



DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

**POLITICAL RIGHTS OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES
IN IRAQ AND SYRIA: 2008-2018**

AHMED SALEEM JANABI

DIRECTOR:

Dr. GUADALUPE MARTÍNEZ FUENTES

DOCTORAL PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

UNIVERSITY OF GRANADA

Editor: Universidad de Granada. Tesis Doctorales
Autor: Ahmed Saleem Janabi
ISBN: 978-84-1195-246-0
URI: <https://hdl.handle.net/10481/90756>

Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	15
1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY	15
1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS	19
1.3 METHODOLOGY	20
1.3.1 Techniques	20
1.3.2 Case selection.....	21
1.3.3 Descriptive analysis (Within Case and Comparative Binary studies).....	22
1.3.4 Explanatory analysis	25
1.4 STRUCTURE	28
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUALIZATION.....	29
2.1 THE CONCEPT OF MINORITY.....	32
2.1.1 Concept and definition of the minority from a legal perspective.....	33
2.1.2 Concept and definition of minorities from a Political perspective.....	40
2.1.3 Concept and definition of minorities from a social perspective.....	43
2.2 The Rights of Religious Minorities.....	48
2.2.1 Challenges of the religious minorities practising their rights effectively	50
2.2.2 Minority Rights from a legal perspective.....	54
2.2.3 Role of the United Nations in the protection of the minorities' rights.....	62
2.2.4 Minority Rights from the political perspective	65
2.2.5 The Rights of Minorities from a Social Perspective	79
2.3 Conclusion:	83
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	85
3.1 Evidences of reduction of political rights of voting and accessing public services for religious minorities worldwide	85
3.2 The effect of political decision-making within the political system	93
3.3 The impact of domestic, regional, and international factors	101

3.3.1 Government.....	101
3.3.2 The Social and Religious Majority	105
3.3.3 Terrorism.....	111
3.3.4 International Relations	114

CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION OF RELIGIOUS

MINORITIES IN IRAQ AND SYRIA 2008-2018 (CHRISTIANS AND YAZIDIS)

Introduction.....	119
4.1 Religious Minorities in Iraq: Christians and Yazidis	120
4.1.1 Common problems, different challenges and reasoning	120
4.1.2 Christian and Yazidis' voting in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018	128
4.1.3 Christian and Yazidis' accessing public services in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018	133
4.2 Religious Minorities in Syria: Christians and Yazidis	136
4.2.1 Introduction to the Common Problems of Christians and Yazidis.....	136
4.2.2 Christians and Yazidis' voting in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018	140
4.2.3 Christians and Yazidis' accessing public services in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018	146
4.3 Similarities and Differences between the Level of Political Rights of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq and Syria	148
4.3.1 Christians and Yazidis' voting in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018	150
4.3.2 Christians and Yazidis' accessing public services in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018	155

Chapter 5: Testing of the Explanatory Hypothesis by Examining the Impact of External and

Internal Factors on the Evolution of Political Rights of Christians and Yazidis in Syria and

Iraq: Introduction	170
5.1 The Behaviour of the Dependent Variable: Outcomes in the Evolution of political Rights for Religious Minorities.....	170
Evolution of political rights for religious minority groups in Syria as well as Iraq.....	171
5.2 Description of the Evolution of Independent Variables (conditions)	173
5.2.1 Evolution of the level of government involvement.....	173
5.2.2 Evolution of the behaviour of the social religious majority	177
5.2.3 Evolution of the Behaviour of Terrorist Groups	182
5.2.4 Examining the Impact of External Factors on the Evolution of Political Rights of Christians and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq	187

5.2.5 Examining the impact of internal factors on the Evolution of political Rights of Christians and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq.....	197
5.3 Matrix of Analysis	205
5.4 Analysis of Necessity.....	208
5.5 Discussion.....	210
5.6 Summary	212
 Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	 215
References:.....	222

In memory of my father

Saleem Janabi

1937-2001

Acknowledgements:

I have a passion for learning that has remained with me for years. Entering into a PhD program in social sciences was not easy and overwhelming, especially in the first year, but then I found my way and made progress.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor **Dr. Guadalupe Martínez Fuentes**, for her exclusive assistance and ideas. Her advice and comments helped me to create an excellent work for this study. She pushed me in a way that made me comfortable, excited and confident. She also encouraged me to think about things from a different perspective, making me into a real academic, and she helped me shape my study into something I am incredibly proud of. Any success that this study finds is just as much hers as it is mine.

Also the tutor **Dr. Juan Montabes Pereira**, and the Coordinator **Dr. EVARISTO JIMÉNEZ CONTRERAS**, have been major influences on my study. They have contributed ideas and support that have helped to make this into, I believe, a very rich study that approached the research from multiple perspectives. I owe all of these amazing people a debt of gratitude.

I'd also be remiss if I did not express my sincere gratitude to my entire cohort: **Mohamad Warjen, Ammar Alani, Ahmad Al Ahmad, Ahmed Saad, Atheer Sabah, Aqeel Taha** and **Omar Ali**. They have also been the most incredible support system a friend could ask for. I want to thank my friends for their encouragement and recommendations.

Specifically, I'd like to sincerely thank my best friend **Hayder Jasim**. He and I have become like siblings over all the years of life. Sometimes arguing, but always there for one another. Without his unwavering support, daily chats, and quantitative affinity, I likely would have

given up dozens of times over the course of the program. I could not have done this without him!

Finally, this entire project would not have been possible without the constant support, love, and encouragement from my family. **My mother, brothers and sisters** have been my biggest cheerleaders, continually pushing me to work harder and rarely complaining when I spent days locked in my flat writing. They have been my saviours these years, and words cannot express my gratitude and love for this incredibly generous family. They know why. Beyond that, **my mother** listened to me cry, she's been my rock during the most stressful times in my life, and she's been a constant support and inspiration every day. She has listened to me talk about nothing else over the last few years, and has let me complain but always told me to put Allah first and get going. They may not fully understand my motivations, but they have always supported me fully. To all of you: I'm eternally grateful and so very blessed to have you in my life and on my team. I love you all so much. Thank you for everything!

"And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours. In this are signs for those who know". (The HOLY QURAN The Romans: Verse 22)

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“No person is above another by virtue of race or ethnicity.”

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)

In His last sermon 632 A.D. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) unequivocally condemned racism when he said:

“All mankind is descended from Adam and Eve,

An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab,

A non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab,

A white person has no superiority over a black person,

Nor a black person has any superiority over a white person,

Except by piety and good action.

Resumen:

El objeto de estudio de este trabajo son las minorías religiosas en Irak y Siria. Estas representan un porcentaje relativamente pequeño de la población total, lo que significa que son más propensas a ser objeto de represión política. La relevancia de su estudio obedece a diversos factores. En primer lugar, la historia de sectarismo y persecución que sufren las minorías religiosas en ambos países. Segundo, las múltiples experiencias de violencia política acumuladas por ambos sistemas políticos, bajo las formas de gobierno dictatorial, guerra y ataques de grupos insurgentes y terroristas. Y tercero, la consideración común de la región como zona prioritaria para las acciones de construcción de la paz.

El propósito de este trabajo es arrojar luz sobre la evolución de los derechos políticos de las minorías religiosas yazidí y cristiana en Irak y Siria entre los años 2008 y 2018 en perspectiva comparada. Para contextualizar este proceso, el presente estudio contrasta también las similitudes y diferencias entre los derechos sociales y económicos de las comunidades minoritarias.

El trabajo plantea tres preguntas de investigación y sus respectivas hipótesis. La primera pregunta es cómo han evolucionado los derechos políticos para las minorías religiosas en Irak y Siria desde 2008 hasta 2018. La hipótesis que se pone a prueba es: H1) *Los derechos políticos de voto y acceso a los servicios públicos se han reducido para las minorías religiosas en Irak y Siria desde 2008 hasta 2018.* El segundo interrogante concierne a las similitudes y diferencias entre el nivel de derechos políticos que tienen las minorías religiosas en Irak y Siria. Dos hipótesis alternativas se ponen a prueba: H2a) *Hay diferencias entre los derechos políticos de cada minoría religiosa en Irak y Siria en lo que respecta a la toma de decisiones políticas dentro del sistema político,* y H2b) *No hay diferencias.* La tercera y última pregunta de investigación se refiere a las causas que explican tales

similitudes o diferencias. La hipótesis a testar es que H3) *la evolución de los derechos políticos de las minorías religiosas en ambos países está determinada por diferentes configuraciones de condiciones internas, regionales e internacionales. Las variaciones en el nivel de participación del gobierno, el comportamiento de la mayoría social religiosa, los grupos terroristas y los poderes externos determinan las diferencias/similitudes en el patrón de evolución del nivel de derechos políticos de las minorías religiosas.*

Tres técnicas son utilizadas para poner a prueba las hipótesis de trabajo. El método de estudio de caso se utiliza para testar la H1. El estudio binario comparado se utiliza para testar la H2a y H2bs. El análisis comparado cualitativo en su variante crisp-set (csQCA, en sus siglas en inglés) se utiliza para testar la H3.

Las fuentes de datos utilizadas son textos constitucionales y legales iraquíes y sirios y previos estudios académicos, humanitarios y de seguridad sobre ambos países. Las condiciones de inseguridad vigentes en el área de estudio durante el desarrollo de esta investigación han dificultado acceder a fuentes primarias testimoniales de representantes de los colectivos afectados, como en principio se planificó.

El resultado del análisis de caso es que en el periodo de 2008 a 2013 y de 2014 a 2018, se produjeron diversas transformaciones en la constitución de Irak, cuyo objetivo es proporcionar igualdad de derechos a las minorías religiosas. Sin embargo, tales cambios legales no consiguen garantizar los derechos políticos de los cristianos y los yazidíes. Un caso similar de discriminación se ha observado en Siria. La influencia y el miedo de los partidos políticos corruptos han obligado al gobierno de estas naciones a seguir privando a las minorías religiosas de sus derechos. Las fuerzas del orden en Irak y Siria tampoco cooperan con los grupos religiosos minoritarios. Además, el auge de los grupos extremistas en Siria e Irak ha empeorado sus condiciones de vida. Así, el sistema político de Irak y Siria son

discriminatorios para las comunidades religiosas minoritarias. Por otra parte, y gracias al apoyo exterior, la participación política de las personas de las comunidades religiosas minoritarias ha aumentado, pero no alcanza niveles satisfactorios.

El resultado del análisis comparado binario de tipo descriptivo revela dos hallazgos principales. El primero es que las condiciones de protección de los derechos humanos de los yazidíes y los cristianos no sufrieron mejoras en Irak a lo largo del periodo analizado. El segundo es que en Siria sí se registraron mejoras para los yazidíes tanto entre 2008 y 2013 como entre 2014 y 2018, así como mejoras para los cristianos en el periodo 2014-2018.

Finalmente, el resultado del análisis comparado explicativo refuta la hipótesis de trabajo. El hallazgo es que ninguna de las condiciones contempladas en la misma consigue explicar ni las mejoras registradas en Siria y ni la perseverancia de las condiciones negativas registradas en Irak.

Los resultados de esta investigación completan estudios previos revelando los desafíos únicos a los que se han enfrentado las comunidades minoritarias en Irak y Siria desde el año 2008 hasta el año 2018. Por otra parte, el carácter no conclusivo del estudio explicativo anima a seguir investigando sobre la materia. En todo caso, se espera que este estudio ayude a los gobiernos de Irak y Siria, así como a la comunidad internacional, a identificar y explorar los problemas a los que se enfrentan las comunidades religiosas minoritarias, de modo que puedan aplicarse las políticas locales e internacionales más adecuadas para mejorar sus situaciones social y política.

Abstract:

The object of study of this work are the religious minorities in Iraq and Syria. They represent a relatively small percentage of the total population, which means that they are more likely to be the target of political repression. The relevance of his study is due to several factors. In the first place, the history of sectarianism and persecution suffered by religious minorities in both countries. Second, the multiple experiences of political violence accumulated by both political systems, under the forms of dictatorial government, war, and attacks by insurgent and terrorist groups. And third, the common consideration of the region as a priority area for peace building actions.

The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the evolution of the political rights of the Yazidi and Christian religious minorities in Iraq and Syria between 2008 and 2018 in comparative perspective. To contextualize this process, this study also contrasts the similarities and differences between the social and economic rights of minority communities.

The work poses three research questions and their respective hypotheses. The first question is how political rights have evolved for religious minorities in Iraq and Syria from 2008 to 2018. The hypothesis tested is: H1) *Political voting rights and access to public services have been reduced for religious minorities in Iraq and Syria from 2008 to 2018.* The second question concerns the similarities and differences between the level of political rights that religious minorities have in Iraq and Syria. Two alternative hypotheses are tested: H2a) *There are differences between the political rights of each religious minority in Iraq and Syria with regard to political decision-making within the political system,* and H2b) *There are no differences.* The third and final research question refers to the causes that explain such similarities or differences. The hypothesis to be tested is that H3) *the evolution of the political rights of religious minorities in both countries is determined by different configurations of internal, regional and international conditions. Variations in the level of government*

participation, the conduct of the religious social majority, terrorist groups and external powers determine the differences/similarities in the pattern of evolution of the level of political rights of religious minorities.

Three techniques are used to test the working hypotheses. The case study method is used to test the H1. The comparative binary study is used to test H2a and H2bs. Qualitative comparative analysis in its crisp-set variant (csQCA) is used to test H3.

The data sources used are Iraqi and Syrian constitutional and legal texts and previous academic, humanitarian and security studies on both countries. The conditions of insecurity in force in the study area during the development of this research have made it difficult to access primary testimonial sources from representatives of the affected groups, as originally planned.

The result of the case analysis is that in the period from 2008 to 2013 and from 2014 to 2018, there were various transformations in the constitution of Iraq, whose objective is to provide equal rights to religious minorities. However, such legal changes fail to guarantee the political rights of Christians and Yazidis. A similar case of discrimination has been observed in Syria. The influence and fear of corrupt political parties have forced the government of these nations to continue to disenfranchise religious minorities. Law enforcement in Iraq and Syria are also uncooperative with minority religious groups. In addition, the rise of extremist groups in Syria and Iraq has worsened their living conditions. Thus, the political system of Iraq and Syria are discriminatory towards minority religious communities. On the other hand, and thanks to external support, the political participation of people from minority religious communities has increased, but it does not reach satisfactory levels.

The result of the descriptive binary comparative analysis reveals two main findings. The first is that the conditions of protection of the human rights of Yazidis and Christians did not improve in Iraq throughout the period analysed. The second is that in Syria there were

improvements for the Yazidis both between 2008 and 2013 and between 2014 and 2018, as well as improvements for Christians in the period 2014-2018.

Finally, the result of the explanatory comparative analysis refutes the working hypothesis. The finding is that none of the conditions contemplated in it manages to explain neither the improvements registered in Syria nor the perseverance of the negative conditions registered in Iraq.

The results of this research complement previous studies by revealing the unique challenges that minority communities in Iraq and Syria have faced from 2008 to 2018. Furthermore, the inconclusive nature of the explanatory study encourages further research on the matter. In any case, it is hoped that this study will help the governments of Iraq and Syria, as well as the international community, to identify and explore the problems faced by minority religious communities, so that the most suitable local and international policies can be applied to improve their social and political situations.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The ability of individuals to participate in the political and civil life of the State and society without any fear of oppression and bias is known as political rights. Political rights are interconnected to civil rights wherein it mainly emphasises on the rights that include the participation in the establishment of a government or an administration that holds the public office and political activities (Mahmood, 2015). Voting rights are included in the set of political rights and mean the right to select people to run the government and manage the administration.

The citizens' lack of political rights entails consequent deficiencies both for them and for the political regime of the State. To this regard, we must distinguish between the situations in which the lack of political rights affect all the citizens of the State and the situations in which the lack of political rights exclusively affect a sector of the society. Even in the latter context, both the consequences for the affected social sector and the political system itself vary depending on the form of political regime prevailing in the State.

Specific groups of citizens may lack political rights in democratic contexts where democracy is degraded. Electoral democracies and/or illiberal democracies allow political competition and generally fair elections, but do not protect the rights of the minorities. In these political systems, minorities become more excluded over time, their civil rights are increasingly violated, they experience rising levels of political and social marginalization, and their trust in democracy gets eroded. Due to this, there are both clusters of disaffected citizens towards democracy, its institutions and / or its norms as well as an environment of insecurity and civil disturbance. This scenario leads to political and social instability and political delegitimation of the regime. For their part, autocracies tend to exhibit a more

discriminative environment in comparison to democracies and produce an environment of social instability and political delegitimation (Fox & Sandler, 2003).

Religious minorities are social groups susceptible to being affected by the violation of their political rights in democratic and non-democratic contexts, due to their religion and the small proportion of the entire population they represent. The lack of political rights of religious minorities in both scenarios entails extra consequences. It does not only lead the religious minorities to become dissatisfied and discriminated against, by empowering majorities to violate their rights, it also increases the risk of social sectarianism.

Social sectarianism is identified as social discrimination arising from the religious differences between the minorities and majorities of a place, leading to sectarian violence (Haddad, 2020). It is defined as a non-homogenous phenomenon that prevails in a varied format in terms of the diverse rate of intensity as well as politicisation. Hence, addressing the issue of sectarian violence requires proper protection to religious minorities by securing their political rights and civil rights (Mahmood, 2015).

This protection is particularly at stake in the Arab region, where religious minorities have traditionally faced serious challenges from weak democracies, authoritarian dictatorships, extremist religious movements, and terrorist organizations. The challenges increased when the belief that religious minorities' rights should be withdrawn became more and more common throughout the Arab East, and violations against religious minorities, including racism and discrimination (Ferris, 2008). An aggravation of the problems came with the spread of the Arab Spring Revolutions in 2011, which spurred chaos, extremism and terrorism, and caused the eruption of civil wars. Not to mention, the dictatorial and non-dictatorial governments in these areas are failing to carry out their primary tasks of protecting all citizens, providing security and peace within the State. More to the point, sectarianism is highlighting the religious differences between Islam and Christianity as well as the

differences between Sunni and Shia Islam, weakening the area as a whole. As a result, religious minorities, including Christians, Mandaeans, Yazidis, Shabaks, Druze, and others, suffer (Hanish, 2015).

To this regard, the region of Iraq and Syria deserves special attention for several reasons. First, its society's religious diversity, with a clear distinction between the religious majority and minorities. Second, the history of sectarianism and persecution experienced by religious minorities in both countries. Third, the multiple experiences of political violence accumulated by both political systems, under the forms of dictatorial government, war, and insurgent and terrorist groups attacks. And finally, the common consideration of the region as a priority area for peace-building actions.

The region is multi-religious and has been for millennia. In fact, this diversity has stretched back to 4000 BCE during the Mesopotamian period, where a variety of civilizations and religions coexisted sometimes, and then fought against each other at other times. The indigenous inhabitants of these ancient areas were Yazidis, Sabeen Mandaeans, Chaldean, Armenian, and Assyrian Christians, and others (Hanish: 2015, p.p. 7-11). Remarkably, these aged religions still exist in the area today, though they are minorities in the now predominantly Islamic countries. Even though the political rights of these religious minorities are formally guaranteed by the constitution within each country, by international law, and by international conventions, they are still at risk.

Moreover, de-sectarianisation efforts are being made in both countries. Sustainable procedures surrounding the de-sectarianisation in Iraq are the latest instances of protests in the year 2019, where the ruling parties responded in reference to the implementation of overt as well as covert violence (Dodge & Mansour, 2020). However, the de-sectarianisation in Syria is caused due to regional uprisings and revolts that request the downfall of the political regimes that influence regional differences and sectarianisation (MEPS, 2020).

Democratisation in Syria after the 2011 revolution has failed towards entirely taming the turbulence caused by many factors. Among them we stress the involvement of Hizballah, (Conduit, 2014), the insufficiency of the political and economic justice systems, the interference of the Muslim brotherhood (Al-Fawwaz, 2018) and the participation of foreign countries in the Syrian proxy war. Moreover, democratisation advance within Iraq has also failed in the last ten years due to the regime corruption, outside interference, ineffective support offered from its democratic allies (Hadad, 2016), and terrorism. Indeed, the rise of terrorism in Iraq has much to do with Syria. To this regard we could mention the inclusion of Syria in the Iranian expansion plan in neighbouring countries, as well as the active cooperation of the Syrian government with the supporting groups "militias backed by Iran" that oppose the presence of the United States in Iraq (Al-Fawwaz, 2018).

As a final evidence, peace-building efforts are also required in both cases. The localised concern for peace-building in Syria was commenced by the aid of the Arab League. However, the military monitoring organised under the Arab League failed in terms of materialising the cease-fire. This raised controversies and withdrawal of the League member states. Thus, the international concern for peace-building was passed to the United Nations, by following an exhaustive diplomatic shuttling (Lundgren, 2015). On the other hand, the localised concerns for the peace-building in Iraq were initiated by most of the leaders of political parties that offer support for the militias and regional insurgent groups. Further, the international peace-building concern in Iraq was initiated by the aid of fighting against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant for polarising volatile scenarios (Rohwerder, 2015).

Hence, it is essential to understand how religious minorities are constrained, and why they have been targeted in both countries. Detailed investigation, analysis of literary sources, and in-depth comparison of differences and similarities of political rights of religious minorities in Iraq and Syria would offer meaningful insights about the issues persisting in the

Arab region and across the world. Its proper understanding will not only contribute to the comprehension of this widespread phenomenon where religious minorities suffer from deprivation of political rights (Gomes, 2018), it will also have practical benefits for Iraq and Syria. More to the point, exploration of political rights of religious minorities would be helpful in giving meaningful insights into current conflicts prevailing in the region, and it would also contribute in addressing the identified issues and tackling factors accelerating oppression and tension in the area. It would also enable formulating useful strategies and improving implementation of legislative provisions to secure political rights of minorities and promote their political participation.

1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

The study aspires to explore the evolution of political rights of religious minorities in Iraq and Syria between 2008 and 2018 with focus on descriptive, comparative and explanatory approaches. In order to accomplish the three-fold aim, this study aims to touch upon the reality of religious minorities and their political rights, the kind of problems they face, the similarities and differences between them, and the origins or causes of these problems.

The first aim of the research is to analyse the way political rights are shaped and changed for religious minorities in Iraq and Syria during this period, which relates to the first research question. *“How did political rights for religious minorities evolve in Iraq and Syria from 2008 to 2018?”* The hypothesis I will test is: The political rights of voting and accessing public services have been reduced for religious minorities in Iraq and Syria from 2008 to 2018.

The second aim of the study is centred on finding similarities and differences between the level of political rights religious minorities have in Iraq and Syria, which relates to the second research question. *“What are the similarities and differences between the level of*

political rights religious minorities have in Iraq and Syria?” I will test two alternative hypotheses. The first one is that there are differences between political rights of each religious minority in Iraq and Syria concerning political decision-making within the political system and the second is that there are no differences.

The third aim of the study is focused on finding factors that are causing differences or similarities in the evolution of political rights in both nations for religious minorities. “*What contextual factors explain such similarities or differences?*” The hypothesis is that the evolution of the religious minorities’ political rights in both countries is determined by different configurations of internal, regional, and international factors. Variations in the level of government involvement, the behaviour of the social religious majority, terrorist groups, and external powers determine the differences/similarities in the pattern of evolution of the level of religious minorities’ political rights.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology that will be utilized for addressing the research questions, testing the hypothesis and fulfilling the research aims.

1.3.1 Techniques

Firstly, Within-Case Study is used to measure and contrast religious minorities’ political rights in different periods of the Syrian and Iraqi political process, in order to test hypothesis 1. Secondly, Binary Case Study is used for comparing the evolution of religious minorities’ political rights in Iraq and Syria in order to test hypothesis 2 and 3. Crisp-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is used for explanation of the causes of different or similar pattern of evolutions in order to test hypothesis 4.

The combination of within-case study, binary case study and QCA is considered important for establishing general recommendations and theory-building. Whilst the case study is used to gain concrete, contextual, in-depth intra-nation knowledge about minorities’

political rights in Iraq and Syria, the results obtained from the binary case study helps to further determine inter-nation descriptive conclusions, namely whether religious minorities have equal or unequal rights and implications of political rights on political decision-making. The QCA, from its part, contributes to find the reasons of the similarities or differences in the evolution of political rights faced by chosen religious minorities of both countries.

