a border between two communities.

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