1.3.2 Case selection

The cases selected in this study are comparable and relevant for several reasons. First of all, intra-regional comparison facilitates the use of analytical concepts. Secondly, they are comparable and relevant in the context of the cumulative similarities prevailing in the political rights of the minority groups as well as in the political restrictions that are faced by the minority groups, given that Iraq and Syria rank the same in the “very high- level category within the Social Hostility Index of Pew Forum¹. Thirdly, the heterogeneity of the context of both countries helps to observe possible causal relations between the experimental independent variables included in the hypothesis (conditions) and the dependent variable (result). Fourthly, the historical, cultural, political, social, economic and security characteristics shared by both countries allow to reduce the number of control variables that must be considered in the causal analysis in order to avoid unwanted interferences in the analysis. Further, the comparability of the cases is justified as well in terms of the bilateral relationships that prevail between Iraq and Syria (Danilovich, 2016).

¹The social hostilities index ranks 198 countries and territories and is mainly comprised of and based on the 13 distinct questions that are used in order to gauge the hostilities between various realign groups with the inclusion of violence, crimes that are motivated by the bias religions, religious harassments, physical conflicts, and terrorism caused due to religion. Furthermore, in the context of using the measure of social hostility index, it is inferred that the provision of political rights for minorities in Iraq, that the crisis surrounding the political rights as well as security are triggered in the perspectives of the extremist groups like Islamic State as well as group-based murder attacks on a large populace of innocent people. In comparison to this, it is explained that the religious violators in Syria tend to impose policy-based restrictions on offering security as well as economic assistance to the minorities if they consider assistance of the United States government (Blanchard, 2014).

1.3.3 Descriptive analysis (Within Case and Comparative Binary studies)

The units of analysis as religious minorities in both cases are Christians and Yazidis. This choice is opportune in order to fill a knowledge gap. Most of the scholars of minorities in the Arab region study the violence, discrimination, and political rights violations committed by some political regimes, as well as minorities' exoduses after the massacres perpetrated against them by extremists such as al-Qaeda, ISIS and others. However, there is limited data about religious minorities specifically and their status in Iraq and Syria. There was no accurate census data providing a distribution of the religious populations in these two countries even before the Syrian civil war began in March 2011 and Islamic extremists and terrorist groups in Iraq emerged. Furthermore, the conflicts precipitated mass movements of people, which greatly shifted the demographic ratios in the region, especially in Iraq and Syria. At this time, because of these crises, the demographics and movement patterns of religious and ethnic minorities can be politicized. Due to the large number of terrorist activities conducted by terrorist groups, the proportion of Christians and Yazidis in the country has significantly declined over the past 20 years (Oehring, 2017). Thus, it is very important to understand the key factors responsible for aggravating discrimination against these religious minorities and determining the gap between legal provisions and their implementation.

The political rights observed for Christians and Yazidis in both countries are political participation and participation in the voting system². Political participation means encompassing a wide range of activities that can be used to express the personal viewpoints regarding the governance-related activities around the globe that determine the living standards of individuals. Further, participation in the voting system means to assure a correct

²Other variables related to political rights are excluded because these variables are complicated to be examined in the context of two cases like Syria and Iraq.

practising of the electoral rights to recruit the state representatives that are responsible for managing the societal order.

The variable named political participation is made operative by the help of concrete indicators such as political and public access-related rights of the individuals. The participation in the voting system is made operative by the help of the indicator named as the voting rights.

The data sources highlighting the human rights-based information of Iraq and Syria are used for the indicator of political rights. Further, the data sources such as laws, books, journal and newspaper articles surrounding the electoral rights of the minority citizens in Iraq and Syria are considered for determining the voting right indicator.

The selected period for the observation of these indicators is between 2008 and 2018. This time range is relevant as it covers a span of ten years which is sufficient to compare the public access rights, and political and voting rights offered to the minority population residing in Iraq as well as Syria. Furthermore, this time span is also highly relevant for observing continuities or changes in the voting as well as political and public level rights of the minority individuals in Syria and Iraq. The period from 2008 to 2018 has witnessed a large number of political changes in Iraq and Syria. Syria witnessed foreign intervention by the United States of America with airstrikes in the year 2014. Along with this, Russia also intervened in Syria with airstrikes in the year 2015. Furthermore, the collaboration of other nations with the USA to fight against ISIS in the year 2014 was also a major step taken at the global level to eradicate ISIS. The increased number of political and social changes in the area of the Middle East affected the religious and global powers of Syria and Iraq, highlighting a large number of changes during this time period in these countries (Pettersson, 2020). Thus, the ten-year time period has shown a diversified evidence that can be considered for understanding and observing the key indicators between the years 2008 to 2018.

Time is considered when observing the behaviour of the indicators selected within the period 2008-2018. The entire process is observed by the differentiation of the entire time phase in two phases comprising of 5 years, namely 2008-2013 and 2013-2018. Hence, in the research, 8 cases are measured, comprising of Iraq 2008-2013 for Christians, Syria 2008-2013 for Christians, Iraq 2014-2018 for Christians, and Syria 2014-2018 for Christians, Iraq 2008-2013 for Yazidis, Syria 2008-2013 for Yazidis, Iraq 2014-2018 for Yazidis, and Syria 2014-2018 for Yazidis.

The critical moments in the selected cases between 2008-13 and 2013-18 are offered concrete evidence by the BBC (2019) which highlights the emergence of the diplomatic relations of Syria with Lebanon in the year 2008 as well as rise of extremism in Syria from the year 2013 (BBC, 2019). Iraq also encountered critical instances between the year 2008 and 2013, where in March 2008, the Prime Minister Maliki issued orders for initiating the war with the Mehdi army led by Moqtada Sadr. Further, the military troops of the USA withdrew from the cities of Iraq, after launching the six years of invasion. Moreover, bombings were executed in Baghdad, Samarra and Nineveh (BBC, 2018). The year 2014 was a turning point in the history of Iraq and Syria as the President of America, Barack Obama, invited other nations to fight against ISIS. More than 40 nations became part of the global alliance to fight against ISIS and help the people who were fighting for their freedom. This global coalition proved to be a strong network of nations that gave a tough fight against ISIS (Quanrud, 2018). Furthermore, between June 2014 and 2018, ISIS dominated vast territories in Iraq and Syria, when a lot of people were kidnapped and killed, being especially notable the massacres committed against Yazidis and Christians.

The measurement of the evolution of the indicators will be done with the help of the Line Scale. Line scales are effective for the current QDA analysis in account of the dependent as well as independent variables. The scale is drafted in the line of the indicators named as

political and public access-related rights of the individuals and voting rights as the chosen line scale is drafted over a length of 6 inches, which involves placement of the word anchors for marking the sensory intensities that are placed 0.5 inch apart. This scale measures the results from left to right in the form of increasing intensities; for instance moving from weak to smaller ones (Lawless & Heymann, 2010).

1.3.4 Explanatory analysis

In using the csQCA software, seven steps are made, as based on Rihoux & De Meur (2009):

- 1) Definition of the research population and selection of the cases for analysis.
- 2) Identification of the outcome.
- 3) Identification of the conditions.
- 4) Definition of every condition and outcome as a binary variable. Crisp-set QCA (csQCA) applies to sets where conditions have full membership (1) or no full membership (0) in sets (Paustyan, 2020).

- 5) Creation of an L-shaped matrix to relate between the 8 cases and the variables.
- 6) Analysis of necessary conditions. A condition, or variable, is necessary when the outcome does not exist without it (i.e., if $Y = 1$ then $X = 1$) and the condition does not automatically produce the outcome (i.e., when $X = 1$, Y can be either 1 or 0). A necessary condition is a constraint for the outcome to exist.

- 7) Configurative analysis. A truth table is developed that sets out the functional values expressing logics on every condition-case argument. So for every combination, the values were obtained and defined with context to the logical variables. In this case, the logical variables are the 5 conditions that are tested one on one with the 8 cases (relationship test). Based on the true table, the researcher is able to identify the lowest model and identify the required sufficient configuration or combination of conditions (Ragin & Sonnett, 2005).

A sufficient condition or configuration, ensures the existence of the outcome (i.e., if $X = 1$ then $Y = 1$), but the outcome can also exist without the sufficient condition (i.e., if $X = 0$, Y can still be 1). The identification of the lowest model was done by a reduction process dedicated to remove irrelevant conditions from the configurations in order to achieve purity (Marx & Dusa, 2011; (Cronqvist & Berg-Schlosser, 2009).

Cases

The following cases are analysed:

Iraq 2008-2013 for Christians,

Syria 2008-2013 for Christians,

Iraq 2014-2018 for Christians,

Syria 2014-2018 for Christians,

Iraq 2008-2013 for Yazidis,

Syria 2008-2013 for Yazidis,

Iraq 2014-2018 for Yazidis,

Syria 2014-2018 for Yazidis.

Outcome and values

The dependent variable or outcome in our Crisp-set QCA analysis is the evolution of political rights for religious minority groups in Syria as well as Iraq. In the research, crisp-set technique is applied with dichotomous value for the interest outcome; herein, 1= increase in the political rights violation/ 0 is assigned to no increase in the violation of political rights.

Conditions and values

The experimental independent variables or conditions refer to internal, regional, and international factors. These are: the evolution of the level of government involvement, the evolution of the behaviour of social religious majority, the evolution of the behaviour of terrorist groups, and the evolution of external powers influence upon the political rights

observed. These conditions are also assigned with the dichotomous value using the crisp-set technique.

The level of government involvement refers to the participation of the government in managing peace and equality. The measurement of its evolution is based on the observation of the number of plans and regulations for the management of violent activities devised by the government in a year. The dichotomous value for this condition is 1= positive evolution/ 0= absence of positive evolution.

The behaviour of the social, religious majority refers to the attitude of the religious majority towards sharing rights and benefits with minorities. We can observe this behaviour by means of a proxy indicator. This is the number of riots for preserving the rights of the minority groups in the area within a specific time period. The main reason behind using a proxy indicator for this study is it provides a rigid platform to overcome data gaps associated with this unit. This way, the measurement of its evolution is based on the riots and conferences organised to provide equal rights to minorities. The dichotomous value for this condition is 1= positive evolution/ 0= absence of positive evolution.

The behaviour of terrorist groups refers to violence and threat to citizens' security, international stability and prosperity. The behaviour of this condition is assessed against the data findings of prevalent literature sources such as books, journal articles and databases like the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Then, the measurement of its evolution is based on the observation of violations and aggressive activities. The dichotomous value for this condition is 1= positive evolution/ 0= absence of positive evolution.

External power is understood as the external authorities that can have direct influence over the social balance and can shift the power balance in the country. In order to make the measurement of the external powers' influence upon the political rights easier, the phenomenon is categorised into three major categories, namely militant operations, the

dominance of external countries and high economic dependence on foreign countries (Lockyer, 2008). We observe militant operations on the basis of the number of wars or political disputes with foreign countries. The dominance of an external country is measured by economic support or debt taken from the country. Finally, economic dependence is considered through the indicator by GDP growth of the country per year. Then, we measure the evolution of this condition by the observation of the role of foreign countries and their impact on the economy. The dichotomous value for this condition is 1= increase of external power/ 0= absence of increase.

1.4 STRUCTURE

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 is introductory, which includes the statement of the problem and justification, research questions and hypotheses, methodology, and the structure of the study. Further, chapter 2 approaches the concepts minority, religious minority and political rights of religious minorities with special references to Iraq and Syria. Chapter 3 provides the theoretical framework that justifies the proposal of the descriptive, comparative, and explanatory hypothesis, wherein Chapter 4 tests the descriptive and comparative hypothesis. Chapter 5 tests the explanatory hypothesis by examining the impact of internal and external factors on the evolution of political rights of Christians and Yazidis In Syria and Iraq. The last chapter presents the discussion of results and concluding remarks in light of the research aim.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUALIZATION

The objective of this chapter is two-fold. First of all, it aims at offering a comprehensive vision of the variety of existing concepts on the idea of minorities based on definitions with different approaches (legal, political and social) as well as different levels of intention and extension. Second, it pursues the operative concept of a religious minority with which we will work in our empirical study.

This clarification is much needed because the term minority has evolved over time. The minority was defined for the first time at the end of the nineteenth century in European countries (Wirth, 1945: 347-372), to refer to a group of people who share a religious identity. Later, it was referred to as a modern term that expanded its scope by including other differential dimensions apart from the religious one as well as political connotations of inferiority, weakness and subordination (Master class, 2012). In this regard, minority means a group of citizens of a country that constitutes a small percentage of the population and does not participate in power, differentiated from the rest of the society by religious, linguistic or ethnic characteristics. There may be a sense of loneliness for this minority within society, which leads them to claim their rights and legal equality with the majority (Mihandoost, 2016). Patrick Thornberry, the author of "International Law and Minorities Rights", defines the minority as a non-government group and its members as a smaller group than the rest of the society (Erickson, 2019). Members of this minority have religious, ethnic, or linguistic characteristics that may be distinct from the rest of the society, as well as in their unity of interests and cooperation, in order to preserve their culture, customs, and traditions as a minority. (Ghari Seyed Fatemi, 2003). In addition to this, according to social theory, the distinctive characteristic of minorities is the "object of collective discrimination" (Wirth, 1945). In this line, Wilkinson (2000) suggested that the minority is "a sociological

euphemism for oppressed groups" (Wilkinson, 2000). Since then, this type of conceptualization strategy has predominated in the legal, social and political approaches to the subject matter. This study further focuses on adding to the gravity of the political rights of religious members in Iraq and Syria. Different perspectives from pieces of literature are taken into consideration during the course of this study.

What is 'state of the art', particularly in the study of minorities in the Arab world? Minority literature in the Arab region often refers to religious and ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities are groups that define themselves and are known by others through their genetic characteristics. These traits and characteristics are imperative traits, meaning that they are born with the individual, such as facial features, skin colour and hair type, which are derived from a specific race (Wirth, 1945). However, these characteristics can be abandoned with time; for instance, hair colour can be changed in accordance with the choice of an individual. In addition to that, new languages can be learnt, and skin colour can change as well according to the *h abitat*. Thus, according to this definition, religious minorities can be regarded as a subset of ethnic minorities (Ghanea, 2004:705-729). What minorities' particularities are especially relevant? Some minorities may differ from the majority at the level of language and race, but this difference is not as important as the religious difference in the communities in which they live (Wilkinson, 2000). Arab societies, like other societies in the world, have criteria for social classification. The most important criterion of these is religion at the social, political and legal levels. This classification according to religion is rooted in the history of these countries. In that a certain religion was adopted for the state (the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius in 380 CE, promulgated a law stipulating that the official religion of the Roman Empire was Catholic Christianity). Since then, religious diversity has been subject to state control and laws to consider those other Christian denominations that were persecuted because they were declared by the Byzantine State. Now we see many countries in the Arab

region have established detailed rules in laws and constitutions to support religious diversity, but not necessarily equally so that the Arab constitutions clearly show their religious nature. But most laws and rights are no more than ink on paper in countries that are considered dictatorships (Ghanea, 2004:705-729).

The critical moments surrounding the lack of government involvement can also be identified by the evidence of Maze (2011) which states that the Christian religious groups that form 10 to 12% of the total population of the Egyptian population are treated as minority groups in the totalitarian dictatorship Egyptian regions (Maze, 2011). Furthermore, another critical moment regarding the lack of government involvement is highlighted by the study of Moore (2011) which helps in reflecting that the government of the United States (US) has refrained from supporting the minority religious groups as the Muslim individuals in the US are considered as terrorists and they are vulnerable to the physical assaults and threats such as bombing (Moore, 2011). Hence, it can be interpreted from the above-discussed evidence that the wrong perceptions about the minority populace can lead to a partial type of governmental participation and involvement with the majority groups. This leads towards generating problems for the deprived religious sentiments and personal rights of the individuals that are a part of the minority groups within a country. The above interpretation is also helpful in grounding a substantial base for the testing of the explanatory research hypothesis as it assists in analysing that the personal rights of the individuals are hampered whenever the government involvement is identified to proceed in a partial manner and where the support is shown only to the religious sentiments of the majority group of individuals. It is also examined that apart from hurting the religious ideologies of the minority groups, the biased government involvement also leads to an increased degree of threats surrounding personal assault and the use of explosives.

Further, it is analysed that the low involvement of the government has imposed a serious impact on the political rights of the religious minority communities in the countries like Iran. The evidence of El-Issawi (2011), helps in affirming that there is a prevalence of inequalities among the minority populace of Iran as approximately 75% of the political prisoners that are captivated by the government of Iran belong to the religious minority groups (El-Issawi, 2011).

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF MINORITY

Legal dimension can be defined as formal rules which establish an outline for organizational governance, national conduct, along with methods associated with the establishment of rules/laws/policy and potential courses of action for enforcement of the same. Equality and non-discrimination: the preamble to the 1981 Universal Declaration of Human Rights refers to the "inherent dignity" of all individuals in the world as "their equal and inalienable rights", which demonstrates the importance of equality in the political rights of religious minorities as a fundamental principle of humanity (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). It further leads to a specific understanding of equality, coupled with freedom, always because it leads to respect for human dignity; otherwise, it is misunderstood and confusing, as it may confuse the concept of equality with uniformity or "sameness", and this misunderstanding sometimes occurs (Farrior, 2017). Certainly, such misconceptions can lead to harsh consequences for religious minorities, such as policies of forced assimilation. However, political rights entail respect and equal freedom of all individuals and freedom of expression of their various religious convictions and the practise of their religious rites. This equality results in more diverse and pluralistic societies at the level of religion and belief. This equality essentially requires efforts to eliminate discrimination, including the elimination of discrimination based on religion and belief. Article 2 (1) of the Declaration states that "no one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of

persons, or persons on the grounds of religion or other belief. Article 3 clearly states that "discrimination between human beings on the grounds of religion or belief, constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations [...]" (Bielefeldt, 2018).

2.1.1 Concept and definition of the minority from a legal perspective

Studying the legal approach to the concept of religious minority rights entails facing several difficulties. The first one is that both international law and national law often avoid offering a definition of the term minority. The second is that when such a definition is offered, the setting of the criteria that give it content and delimitation is debatable. The third dilemma is how to isolate the religious factor from other types of factors that particularize the identity of the minority group. Finally, the confusion on the concept of religion and other types of concepts that allude to a belief system that guide the way of life represents an added problem. Therefore, specifying what are the political rights of religious minorities from the legal point of view is the last of the conceptual problems of our work. Addressing it implies having to solve other definition problems beforehand.

The definition of a minority can be derived from considerations of international law and the national law of states, both of which feed on international perceptions (Gilbert, 1996: 160). Moreover, Francesco, 1991, stated that when examining international instruments and the commentators, it is possible to realize that they avoided the definition of the term minorities in any way, where necessary.

It can further be observed that there is also no definition of minorities in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the 1992 UN resolution and declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (Assembly, 1992). Moreover, in the Council of Europe's 1995 framework convention for the protection of national minorities, often, there is no definition in the

declarations, but what raises the question is the absence of definitions in a legal instrument, such as the framework convention and this leads to a logical question about whom the convention applies to. When concepts are ambiguous, rights can't be granted on a vague basis, as indicated by the Bulgarian representative to the Human Rights Commission, where he pointed out that ambiguity in the 1992 declaration could lead to different interpretations in different states (Gilbert, 1997: 97-134).

The World Health Organization (WHO) establishes an outline for the definition of minority and adds to the gravity on how it has become a definitive issue. While the minority seeks to assert its identity, it must also have satisfied objective criteria. However, it is not acceptable to determine who are the qualified minorities and who are the opposite. Some countries claim that there is no discrimination based on race or religion and, on this basis, they do not have minorities, which is a false claim. The existence of an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority does not depend on a decision taken by the minority state, established by objective criteria (UN Human Rights Committee, 1994).

Some have argued that there should be at least a description of these characteristics, which are described by minorities; these are usually threatened with persecution. In addition, the treaty of Lausanne, in Articles 38.3, 40 and 41, guaranteed rights to religious minorities in Turkey, but to no other type (Hunault, 2009). Religious minorities are still in close contact with international law because of the long history of these minorities and the ensuing persecution, extermination, and oppression. But there is a problem that religious minorities, other than the cultural, linguistic, ethnic and even national minorities, suffer from.

There are other problems surrounding the religious minorities in some cases. There are multi-faceted religious minorities, who can be classified according to either religion or nationality. This diversity of characteristics of religious minorities produces some problems that generate conflicts associated with equity in society due to differences in cultural beliefs

(Crampton, 2002). On the other hand, the attributes associated with minorities lead to classification based on a simple analysis of the position of minorities within the state. Minorities recognized in international law have also been instrumental in bringing these issues and establishing relevant laws accordingly.

Another problem facing minorities concerns those who classify minority groups as categorizing the minority group. In the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, special protection was given to the Jews because of the events that occurred. However, Georges Benjamin Clemenceau (Prime Minister of France during the periods 1906-1909 and 1917-1920) said that 'the religious guarantees should not create any obstacle to the unity of Poland, they do not institute any recognition of the Jews as a separate political community within the Polish state' (Capotorti, 1995).

The existence of a minority in a state is just a fact and not dependent on the law. According to the WWI Minorities Treaties, the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) addressed the Greco Bulgarian Communities Case. [A community] is a group of persons living in a given country or locality having a race, religion, language and tradition of their own and united by this identity of race, religion, language and tradition in a sentiment of solidarity, with a view to preserving their traditions, maintaining their form of worship, ensuring the instruction and upbringing of their children in accordance with the spirit and tradition of their race and rendering mutual assistance to each other (Eligür, 2019). Discussions were held at the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities that resulted in recommendations that groups be just non-dominant groups, loyal to the State which seeks to stabilize ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristics, markedly different from those of the rest of the population should be accorded minority status. In accordance with the definition previously submitted and adopted 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 (United Nations Human Rights Office of the Commissioner, 2010).

Although there is no specific definition for minority, it majorly is defined as the race or culture which does not dominate the society (Thornberry, 1994). In general, the UN General Assembly adopted in 1992 the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Religious, National, Ethnic or Linguistic Minorities. The first paragraph of this Declaration states: "States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity" (UN, 2010). The concept of minorities in accordance with the Permanent Court of International Justice: on the 31st of July 1930, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion on the definition of minorities after the exodus of Greek-Bulgarian groups. This was in response to a question of the League of Nations on the 16th of January 1930, which explained the groups facilitated by the reciprocal migration between Bulgaria and the Greeks, which were mentioned in the text of Articles 6 and 7 of the agreement between the two countries (Tzouvala, 2018). In accordance with Articles 8 and 9 of the Treaty, it was decided to establish a mixed committee of members appointed by the two countries and others selected from other countries. With the aim of facilitating migration between the two countries, the opinion of the ICJ Advisory Committee on the groups mentioned in this Convention is: A group of persons residing in a particular region or region with their own ethnic origin, religion, language or customs and traditions and who have a sense of solidarity and cohesion in order to protect their own

character and desire to maintain their traditions, customs and beliefs and to ensure that their children and their education according to their traditions and ethnic continuation, and work among them to support each other. Here, in the International Court of Justice's definition of the term Greek-Bulgarian groups, it has taken two criteria in determining the minority, an objective criterion, a standard and a personal standard (Alam, 1994).

Definition of minorities according to the Sub-Committee on minority and racial discrimination: The United Nations Commission on Human Rights held its first session during the period January the 27th to February the 10th, 1947, and decided to establish a sub-committee to prevent discrimination and protect minorities and recommended the adoption by the Commission on Human Rights of this subject and the preparation of a draft resolution on the definition of minorities in view of the importance of the topic (Waechter, 2019). The Committee adopted a draft resolution containing several elements to be considered. Definition of minorities: the term "minority" includes groups that are not dominant within the population, possess certain religious, ethnic, linguistic and religious traditions and distinct characteristics, and have a desire to preserve them. When the term minority refers to groups that are less numerous than the majority, it is preferable for these groups to be composed of relatively large numbers so that they can maintain their distinct characteristics (Aldeeb, 1996).

The above commission appointed Mr. Francesco Capotorti, one of its members, to draw up a definition. In 1977, Capotorti concluded that the minority is a group that is less in number than the rest of the population of the state and in an uncontrolled situation. Its members as nationals in this state have ethnic or religious characteristics of language that differ from the characteristics of the rest of the population and show a sense of interconnectedness, albeit implicitly, in order to preserve their culture, traditions, religion or language. The Sub-Committee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

made several attempts to arrive at a precise definition of the term minority, which made it more than one element in defining it and the most important elements that must be provided in a group so that it is considered a minority (Merino & Tileagă, 2011). The minority is a non-dominant group because dominant groups are not covered by the term minority. The minority has elements or characteristics that distinctly distinguish them from the rest of the people. The minority should include a reasonable number of individuals through which it can maintain its traditions. The draft additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights on National Minorities and Members was proposed by the Committee on Legal and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (APCE). Law scholars have also made many attempts to define the minority (Thornberry & Estébanez, 2004).

The minority is a group of individuals in the state who are characterized as residing in the territory of this state and are linked to close and permanent relations of this country through birth, nationality or permanent residence, and they obviously constitute a smaller number of the population of the state or in part of this state, they have religious, or linguistic differences with the rest of the population, and possess a cultural identity of their own (Baldwin, 2007). Therefore, some governments are demanding to identify who are the minorities. This request to identify minorities was rejected by the United Nations Human Rights Committee, as the Committee monitors the implementation of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (A report by the UN Human Rights Committee, 1994).

From the above discussion, it is inferred that the researchers have a vision on the definition of the minority. They conclude that the definition of the term "minority" is a group of people who are less than the majority. They have their characteristics, such as religion,

language, race, nationality, and ethnicity, which are interrelated and they seek to preserve these characteristics.

There are definitions related to minorities on the basis of religion that is a belief followed by a person who has an identity that can be classified based on this religion and determines the individual's way of life. International conventions and international law prohibit an individual from discriminating based on religion or belief, as stated in the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Moreover, on the basis of creed, is interpreted to mean "religious creed" or "religion". It is defined as a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship. A belief in a God or gods, or a single supreme being or deity is not a pre-requisite. Religion is broadly accepted by the commission to include, for example, non-deistic bodies of faith, such as the spiritual faiths/practices of aboriginal cultures, as well as bona fide newer religions (assessed on a case by case basis) (A report by the Ontario Human Rights Commission).

The European Court of Human Rights ("European Court") interpreted Article (9) of the European Convention on Human Rights ("ECHR"). According to the interpretation, religion extends to Druidism, pacifism, veganism, the Divine Light Centrum and the Church of Scientology. According to the Court's interpretation, Article (9) is a safe haven and an important passage for atheists, different faiths and sceptics. Religion or belief may be an individual's opinion or constitutional right of choice, and these views must be at a specific level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance (A report by the European Court of Human Rights, 1982). On the other hand, discrimination is defined as the illegal and deliberate denial of equality in all forms of equality with others. This discrimination is less favourable than the treatment of others. Formal equality is to be treated by similar individuals alike. Any legal legislation on religious minorities must include the principle of equal treatment with others (*Seide v Gillette Industries Ltd*, 1980). In addition to this, everyone has

the right to practise religion and has the right to manifest what he believes and believes in. He has this right in paragraph (1) of article (18) of the ICCPR (Harris, 2014).

When international law is observed, it is clear that it protects minorities through the principles of equality and non-discrimination, but international law, international documents, international conventions and treaties lack a legally binding document guaranteeing the rights of minorities in a comprehensive and detailed manner. International law contains some paragraphs referring to minorities, which we will explain later (Anwar, 2004). It can be clearly observed that minorities enjoy little and limited rights in international law that may not exceed the right to life, because international law prohibits genocide and the right of identity, which is set forth in article (27) of civil-political law (Danchin, 2008).

Based on the above discussion, it is evaluated that the regional legal systems and the legislations of every country have provisions of preventing discrimination and provide equal rights to the minority. However, the international bodies feel that these regulations are unable to protect human rights of minorities especially in the case of civil war and due to this reason they drafted international regulations that prohibited the discrimination from minority.

2.1.2 Concept and definition of minorities from a Political perspective

The legal considerations are considered to be the predetermined rules and regulations undertaken by governments all over the globe. While reflecting upon the political implications of this study, the focus is laid upon stability and global alliances. There are two criteria for defining religious minorities in the Middle East. The first criterion concerns rights, equality, political participation, and social integration. These religious minorities are often absent from political power, but there is one exception: the Alawite minority that controls power in Syria, which governs the country. The second criterion is the apparent religious differentiation of a group of citizens, which distinguishes them from the rest of society. The term "religious minorities" was used in the Arab region to refer to non-Muslims

(Hunault, 2009). On the other hand, there is a general perception among people that minorities are weak groups, inferior, and subordinate; some even call minorities a mere sociological expression of oppressed groups. The international community has not given clear and specific rights to minorities in general or religious minorities in particular. The members of the minority have an awareness that motivates them to confront others as a result of political, social and economic discrimination against them. There has been a lot of emphasis on the term "minorities" in the recent period, especially when dealing with the issue of political rights and democracy (Eligür, 2019).

From a political perspective, minority is a political term used in the international custom intended for a group or groups of nationals of a country belonging to a race, language or religion other than the majority. While considering the legal perspective, it can be defined as predetermined rules and regulations associated with minorities all over the globe. Typically, minority demands include equality in the majority of civil and political rights, meanwhile recognizing the right of diversity and discrimination in belief and values. Maisel (2016) affirms that in order for the minority leaderships to play a critical role in leading the minority members, it usually determines some major tasks to do so. One of them is explaining to the minority members about their historical roots, advantages and justifications in order to help them in answering the question: "Who are we as a minority?" Another one is consolidating the elements of the minority and establishing links between them. The third is adopting cultural symbols that express the privacy of the minority.

The minority is defined politically as a group that shares one or more cultural or natural elements or a number of interests that make them distinguished to confront others, as a result of the political, social and economic discrimination against them, which leads them to solidarity in the face of challenges. There are criteria for minorities, the most important ones are the criteria of rights, equality and political participation, which guarantees citizenship in

their communities. This applies on all minorities but does not apply on the ruling Alawite minority in Syria (Sinclair & Kajjo, 2011).

The apparent criterion is the numerical standard of a group of individuals, which is the numerical minority, whether religious, linguistic or ethnic. Accordingly, there is a difficulty in adopting a general definition of minorities that satisfies and expresses all minorities. However, the international community has set a number of criteria for the minorities around the world, including the number of minorities, and non-domination. The criterion of a number of minorities depends on the minority being less than the rest of the citizens who make up the majority (Thornberry & Estébanez, 2004). On the other hand, there are cases where there is no majority. Minorities are numerically close to forming a society. However, as per the criteria of non-domination, the minority is not in control of power; it needs protection to guarantee its rights. Some minorities are dominant in power and, in this case, need not be protected. On the contrary, some minorities violate international laws, deprive freedoms and persecute the majority. As per characteristics of minorities, some characteristics and attributes must be available in the community to be called a minority. These characteristics are privacy, qualitative, psychological, oppression, and non-domination (Merino & Tileagă, 2011).

The psychological element is the need to have a genuine desire to belong, and for the prevailing majority to treat the minority as one unit. The cohesion and instinctive generation does not continue automatically but requires intensive communication networks that urge interaction among its members (Sinclair & Kajjo, 2011). What is more important in our time is the unity of the political movements that express the aspirations of the one people and avoid competing with the leaders, who are working to protect their names, and to represent them as legitimate leaders for their people, but they are really beating the national

arbitrariness at the core because their success is often at the expense of that issue (Maisel, 2016).

As for the element of repression, it can be further determined in broader perspective, every abnormal circumstance passed by the minority prevented it from becoming a large national number, and despite the importance of this element, it is not inevitable to practise repression against this group, and maybe other circumstances have prevented the minority from becoming a national number, such as the desire to control birth, or to work to improve the economic situation in a way that hinders the multiplicity of children, or the feeling of instability and the desire to travel. This may be stemmed from the belief of the members of the minority that they will never be better than second-class citizens. The lack of hegemony is caused by the fact that the customary group is a minority, and when it is not dominant and weak, it needs protection. Some assert that dominant minorities will grossly violate the principles of equality (Yaqo: 2010, p. 144). It is an important issue facing the international human rights system, considering that it is one of the manifestations of the free world represented by the liberal western world that cares about the rights of the individual. The concern of the individual may lead to negligence of minorities and groups (Glazer, 1997).

On the basis of the above discussion it is evaluated that the concept of political rights and religious freedom for religious minorities has been linked to the cause of religious minorities. For the members of the minority have an explicit and clear attitude. In this element, the main emphasis is provided on the need for cohesion among the members of the group in order to have the power to express their demands.

2.1.3 Concept and definition of minorities from a social perspective

Political perspective associated with minority can be defined as the associations and global relations along with government stability and its direct proportionality with the real-time issue. Since ancient times there have been wars and conflicts of previous civilizations

and countries, because of different interests, that left behind destruction and economic and social backwardness. Minorities are an important cause in the outbreak of several conflicts and wars, and are more affected by them. For thousands of years, this has led to the adoption of norms and laws to protect human rights during war, whether war within the state or with other countries. The heavenly religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) had an impact on the spread of peace, the organization of social life and the protection of human rights, minorities and other things that these religions claim (Kinloch: 1979). Religions began to call for peace and tolerance, but soon the divisions and differences between the religions began to divide into sects because of differences, sparking crisis and conflict. There is no definition of the minority, but there is a definition that the minority is "a group of citizens in a country whose members are bound by religious, ethnic, or linguistic ties that distinguish them". The new British Encyclopaedia provides a definition of minorities: a minority is a culturally, ethnically or ethnically distinct group living in a larger society when used to describe such a group, carrying a network of political and social influences (MacHenry: 1994, P. 196).

The majority uses some means to prevent the minority from integrating into society, keeping them away from power and from effective economic participation, as well as facing rejection and persecution. The majority has begun to integrate the minority, and this is often in democratic countries that accept the other even if the minority is small and ineffective. Therefore, there are three options for the minority within one of the societies, first: loyalty to the majority and integration into them in the event that they are compatible with their aspirations and goals and the preservation of their rights (MacHenry: 1994, P. 196). Secondly, the minority feels unable to coexist with this majority and cannot preserve their rights and go to demand separation according to law. From a social point of view, Kinloch argues that the minority is different from the majority according to assumptions related to

physical, cultural, economic or behavioural criteria and as a result is treated and controlled negatively (Kinloch: 1979, p.p. 5-12).

There are social factors that result from this relationship (minorities). The historical factor can be defined as factors that go to the establishment and emergence of minorities and their origins and evolution throughout history. The institutional factor relates to political, economic and social institutions governing relations between minorities. Minorities are defined differently according to the different communities to which they belong. Some contemporary scholars say there is no need to use the term "minority" because of the association of this term with the League of Nations system. The international situation has changed so the term minority should be changed. In contrast, there are other contemporary scholars who see the opposite, where there is a smaller social class than the dominant majority, "minority" is the right term. While there is a difference in the appropriate term for minorities, there are suggested terms of use such as "communities", "social groups", and recently "peoples" (Menkes, 1992, p.p. 28-34).

Religious minorities are the most prominent minorities in the world, because of the large size and the many problems and violations against them. Religion is a sensitive human need, and wars of religion have been there for many centuries. Some countries adopt a major religion, as well as the existence of other religions as minorities, which are often oppressed or being tightened, or are completely banned. Minorities within the state are considered to be part of the citizenry. They are traditional and historical, but they are smaller than the rest of the population, and often they are not in control of the State, which has characteristics based on gender, race, religion, language or culture, or a combination of these elements (Cf. HRC General Comment).

The difference in historical, economic and social conditions, in addition to the difference in characteristics of minorities, makes the definition of minorities differ according

to the criterion defined by minorities. Sociology introduces a definition of the term minority on the basis of a particular characteristic, which is usually characterized by belonging to minorities, who are united by some common characteristics and a sense of belonging to one side unites them. Where they can combine a common race, religious creed, habits, language, or combination of these traits (Fox, 2003). Another definition for the minority is: a group that is united because of physical or cultural characteristics that distinguish them from others in the society in which they live in, and where they may be subjected to unequal treatment, which makes them feel the collective excellence. The assumption of having a minority in this society means that there is a group in return, with a larger social status and more privileges (Linton: 1945, p. 347).

The research on religious minorities is not limited to definitions of religion and the scope of powers of the legal entity of these minorities in the domestic laws within the state, but beyond to international laws. Religious practices and rituals and their independent identity confirm their existence, but it is important to prove their legal existence and to recognize their status without limiting their religious rights only. For studying the rights of religious minorities, there is a multifaceted analysis in which some minorities do not care about their rights but are interested in their religious identity and how to preserve it, unlike other religious minorities who seek broader rights and more because they consider themselves national and ethnic minorities (Ferris, 2008). Religious minorities suffer at the social level because there are no accurate statistics for religious minorities. There are no periodic statistics, so their numbers cannot be accurately defined, and therefore, their political status cannot be given in proportion to their real enemies (Toole, 2013).

There is another social concept for minorities: sociologists define minorities as a group of people who live in a larger environment and differ from the larger surrounding by their origin, language, religion or sex. At the same time, they feel different and separated

from this larger surrounding, this feeling depends on the extent to which rights and duties are equal among members of society (Scott, 2009). Finally, after reviewing many of the definitions given to this term, we propose the following simplified definition: "The minority is a group in a particular society that is homogeneous among themselves in one or more religious, linguistic, cultural or national elements, which differs from the majority of the members of the society and whose members are characterized by the desire to live together, however, they have a desire to preserve their cultural and religious traditions. This part of the community is small in number compared to the rest of the population of the society" (Linton: 1945).

Charles Wagley and Harris (1964) noted a number of characteristics for minorities, including they are a social group whose members suffer from discrimination and persecution by another social group that dominates and possesses the power. The minority has cultural or physical characteristics that distinguish it from the rest of society. Minorities are a social group of which the members are characterized that they have a unified awareness among themselves (Wagley & Harris, 1964). The members of the minority have a social affinity among themselves that stems from a common feeling. Minority membership is not generally voluntary. The members of the minority get married within their community optionally or compulsory which is called endogamy, where individuals encourage some of them to marry among themselves to preserve their unique cultural heritage (Vander Zanden: 1986, p. 190). However, the term "minority" is used in social sciences to denote groups of lesser social power, so the term minority usually comes in addition to advocating civil rights and collective rights (Barzilai, 2010).

On the basis of the above discussion it is evaluated that the term "minority" refers to a group of people who differ from the social majority. This majority occupies most of the positions in social power in a society and is regulated by law. This characterization makes use

of the term "social group" rather than "minority group". Discrimination may come in the form of one or more characteristics characterized by the individual and can be observed such as religion, ethnicity and language.

2.2 The Rights of Religious Minorities

There is a concept among the international community that religious minorities in all parts of the world must be protected to maintain international peace and security, preserve religious and cultural heritage, the world's mosaic and ancient beliefs, as well as maintain the rights and freedoms of all peoples around the world. The issue of political rights has great importance and focus by international organizations and the various countries of the world, so as to achieve democracy and progress of countries, so most governments and constitutions call for the protection of political rights, including the rights of minorities (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007). The 'minorities' issue is considered one of the most important in human rights issues due to the fact that the rights of minorities and the concept of democracy and political stability are well connected, which affects international stability in general. The constitution defines the rights of minorities and majority rights and regulates the relationship between them. In some cases, the interests of some dictatorships, superpowers, and international organizations are required to ignite conflicts within the state to achieve political goals. Therefore, minorities may turn to the International Court of Justice and the United Nations to ensure their rights are guaranteed under international humanitarian law and some international conventions on minorities. Conflicts have emerged in most of the Arab Mashreq countries where religious minorities have existed for a long time, as illustrated by the history of the Arab world. Arab governments have failed to protect minorities. In fact, these governments have violated human rights in advance for all categories of the population, whether minority or majority and the Arab governments are increasingly violating minorities if they demand their rights, especially the right of separation (Beinin et al., 2016).

In this case, Arab governments use repression and power to dissolve the minority within society and do not allow them separatism. Governments use national names to suppress the rights of minorities under national pretexts such as national unity and against partition. Arab constitutions often contain clauses calling for human rights, democracy, and the protection of religious rights, but they are mere ink on paper and without implementation in practice. The 1951 Refugee Convention recognizes persecution on the basis of six characteristics (race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, membership in a social group or political opinion), or the direct cause of being involved in a particular religious minority or political persecution because of the government's opposition to the defence of a religious minority (Kalin, 2008). There has been repression of religious minorities for a long time. There are three ways to eliminate this repression: agreements of political settlements, constitutional guarantees, and international conventions. Political agreements and settlements: All religious minorities can express themselves and emphasize mutual respect. Constitutional guarantees: They allow for laws that guarantee religious freedom and the freedom to practise religious rites. As for international conventions: The international conventions clearly provide for legal rules that oblige all members of the international community to protect basic human rights, the most important is freedom of belief and religion and protection of minorities in general (Mahmud, 1995).

At the international level, the United Nations has adopted human rights rules, which are specific and binding to the countries of the world and have been willingly accepted by the Arab Mashreq countries to abide by these international laws which call for the preservation of the rights of religious minorities. Internationally agreed human rights standards regarding religious minorities are primarily encapsulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on the 10th December 1948. Reprinted at 43 AM. J. INT'L L. Supp. 127 (1949); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted 16 Dec. 1966, G.A. Res. 2200

(XXI), U.N. GAOR, 21st Sess., Supp. No. 16, art. 18, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 999 U.N.T.S. 171 (entered into force 23 Mar. 1976); Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, adopted 25 Nov. 1981, G.A. Res. 36/55, U.N. GAOR, 36th Sess., Supp. No. 51, U.N. Doc. A/36/51 (1981) (Lillich, 1990). And to support every citizen to embrace the religion that he or she wants and to practise the rituals of that religion freely (Barbieri, 1999). These international legal norms and agreed standards have an impact on religious minorities as a society and as individuals within society. In reading the UN reports on religious minorities, it is possible to see that there are real problems facing these religious minorities, whether civil and political rights or economic, cultural, and social rights, and that these minorities face the danger of the right to live, which is the simplest human right (Amor, 2000).

As per the above discussion it is inferred that the religious minorities were subjected to injustice, murder, persecution, and they fled as refugees internally displaced or as refugees in other countries in the world, and these countries are seeking to gain their loyalty and to have control over their actions. The religious minorities in the Arab region have called for the establishment of a democratic civil state, to guarantee full guarantees for the realization of the rights of minorities guaranteed by international law and by most civil constitutions that believe in democracy.

2.2.1 Challenges of the religious minorities practising their rights effectively

Religious minorities face some obstacles and challenges in practising their rights effectively, due to a number of factors that have had an impact on the religious minorities in particular and on the Arab people in general. The most important of these factors are the oppression and persecution of Arab dictator governments against religious minorities, the killing and displacement of religious minorities by terrorist organizations, like al-Qaeda and ISIS and the exploitation of the Great World Countries, some of the regional states and some

international organizations to the religious minorities issue in order to achieve political interests. Moreover, the social pressures in some areas of the Arab East, such as: some cases of racism and discrimination (Ferris, 2008). Therefore, religious minorities have experienced various forms of suffering such as: non-recognition, discrimination, exploitation, prosecution, abduction, captivity, displacement and murder.

There have been many difficulties such as the displacement facing minorities, for instance, the displacement of Christians in Iraq, which began during the period of violent instability that followed the US occupation of Iraq in 2003, and it became a surge in 2008. Escalating violence levels compelled many Christian families to emigrate, to the point where the continued existence of Iraq's Christian minority community may now be in jeopardy. Out of 1.4 million Christians living in the country prior to 2003, today only 250-300 thousand remain, and this number continues to decrease on a daily basis. Dr. Ameer Jaje al-Dominiki, Director of the Baghdad Academy of Human Sciences, estimates that 1,015 Christian families emigrate from Iraq every day (Salloum, 2017, 47). When ISIS invaded Mosul, the Nineveh Plain and other cities in Iraq and Syria in June 2014, many religious minorities left their homes, abandoning the areas they had shared with other ethnic and religious groups for hundreds of years. Since their departure, religious minorities' property and religious sites have become targets for attacks and looting. This fear includes both countries and is a product of violations affecting the safety of individuals and the exposure of religious minorities property to illegal seizure (Smith, Brook-Holland & Page, 2014).

For the last few years, there has been no interest in the issue of religious minorities except for some researches on Christians and Jews. With the rise of the Iranian Islamic revolution in the 1980s, attention was paid to religious minorities, and some researches emerged in the 1990s. In the year 2000, religious minorities in the Middle East moved on to become an important subject for researchers because it was closely linked to the war on terror

and global changes that took place in the world, including the US occupation of Iraq in 2003 (Nga Longva & Sofie Roald, 2011). On the other hand, Iraq is a multi-religious country; this occupation has led to the emergence of violence, killing and displacement against religious minorities, so it was the responsibility of the United Nations to create a legal framework to protect minorities from violations of rights, which are violations that had never happened before. Therefore, the United Nations has worked to raise the necessary awareness to clarify the rights of religious minorities and the importance of protecting them, as a duty of the United Nations and all governments of the world. The United Nations has worked to spread the values of tolerance between religions and to legislate certain laws and decrees to guarantee the rights of religious minorities and to formally recognize them to guarantee their rights. This has given attention to the issue of religious minorities (Fox, 2013).

For minorities to enjoy equal political rights, they have to be active participants in the decision-making process, as a precondition, especially where their rights are concerned. Though the right to vote and participate in the political process, including running and holding public offices, is the most influential way to do so, the principle of public participation is a much broader concept. In addition, it entails participation in governmental bodies, the judiciary and other agencies of the criminal justice system, decentralized and local forms of government, consultation mechanisms, as well as through cultural or territorial autonomy arrangements (UNHRC FMI, 2009, paragraph 5).

In most parts of the world, the major cause of marginalization of minorities is discrimination and it is the main impediment to the active participation of minorities. This study discusses the political aspects of discrimination by detailing the experiences of minorities in both countries. Discrimination can take various forms and some segments of minorities are vulnerable to traditional forms of it. In addition to the discrimination, they suffer due to their religion, ethnicity, national origin, or language; they also suffer

discrimination related to gender, age, disability, and other forms (Nga Longva & Sofie Roald, 2011). However, it is important to address discrimination as it is depriving minorities of their right to participate actively in any aspect, whether political, economic, social or cultural, in the society they live in, and they need that to preserve their identity, and ensure their presence. Therefore, it is vital for minorities to fully participate in all aspects of public life - beginning with the Parliament and Government and ending with city and village councils and throughout vital sectors, so as to have effective representation. In this context, effective participation is considered the basis for the realization of all political rights for women and men, who are members of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities (Fox, 2013).

It is through effective participation that people can express their identity and protect it, and it is through participation that minorities can survive, and their dignity is kept intact. The right to active participation means participating in the political decision-making process at the local and national levels. Gay McDougall, an independent expert on minority rights, has noted that the achievement of “adequate representation of persons belonging to minorities in policy and decision-making, by society, is instrumental in breaking the cycle of discrimination and exclusion suffered by members of these groups, as well as their often disproportionate levels of poverty and other impediments to the full enjoyment of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights” (UNHRC FMI, 2009, paragraph 1).

It is evaluated that numbers of minority members are small and that puts them in a clear disadvantaged and discriminatory position. Thus, a minority cannot determine the outcome of decisions in a majority-rule democratic system. For this reason, the representation of minorities in the legislative, administrative, and advisory bodies should somehow be translated into actual participation in the decision-making process.

2.2.2 Minority Rights from a legal perspective

International law experts distinguish between two main categories of rights (civil-political rights, social and economic rights), civil and political rights as 'first-generation rights' because they are the first to be recognized as international laws, individuals and property, the prevention of arbitrary detention and the right to due process and a fair trial and the right to seek redress (Hurd, 2017). The social and economic rights are later called 'second generation rights' and we mention some examples of these rights, such as the right to form a family that has property and work, and access to education and health insurance. Sometimes we see that minorities do not get these rights because of discrimination or absence of law, justice, and equality in some societies so that the whole society does not get the rights, but minorities are the most harmful; all these rights are individual rights. In the 1990s, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe issued minority rights instruments (House, 2014).

Minority rights were also individual in these publications, as much as they were given to persons belonging to minorities and not to minorities as an entity. One of the important rights of minorities is the right to self-determination, which is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, although the United Nations is still reluctant to add extensions and additions to this right beyond the traditional context of decolonization, because the concept of self-determination raises fears of separation. In the context of the rights of minorities, they have the right to define themselves (minorities) instead of being defined by the majority (House, 2014). Moreover, the minority has the right to represent themselves, write their history, culture, and vision in the upbringing of their children and do not relinquish these rights to the majority. Social status resulting in freedom for the components of society: this means that the rights are political and social rights and therefore when the state does not recognize these

rights to minorities, it is a dangerous warning to destabilize the state, but most countries do not face the components of their communities except repression and neglect (Gilbert 2005).

This comprehensive goal of minority rights was also addressed in a more comprehensive manner in the 1992 Minorities Declaration, whose article (1) provides that “States shall protect the existence of the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.” The identity of the individual or group must be determined and, as a result, will result in a very diverse nature that may change over time. The principle of respect for the person's self-understanding is clearer when it comes to the definition of religious identities (Hurd, 2017). The development of these identities is linked to the individual's right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. This right has been accepted and recognized in instruments that have been written in various international forums, Article 18 of the Universal Declaration, Article 18 of the International Covenant and the 1981 Declaration. Religious minorities were the cause of the stimulation of the concerns of other minorities at the regional and international levels. There were attempts by the League of Nations to protect the minorities and then the United Nations, which established mechanisms and standards of human rights (Lindkvist, 2014). After decades of violation of the rights of minorities, religious minorities were not integrated into the concept of minorities. Religious minorities are supposed to have the protection of human rights in view of these minority rights as well as human rights as a category of people. Despite these rights on both sides, religious minorities are far from obtaining these rights. The rights of religious minorities have a legal framework for those working in the field of human rights, especially the rights of religious minorities and other areas that generate different conflicts, and if the governments of the Arab Mashreq countries use these legal frameworks, this will help in the process of building peace and equality (Chapman, 2008).

The situation of members of religious minorities is a weak one and has attracted the attention of the international community to religious minorities in recent years. States, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, the media and all those concerned with the issue of religious minorities have been interested in devising strategies to protect members of religious minorities and to be more effective in the protection of the world. This has been discussed several times in the corridors of the UN General Assembly, the United Nations Human Rights Council and all forums dealing with minorities and their issues (Lindkvist, 2014). There are some societies that have a long history of discrimination and persecution against members of religious minorities. This persecution is multifaceted in terms of motives and situations. This may be persecution by States or non-State actors, and both may participate.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on ‘freedom of religion and belief’ (FORB) position was created in 1986 as a result of the Declaration of eliminating all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion and belief, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1981 (Hurd, 2013). The duration of his task is for three years, same as the other UN rapporteurs; his decision is independent and he is not paid. The task of the rapporteur is to identify obstacles and problems that prevent practising the right of freedom of religion and belief, as well as to make recommendations on how to eliminate the existing obstacles and to avoid any new obstacles in the future. This declaration is the first international legal instrument exclusively devoted to the freedom of religions. To support this declaration, the UNHRC established the position of "Special Rapporteur of Religious Intolerance". In 2000, the title of the position was changed to "Special Rapporteur of Freedom of Religion and Belief (FORB)" to better emphasize the right of freedom of religion and belief, and to protect the beliefs of non-religious people as much as those with religious beliefs (Hurd, 2013). Freedom of religion and belief makes it possible for all individuals to

freely choose their religion and belief. They also have the freedom to maintain their religion, beliefs and identity, as well as the freedom to communicate with others from the same religion within the community, or with those who disagree with them in religion and belief and freedom to hold religious ceremonies for this religious minority alone or to share with others (Lindkvist, 2014).

Other rights of religious minorities include the freedom for their children to receive religious teachings, the freedom to import religious books from abroad and to communicate with others who have their own religious identity, as well as their right not to declare their religious views and not to disclose their convictions. The measures used to promote the identity of a specific religious minority often presuppose respect for the freedom of religion and belief of all its members. Since practising political rights is contingent on individual choice of what they wish, the state cannot guarantee the development of particular religious minorities over the long term. The State is solely responsible for creating conditions for individuals belonging to religious minorities, so that they can manage their religious affairs in order to preserve their religious identity and thus the identity of their religious community and to further develop it (Brownlie: 1992, p.16). It calls upon States to take positive measures to facilitate the long-term development of religious minorities and thus become a binding obligation under international human rights law. According to article 4 (2) of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 1992 Minorities Declaration, "States should take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons related to minorities to express their characteristics, and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national laws and contradictory to international standards". This requires a wide range of activities, such as ensuring support measures for schools and training institutions, facilitating community media, appropriate provisions for a suitable legal status for religious minorities, holding

festivals for religious minorities, and initiatives for inter-faith dialogue combined with outreach programs for religious communities. These measures are important for religious minorities and without them religious minorities may be at risk in the long term and it may lead to grave violations of the freedom of religions and beliefs of individuals (Bielefeldt, 2018).

Protection from the negative aspects of McGarry and O'Leary's taxonomic range of methods of ethnic conflict regulation, is equally important to religious minorities as well as to all other types of minorities. In addition, religious minorities need rights that guarantee equality with the majority, and the ability to maintain their traditions and practise their religious rites freely (Brownlie: 1992, p.16). The legal classification of the total population, whether indigenous peoples or minorities, which in turn are divided into minorities, national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious, leads to a limited view of the rights that the group may need or be entitled to. Freedom of worshippers shall be free to assemble, practise religious rites and personal faith without discrimination. This freedom can extend to the extent that those who belong to the religions have the right to preach their religion. This right appears in legal provisions of the European Court of Human Rights, which shows how to counter this aspect of freedom of religion against "peaceful enjoyment of the personal freedoms". Although there is a fundamental lack of definition of religions, the important issue is the State's recognition of religious minorities (A report by the European Court of Human Rights, 1997).

Recognition is not part of the rights of religious minorities, but without such recognition, the religious minority cannot practise its role or regulate its own affairs with regard to the acquisition of property that enables it to practise its religious role and rites requiring religious institutions, churches and places of worship. Religious minorities, on the other hand, must have educational institutions, institutes, and schools to teach clergy. In the

case of the establishment of these religious educational institutions, there is no explicit need for the State to fund such institutions (Fox, 2013). The State may not play its role towards religious minorities, which is to create conditions for strengthening the identity of the minority, Article 1, 1992 Declaration, supra n. 12. - 'the mere fact that an interpretation of the convention may extend into the sphere of social and economic rights should not be a decisive factor against such an interpretation'. There are those who believe that the rights of minorities are a set of basic rights that are not dispensed with by members of the minority either in their humanitarian capacity or as individuals belonging to a group. The State guarantees recognition, organization, and protection according to the rules of law. The rights of minorities can be divided into two parts: the "public rights" in which the members of the minority are equal in their enjoyment with the rest of the individuals (Nga Longva & Sofie Roald, 2011).

The second section is the so-called "special rights." These rights are of special significance to the minorities. These are the general rights of the minorities' children as individuals. The most important public rights that benefit the minority are the right of life, right to protect private life and right to protect private property. The right to life is one of the most important rights enshrined in international constitutions, conventions and human rights declarations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states that "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person" (Article 3). Most of the constitutions of the world have provisions that affirm this right. For example, the Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, 2005, states: "Everyone has the right to life, security and liberty. No one may be deprived of these rights or restricted except by law". In this context, the recent amendments in the constitution of Syria also aim to provide basic rights and freedom to its citizens.

As per right to protect private life the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights concerns this right if it clarifies the human need for a world in which they

enjoy freedom and freedom from fear, which means ensuring the safety of the individual for his or her own life. In addition, several constitutions referred to this right, including the Constitution of the Republic of Iraq for the year 2005, Article 17 states: “Everyone has the right to personal privacy in a way that does not contradict the rights of others and public morals. Except by judicial decision and in accordance with the law” (Hamoudi, 2013). Moreover as per right to protect private property international human rights law recognizes the right of every individual to own property, or to share with others, and may not be deprived of his property in any arbitrary manner. The Constitution of the Republic of Iraq has affirmed this right in many of its constitutional provisions, including the Constitution of the Republic of Iraq for the year 2005, Article (3) of the Constitution states that “Private property is protected and the owner has the right to use it and exploit it within the limits of the law” (Khan & Kirmanj, 2015).

According to prohibition of torture, punishment and inhumane treatment individuals belonging to minorities seek fair treatment within the society, as a result of the torture committed by many countries against their members, the international charters have taken care of this issue. The constitutions have also paid attention to this issue through the provision in the constitutional documents, including the Constitution of the Republic of Iraq in 2005 Article (37), which took care of all kinds of psychological or physical torture and inhumane treatment (Hamoudi, 2013). In a similar context under Article 53 of the Syrian constitution, the government provides rights to the people as the people cannot be tortured and humiliated. Along with this, only law has the power to decide the punishment for the guilty (Constitute, 2021).

The special rights of children of minorities as groups are the right of minority culture that is an essential and fundamental element in the international protection of the identity and privacy of minorities. Right of education is a widely recognized right, as education is a

prerequisite for the transmission of minority culture among its members and from one generation to another. It is also a means of maintaining and preserving this culture. As per the right to participate in cultural life an individual has the right to participate voluntarily in the cultural life of the community and to contribute to scientific progress. Language is the main tool through which people belonging to minorities express their cultural specificity, ethnic identity or national identity, and the tool of communication between their community and society. Reward opportunities means the equality of Iraqis in terms of the opportunities granted without discrimination and preference and according to the text of Article (16) of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 (Alwan: 2011, P. 482).

The protection of minorities is also found in international law specifically in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (especially Article 27), the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and regional Conventions. For example, first: there is a Working Group on Minorities, created in 1995 as per the Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/31 of 25 July 1995 in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, second: the European Charter for Minority Languages, and third: the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities (Alwan: 2011, P. 482). A team working as a side team was established in the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to be a suitable place to discuss the problems of minorities and to put forth proposals that would strengthen the situation of minorities and protect their rights (A report by the High Commissioner for Human Rights). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with the protection of minority rights. There are several organizations around the world, such as the International Minority Rights Group (MRG), which works with religious, ethnic and linguistic communities, all of which are non-dominant or dominant (Maathai, 2008).

2.2.3 Role of the United Nations in the protection of the minorities' rights

The General Assembly of the United Nations is one of the most important organs of the United Nations as it includes all the member states of the United Nations and has the right to discuss any matter within the scope of other organs, which was enshrined in Chapter IV of the Charter of the United Nations (Drissi, 2013). The United Nations General Assembly in 1948 approved the draft of the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities within the framework of the Commission on Human Rights, which drafted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "Only those non-dominant groups in a population which possess and wish to preserve stable ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristic markedly different from those of the rest of the population" (A report by Yearbook on Human Rights, p. 490).

In the framework of human rights, Article (13) of the Charter states that the UN General Assembly prepares research and makes recommendations to help develop international cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields as well as education and health, and to help implement the human rights, as well as political rights, and fundamental freedoms of all people without discrimination on the basis of language, religion, nationality or anything else, so we often find political rights and human rights issues on the agenda of the UN General Assembly (Costa-Buranelli, 2014). The General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December the 10th, 1948, which did not explicitly affirm the protection of minorities, but only affirmed the principle of equality and non-discrimination, which prompted the General Assembly to the date of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an expression of interest in minorities. The text of the resolution reads as follows:

« L'Assemblée générale: Considérant que les Nations Unies ne peuvent pas demeurer indifférentes au sort des minorités, Considérant qu'il est difficile d'adopter une solution

uniforme de cette question complexe et délicate qui revêt des aspects particuliers dans chaque Etat ou elle se pose, Considérant le caractère universel de la déclaration des droits de l'homme, Décide de ne pas traiter par une disposition spécifique dans le corps de cette déclaration la question des minorités,... » (website of UN).

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1965, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1966, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1989, the United Nations Declaration on Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities in 1992, which is considered to be the closest international document to minorities of its predecessors, bearing in mind that this international instrument is not binding and does not enjoy the binding legal value of states as well as the international safeguards that they are required to implement, with the exception of internal mechanisms subject to the will of states (Altabal: 2010, p. 586). In addition, the General Assembly shall monitor the implementation and observance of international texts and documents through the reports of the supervisory bodies of the General Assembly concerned with human rights submitted through the Economic and Social Council as well as other bodies, which issue recommendations to states or refer the case to the Security Council for measures. Appropriate to the application of human rights. The role of the United Nations General Assembly has not only contributed to the adoption of international texts but has expanded its activities to take many decisions calling for international conferences to address human rights issues (Ounce: 2001, p. 39).

One of the above-mentioned resolutions is resolution 35/33 of 14th November 1980 on the convening of the Second World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, which calls for the Conference, in paragraph (21), to provide special protection to individuals belonging to minorities (A report by United Nations publications,

1990, p.p 207-211). Article (68) of the United Nations Charter authorizes the Economic and Social Council to establish sub-committees and affiliated bodies. In pursuance of this article, the Council established a number of committees to implement its terms of reference in the field of human rights, one of the most important committees that carry out tasks related to the protection of minorities is the Human Rights Committee and the Sub-Committee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which is a major body concerned with the protection of political rights in general and minorities in particular (Drissi: 2013, p. 17). The problem of the protection of religious minorities is considered by international law as an international problem, because the countries that treat the minorities within their borders affect international stability, so it is the duty of international law to protect political rights and protect minorities. For a long time, minorities have been subjected to annihilation, oppression, and injustice. "Religious minorities" is a dangerous and sensitive subject, and International law deals with such issues with great caution (Rehman, 1995).

Religious minorities suffer injustice in many countries of the world, so countries that oppress minorities try to hide behind Article 2 (7) of the UN Charter and take this article as a pretext and resort to the fortress of state sovereignty and sovereign equality. Minorities may resort to protests and revolutions and demand separation according to the item of self-determination. In accordance with Article (27) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees minorities the exercise of their rights and the enjoyment of their culture (Rehman, 1995). The Human Rights Committee, in its General Comment No. 23 (1994) in Article (27) (Minority Rights), stated the overall objective was to facilitate the development and long-term preservation of minority communities, stressing that "the protection of these rights is directed towards ensuring the survival and continued development of the cultural, religious and social identity of the minorities concerned, thus enriching the fabric of society as a whole" (A report by the Human Rights Committee, 1994).

On the basis of the above discussion it is evaluated that the appropriate rights of minorities must be established by their historical and political context, as well as the religious context, which may be a distinguishing characteristic but should not be the exclusive feature that determines the grant of rights. With the establishment of the international community in the new form, some suggestions were made that international law did not address the issue of minorities in a fair manner, but these proposals were ignored because of the opposition of some states. In this context, the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2010) reported that the governments of respective countries need to consider the religious, social, political and physical rights of the minority communities in the policies and protocols. As Iraq and Syria are considered to be conflict regions due to the political scenarios, the war is common and in war situations, the religious and minority communities become at a greater risk. The government also need to address the issues such as health care, shelter and food for the religious and minority risks (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2010).

2.2.4 Minority Rights from the political perspective

As per the reported findings of Buck (2013), the religious minority is linked with the religion having a minority of the population in a nation, region, or state. This religious minority group is subjected to discrimination or stigma. A religious minority is claimed to have its own compass for morality and religious laws (Buck, 2013). However, in several studies, religious minorities are explained in terms of demographics. In this context, Weitz (2015) has highlighted religious communities minorities as the group of people comprising a small percentage of the population of the state, wherein they live. The group members hold similarities in regard to ethnicity, traditions, beliefs, linguistic and religious practices (Weitz, 2015). A similar insight has been produced by Irfan (2015), who defined religious, ethnic or linguistic minority as the group of people having smaller proportion in comparison to the rest

of the population of the nation to which they belong, and possessing historical, cultural and physical characteristics, language or religion from the rest of the population. Sense of “alikeness” and communal unity are defined as the key characteristics of defined religious minorities (Irfan, 2015).

In the historic times, it has been seen that Yazidis used to be considered as the minority in dual terms; first, due to being from the Kurdish subgroup, Yazidis used to share the Kurds’ fate that was oppression and persecution for many centuries, secondly, being the religious minority, Yazidis used to be discriminated against many times by some of the people from Kurdish region (Jäger *et al.*, 2019). In the Yazidis' history, it is seen that there were multiple recurring phases related to attacks and oppression by French and British occupation. As evidence, 74 genocide cases were observed in the history against the Yazidis due to which these people were facing severe trauma. On the distinct side, it is also evaluated that Christians like all other minorities encountered issues of persecution and displacement as well as they used to be forced to convert their religion as per the other extremist groups (Jäger *et al.*, 2019).

Choedupet et al. (2015) have explained the Arab culture by ethnicity and generally associated with Sunni Islam. The population of the countries is widely diverse both in regard to ethnically and religiously. The literature has defined ethnic and religious minorities as the segment of the indigenous population, which is not identified as Sunni Muslim or Arab. In the region, the largest non-Arabian ethnicities are Armenian, Nubian, Imazighen (Berber), and Kurd, along with the presence of some smaller ethnolinguistic groups, mainly in Sudan. Within the Arab nations, the key basis of religious discrimination and minorities is language, which acts as its primary marker and distinguishes the people by the fact that they do not speak the Arabic language as their mother tongue (Choedupet al., 2015).

After the First World War (1914-1918) and the Second World War (1939-1945), there were significant changes in the status of States at all political, military, geographical and legal levels. Among these were changes in the borders of some countries. These changes have resulted in a religious, ethnic and linguistic mixture of states that have dealt with the issue of minorities in different ways by country. With the establishment of the international community in the new form, some suggestions were made that international law did not address the issue of minorities in a fair manner, but these proposals were ignored because of the opposition of some states. The protection and promotion of the rights of minority and religious communities also assist in preventing the languages, religious interests and cultures of the minority communities. The minority rights framed by the governments also need to ensure that the non-discriminatory practices and policies are considered in the political frameworks to safeguard the linguistic, religious and cultural diversity in a proper manner (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2010). In the event of a dispute between the minority and the State, to file a complaint with the Nations Society Council, which is responsible for "control", which refers this matter to the International Justice Perpetual Court for decision and the Court shall render an irrevocable judgment (Weller, 2005).

The countries of the Middle East are not homogeneous internally because of the multiplicity of races and religions, and this is the case in many regions of the world to contain a large number of sects, religions and ethnic and linguistic groups, and treatment is the most prominent problem facing these minorities, which is always an effective tool in the hands of political power, The problems of minorities can be exploited by other countries to achieve political goals, and it is possible by the government in the same state to do so. When any country thinks of creating problems to achieve certain goals, the first tool used is the

minorities, even the Western democratic countries; there is a tendency against the minorities, not to mention the Arab Mashreq, which is more affected than others (Kumaraswamy, 2003).

The academic research on the issue of religious minorities in the Arab region has escalated with the launch of the so-called war on terror launched after the 11th September 2001 attacks in the United States, following which the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. This changed the political system in Iraq and was replaced by a political system according to sectarian balances, which resulted in acts of violence against some religious minorities for political goals and foreign agendas. It has been evaluated that unprecedented international attention in the Arab region has emerged to provide a legal framework for the protection of religious minorities. Therefore, there is a great interest for researchers in the study of religious minorities in the Arab region because of the development of serious events that puts them in a dangerous situation. Therefore, this study will try to address previous studies and complete the path in this field, because the political rights issue of religious minorities in Iraq and Syria is an important issue, as there is a large number of religious minorities, and a larger majority of Muslims. What concerns us in this research is the legal, political and social rights of religious minorities during the last ten years.

There is a complex situation in this region, and this study will try to delve into the details of the events that have changed everything related to religious minorities during a time of rapid acceleration. When we address the issue of religious minorities in two Arab countries that have gone through different circumstances, there will be a useful comparison in understanding what is happening to the religious minorities in those countries. In addition to the international and regional factor that exploits and affects their rights, which has a great influence in changing the events to achieve the political interests of the world powers that do not care about all the oppression of them. This study will seek to understand the nature of the relationship between religious minorities and the Muslim majority in times of peace and

times of conflict, which will reveal that religious minorities coexisted peacefully years ago, but what has happened is that they are oppressed, with no minority rights recently in times of conflict and war in the Arab region for the purpose of achieving political interests (Longva: 2011, p. 4). Conflict management requires a historical and analytical approach to the causes of conflict, Minority Rights Group International (MRG) conducted research that concluded that governments and external actors often ignore the rights of minorities that are the cause of conflicts (Baldwin: 2006, p. 14).

While the political situation was unstable in the Arab Mashreq countries, Iraq was subjected to US occupation in 2003, a change of regime and the establishment of a sectarian political system, triggering problems and sectarian war and the emergence of terrorist militant groups that kill religious minorities, and all those who oppose them, even if they are from the same sect. Syria is ruled by the Alawite sect, a religious minority, while the majority is the Sunni community, in addition to the presence of many other religious minorities. Over the years, the dictatorial regime made the Syrian people dissatisfied with the injustice of the government, which led to a bloody civil war that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Syrian people, as well as the migration of millions of Syrians to other countries to escape from the fire of the multi-party war. Persecution, injustice and marginalization are a reality imposed on religious minorities in the Arab region. Religious minorities suffer from political marginalization and the confiscation of their rights, because they cannot compete with dictatorships. For dictatorships to achieve their interests, they are robbing religious minorities of their rights and not allowing them to participate politically (A report by the European Parliament, 2013).

Religion has been and is still playing a clear role in the lives of peoples and different national groups throughout the ages, and perhaps this role came under a range of social and cultural variables with each era of history, passed by these groups, as religion has an impact

in some groups or communities at present, where it plays either a complementary or contradictory role, in the sense that either it is a key factor of unity or a key factor of division, among the members of one group, as the group, which is dominated by one religion among most of its members, is a factor of its attachment and strength. Based on the foregoing, it can be said that the multiplicity of religions, or the existence of religious differences, may lead to the emergence of religious or sectarian conflict. However, having more than one religion in a single group doesn't necessarily mean that there is a conflict, an example for that is the Coptic religious minorities in Egypt.

Human rights shall be agreed upon in international law, and international human rights instruments shall be provided, the United Nations shall have mechanisms to monitor the application of these instruments. On this basis, the international community has accepted these rights, including those of the Arab Mashreq, to support the freedom of every individual to believe, to profess and practise their religion. These standards have implications for the human rights of religious minorities or other components of society (Ghanea: 2004, p.p. 705-729). Freedom of religion, freedom of belief and freedom to practise religious rites are among the manifestations of Islam, so that Islam guarantees the freedom to embrace any religion. This is mentioned in the Muslims' holy book, the "Quran". Peace, freedom, and coexistence are among the most important teachings of Islam, like other religions, therefore, Islam urges to respect and coexist with other religions in peace (Berween: 2006, p.p. 91-102). Overall, the discussion suggests that there exists a significant gap in the political right of religious minorities in Arab countries. Despite the development of several human and political rights by the UN, the minorities in Arab countries are facing discrimination in accessing all these rights.

The civil, political, social and economic rights are all legitimate rights of religious minorities, the political and civil rights guarantee them: freedom of political expression,

political participation, non-arbitrary arrests and security of persons. This was previously, but with the modern time, there has become another essential right of religious minorities, which is social and economic rights, that guarantee the following rights for several religious minorities, such as: the right to establish a family and income, the right of ownership, the right to work and education and health, but minorities are often lacking these rights because of dictatorships (Weller, 2007). The rights of individuals belonging to religious minorities should be understood from the perspective of political rights and the protection of these rights. This is considered obvious and necessary at the same time, because minority issues are closely related to the concept of protection of minorities, which historically appears outside the framework of human rights.

An important aspect of justice is the recognition of the advantages of the protection systems for minorities, to facilitate the peaceful coexistence of different components of society. However, one should be aware that they may differ conceptually from the norms and principles of universal human rights. Nonetheless, components of different forms of minority protection continue to play an important political role and can even permeate the rhetoric of human rights without always being conceptually consistent with the human rights-based approach. This is a confusing source with possible adverse implications for the practical implementation of the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities. For example, minority protection systems developed under bilateral or multilateral peace agreements, usually lead to legal and political guarantees on behalf of minorities, although these guarantees have given them practical advantages, these protection systems are not always based on human rights. Instead of relying on the principles of human rights and the universal principles of freedom and equality, they usually protect members of certain pre-defined groups only. In addition, the political context of bilateral or multilateral agreements to protect

minorities may lead to some risk, by having a look at the minorities defined in the Convention as receiving protection from foreign parties.

As a result, in some cases, some minority protection mechanisms have been turned against the same groups that were supposed to protect them. The political rights-based approach also differs from ideology-specific concepts for the protection of the rights of minorities, where different situations can be adopted to place them close to or to distance them from the dominant religion of the state. This will result in the seizure of protection for a pre-determined group of religious minorities, not all religious minorities, without taking into consideration the right of freedom of religion and belief to those groups that appear to be incompatible with the ethically acceptable situation in the State. It is often emphasized, that the rights of individuals belonging to religious minorities, as laid down in the context of international human rights law, share all the characteristics of a human rights approach, based on the principles of universality of freedom and equality, "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". In addition, the preamble to the Universal Declaration addresses an important starting point: "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family". This declaration, which has been mentioned repeatedly in a number of international human rights conventions, must be implemented and realized in the rights of individuals belonging to the minority religions (Bielefeldt, 2018). It has been evaluated that in the democratic system, the power is controlled by majority groups and religious minorities even in modern times face problems in accessing their basic rights and therefore there is a need to protect minorities of all kinds. Minorities greatly fear being oppressed by political regimes, especially from the authoritarian regime, which exploits the use of some measures against them under many different pretexts; this is easily noted by following the history of minorities in the Arab region and in the rest of the world.

There are international and regional human rights conventions dealing with political rights issues in general and the rights of minorities in particular. The most important of these agreements is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December the 10th, 1948, which includes 30 articles.

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and have been endowed with reason and conscience, and they must treat each other in the spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2: Everyone has the right to enjoy all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, opinion, political opinion or any other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or any other situation, as well as the foregoing, there shall be no discrimination based on the political, legal or international situation of the country or territory independent, under guardianship or non-self-governing, or if its sovereignty is subject to any restriction.

The legal classification of groups, whether these groups are indigenous peoples or minorities, on a national, religious, linguistic or ethnic basis, is within a specific view of the rights to which they are entitled. These rights must be placed in a historical and political context of minorities, through which religion may have a distinctive function without any limitation to give rights. As shown in the international charters, minorities tend to obtain the minimum of their rights and are desired by any minority in the world. Thus, there is an overview of the rights of minorities whose most important characteristic is the religious one, which is referred to as the spiritual minorities. Religious minorities have human rights, like any other human being, one of which is freedom from genocide, which is recognized in Article (2) of the Genocide Conference and other rights that we will address later (Gilbert: 1997, p.p. 97-134).

The basic rights of minorities were mentioned in article (27) of the ICCPR, which was developed in the Declaration on the Rights of National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (UNDM), which was again adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1992 (Chapman: 2008, 16).

These rights, mentioned above, include minorities in several aspects, including:

1. Right to exist: Minorities are looking for the right to exist, a right available to all, whether they are a minority or a majority, therefore, the most important duty of States is to protect the existence of minorities as small communities within the national community from any persecution, genocide, murder or ethnic cleansing (A report by the UN Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries, 1998).

2. The right to equality and non-discrimination: this right protects minorities from direct and indirect discrimination based on religion, race or nationality, therefore, it exists in most of the international human rights treaties of the United Nations. There are examples of these international covenants and following are some of them, Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted 27th June 1981, Organization of African Unity OAU Doc. as well as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). These give minorities the right not to discriminate, restrict, favour or exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The agreement allows member States to take temporary special measures at the economic, cultural and social levels to help individuals overcome discrimination (Article 2.2).

3. The right of protecting the identity: this right guarantees to minorities the right to practise their religion, culture, and language at the private and public levels, and also provides them with means and measures to develop them at the religious, cultural and social levels (UN Human Rights Committee, 1995).

4. The right to participate in public affairs: this right guarantees to minorities the right to participate in decision-making that affects them in their lives, and this enables them to participate in the management of public affairs, in addition to the formation of minorities associations to take account of their affairs. This right is mentioned in Article (25) of the ICCPR:

‘Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity [...] (a) to take part in the conduct of public affairs’. The UN Human Rights Committee interprets public affairs within the meaning of this article as a broad concept which relates to practising political power, in particular, practising legislative, executive and administrative powers. It covers all aspects of public administration, the formulation and implementation of policy at international, national, regional and local levels (UN Human Rights Committee, 1996).

The State has to protect citizens' freedom and political choice, so the European Commission was of the opinion, that the individual should be free to choose either the State religion or any another religion. The same view is found in paragraph (8) of General Comment No. (18) in the ICCPR, which is also based on the case-law of the ECHR and ICCPR. No religion may be subject to certain restrictions under Article (18) paragraph (3) as long as it does not infringe the rights and freedom of others. In addition, the ICCPR General Comment Number (18) paragraph (9), in the case where there is a formal or traditional religion, or the religion of the majority which is the official or major religion, it does not lead to discrimination against other religions, including discrimination concerning government services, economic privileges and special restrictions on the minority religion (Thlimmenos, 2000).

There are several elements in the ICCPR that restrict the above right. These elements are: Firstly, the law must provide, the restriction must be clear to ensure that the abuse or arbitrary decisions are not allowed (Kokkinakis, 1994).

Secondly, the limitation must be necessary. The question of necessity assesses the need of the limitation, comparing to sacrificing freedom with their right to choose their religion, which requires a fair balance between the aim pursued and the limitation. This leads to the principle of proportionality as set out in ICCPR General Comment Number (18), paragraph 8.38, limitations grounded on religion are open for the same scrutiny according to article (18) as limitations grounded on secular norms (Norris, 1988).

If formal restrictions are used to hinder a certain belief or converting into another religion, then such an application will be inappropriate (Theo Manoussakis, 1996).

Thirdly, the limitation must serve one of the purposes of the exhaustive list.

Paragraph (3) of article (18) does not attract national security considerations, only the following purposes may legitimize limitations: Public safety: This phrase covers limitations aimed to protecting the security of persons and things in situations which create a sufficiently clear danger. In *Serif v. Greece*, the European Court used the argument of tensions between Muslims and Christians and between Greece and Turkey to state that the role of the authorities is not to eliminate pluralism, but "to ensure that the competing groups tolerate each other". Further, the clause does not mention national security, which implies that the interest of the state alone may not serve as grounds for limitations.

Right to change one's religion: The right to change religion is included in the ICCPR article (18) and is also expressed in some regional instruments, such as the ACHPR, ECHR and the American Convention of Human Rights. Article (8) of the DEDR states that nothing in the declaration shall be construed as restricting or derogating from any right defined in the UDHR and the ICCPR. The interpretation is that the right to change religion was fully preserved, despite article (2). The declaration also contains different non-discrimination clauses, which are important to the right to manifest a chosen religion in article (6). The Human Rights Committee has stressed in many General Comments that a person has the

absolute right to change religion contrary to the policies of some Islamic States. In general, a number of important and sensitive issues relating to the application of the rights of religious minorities should be mentioned:

Firstly, it concerns the restrictions imposed by governments to freely express religion and to demonstrate and apply religious practices, while violating political rights and laws, as articles (18.3) of the ICCPR and Article (1.3) of the DEID make clear, the protection of public rights, fundamental rights and freedoms of others (DEID, Art. 1.3).

Governments are exploiting the lack of clarity of some laws in taking arbitrary measures against religious minorities and their practise of their religion, but the Human Rights Committee has put an end to these actions under the pretext of protecting national security (Stahnke, 1998).

In addition, the above-mentioned committee has affirmed Article (18) to protect religious minorities by saying:

"The terms belief and religion are to be broadly construed. Article (18) is not limited in its application to traditional religions, or to religions with institutional characteristics, or practices analogous to those of traditional religions. The Committee, therefore, views with concern any tendency to discriminate against any religion or belief for any reasons, including the fact that they are newly-established, or represent religious minorities that may be the subject of hostility by a predominant religious community" (Boyle, 1983).

In addition, the Commission has criticized individual governments that have gone on to explain the conditions of derogation in Article (18.3) of the ICCPR. This is what governments use to impose restrictions on religious minorities under the pretext of preserving national unity and national security.

Secondly: Based on the ideas and beliefs of religious minorities, if they are arrested for this the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial

Discrimination (CERD) states that “the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority”, is probably “punishable by law”, CERD originally might have addressed religious as well as racial hatred and discrimination, though finally, it did not, even though racial and religious intolerance are often deeply interwoven, as, for example, in Anti-Semitism. Religious hatred has not been at the focus of the work of the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, “although [it is] likely to become increasingly important” (Boyle, 1992).

Moreover, Article (20.2) of the ICCPR declares that the law prohibits any advocacy or incitement of racism or religious hatred as these calls for violence, generate a hostile behaviour that affects attitudes and emotions (Lemon, 1983).

Religious expression may have a negative impact on members of religious minorities, which may subject them to the aggressiveness of those who disagree with them, and this is considered a major threat to religious minorities (Cecil, 1997).

Thirdly, the issue or problem is related to the religious minorities in particular, where States provide special protection for them to the extent of providing assistance, but the texts relating to religious minorities have been deleted and excluded from the UN Charter and from the formative instruments of human rights. This deletion was deliberate, in order to prevent the existence of many texts on minorities in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Morsink, 1999).

As well as Article (27) of the ICCPR, concerning minority rights, explicitly concerning members of minorities. However, international documents contain collective rights and do not include individual rights such as: the 1992 UN Declaration on Minorities, the 1994-5 UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and article (1) of the ICCPR (and similarly in the ICESCR) which talk about the right of self-determination “for all peoples,” though that is the one exception in the formative documents. That right has been exclusively taken to be applied on colonized peoples (Lerner, 1999). Overall, the discussion

suggests that even after the description about minorities' rights under several acts and legislations, the religious minorities are struggling in getting their basic rights and the scenario is found to more critical in Arab regions wherein the government is also found not to be capable in supporting minorities.

2.2.5 The Rights of Minorities from a Social Perspective

Iraq and the Levant states were under Ottoman control, the majority of the Muslim population was in these communities, except for Lebanon, where a large percentage of Christians lived. The rest of the societies were characterized by their belonging to many religious minorities. There was coexistence between Muslims, Christians, Jews, religious minorities and sects, but conflicts began with the end of the Ottoman era and the beginning of British and French colonization of the region. So that the region was treated on the basis of religion (Bowman: 1983, pp. 291-295). The region of the Levant contains many groups distinct from the Muslim majority due to differences in religion, race, culture, and nationalism. These societies are characterized by diverse religious identities (Hourani: 1947, p.1).

The historian, Albert Hourani (1915-1993), an Arab in origin, and a specialist in the history of the Middle East, knew at the end of the Second World War that religious minorities in the Arab region were those societies that differed from the Sunni Muslim majority, and are different from other religious minorities. Religious minorities in the Arab Mashreq societies can be divided into several categories, including (1) Arab groups in terms of race and culture, but not Muslims. There are several different Christian denominations including Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Maronites, Latins and Protestants; heterodox Islamic sects such as Shias, Alawis, Druze (2) Non-Arab and non-Muslim groups such as Jews, Armenians, Assyrians, Christian tribes (3) Religious minorities: Jews, Christian denominations such as Copts, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Maronites, Latins and Protestants, Israeli Arabs (4)

Majoritarian minorities: Bahrain's Shiite Muslims, Sunni Muslims in Syria, and Palestinian origin in Jordan. Therefore, some of the majorities in some Arab countries are marginalized, and some of the majorities have the same characteristics of the minorities, as the Sunni community in Syria and (5) Heterodox Islamic minorities: Alawis, Druze, Ahmadias, Ismailis, Bahais (Alternatives, 2003). These classifications are guaranteed by international law, as set forth in paragraph (27) of the Charter.

Article (27) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides that “in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, the rights of the persons who are belonging to such minorities shall not be denied. In communities where other groups’ members belong, they shall have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion and to use their own language”. According to the wording used in this provision, rights’ holders are individual persons who practise their rights within their communities. The same content can also be found in the 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (Minorities Declaration 1992, General Assembly resolution 47/135).

Because minorities were oppressed in the past, most countries of the world have worked to ensure the rights of these minorities in the constitutions, international conventions and the Charter of International Humanitarian Law. Despite its ineffectiveness in many examples in the world, the International Humanitarian Law is a strong deterrent to protect human rights in general and minorities in particular. International conventions have allowed international intervention to protect minorities and human rights in general in certain cases defined by law; however, this international intervention may be used as an excuse for international interests, so the problem of minorities is complex and interrelated.

There is a conflict between religious minorities and the majority in general. Since the rights of minorities have become an integral part of human rights, the General Assembly of

the United Nations in December 1992 issued a special declaration on minorities. Article (1) states that, all countries must protect the existence of minorities within their territories, and support the religious, national, ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity by creating the conditions for that. This Declaration and other UN resolutions, in addition to some paragraphs of the International Humanitarian Law or some paragraphs within the constitutions of most countries, call for the protection of the rights of minorities.

On international relations, international law does not necessarily apply, and it is not necessary that some paragraphs of the constitution are not violated in some countries. Minority rights are ordinary individual rights that are applicable on different types of minorities, as well as collective rights of minority groups, therefore, minority rights may be applied on any part that does not belong to the majority (Smihula: 2008, p.p. 51-81). There were only political rights and civil rights for the first generation of minorities, but with the development of life, other rights occurred, such as: social and economic rights, which are called rights of the second generation. These rights are given for members of a society, but in the 1990s, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe gave rights for minorities within countries and promulgated minority rights instruments (Gilbert, 2005).

In recent years there have been many events and factors, especially after the Arab Spring, the rising wave of terrorism, the dictatorial governments in the Arab region and the impact of international and regional interventions. These events have led to major changes and divisions within the society on religious and sectarian backgrounds. Therefore, the study of the human rights of religious minorities is a message to the human rights actors concerned with preserving the rights of this minority, which has been subjected to persecution and murder for a long time and especially in recent years. It is a message to the governments of the Arab Mashreq, governments of the donor countries, humanitarians working for donor

governments, Intergovernmental organizations, local and international NGOs and international NGOs.

Through the UN reports on freedom of religion and belief, there are human rights dilemmas facing religious minorities at the social level. The problems and dilemmas of civil and political rights are related to economic, social and cultural rights. Discrimination against religious minorities in Arab societies is a violation of social rights or the right of citizenship, the right of life, discrimination in the judiciary and many civil rights, such as exclusion from important government posts (A Report Submitted by Mr. Abdelfattah Amor, 2003).

Minority Rights: Individual rights that are compatible with members of all minorities, whether they are religious, ethnic, linguistic or national minorities. As well as collective rights granted to minorities (Smihula: 2008, p.p. 51-81). There are civil rights movements that seek to preserve the individual rights of minorities. These movements include the Global Women's Rights Movement and many global movements around the world that advocate individual rights (Mihandoost: 2016, p.p. 9-15).

It has been analysed that most of the Arab societies have the Muslim population as the majority and Christians, Jews and other religious groups are considered to be minority groups. These minority groups are categorised on the basis of different criteria such as race and culture held by groups of people other than Muslims and Non-Arab and Non-Muslim groups like Christian tribes, Jews and Armenians. Although the freedom of belief and religion has been stated by the UN for all the population, religious minorities in Arab countries often face challenges in getting their political, social and civil rights. Therefore, there is an increased need for developing legislation that provides equal rights to minorities all across the world.

Further, Ghanea (2012) has characterized the religious minorities as the primary driver of institutionalization of the international framework concerning minority rights.

International provisions are continuously referred with the designation of ‘religious’, ‘ethnic’ or ‘linguistic’. The literature has provided a comprehensive definition and characteristics of religious minorities around six main aspects, including, religious culture, group rights, objective determination, positive measures, effective participation in the decision formation, and survival and constant development. In this context, firstly, religious minorities aim at enhancing the protection of their minority’s rights concerning religious culture which integrates protection of language, symbols, literature, cumulative manifestation and practices of customs, worship, fasting, pilgrimage and dietary codes (Ghanea, 2012). Secondly, religious minorities aim at protecting their group rights stated in Articles 27 and 18 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (United Nations Human Rights, 2020). In regard to objective determination, the Human Rights Committee stressed upon the fact that existence of religious, linguistic or ethnic minority in the state is not determined by the state decisions, rather it requires to be established using the objective criteria. In this, the use of positive measures by the state is claimed as highly essential to protect the identity and rights of the minority to practise their religion and develop their culture. Fifth, the demand for the encouragement of religious minorities in effective decision-making is another key characteristic of religious minorities, mainly in the areas that affect them, their progress and development. This involves the areas including worship, practice, observance and teaching. Ensuring the survival and development of the religious minorities groups is another key characteristic of the minorities (Ghanea, 2012).

2.3 Conclusion:

It has been inferred from the overall discussion that the minority groups are being discriminated against on several aspects such as human rights, social integration, equality and political participation in the different parts of the world; however, these groups are being repressed majorly in the Middle East countries. The minority is defined as a group of people

of a nation which are found to be in a smaller percentage than the total population and often are not allowed to participate in power which is being characterised by linguistic, ethnic or religious features as compared to the rest of the society. The discussion above has been made majorly on religious minority groups and not on linguistic and ethnic in order to gain in-depth information on one particular area on how religious minorities are subject to discrimination and stigma in the Middle East. The definition of religious minority includes a religion which is being held by the minority population of a particular region, state or country.

In relation to Iraq and Syria, there are two different criteria which define the religious minorities in the countries wherein the first criteria are found to be based on equality, rights, social integration and political participation. The second includes religious differentiation, which is found to be apparent in a group of people that makes them distinct from the rest of the population.

The two criteria of discrimination which have been selected to be analysed further in this study for religious minorities include political participation and human rights.

Therefore, in the further chapters, the discussion will focus on analysing the list of rights such as the right of minorities to participate in political affairs, right of democracy, right to vote, right to express, right to religion and free election.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Evidences of reduction of political rights of voting and accessing public services for religious minorities worldwide

In explaining the characteristics of the religious minority, Awad (2010) has explained it as the vulnerable group subjected to discrimination and prejudice, mainly in cases wherein religious differences are found to correlate with the ethnic differences. Such vulnerable groups are generally seeking international protection, and across different parts of the world, they are found highly victimized with several violations of their human right of freedom of religion. Along with this, they are the victims of conflicts, violence, religious or ethnic persecution, and sometimes, in extreme cases, face genocide (Awad, 2010). On the other hand, OHCHR (2020) highlighted that the human rights system of the United Nations generally referred and characterized minorities on the basis of ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities. A minority is defined as the group, which is numerically inferior in contrast to the state population. The members of the group are the nationals of the state but possess different characteristics in terms of ethnicity, language, and religious values. The group holds a sense of solidarity that aims at preserving their traditions, culture, religions, and language (OHCHR, 2020).

With regard to religious minorities, Elguédri & Ferjani (2017) have shed crucial light on Muslim societies as religious minorities' society of Arab countries, internationally. The literature has claimed that at the advent of Medina first community and outset of Islam, Muslim societies have religious minorities, wherein allegedly they characterize refusing peaceful coexistence, recognition, discrimination, tolerance and persecution. In the Muslim countries, religious minorities have remained a predominant issue, and in it, the literature

highlighted increasing constituents of Christians. Despite it, in Saudi Arabia, 93% are Muslims, 4.4% Christians and 2.6% comprising of other religions (Elguédri & Ferjani, 2017). In it, the followers of other Islamic minorities and non-Muslims are examined to be deprived of their fundamental rights, wherein, all the worship sites of non-Muslim are forbidden. Similarly, in the UAE also, 86% of the population is following Islam, 9% are Christians, and the remaining 5% are found mostly Hindu. However, Oman is examined to support positively religious minorities by constituting 45% share of foreigners from Jordan, South Asia, Egypt, the Philippines and old Baloch immigration area. The foreign population is constituted by Sikhs, Hindu and Buddhists, for whom there are proper places to worship, including Mandir, Gurudwara and churches (Gouda & Gutmann, 2019; Elguédri & Ferjani, 2017).

A qualitative study by Choedupet et al. (2015) has claimed that in the Arab world, Shiite Muslims is the largest population of the religious minority by far. This segment of the population actually outnumbers the segment of Sunni Muslims in Iraq, Bahrain and Lebanon. In explaining the characteristics of this religious minority group, the literature claimed the majority of the Arab Shiites are recognized as Twelvers, which is characterized by recognizing the Twelve Imams and Prophet Muhammad's descendants and heirs of his authority, both in regard to spiritual and political aspects. Imams are also recognized by the Druze and Alawi sects; wherein each sect is claiming a certain Imam as the divine incarnation. Followed by Shiite Muslims, Christians are evident to constitute the second major group in the Arab world of religious minorities. Along with this, the Coptic Orthodox Church is led by the Coptic Patriarch as the independent church in the Arab nation, and it is found to have a significant count of adherents (Choedupet et al., 2015).

A research paper by Sajoo (2014) evaluated the minority rights in the Middle East wherein rights of religious minorities are deemed to be the interplay of historical, political, and religious forces that constituted the contemporary setting comprising the Palestinian

condition that highly affected the politics of the whole region. It is pointed out by the author that the Syrian uprising followed by the Arab Spring directed attention towards the multifaceted aspect of the minorities' issues prevailing in the Arab region. In regard to the political rights of religious minorities in Saudi Arabia, it is noted that the monarchy commonly excludes the public from political participation. Municipal elections in Saudi Arabia and voters are largely influenced by religious and tribal leaders due to the dearth of political parties. The political rights of religious minorities, women, and all the Saudi citizens are already curtailed, and the citizens encounter additional hurdles due to rigid customs, law, and regulations on matters of religious groups' intolerance and gender segregation (Sajoo, 2014).

It is observed that religious minorities are not given equal opportunities in terms of securing leadership roles in the government; rather, they are excluded. The majority population in the Arab region complies with two Islamic variants, namely, Shia Islam and Sunni Islam, and Sunni-Shia conflicts in Iraq aggravated sectarian disputes in Syria, Lebanon, and Iran. It is mentioned that smaller Muslim sects often face the issue of discrimination in Middle Eastern countries. In addition, Christians and Jews are also subjected to discrimination in the Arab region. Other than this, indigenous Palestinians struggled with the issue of systematic government discrimination concerning property, education, citizenship, and human rights (Freedom House, 2020).

Fox & Akbaba (2015) have performed an empirical study using Religion and State Minorities Round 2 (RAS2-M) datasets to assess the causes and extent of religious discrimination in 27 Western democracies and 86 religious minorities groups from 1990 to 2008. The literature shed crucial insight into the changes in religious discrimination in the prevailed scrutinized environment post-9/11, mainly against Muslims in contrast to other religious minorities of Western democracies. The results of the research have showcased that

religious discrimination has raised considerably more against Muslims. This is followed by Christian, Jewish community, and Buddhist minorities, which led to raising restrictions on the human rights of religious freedom to Muslims in the West. In light of the results, Avis (2019) has characterized the religious minorities groups as the marginalized communities, which often faced substantial exclusion in many societies across participation in economic and social affairs, access to political power, expressing their identities and forced to follow the majority's religion (Avis, 2019).

In explaining the attitude and characteristics of religious minorities in Germany, Aydin et al. (2014) have explained the attitude or characteristics of native German people's attitude in light of social identity theory and uncertainty-identity theory. Social identity theory has proposed the desire to attain or ensure positive feelings on the social identity that facilitates in-group favouritism. This involves prejudice and stereotyping as the key characteristics under perceived threats. On the other hand, the uncertainty-identity theory has claimed people identify more related to ethnocentric or extremist groups, or threatened by uncertainty. In order to overcome uncertainty, engagement in radicalism may assist in reducing uncertainty feelings by restoring the sense of controllability and predictability in the social world (Aydin et al., 2014).

Avis (2019) has shed crucial light on the religious discrimination and persecution faced by religious minorities on religious faith grounds across the globe. The literature claimed that in Yemen, the increasing religious extremism has led to raising the violence threat between the Zaidi Shi'a and Sunni Muslims. In contrast to this, the situation of the Christians religious group is examined to have worsened with the fall of Saddam Hussain's regime, with the rise in the attacks of Islamist extremists on non-Sunni minority groups. The characteristics highlighted of the group in the country involve internal mass displacement, lack of responsibility of the group by the local religious organization to provide humanitarian

assistance, and lack of funding by the UN to the Christian minority. Similarly, religious minorities' prevalence is found in China also, despite the presence of Article 36 in China's constitution. The article grants the citizens with substantial freedom of religious beliefs, subject to the fact that the activities of religious nature do not cause any disruption to public order, along with impairing the citizens' health or interfere with the educational system. Despite it, Christians have remained the minority religious group in the country. The characteristic of the Christian group is their non-involvement as a part of the official Protestant or Catholic Church. This group has often experienced harassment, contravention to their human rights regarding freedom of conscience and thoughts, practising their faiths, and forced to adopt government propaganda (Avis, 2019; Gouda & Gutmann, 2019).

In light of the above views, Weitz (2015) has provided crucial insights on religious minorities and their characteristics in the modern Middle East. The author has explained religious minorities across three broad categories, Shiite Muslim groups, Christian denominations, and a range of other smaller groups with unrelated traditions. Shiite Muslims are shaped the substantial minorities across several states of Middle Eastern countries, and in it, Twelver Shiites hold its largest denomination. Twelver Shiites hold an overwhelming majority in Iran, Iraq and Bahrain, and a much smaller proportion elsewhere. The Ismailis and Zaydis are other two prominent religious minorities of Shiite groups formed around different lineages of Muhammad's descendants. In Yemen, Zaydis Shiism is a prominent religious tradition, whereas, in Syria and Lebanon, Ismailis Shiism predominates (Weitz, 2015). On the other hand, the characteristics of Christian denominations involve their distinct identity rooted in the pre-Islamic past. In Christianity also, Coptic Christians are distinctive in their liturgy, whereas Christian Egyptians are claimed to speak Arabic as the first language (Weitz, 2015).

In support of the arguments, Elguédri & Ferjani (2017) have also highlighted religious minorities across distinct Arab countries. In this regard, the literature highlighted that in Bahrain, 70% of the population is Muslim and 30% population is non-Muslim, involving 14.5% as Christians and 9.8% as Hindu in 2016. Herein, the majority of the population is Shiite, and the Sunni minority holds the majority of the power. The North African countries also have an overwhelming constituent of Sunnis with more than 95% share in the population. In this situation, the African migrants are frequently exposed to inhumane treatment, racism, violence and insults from the local public and political authorities. Here, migrants are referred to as a source of all nature of crimes and face failure to respect their religious rights (Elguédri & Ferjani, 2017).

Avis (2019) also supported these views by claiming that the tendencies of religious minorities prevail in Pakistan also, wherein religious minorities have faced major attacks and discrimination from the wider society and extremist groups. The key characteristics highlighted of the minority groups in Pakistan involve their low social status, disproportionate use of the country's blasphemy laws against them, lack of access, and challenges in accessing educational provisions. The country is constantly claimed as a nation for making egregious violations of religious freedom on an ongoing basis (Avis, 2019). In contrast to this, Weitz (2015) has highlighted the characteristics of several other religious communities in the Middle East, rooted in the venerate family of Muhammad and Shiite Islam. These communities are the Alevis, Druze, and Alawites. Distinctive rituals, theological ideas, and scriptures, along with the Quran, are the key characteristics of these religious communities that make them distinct from 'mainstream' Shiism. Apart from them, there are several other small religious communities, also in the Middle East, and each has distinctive characteristics. In Northeast Iraq, the Yezidis are a unique ethnoreligious community having a religious minority in the state. The characteristic of them is their religious tradition, which

is found to have a mix of ancient Iranian religion and Islam. Similarly, a small number of pre-Islamic religious followers of Iran, namely Zoroastrians, have remained in the Islamic Republic, which is now found in the much larger communities in India. Indigenous Jewish communities are another key religious minority in the various states of the Middle East (Weitz, 2015).

In explanation of the views, Ohliger (2008) has claimed that entry of immigrant groups is the key source of religious minorities, and today, almost 19% of the German nation-state population is composed of ‘minority population’ (Ohliger, 2008). The refugees belonging to Christians with a Muslim background, Yezidis and Muslims, are claimed as the key religious minority groups in the country. The groups have faced several religious motivated attacks in the country, along with being subjected to intimidation, rejection, discrimination, and violence. Freedom of religion and equality rights in the German constitution is lacking in the country for the refugees. Nevertheless, in regard to characteristics of the religious minorities’ groups of refugees in Germany, the understanding of Islam, belief of total submission of people under Allah and the Quran-linked way of thinking that claims non-Muslims are impure and infidels are the widespread beliefs that remain with the refugees in other cultural environments also. This substantially affects their way of thinking and acting (Open Doors Germany, 2016).

In support of the views, Weitz (2015) has also claimed that the tendency to emigrate has risen substantially, with the growing political instability and war. There are several incidences that have been noticed, such that resulted in squeezing down the share of indigenous religious minorities in the Middle East, and enhanced the emigration of religious minorities to North America, Europe, and Australia. The key incidences noticed in this regard include the civil war in Syria, growing threat by Jihadi groups, the prominence of ISIS in Iraq, the American invasion, growing violence between Kurdish separatists and the

government in Turkey, and life under threat by the Israel occupation in Palestine are examined as the key factors or incidences raising immigration of Christian religious minorities from the Middle East to other countries (Weitz, 2015).

Religious minorities have remained a prevailing issue across all the nations of the world; India is one of them. Though India is a secular state constitutionally and claimed as equidistant from all regions, Hinduism is found as the dominating religion in the country. In this context, a report published by the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) (2017) has claimed India is characterized as a nation having a wide diversity of religious practices and beliefs. The 2011 census findings have claimed 79.8% of the population practise Hinduism, 14.2% adhere to Islamic beliefs, and the remaining 6% are claimed to follow Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, and distinct other indigenous ethically-bound faiths. In this, Christians and Sikhs groups are evidenced to face detenus, undertrials, and convictions more than Hindus, whereas, Dalits, Muslims, and Adivasis are claimed as the most vulnerable communities in Indian society. The religious minorities are claimed to be growing due to political reasons (Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI), 2017). In support of this, Minority Rights Group International (2017) states communal violence is the key characteristic of religious minorities in India, which is mainly affecting Muslims, then Christians, and Sikhs. This exacerbates a climate in the country, instilling a high level of discrimination, insecurity, marginalization, inadequate access to reparations, and justice. Religious minorities also remain the target of wider forms of persecution, such as threats, hate crimes, forced conversion, and attacks on worship places. Nevertheless, over the past few years, rising hostility tendency is also evident in the country against religious minorities with the winning of the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) political group that claimed to promote Hinduism at the national level. In the country, the multiplicity of intersecting identities, which originated from

the language, caste, tribe, ethnicity, and varying degrees of syncretism religiously (Minority Rights Group International, 2017).

In contrast to India, the Office for National Statistics (2020) highlighted that England and Wales are mainly found to have people belonging to religious groups, either of no religion, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and other distinct religions. Christianity is the largest religious group in England and Wales with 59% and 58% proportion of the total population, respectively, whereas 32% in Wales and 25% of the population in England is claimed to not identify with any religion. In this, Muslims are claimed as the largest group of religious minorities in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2020). However, the recent data illustrated by the Office for National Statistics (2020) has also revealed that the Christian group is declining with the rise of other religious groups in England and Wales, wherein, Muslims claim to showcase the largest increase (Office for National Statistics, 2020).

3.2 The effect of political decision-making within the political system

The issue of minority rights can be understood in more detail with reference to the international law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) wherein article 27 of ICCPR states that individuals belonging to religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities must not be denied any rights to practise their own religion and enjoy their own culture (Macklem, 2008). The United States (US) also exhibited inconsistencies in its commitment to protecting human rights and minority rights by denying conducting a democratic election in Gaza in the year 2006 and by torturing persons in interrogation over suspicion of involvement in terrorist activities, thereby setting the stage of unilateralism and aggressive diplomacy (Macklem, 2008). In regard to the international initiatives to safeguard the rights of minorities, the European Convention on Human Rights is considered to be quite effective as it takes into account the issue of securing minority rights through a focus on

fostering political stability in the European states. The majority of political and civil rights are protected under the Convention regardless of the absence of explicit mention such as expression, freedom of religion, right concerning family life, free elections, and the equality guarantee for securing minorities' interests (Macklem, 2008).

On the contrary, the religious minorities in Indonesia suffer massive discrimination due to the religious practices followed by them as the country consists of the maximum number of Muslim people across the globe. The minorities have witnessed incidences regarding intolerance and violence even after the presence of human rights law protected by the country's constitution. These minorities have also complained of incidents of discrimination and harassment, and especially the people providing religious knowledge to the students. Incidents have been reported where they were innocent but still charged as well as convicted by laws for preaching good things about their religions. They were charged with the false accusation of forced conversion of people to their religion (Colbran, 2010). The Christian minorities in countries such as Egypt, Iraq and Syria witness more discrimination and face more restrictions compared to the Muslim minorities' countries. The countries such as Egypt have a combination consisting of autocracy and universal state religion which does not provide an ideal option for the religious minorities residing in the Muslim majority country. Additionally, the country does not have any religious freedom clause to ensure equal rights to religious minorities. The involvement of government in religious matters is higher in the case of Muslim majority countries. Thus the minorities suffer a tremendous amount of discrimination in countries such as Egypt where the minorities are forced to take Islamic teachings (Stephanous, 2010).

The Arab countries classify all the religions other than the Muslims as minorities. However, the Arab states in parts of Middle East countries and North Africa consist of major religious minority groups comprised of Christians. The Christians in Egypt comprise only

about 10-12% of the population. The percentage of Christians is the same in Syria as well. Although the Shiites are part of the group of Muslim Arabs; however, they constitute about 15% of the Arab states and are treated as minorities (Maze, 2011). The minorities in the US face a large number of challenges from the institutional and economic discrimination, along with incidents of employment discrimination. For example, the Muslim workers in the US were called terrorists and Obama by their co-workers at the workplace. The minorities also faced certain situations of physical abuse such as assaults, threats and some of their religious properties were damaged by bombing (Moore, 2011). Inequalities in the treatment of religious minorities in Iran led to profound resentment and dissatisfaction leading to arrests and peaceful protests wherein prison data shows that around three-quarters of political prisoners in Iran are from religious and ethnic minorities (El-Issawi, 2011).

Religious minorities in the Arab region often suffered from injustice, oppression, and lack of human rights and freedom due to authoritative Arab regimes that employed and practised discriminatory policies on the grounds of religion, belief, and race. Various serious human rights infringement events targeting minorities were denounced via the High Commissioner expressing deep concerns and criticizing forced marriages and violations against religious minorities (Castellino & Cavanaugh, 2013). In a similar context, an article by Moniruzzaman (2014) indicated that minority policies is a critical issue in contemporary politics, mainly with respect to nation-building as it influences international relations along with national political identity formation. Minority policies encompass sensitivities to cultural, religious, linguistic, and ethnic rights that are recognized by international bodies and conventions. However, minority groups' rights are hindered by a plethora of political, economic, and societal factors resulting in voicing out complaints and discrimination practised against them in an organized, violent manner. The absence of a formal instrument to assess the extent of political participation in the Arab world implies the need for strong

measures and fair minority policies (Moniruzzaman, 2014). In contrast to this, the minorities recognized in Turkey are Christians along with Jews, Armenians and Greeks. The Christians in Turkey comprise less than 1% of the overall Turkish population (Kılınç, 2014). The Christians, who are one of the religious minorities in Turkey, were exposed to restrictions regarding the opening of their places of worship. They also faced imposition with restricting the usage of their languages and were denied religious rights within the country. Additionally, the issues faced by Christians in Turkey were regarding the acquisition and selling of properties by them, low exposure to religious education and receiving permission for legal personality (Kılınç, 2014).

As per Prina (2014), minorities in Russia face a variety of challenges in terms of their basic rights, cultural and political rights such as discrimination, xenophobia, power abuse by law authorities, exploitation, arbitrary arrest and detention, and participation. Russia is a multi-ethnic country, and several problems exist in the region relating to indigenous and minority rights due to improper implementation of international standards, especially for people from Roma, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, primarily due to their religious and cultural distinctness. Political and civil rights such as employment, healthcare, and education are denied and restricted to non-citizens and communities practising different faiths. In addition, it is law enforcement authorities that also abuse their power and do not contribute towards ensuring and protecting the basic rights of indigenous people and minorities (Prina, 2014).

The minority issue is transformed into the large-scale debate of strategic interest and national survival to maintain the security and stability of states due to the ethnic and religious politics in various countries of the Muslim world. The above-mentioned patterns are apparent in the Gulf States, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, and Turkey. Thus, a clear, fair, comprehensive, and transparent policy is needed for securing minority rights and prohibiting discriminatory

practices that exist in the name of national integration and nationalistic bargaining (Nisan, 2015). The Human Rights Council strongly criticized Syrian authorities and the government for violating human rights in the form of arbitrary detention and arrest, ill-treatment of detainees, torture, sexual violence, unlawful killings against children, women, and religious minorities and extrajudicial violence (Belge & Karakoc, 2015). The religious minorities in the US, especially the Muslims, face issues regarding discriminations at workplaces which increased more after the 9/11 attack. The discrimination was witnessed more by women and created issues for them, such as increased job stress and more often imposition of the western culture on them. The Muslim women were also forced to remove their 'hijab' which is a crucial part of their religious values (Ali, Yamada & Mahmood, 2015).

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry reported about war crimes and posing threats to the security of religious minorities in Syria. On the other side, Egyptian people suffered from persecution and injustice irrespective of their religious values and belief system. The provision of Martial law and state of emergency severely affected the rights of Egyptian people and did not segregate amid Coptic or Egyptian Muslims (Nasrawin, 2016). On the other side, a study by Nasrawin (2016) stressed that the Muslim Brotherhood or the dominance of religious majority in Arab nations has increased insecurities and uncertainties among religious minorities about their freedom, basic rights, and equation with the ruling authority. Moreover, under the contemporary scenario of the Arab regimes, Islam extremism has replaced Western-linked or influenced dictatorship. Syrian and Egyptian religious minorities are migrating to Europe and the US from the Middle East due to fear of abduction or killing as occurred in the case of Christians in Iraq right after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime (Nasrawin, 2016). Additionally, the minority groups in the country did not possess equal rights and uniform laws from the legal assurance department of the government and had no one to consult in case of such legal issues. Turkey was not able to provide appropriate

support regarding the minorities' protection as per the international law and standards and they used to be scared while moving freely in the country at odd times (Bayir, 2016).

Saudi Arabia consists of different religious minorities groups such as Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Shiite Muslims. The Buddhists comprise 0.25% of the population, Hindus around 1% while Shiite Muslims and Christians comprise around 4% (Basedau et al., 2017).

Malaysia, known to be a Muslim dominated country, is found to be consisting of religious minorities of Buddhists, traditional Chinese, Christians and Hindus. The Buddhists comprise 19.8% while Christians comprise 9.2%, Hindus around 6.3% and 1.3% follow Chinese philosophies of the entire country's population (Sawe, 2017).

The religious minorities of Saudi Arabia also face discrimination from State clerics as these clerics incite hatred among them through hate speeches. The Saudi government has allowed religious scholars to defame religious minorities in official documents that impact the decision-making of the government. The Shia minority in the country face systematic discrimination by the violent religious majority who attack them (Human rights watch, 2017).

On the other side, a research paper by Shboul (2018) explained the connection between state and religion in Jordan, and it is mentioned in the paper that the Jordanian state is not characterized as religious but civil. The state is not established on the grounds of religion, thereby indicating that it does not function on the basis of religion or any religious ideology. In contrast, it is not built with a focus on radical secularism. Thus, it is found that Jordan has strived to maintain a balance amid religious and civil requirements. The author reviewed secondary sources and published information for data collection. It is found in the study that Jordan is an Islam dominated region wherein Muslims account for around 92% of the total population of the Kingdom, while Christians are roughly 4% of the Jordanian population. However, Druze religions and Baha'i are not recognized via the Jordanian

government. Overall, it is analyzed with respect to the Jordanian state and rights of minorities that the constitutional provisions appear to be just regarding civil rights, political system, and also in terms of equal citizenship for religious minorities' duties and rights (Shboul, 2018).

The government of Egypt accepts the presence of only three fundamental religions in the country, namely Islam, which is the dominant religion comprising of 94.4% of the population. However, the religious minorities present in the country are Christianity which occupies 5.1% and Judaism, comprising of less than 1% of the total population (Pariona, 2018). The religious minorities, especially the Christians, face aggressive actions by the traditional elite group of Malaysia as they have adopted specific measures to justify the actions done by the minorities by defaming Islam. These minorities have also reported abductions of some of the Christians as they were suspected by the Muslim community of converting Muslim people to Christianity. Several people belonging to the religious minorities were found to disappear, and they suspected the involvement of the country's government in these disappearances and abductions. Even the Muslim-Malay who converted to Christianity were found to be missing by their friends and families. The minorities also faced other issues in Malaysia such as forced detention, absence of freedom to practise their religion, limitations in their legal and political rights and lack of proper voting trends due to the growing power of the Islamic political parties (Jones, 2018).

In this sequence concerning the political and civil rights of religious minorities in Iran, a report by Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights (2018) pointed out that minorities encounter challenges in Iran due to violation of their political and civil rights in the form of arbitrary imprisonment and arrest, landmines, executions, and political representations. On the other side, they also face issues relating to minority languages, hate speech, land mines, and religious freedom. From police intimidation, hate speech, and to the denial of opportunities and basic rights, minorities in Iran are restricted from equal access to

employment, education, justice, and also political participation. The Constitution of Iran guarantees religious freedom to Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity and does not take into consideration other faiths such as Yasanis, Bahá'í, and Sabeian-Mandaeans, thereby denying protection to other faiths. Civil as well as political rights of the Bahá'í community are infringed, and they are often executed, arrested, and vilified due to their beliefs. Other than this, they are also punished harshly and are given death sentences and long prison terms. It is pointed out that religious minorities in Iran, such as Baluchis, Arabs, and Azerbaijani Turks are treated as second-class residents and sidelined from basic services and rights. Minority-populated areas such as Kurdistan, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Khuzestan are undeveloped, exhibiting a high level of poverty (Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, 2018).

It is pointed out by Freedom House (2020) that the electoral framework of the Arab region, mainly Saudi Arabia, lacks constitutional protections, and elections of 2015 for municipal councils exhibited onerous restrictions. It is determined that religious minorities and women face the challenge of discrimination in practice and in law in Saudi Arabia (Freedom House, 2020).

The US consists of different religious minority groups including Muslims, Buddhists and Jewish and Hindus. The Jewish comprise 1.9% of the US population, Muslim about 0.9% while Buddhist and Hindu both comprise around 0.7% each of the country's population (Pew Research Centre, 2020). Similarly, Indonesia consists of mainly three religious minorities, namely Christians, Roman Catholic and Hindus. The Christians comprise 7%, Roman Catholic is around 2.9%, and Hindus constitute 1.7%. The country also consists of 0.9% of the religious minorities that are Buddhist and Confucian (Minority Rights, 2020a). On the contrary, Iran is considered to be a Muslim country as it is dominated by 99% of people following Islam there and the religious minorities comprising of mostly Christians and Jews (Minority Rights, 2020b). The violation of human rights of religious minorities by the Iranian

government can be manifested, no attention is being paid to the various challenge of religious minorities such as police intimidation and violation of human rights.

3.3 The impact of domestic, regional, and international factors

3.3.1 Government

According to the perspective of Nasrawin (2016), the emergence of the Muslim brotherhood in Arab countries has resulted in increasing the fear of basic political rights as well as freedom along with their relationship with the government among religious minorities. The outbreak of the Arab spring has made all the international and religious parties engage in the social and political changes that have emerged from the youth revolution in Arab countries which has eventually resulted in dropping an arbitrary and an authorized governance system by replacing it with the democratically-elected governments. The major concern behind the establishment of the new governance system by people in the Arab world was that they were looking for new rulers who will protect their freedom and rights, unlike earlier governance systems from centuries ago. The new government was accepted successfully by the people in Egypt that belonged previously to the Freedom and Justice Party. In fact, the minorities in Syria and Egypt have decided to migrate from the Middle East to Latin America, the United States and Europe because of their increased concern of facing similar circumstances that Christians faced in Iraq who were displaced and killed in large numbers after the fall of the government of President Saddam Hussain (Nasrawin, 2016). Nossett (2014) has assessed that Mohamed Morsi was elected as the first democratic leader in Egypt who ratified and drafted many new legislations for tackling the issues faced by religious minorities; however, the measures taken by the Morsi government were not found to be effective in addressing the tensions (Minority rights, 2014). The adverse situation made the minority groups conduct several protests which in turn resulted in making the military forces in Egypt remove the Morsi government from power and finally a new

transitional government and constitution was established as the country's effort to address the ongoing issue of turmoil on 3rd July 2013. However, still, the minority group encounters several restrictions in order to access their political rights and freedoms (Nossett, 2014). Therefore, on the basis of this aforementioned case, it can be observed that the behaviour of the government towards minority groups in Arab countries is not supportive of encouraging them to be involved in political affairs.

McCallum (2012) has described that although the minority groups might be included to participate in the parliaments and cabinets in Arab countries, their political participation is found to be less as compared to the majority group because of the lack of government support. The Islamic environment in the Arab countries raises complications for the minority groups to participate actively in political affairs at the same level of majorities. Religion in the Arab world has always remained to hold social significance, and thus it extensively influences political affairs. The constitution in the Arab countries allows a minority group to engage in several professions like scholarship, administration and medicine; however, they are still discriminated against for being involved in political affairs. There are examples, where this is not true. In Tunisia, there is a Jewish minister. In Lebanon, certain political positions are assigned to certain religions by law. In addition to that, the government allows the right to minority groups to worship and they are allowed to participate in the state and society, but some of the specific positions such as the commander of the army or head of the state has been reserved by the government specifically for Muslims (McCallum, 2012). Furthermore, Martiniello & Lafleur (2008) have discussed that the government in Arab countries does not entirely ignore the political participation of minority groups as some of the groups such as Christians hold the position of high-ranking positions and also serve as cabinet ministers, but the constitution does not allow people from a minority group to hold the position of head of the state. Besides this, although the specific quota has not been

reserved for a minority group, the candidates from the minority group are always nominated as per their considerable population (Martiniello & Lafleur, 2008). As per the report published by Govt. UK. (2019), religious minorities in Iraq face a difficult situation because of the Muslim brotherhood and the presence of the Islamic government.

Although the government in Iraq is found to be focused on respecting the political freedom of minorities and religion, most of the minorities not found to have a strong tribal or political background or network face significant waves of discrimination. The government in Iraq is not found to be effective in protecting religious minorities from economic, political and legal marginalization (Govt. UK., 2019). In the views of Diamond (2010), religious minorities are found to face sexual assault and harassment from the government-affiliated groups in most of the areas. However, at present, the government in most of the Arab world has started to focus on protecting the political rights of the minority groups in order to ensure peace in the nation. For this purpose, the government does not interfere with the minority religious observances and has started providing security for worship places as well as other religious places such as shrines, churches, religious pilgrimage sites, mosques and routes, and it has been found that minority groups in Arab countries continue to face several harassments like restrictions provided by local authorities to participate in political affairs in some of the regions and sexual assault (Diamond, 2010).

On the other hand, it has been evaluated by Ottaway & Hamzawy (2011) that the Islamic brotherhood in Arab countries has resulted in making minority groups suffer significantly from lack of political and human rights, oppression and injustice; however, the scenario started to change with the increase in the demonstrations, strikes and protests by a minority for facing several types of violations of human and political rights such as sexual violence, arbitrary detention and arrest, extrajudicial executions, poor treatments in detention and unlawful killing against children, women and religious minorities. Various organizations

such as youth organizations, labour organizations and political leaders started protesting in all the Arab countries for the fulfilment of different demands such as higher wages, education, reduction in the government corruption, improved transportation, arbitrary detainment, police torture and the development of fair and equal judiciary systems. As a result of the continuation in the socioeconomic protests, the government in Arab countries has shifted its policy of repression to provide concessions to the groups involved in the protest. The salary of workers and employees has been raised, transportation has been improved, and prices of products have been reduced for all the people; however, the demand of minority groups to have participation in political affairs and recognition of their cultural rights and language by the government still continues (Ottaway & Hamzawy, 2011).

Moniruzzaman (2014) has opined that the religious minorities groups in Arab countries are subject to the effects of a significant number of economic, political and societal factors which prevent them from accessing their basic human and political rights. The policy which has been developed by the government in the Arab world for religious minorities integrates their minimum representation in politics, lack of freedom and unequal human rights and justice. Although many of the governments in Arab countries have negotiated and rectified their behaviour towards minorities and have developed conventions for safeguarding cultural, economic and social rights, the government still does not focus on providing the political rights of accessing dominance and power to minority groups. Some of the Arab countries that provide minimum political rights to the religious minority groups include Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Oman (Moniruzzaman, 2014). Al-Rasheed (2010) has argued that Saudi Arabia is found to be the worst Arab country for violating the rights of minorities. Women are found to be the most vulnerable group who are not provided with their human and political rights. The Sharia's law makes the government prevent women from having the right to drive, right to travel without having male guardianship; along with

this, the women are found to be also restricted by the government on several other rights such as the right to enjoy economic, social and political rights. In fact, it has been found that the government in most of the Arab countries manipulate voters by promoting ethnic violence in order to ensure either personal or political gain of the party (Al-Rasheed, 2010).

As per the report of CIGI (2009) religious minorities in Iraq endure increased violence and discrimination and lack of adequate government policy. The government's failure to provide a peaceful and secure environment as well as expansion in sectarianism in the political process is making a significant minority population in the country to displace. Candidates from a minority group who participate in elections are assaulted, discriminated against, forced and threatened to take back their participation. The relationship between government and minority or political groups is found to be based on a higher level of mistrust. The government often faces challenges in fulfilling the demands of political or minority groups (CIGI, 2009). Overall, it has been evaluated that the government in Arab countries fails to provide the equal political rights to religious minority groups and thus there is huge need to include different political freedoms and rights for them such as the right of expression and opinion, right to participate and establish their own political association and parties, and right to move and vote in presidential and parliament elections. The government must focus on adopting the equality principle on the basis of citizenship and multiple identities and not on the nationality and majority of religion so as to reduce discrimination faced by the religious minorities (Reiter, 2009; Nasrawin, 2016).

3.3.2 The Social and Religious Majority

As noted by Jasser (2014), Syria was considered as the multi-religious country in which the people belonging to different religions lived together without any problem or sectarian and religious animosities. The pre-war population of Syria was 22 million inhabitants in which the majority was of people belonging to the Sunni Islamic sect, and from

the total population of Sunni, 14% were Kurdish Sunni. Moreover, 12% of the total population was Alawite, people that follow Christianity were 10%, 4% of the total population was of people belonging to Druze, and 1% were of Yezidi. In addition to this, there were small Jewish communities also in Syria that were living in Aleppo, Al Qamishli and Damascus (Jasser, 2014, p. 58). Taleb et al. (2015) have supported the argument and stated that prior to the war, the country was home to approximately 22 million people that belong to different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The majority in the country was of Sunni and accounted for more than 75% of the total population, and the rest of the population constituted Christians, Alawites, Armenians, Kurds, Druze and Turkmen. Prior to the war, most of the population was young as more than 58% of the total population was less than 24 years of age. The population of Syria was subjected to ill health, poverty, unemployment, malnutrition and food crises (Taleb et al., 2015, p. 63).

On the basis of the above discussion, it is evaluated that the majority of people in Syria belong to the Sunni Islamic Sect, and Shia is considered as a minority in the country along with other religions such as Christianity, Jews and Yazidi. According to Alfahham (2020), Iraq is a country in which the majority population is Muslim and followers of the Prophet Muhammad. The country has a population of both Shia and Sunni in which Shia constitutes 55-60% of the total population and Sunni constitutes 40%. Most of the Shia ethnically belongs to the Arabs, and the rest belong to Kurdish and Turkomen Shia. Of the total Sunni population, approximately 60% are Arabs, 2.5% are Turkomen, and 37.5% are Kurds. The population is divided into the sects, and people feel belonging to their tribe instead of recognizing national identity. The religious minority in the country includes Mandaean, Yazidis, Christians, Jews and Bahai (Alfahham, 2020). Abdel-Razek and Puttick (2016) have stated that the government of Iraq formed after the US-led invasion in the year of 2003 has reversed the legacy of Saddam Hussein by providing equal participation to its

majority. However, the new political system was unable to provide a voice to Iraq's minority, and due to this reason, they were exposed to poverty, discrimination and violence. The incidents of brutal targeting of minorities after 2003 raised a question on their survival in the country. The country experienced the worst phase of bloodshed in the year 2006 when Al-Qaeda bombed the al-Askari mosque. In reaction to this Shia started to torture, kidnap and execute Sunni as a punishment and in this bloodshed, minorities of Iraq were also targeted as the population of Christians estimated at 1.4 million prior to conflicts was reduced to 350,000 (Abdel-Razek & Puttick, 2016, p.569).

As per Bengio (2012), minorities and women became victims of the expansion of the political power of Islam in the post-Saddam era in Iraq. As the influence of several Islamic groups like ISIS increased in the area, the residents began to impose a restriction on women and minorities and restrict their participation in the formation of the government by placing family pressure upon them. In the post-Saddam era, acts of violence such as killing, rape, human trafficking, kidnapping and various types of sexual harassment increased to a great level for religious minorities. The women and minorities were restricted to enjoy their basic rights and left outside the supervision of the state in which they became vulnerable to the unfavourable conditions of customary and Islamic law (Bengio, 2012, p. 55). On the other hand, Malantowicz (2013) has stated that the condition of the minority was the opposite in Syria. The minority enjoyed power in the country and engaged in the quarrel with the majority. At the time of the civil war in Syria, the Alawite sect that was a minority ruling the country and its conflicts with the majority of Sunni also pulled other minorities into the conflict. In responding to conflicts, Sunni organizations made a coalition in order to oppose the minority-led government, to which the regime responded violently and declared them as a foreign element and terrorists that wanted to threaten the national identity of Syria (Malantowicz, 2013).

In the viewpoint of Holtmann (2013), the minority in the countries of the Middle East regions such as Syria and Iraq are scattered in various regions especially at the border areas and are undergoing pressure from Sunnis and Shias to choose their side in the conflict. Syria is a country that has Sunni as the majority, and Iraq has Shia as the majority, and for decades both countries were ruled by the dictators from a religious minority in the country. Assad, the dictator of Syria, was an Alawite and the dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussain, was a Sunni Muslim. The unequal constellation by the former regimes nourish conflicts between the majority and minority in which both groups narrate themselves victims of conspiracy from the opposite party (Holtmann, 2013, p. 142). Çakmak (2017) has stated that the sectarian tension emerged after the outbreak of uprising and led the majority in Syria to crush and torture the minority by attacking their political and social freedom and rights. In this condition, the minority had no choice but to seek help from the government for their protection (Çakmak, 2017, p. 159). In addition to this, the government of Bashar-al-Assad portrayed itself as a protector of the minority and took decisions that resulted in crushing the uprising of the Islamic movement in the period 1970 to 1980. This act of Assad's government established an outline for actions of protests against religious minorities, and they started to attack the social and political rights of minorities by attacking, looting and threatening to prevent their participation in government (Çakmak, 2017, p. 174).

On the basis of the above discussion, it is inferred that the minority in Iraq and Syria got a chance to form a government. However, their condition in both countries was not good, and they had gone through a long phase of torture and violence in which their social and political rights were abolished in the past and rights were provided in name only; they did not work to save the minority from violence from the majority.

As noted by Al-Absi and Al-Absiová (2018), the issues of providing equal status to the ethnic and religious minority in the countries of the Middle East is most dangerous and

there are sensitive issues due to the reason that it may lead to create conflicts and become the prime reason of social unrest, ethnic, racial and religious disputes in the region. The majority want to take power in the region of the Middle East, and in this, they want to uproot the minority from that region. The issue of rights of the minority was first raised by the western powers that wanted to increase their influence in that area (Al-Absi & Al-Absiová, 2018, p. 150). Barkey and Gavrilis (2016) have stated that the nostalgic treatment received by the millet system is due to the failure of the government to give proper rights to a minority due to the pressure of a majority (Barkey & Gavrilis, 2016, p. 25). A new political system emerged in the countries of the Middle East in which an individual has freedom and rights due to his/her claim as a member of the state. The coexistence of the legal system and the millet-style political culture drag the rights of an individual into troublesome conditions. This existence of a parallel system leads a minority into a dependent status and vulnerable to elimination of their existence from the state (Barkey & Gavrilis, 2016, p. 31).

In the perspective of Moberg (2016), the condition under which a group is referred to as a nation is termed as the right to self-government all over the globe. The phase of self-government is considered as independence or autonomy provided to the groups protesting as per the political power of the group in that region. The expansion of these Islamic groups in the region posed a great threat to the rights of the minority in the country as the group proclaimed that they are advocating the beliefs of the majority and wanted to impose Islamic rule on the minority population. Esfandiari and Heideman (2015) have stated that the fall of the Arab Spring resulted in the rise of Daesh that controlled a huge territory of Iraq and Syria. The minority of these territories felt deterioration of their rights due to the extremist movement led by the majority. ISIS was most brutal due to the reason that it conducted the most barbaric and notorious acts against the minority that included rape, kidnapping, selling, trafficking and sexual enslavement. The group specially targeted Yazidis girls and women

over the other girls of religious minorities. In the territories controlled by ISIS, women belonging to the minority were forced to undergo inhumane treatment and had to follow restrictions forcefully on the basis of their interpretation of Sharia (Esfandiari & Heideman, 2015, p. 303).

Based on the above discussion it is evaluated that the movement for power and rights started by the majority forcefully drag the minority into the conflicts in which their rights have been abolished and not providing them the dignity and respect that they deserve. The political group that captured a huge territory of the region also pressurized and tortured the minority to live as per their orders and imposed Sharia law on them and in these practices, ISIS was the most infamous group. Another one of the key issues associated with this issue can be defined as sectarianism. This can be defined as struggles in the Middle East are regularly introduced as extremely old, strict and philosophical marvels. The individuals who buy in to such reasoning accept sectarianism runs so profound that it can't be tended to or settled. This view is far reaching in the media, strategy circles, and in some scholastic quarters also. Individuals high in the echelons of force, for example, previous President Barack Obama, have likewise accepted this view. Indeed, in his 2016 State of the Union oration, Obama said, "The Middle East is going through a change that will work out for an age, established in clashes that date back millennia".

Moreover, in any case, the Sunni-Shia partisan struggle is a cutting edge revisionist wonder that to a great extent establishes a response to explicit advanced occasions and financial issues. Its foundations can be followed back to the 1979 Iranian transformation instead of seventh-century strict and political divisions inside Islam. It has been exacerbated by a bunch of resulting outer and home-grown occasions; among them is the 2003 US intrusion of Iraq, the 2011 Syrian insurgency, the conflict in Yemen, and other running

contentions around there. Truth be told, sectarianism implies the disappointment of state working in the Middle East, which focuses, thus, to unfamiliar intercession.

3.3.3 Terrorism

In the views of Zeng & Tahat (2012) terrorism has gained, and it still continues to receive a significant amount of coverage from the media specifically after the attack of 9/11. Approximately 700 stories related to terrorism were viewed on the networks in the United States in 2006, which was found to be more after adding about 4,300 terrorism stories which aired between 2002 and 2005. This increase in terrorism activities has attracted the media to interpret and represent terrorism in all countries. The general perception which has been covered by the western media is that it labelled the violence from the Islamic end as terrorism rather than violence caused by Jewish or Christian (Berkley Center, 2021). Because of the attack of 9/11 as well as several other terrorist attacks which took place long after were found to be committed by extremists of Islam. Therefore Muslims have been found to be frequently portrayed by the media as culprits or perpetrators of terrorism.

However, Bar (2008) has opined that terrorism and in fact any type of suicide attack is not at all the Islamic phenomenon which has been described by the western media, but the increased number involving Muslims in terrorist attacks was just a coincidence which has resulted in making people relate terrorism with the name of Islam. The linking of the terrorist activities with the acts and teachings of Islam has generated a fundamental debate in both the West and the Muslim world. In this context, the western countries started to distinguish between the religious practices adopted by the different social groups and started viewing Muslims to be a distortion of religion which is actually found to be tolerant and peace-loving (Bar, 2008).

According to the perspective of Kaye et al. (2008), there are multiple reasons that could lead to terrorism as well as violation of political rights. It has been perceived by most

of the analysts and policymakers that promotion of democracy across the political sphere could be used as a critical component of countering terrorism activities. However, it has been argued by some others that democracy could not help in addressing terrorism, but it could result in making the situation worse and specifically in the regions with the unstable political environment like the Middle East. However, it could also not be neglected that the absence or availability of democracy or political rights cannot describe the terrorism level as most of the terrorist attacks across the world and especially after the attack on the US in 2003 have been found to occur mostly in the regions which were undemocratic, like North Africa and the Middle East (Kaye et al., 2008). Therefore, it can be analyzed that access to political rights and democracy are related either directly or indirectly to terrorism. In addition, Kaye et al. (2008) have assessed that the political rights in the Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco are found not to be accessible to people and specifically to minority groups as compared to other democratic countries, and also the liberalization effects in these countries are often delayed and mixed. Instead of promoting norms of tolerance, institutional inclusion and pluralism, the government-based reform processes in the Arab countries often focus on bringing an exclusionary and political intolerance system which eventually contributes in supporting and undermining political violence and other terrorist activities.

The countries which have allowed the public to participate actively in the political process have led to promote moderation. It can further be seen that they have minimized many of the violent terrorism activities against the country. For instance, the government in Morocco has allowed moderate Islamist parties to participate in political affairs for making them lead with the government towards accommodation rather than confrontation (Kaye et al., 2008). In a similar manner, Disha, Cavendish & King (2011) have explained the relationship between the political environment and the terrorism events. The political party

preference of the country and its political competitiveness is found to be the important factor in the promotion of hate crimes. It has been suggested that the political power of the local authorities to respond to different terrorism, civil or political right issues would prove to be more favourable in reducing hate crimes. For instance, a democratic country is more likely to counter hate crime activities as compared to a republican (Disha, Cavendish & King, 2011). In a similar context, it has been found by Chenoweth (2013) that the countries with advanced and wealthy democracies have suffered less from the significant level of terrorism than those non-democratic countries from the period between 1968 to 1997.

According to Weinberg, Pedahzur & Perliger (2008), the two types of political organizations, including terrorist groups and political parties are found to be associated with one another. It has been stated that the political parties have a crucial role in the process of political democracy as they allow voters and the general public to choose their leaders. Political parties provide opportunities to the public to participate and inspire the political process to a great extent. They are also responsible for crystallizing and simplifying critical issues as well as abstract choices; along with this, they also control governments and are found to be accountable to the public of how they are handling national issues. The political parties are the institutions that either motivate or counter violent behaviour. For instance, the violent behaviour in Algeria in the year 1991 was carried out because of the demand for political rights by the people and the transition of the country to democracy. In a similar manner, activities such as kidnapping and bombing in Chile under the dictatorship of Pinochet occurred to a significant extent during the 1980s because of the demand of people for the country's democracy (Weinberg, Pedahzur & Perliger, 2008). In this respect, it can be interpreted that the political rights in the Arab countries also faced the issue of terrorism and the terrorist groups also have political aspirations and thus it is impacting the political rights

of the minority and religious communities. The terrorism and demand for political rights are associated with one another.

Moreover, Wilner & Dubouloz (2010) have opined that after the terrorist attack in the US by al-Qaeda in 2001, there had been a significant increase in the violent activities in the country which was found to be stimulated by radical Islamism as well as people from Australian, European, American and Canadian descent or were Muslim converts or long-term residents of the country. The scenario was labelled as “home-generated terrorism” representing the growth in the aggressive jihadism. The terrorism acts committed by individuals from jihadism against Westerns were due to their grievances that were associated with the social and political environments which eventually made them prepare violent acts within their home country (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2010). Overall, the in-depth analysis of literature reflects that the political environment has a direct influence on terrorism activities within and outside the country. The demand for political rights and democracy make people in the countries commit several types of violent activities such as engaging in terrorism, especially countries associated with dictatorship governance.

3.3.4 International Relations

According to the paper published by the UNHR (2012), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) works for providing protection for the people who have to flee from their country due to political pressure. It emphasizes on providing equal rights to the minority and ensures that the constitution of the country gives equal opportunity to participate in government. It continuously issues guidelines and notes in concern to the matters related to the protection of minorities in a particular nation such as it issued guidelines related to the protection of the Urdu speaking minority in Bangladesh, Asylum Seekers of the Slovak Roma community and protection of people of Kosovo (UNHR, 2012). Ahram (2015) has stated that the United States (US) has taken various military actions in

order to protect the social and political rights of the minority and women in the areas of tension. For instance, the US helped minorities in Afghanistan to raise their voice against the oppressor majority. The US also did great work in protecting the rights of the minority and women in the region of the Middle East by leading a coalition against ISIS and helped the minorities in raising weapons against it and taking their political rights. It also provided training and arms support to Kurdish female fighters to raise weapons against ISIS. The strategy of the US provided positive results in the desperation of Kurds and Yazidis besieged at Kobane and Mount Sinjar and claimed their political rights to live with dignity in that area (Ahram, 2015).

In the viewpoint of Fromson and Simon (2015), a coalition led by the US against ISIS was started with defensive goals such as prevention of the falling of Erbil and Baghdad and protecting the political and social rights of minorities. The organization ISIS has taken aggressive steps to uphold the minorities from Iraq and Syria, and due to this reason, the coalition has to take more aggressive actions against ISIS by retaking Mosul and Al-Raqqa in order to break the back of ISIS. The actions of providing training and arms support to the minority against ISIS is a self-proclaimed government formed to protect the interests of the majority in that region (Fromson & Simon, 2015). On the other hand, Owen (2013) has stated that the presence of the US in the region of the Middle East has the main purpose of maintaining harmony in the area and ensuring that minorities enjoy equal rights and live in prosperity in the country of their origin. The politics in the countries of the Middle East are dominated by religious and sectarian feelings, and due to this reason, every community wants to increase their influence in the region, and this creates conflicts between the countries. In this concern, the presence of the US and its coalition forces are working in the direction to form a government that works beyond sectarian thinking and provides equal political and social rights to minorities in the region of the Middle East (Owen, 2013).

As noted by Halpern (2015), the presence of America in the region of the Middle East often becomes a region of conflicts between the minority and majority and may result in civil war in the countries. For instance, in Lebanon, the civil war occurred due to the support of western countries such as the US to secure a Christian dominated government in the country where the majority population is Muslim. The presence of 10,000 US troops was unable to sustain a government that lost local support (Halpern, 2015). On the contrary, Pollack et al. (2011) have stated that the US has taken several steps to safeguard the interest of minorities and providing them equal rights in the region of the Middle East, such as increasing its influences in the area by deploying more troops. However, these steps taken by the US did provide satisfactory results in reducing the sufferings of minorities in the region of the Middle East, especially in Syria (United Nation, 2015). The government of Syria was unable to minimize the power vacuum that became one of the major reasons for the rise of terrorist groups such as ISIS. The presence of the US in the area of the Middle East should be taken as the protector of rights of minorities as the leaders of opposition movement were not in favour of providing equal rights to minorities (Pollack et al., 2011).

On the basis of the above discussion, it is evaluated that the US has taken huge steps to prevent minorities from being tortured by the government, terrorist organizations, and the majority population. The US provided military support, arms, and training to the minority in order to raise them against the forces that want to take their basic rights.

As per the viewpoint of Puddington (2013), Russia is also one of the major countries that participated in the program to advocate the rights of minorities in the region of the Middle East. The stance of Russia differs from the US as it wanted to limit international interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the Middle East and promote the collaboration of minority and majority in the formation of the government. However, it also raised its voice in favour of minorities and made efforts to create a democratic government in

the region of the Middle East (Puddington, 2013). On the other hand, Mearsheimer (2014) has stated that Russia also intervened in the Ukraine in order to protect the rights of the Russian-speaking minority in that country. The government of the Ukraine adopted suppressive policies regarding the minority that speak the Russian language in the country. The government of Russia also raised the issue in the UN Security Council in order to gain the attention of the international community towards the issue and prevent the rights of minorities in the Ukraine. Moreover, Russia also took military actions against the Ukraine in order to pressurize it to provide equal rights to the minority and prevent discrimination on the basis of language and create harmony in the society (Mearsheimer, 2014).

As noted by Dannreuther (2015), Russia supported the Regime of Assad in Syria, not because he was their ally, but because its belief was that the regime would contribute to defending the interests and rights of minorities in Syria in order to prevent the long tradition of multi-confessional toleration. Russia knew the fact that the nature of the Assad regime was authoritarian, but it believed that overthrowing the government would result in an adverse situation for minorities due to an increase in the influences of organizations such as ISIS. In this situation, the authorities of Russia believed that the effective method of solving the crisis of Syria was to provide external support to the process of negotiation between the parties included in conflicts and minorities instead of overthrowing the regime of Assad (Dannreuther, 2015).

Therefore, it is determined from the discussion that Russia also advocated the voices of minorities against majorities and took proper actions to resolve the conflicts and provide equal political and social rights to minorities in other countries. The support provided to the Assad regime was a step to promote negotiation between the conflicting parties and compel the government to provide equal rights to the minority (Ohchr, 2010).

As per Ralph and Souter (2015), along with the US and Russia, other countries also made great efforts to provide equal rights to minorities in conflicting parts of Iraq and Syria. The biggest threat to the minority, especially Christian and Yazidi, is ISIS and in order to erode it and establish a government that provides equal rights to all of its citizens, the coalition led by the US also gets the support of other countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands that send their troops to airstrike the areas captured by ISIS (Ralph & Souter, 2015). On the other hand, Kinninmont and House (2014) have stated that Iran also engaged in the conflicts of Iraq and Syria by sending its guards to train military forces in Syria. Iran justifies its actions by stating that it was a strategy to counter the influences of al-Qaeda and ISIS. Allies of Iran Hamas and Hezbollah also participated actively in the conflict of Syria and supported Assad by stating that it is less evil in comparison to the two Jihadi groups (ISIS and al-Qaeda) that are against the minority (Kinninmont & House, 2014).

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN IRAQ AND SYRIA 2008-2018 (CHRISTIANS AND YAZIDIS)

Introduction

In this chapter we test the descriptive and comparative hypothesis of our research plan.

Within-Case Study is used to measure and contrast religious minorities' political rights in different periods of the Syrian and Iraqi political process in order to test if the political rights of voting and accessing public services have been reduced for religious minorities in Iraq and Syria from 2008 to 2018. The entire process is observed by the differentiation of the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 are respectively dedicated to analyse the Iraqi and Syrian casuistries. Both sections are structured in three sub-sections. Subsections 4.1.1 and 4.2.1 respectively offer an introduction to Christians and Yazidis' common problems in Iraq and Syria, the different challenges they face and the reasons for those disparities. Subsections 4.1.2 and 4.2.2 respectively measure Christians and Yazidis' voting in Iraq and Syria in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018. Finally, Subsections 4.1.3 and 4.2.3, respectively measure Christians and Yazidis' accessing public services in Iraq and Syria in the same periods.

As a second empirical research step, Section 4.3 addresses a Binary Case Study for comparing the evolution of religious minorities' political rights of voting and accessing public services in Iraq and Syria in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018 in order to test if there are differences and similarities between voting and accessing public services for each religious minority. Subsection 4.3.1 compares Christians and Yazidis' voting in Iraq and Syria in the period 2008-2013. Subsection 4.3.2 compares Christians and Yazidis' accessing public services in Iraq and Syria in the period 2013-2018.

4.1 Religious Minorities in Iraq: Christians and Yazidis

4.1.1 Common problems, different challenges and reasoning

After the fall of the Saddam regime in Iraq 2003, the Yazidis community faced various hurdles that impacted their living within the country. Firstly, after the fall, the water pipes of Yazidi individuals were destroyed and caused various problems in land cultivation and increase of water shortages in numerous villages. The fall of the Saddam regime caused various hurdles for the Yazidi community in terms of no proper cultivation accessories, lack of employment, no influence over the rights and loss of houses they were living in. Thus, the complexity was constantly raised for the Yazidis community impacting their peaceful living within the country (Katzman, 2010). Identically, in the case of the Christian community, the fall of the Saddam regime imposed various strict religious restrictions as being a minority group in the country. The community faced various attacks that result in injured individuals within the community. After the fall of the Saddam Regime, enormous churches were attacked and bombed by the terrorists that killed and injured many individuals of the Christian community. Most of the attacks were coordinated to occur on enormous churches, at the same time to stop their dominancy over the survival. Furthermore, after the fall of the Saddam regime, most of the churches in Iraq were forced to close down as death threats were constantly thrown at the priests (Teule, 2012). Thus, it is manifested that the fall of the Saddam regime created enormous hurdles and death for both communities and makes it one of the similarities between the Christian and the Yazidi community in the context of their level of the political rights in Iraq.

Despite Iraq's 2005 Constitution, the fact is that both religious minority groups suffer different ways of discrimination due to Constitution in-application.

The Constitution of Iraq 2005, which forms the supreme and pre-eminent document of law in Iraq, formally protects the political rights of Yazidis and Christians. The

Constitution emphasises the protection of all Iraqis from discrimination and assures equal treatment irrespective of their race, gender, origin, ethnicity, creed, opinion, colour, opinion or economic and social status. It lays down robust equality rights and establishes a firm foundation of rights of all Iraqis. Article 14 of the Constitution, specifically highlights an equal protection clause for all persons in Iraq, irrespective of their race, gender, origin, ethnicity, or opinion of socio-economic status (Arjomand, 2018). It emphasises on providing equality before the law without creating any discrimination based on sect, religion or belief. Article 40 assures freedom of belief while Article 2, guarantees absolute religious rights to freedom of religious practices and beliefs to all persons and makes a special emphasis to Yazidis, Christians and others, such as Sabaeans. Article 42 provided the freedom of conscious, belief, and thought to every individual in Iraq. Furthermore, Article 43 of the 2005 Constitution states that the nation guarantees the protection of places of worship, and also provides freedom of worship to every individual.

However, Iraq still does not have any religious freedom; rather merely has freedom of worship and region. For instance, in 2016, the parliament of Iraq passed a law to ban the import, sale, and production of alcoholic beverages and alcohol. This law was questioned by the Parliament's Christian Members as Article 2 guarantees the right to freedom of religious practices and beliefs. This act of banning alcohol has imposed massive restrictions on Yazidis, Sabaeans Mandaean, and Christians who are involved in selling spirits as it has drastically affected their livelihood, as well as resulted in their financial ruin (Oehring, 2017).

Furthermore, it has been observed that the minority groups, such as Yazidis and Christians, are forced by the authorities of the Iraqi Federal government to brace their territorial interests (Hoffman et al., 2018). It has also been perceived that even the security forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) violate human rights to force political representatives of the minority groups like Yazidis and Christians and also use intimidation to

ally with the parties of the KRG for establishing control. This highlights the discrimination practices by the security forces in Iraq and demonstrates that minorities do not have strong rights that can protect them from violence.

Numerous important constitutional provisions regarding the protection of the minority groups in the country are yet to be implemented, as a result of which these groups continue to be vulnerable to discrimination (IILHR, n.d.). Article 2 raises serious questions regarding the role and position of non-Islamic religions under the legislation of Iraq by suggesting the need for religious freedom to be tailored to fit the criteria established by Islam (Arjomand, 2018). Further, the Nationality Act, 2006, repeals and replaces the Iraqi National Law No. 43 of 1963 and Law No. 5 of 1975 and highlights significant legislation to grant citizenship to all Iraqis who were earlier denied of such citizenship (IILHR, n.d.). Nevertheless, the legislative and bureaucratic procedures required for reinstating their citizenship are highly complicated and time-consuming. The involvement of such challenges and complications prevent the minorities from using this legislation. The report also highlights that while numerous important international conventions on human rights and minority rights including ICERD, ICESCR and the ICCPR have been signed by Iraq, their consistent incorporation in the domestic law of the country is still absent (IILHR, n.d.).

It is also examined that despite the enactment of Kurdistan Region No. (5) of 2015 and the issuance of Labour Law No. (37) of 2015, which emphasises a ban on discrimination, these regulations are still awaiting approval of the Office of Endowment of Yazidi and Christian religions. Moreover, the current criminal law does not include the prohibition of racial discrimination as a result of which discriminatory behaviours based on racial hatred or superiority including hate speeches are not accountable as a punishable crime (Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, 2018). Further, the representation of minorities in politics is also very low in Iraq. Article 11, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of Iraq lays down 5 seats for

Christians and 1 seat for Yazidis; however, after the amendments, 3 seats each were allocated to the Christians and Yazidis in Nineveh (Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, 2018).

Moreover, despite improvements in the security and legal position, the minorities in the country continue to position Iraq in an unstable polity dominated by targeted violence based on ethnic, racial and religious bias. Instances of discrimination and an absence of institutional support and protection can be seen across all levels of the government. The minority communities in Iraq such as Christians and Yazidis along with Assyrians, Shabak, Chaldeans and Turkoman tend to encounter several challenges (Institution for International Law & Human Rights, 2013). The members of these communities form the key targets of violence, massive displacement, no access to education and employment and opportunities for life. The regional government of Kurdistan Regional Government is claimed to be guaranteeing the rights of the minorities in its constitution. In this context, Article 5 states the ethnic and minority groups while Article 6 ensures the freedom of religious belief and access to religious rights of the Yazidis, Christians and the others. Nevertheless, the Shabak lacks recognition and identification as a unique ethnic group across the entire Kurdish constitution (Institution for International Law & Human Rights, 2013).

Yazidis and Christians are also prone to threats by some communities in Iraq (Asher-Schapiro, 2014). The armed groups in Iraq proclaiming intolerant principles have led to the continuation of their assaults of vulnerable groups, decimating the part of Iraq population, and compelling them to leave the country. The torture of the armed forces in the minority groups show the vagueness of the rights provided to the minority communities in Iraq (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

Moreover, the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (2018) highlight that the Iraqi Council of Ministers Resolution No (92) of 2014 established that Yazidis and Christians

victimised by the Daesh terrorist gangs shall be offered adequate security. Additionally, the Decision of the Iraqi Council of Representative No (43) of 2016 also emphasized on numerous important measures by the government regarding the release of Yazidi abducted women and reconstruction and restoration of the services and infrastructure of the district. Nevertheless, about 3288 Yazidi abductees were still missing by June 2018 (Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, 2018). The statistics of the Yazidis targeted by the Daesh terrorist groups revealed that the number of Yazidis before the attacks as 550,000 persons, which was reduced to 360,000 displaced persons after the attacks, wherein 1,293 Yazidis were targeted and killed, 3,548 women and 2,896 men were abducted and 68 places of worship were effaced. After the massacre of the violence caused by the Daesh terrorist groups, the majority of the Yazidis desired to emigrate. In the context of the Christians, no official statistics regarding the number of persons to have returned to the province of Ninevah could be observed and a large majority of them were unwilling to return permanently to the province (Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, 2018).

It is also estimated by the Christian leaders and international NGOs that there were approximately 500,000 Christians in 2013, indicating a decline of about 300,000 Christians in the last 5 years (International Religious Freedom Report, 2013). Although constitutional provisions emphasising the freedom of religion might reinstate these laws, no court challenges or invalidates them and no adequate legislation provisions are present to repeal them. In 2013, there were substantial reports on detention, arrests, restrictions and discrimination based on superiority of race and religion by the central government along with the sectarian misappropriation of the official authority. There has been the infrequent investigation of abuses of minorities such as Christians and Yazidis who have suffered abuses by the government, terrorist gangs and illegally armed militants. Even where investigations were undertaken, the outcomes were unknown, incomplete or unpublished (International

Religious Freedom Report, 2013). There is a serious threat to the life and security of the religious minorities including Christians and Yazidis residing in the disputed internal boundaries and they have been subjected to armed terrorist attacks including suicide bombings. It has also been alleged by the Yazidi political leaders that Kurdish Peshmerga and Asayish forces continue to harass and abuse their communities in Ninewa Province under the control of the KRG. Human rights groups and these political leaders reported numerous cases of discrimination experienced by them for basic public services such as sanitation, water and electricity. Moreover, Yazidis are also routinely targeted for arbitrary detention by the officials of the KRG at Asayish checkpoints (International Religious Freedom Report, 2013).

Further, the International Religious Freedom Report (2018) reveals that more than 3,000 Yazidis continue to be missing after ISIS's assault on northern Iraq in 2014. Although the security conditions in numerous parts of Iraq were claimed to have been improved since 2017, the reports on societal discrimination and violence by the sectarian armed groups have been equally high. Another important issue encountered by the Yazidis as per this report was the religious status of the children born out of rape of the minority women. These minority women were subjected to gender-based violence perpetrated by the militants of ISIS (International Religious Freedom Report, 2018). It was alleged by the Yazidi leaders that Yazidi captives of ISIS were subjected to repeated violence and rapes besides there being many obstacles that would influence the eligibility of the family to be able to have access to government facilities and services. In the case of Christians also, there were allegations they were subjected to repeated violence and rapes besides there being many obstacles that would influence the eligibility of the family to be able to access food and other basic amenities (International Religious Freedom Report, 2018).

Both minorities are defenceless against these attacks, since they do not have tribal or militia structures for protecting them, and also do not obtain appropriate official protection.

Furthermore, there are no adequate laws and regulations that can protect their lives from the terrors in Iraq. The protection or assistance programmes of the Iraqi government in order to safeguard the minority groups like Yazidis and Christians are sub-operational or non-operational and insufficient for meeting the requirements of these groups, despite domestic and international commitments. The Iraqi government has drastically failed to provide protection to these vulnerable minority groups from attacks and discriminations.

Economically, legally and politically marginalised, these minority communities are stuck in the middle of a struggle between the central government of Iraq and the KRG to control the areas where these communities reside. One of the significant examples is the dispute regarding minority quotas in the regional elections law that shows the way minority groups are caught between the political war of the central government and the KRG (Gaer et al., 2008).

However, despite Iraq being regarded as the most dangerous place for minority communities like Yazidis and Christians to reside, the subjective perceptions of the members of both minority groups differ significantly. The data (Chapman, 2012) has depicted that a decade ago over 70 per cent of the Yazidis stated that the security forces are not capable of guaranteeing their security. However, over 70 per cent of the Christians agreed that they are satisfied with the security forces. On the contrary, over 60 per cent of Christians and over 80 per cent of Yazidis stated that they do not feel safe while leaving home and travelling to school, university, or work.

Several reasons lay behind these differences. These have to do with the dissimilar political representation, religion nature and social perception of the religious minorities.

The first one is the lack of Yazidi representatives in the parliament of Iraq, as well as in the parliament of the KRG (Zoonen & Wirya, 2017). There is no single comprehensive

political body that signifies Yazidis in Iraq (Human Rights Watch, 2019). The Yazidi community is basically divided between the KRG and the central government, which is the biggest drawback that pushes them backward in the political front of the nation. This division made Yazidis politically unorganised in regions under a central authority. Due to the dominance of Kurdish parties, Yazidis also could not establish their own political party (Salah & Hassan, n.d.).

Yazidis are also under-represented in the government, and their representatives are mostly ignored in the meetings, and their concerns are generally unheard (Gaer et al., 2008).

On the contrary, Christians' participation in Iraqi politics has reached the ministerial level, and they have also obtained a quota that permitted them to get seats in Kurdistan Regions Parliament, as well as in the Federal Parliament. Since the beginning, Christians have been participating in Iraqi Politics; however, it is also perceived that mere political participation cannot let Christians actively get involved in the country's political process.

The second reason relates to the nature of the Christian and Yazidi religion. The political framework of Islamic parties involves several provisions to protect certain religious minorities, especially those perceived as monotheistic trajectory parts that preceded Islam, like Christianity and Judaism. These minority groups are regarded as religions that are instituted by God. However, the Yazidis' perception as devoted to the devil, and the inability of the community to counter those observations via written sources, give Yazidis a disadvantage condition.

The third reason for the greater severity of the Yazidis' conditions is connected to the Iraqi majority's misconception about them. It is believed that Yazidis worship the devil. Due to this, there has been misapprehension among the Iraq community about Yazidis that led to socio-economic marginalisation and discrimination of the Yazidi community. Some of

Muslims in Iraq refuse to frequent the businesses that employ Yazidis as they regard the Yazidis as dirty. Yazidis also face attacks if they perform their religious ceremonies, due to which they fear to perform any religious ceremonies. They even fear to travel outside their community due to the fear of being attacked or accused. This has drastically affected the lives of many farmers as they fear to go to the markets to sell their cultivated products. More to the point, in spite of the fact that the majority of the Yazidis speak Kurdish and consider themselves as Kurdish ethnically, they are also targeted by local Kurdish leaders and are subjected to adverse religious violence campaigns in Iraq.

In support of the context, the Institute for International Law and Human Rights (IILHR) has highlighted that Yazidis face tremendous human rights issues in Iraq, which are ignored by the government. Data depicts that in 2005, Iraq consisted of about 700,000 to 750,000 Yazidis, which declined to 500,000 by 2013. This shows the amount of attacks and abuse they face in Iraq regularly. However, there is still no such law that can protect them from the abuse and attacks in the country (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2014).

4.1.2 Christian and Yazidis' voting in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018

4.1.2.1 The period 2008-2013

Yazidis can be considered as the most vulnerable ethnic community in Iraq as they face various discriminations in terms of political rights. During the drafting of the constitution in Iraq, the priorities of Yazidis were not involved at a considerable level. The Iraqi constitution lacks in providing adequate protection measures to this community in terms of individual freedoms and democratic governance (Basci, 2016). The anti-government protests in 2008 pressured the Iraqi government to include a Yazidi representative in the constitution. In 2010, when Abu Bakr al Baghdadi became the leader of ISIL, he conducted various operations on minorities of Iraq and Syria.

In spite of the fact that Christians have participated in Iraq actively in political affairs since the drafting of Iraq's constitution and formation of the Governing Council, they are not provided with equal rights to play a dominant role in political affairs (Ghanim, 2011). Christians in Iraq are categorised on a denominational and ethnic basis. Ethnically, there are Syriac, Assyrian, Armenian and Chaldean Christians in Iraq while denominationally Christians have been categorised into Catholics, Evangelicals, Orthodox and others. Both ethnic and denominational groups form a multiple number of political parties in Iraq and represent Christians. Regardless of the diversity of the Christian population in political parties, most of the Christian representatives find their role only as a frontrunner to serve and protect some currents, parties and persons and not all Christian segments. The representation of Christians in Iraq politics is found to be problematic because of the differences in the demands and viewpoints of Christians coming from diverse backgrounds. This makes Christians in Iraq not to involve in political currents and parties which consequently affects their representation. Besides this, the pressure and personal interest exerted by big existing political currents also make Christians distance themselves from constituencies. The Christian representatives in Iraq also do not have the power to make influential and substantial decisions for the welfare of their community (Heartland and Alliance, 2016). Overall, the participation and representation of the Christian minority is found to be just symbolic instead of substantial.

Similarly, in the case of Yazidis, their participation and representation are almost negligible in Iraq's political affairs. Yazidis are categorised into two groups, including lay families and priestly and religious families. Furthermore, priestly families have been categorised into Sheikh and Pir. Sheikh on the one side is involved in religious festivals while on the other hand, Pir celebrates funerals, weddings and baptisms. Lay families, in addition, are associated with providing subsistence to priestly and religious families. Most of these

groups of Yazidis live in villages and are found to be engaged in their own occupation rather than showing interest in politics (Del Re, 2015). In fact, a very small population of Yazidis who live in urban areas show less interest in participating in economic, social and political affairs. Besides this, the few minority representatives that hold a position in political currents face many problems in reaching higher positions and making decisions by themselves for the welfare of their community. Despite the efforts made by the Iraqi government to promote and favour equal co-existence of Yazidis in affairs, the challenges such as education and pressures by majority groups often make these minority populations unable to represent themselves in politics. Yazidis have now got access to complete their studies until 12th grade, but a few years ago it was problematic for them to access schools which in turn makes these minority groups left behind in society and their representation in politics despite having rights to some seats in Parliament (Del Re, 2015).

Christian people in Iraq and Syria do not hold equal political rights because the share of the Christian population in the Middle East decreased to 5% in 2010 in comparison with 10% in 1900. ISIS conducted various attacks on Christian people, due to which people of minor economies are leaving these countries (Watt, 2013). The lack of sufficient representatives in the Iraqi constitution for Christians is resulting in the lack of political parties who can stand for these people.

Due to the lack of political participation of Christians and Yazidis, people of these minorities are forced to live in uncomfortable situations. The condition of Yazidis is much worse in comparison to Christians as they were attacked by ISIS many times. No political protection for Yazidis makes them more vulnerable to the attacks of ISIS in Iraq and Syria. The Two Yazidi communities in 2007 were attacked by four vehicle bombs which killed 500 people and 1,500 were injured (Tekin et al., 2016). The report published by Human Rights Watch in 2009 illustrated that KDP authorities pressured Yazidis to identify themselves as

Kurds by using economic and political instruments. (Wood, 2013). These incidents indicate that Christians and Yazidis are dealing with adverse situations in Iraq and Syria; however, Yazidis are in a much worse situation than Christians as they have no political rights and support.

4.1.2.2 The period 2013-2018

In the year 2014, ISIS conducted horrific genocide on the Yazidis in northern Iraq, in which thousands of Yazidi men and women were killed. This was a forced conversion campaign on them in which many girls were pushed into sexual slavery. This incident indicates that the political participation of Yazidis is very low, and that people from Kurd and Arab parties threaten them for the votes (Kizilhan, 2019). The persecution of Yazidis from ISIL gained international attention as many countries came forward to help them. This incident helped Yazidis in getting certain political rights in Iraq.

The reasons that make participation and representation of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq's political affairs not just restricted to restrictions like financial burdens, rather these minority groups are also exploited and discriminated against because of having political affiliations. The scenario is found to be more common in disputed territories wherein minority groups integrating Christians, Yazidis, Shabak and Turkmen are often being threatened by bigger political parties from Kurds and Arabs for gaining votes as well as securing their own control in the area.

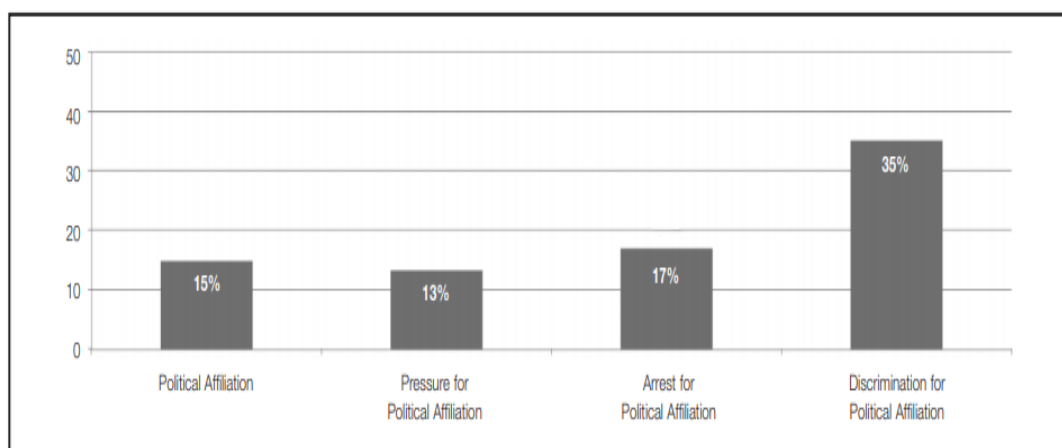


Figure 1: Percentage of Minorities Experiencing Violence and Discrimination for Political Affiliation (2011)

Source: (Iraqi Minorities Council, 2011)

The opposition and resistance made by minority groups increase the risk of losing their services, jobs and in fact, life. The findings of the survey conducted from these groups revealed that approximately 35 per cent of the population had experienced violence and discrimination because of having political connections wherein Yazidis and Turkmen were found to be mostly discriminated against. Similarly, 41 per cent of Yazidis opined that they were pressurised because of having political affiliation. Being harassed, verbally abused, arrested and threatened are some of the common experiences faced by minorities in Iraq. In fact, they are being stopped at checkpoints or in the streets and asked which political group they belong to (Iraqi Minorities Council, 2011). Overall, it analysed that Iraq fails to provide equal political rights to Christians, Yazidis and other minorities to have participation and representation in political affairs. Despite being in politics, minority representatives do not get higher positions and decision-making rights. Besides this, there have been several reasons which make minority populations not to involve in politics including education, restrictions by IHEC, pressure from bigger political groups, discrimination, fear and threat of being arrested and their declining population.

The Christian Community has been decreased from 1.5 million to 250,000, which determines that the persecution of Christians in Iraq is on an extreme level. The assaults conducted in 2014 on Iraqi Christians forced around 125,000 Christians to leave their paternal homes and move somewhere else. There are only five seats for Christians in Iraq's electoral law, which is not sufficient to provide recognition to this community (Oehring, 2017). Although both communities, Yazidis and Christians, are facing various attacks and violent behaviour from local political parties and Militias, only one seat for the Yazidis according to the electoral law shows the cruel treatment of them. Article 49 of the Iraqi constitution only represents one seat for 100,000 Yazidis which indicates the low participation of Yazidis in political rights.

4.1.3 Christian and Yazidis' accessing public services in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018

4.1.3.1 The period 2008-2013

The political participation of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq continues to deteriorate not only because of people's lack of interest in politics but because of experiencing continuous attacks, violence, discrimination, forced displacement and marginalisation. The situation has resulted in drastically decreasing the population of religious minorities in Iraq which is found to be related directly to lack of representation of Christians and Yazidis in political affairs (Allawi, 2008). The Christians that earlier constituted 10.25% of the total Iraqi population have declined to 7.4% and are believed to decline just to 200,000 or in fact less than this in coming years. This declining number of minority population makes their representation in politics restricted or almost negligible. Despite reserving seats for minority communities in the Iraqi parliament that constitutes five seats for Christians and one seat for Yazidis, the seats either remain vacant or MPs' do not get decision-making power to do or achieve something for their voters (KAS, 2017; USCIRF, 2008). Moreover, the restrictions

put by the Iraqi government to get enrolled in political parties is also the prominent reason which restricts Christians, Yazidis as well as other minorities to participate actively in the political association assembly. The condition set by the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to pay electoral charges of approximately fifty million dinars for being eligible to get enrolled in elections is one example which makes minorities not participate in politics. The measures put financial burden specifically on minorities to pay such huge amounts, and in fact, minorities political parties remove their names from elections (Heartland and Alliance, 2016).

In the year 2013, many Yazidis were arrested, so they could not take part in any anti-Kurdish activity. Similarly, some Christian journalists were also detained by big political parties, one of which was Jamil Salah Al-Din Jamil. During the genocide of 2014, many Yazidi refugees were killed and trapped by other political parties in order to minimise any kind of threat for their parties. The Yazidi demonstrators were found looking for international support for their people; similarly, as were the Christian. The issue of disfigurement is faced by Yazidis in the legal sphere of Iraq due to discriminatory legislation which provokes other strong political parties to dominate them. No separate religious codes are provided to Christians and Yazidis that can secure their personal status.

4.1.3.2 The period 2013-2018

The Yazidi communities have been concentrated in the regions of Erbil and Baghdad; however, the lack of political representation of them in Iraq has left these regions to neglect their rights. Along with education, the ongoing dispute between the Arabs and Kurds is also found to be the reason for lack of representation of minorities in political affairs and specifically in disputed territories. The dispute has made Yazidis struggle in having control over their areas as well as putting pressure on them to be recognised as either Arab or Kurd. The scenario has created problems of political representation as it has mandated

representatives to make them first affiliate with either major Arab or Kurdish parties that are found to be focused more on Baghdad-Erbil disputes rather than meeting the needs of different religious and ethnic communities in Iraq and specifically in disputed territories (MERI, 2017). The situation results in generating problems of participation as well as representation of Yazidis and especially when the aspirations of the minority community does not align with objectives of either Kurdish or Arab political parties. Therefore, it has been analysed that the number of representatives in political affairs from both minorities groups Christians and Yazidis are minimum and could be said as just symbolic wherein they do not have the rights to make decisions, hold higher positions or take actions on their own for the benefit of their community as a whole.

During the elections in 2014, many political parties were developed by the non-minorities to campaign in concern of reserved seats. This indicated that even after getting certain reserved seats in elections, Christians and Yazidis do not feel effective enough in order to stand for their rights. Meaningful participation is restricted by mainstream parties for minorities by Kurd and Arab Parties (Van Schaack, 2018). The dominant Kurdish parties such as PUK and KDP only include Yazidis in their election campaign when they want to gain the votes of these minorities. During the genocide, many Yazidi demonstrators were beaten by Kurdish security forces, so the Yazidis did not take any aggressive steps against them (Jäger et al., 2019). Overall, it is examined that the Iraqi government failed in providing equal political rights to these communities because they are not allowed to be promoted to higher positions. The domination of Christians and Yazidis from Kurds and Arabs weakened their position in Iraq and Syria.

4.2 Religious Minorities in Syria: Christians and Yazidis

4.2.1 Introduction to the Common Problems of Christians and Yazidis

The rights of practising religious rituals are provided to the people belonging to the minorities in Syria. However, there is no absolute freedom provided to them as the constitution only provides rights in a manner that does not violate public morality and order. In addition to this, the constitution also provides the right to form unions and professional associations in order to raise their voice against discrimination (House, 2014). The Constitution of Syria provides freedom of practising cultural and religious rituals to the minority. On the other hand, it does not accept proselytizing; that is, the act of converting people belonging to other religions to your religion. The constitution also allows citizens of Syria to speak their regional language or dialect (South, Jermyn & Spence, 2016). The constitution of Syria emphasizes power-sharing and the rights provided to a religious minority. The provisions of providing equal rights to minorities such as Christians and Yazidis are small steps in the building of trust and constructing a national identity in which every citizen has the right to practise their religion and to prevent discrimination on the basis of religion (Dostal, 2014).

Article 3 of the Syrian constitution supports religious freedom of minorities but only on the condition that they do not contradict any order given by the government. The Syrian government did not provide any political role to Yazidis and Christians in respect of their culture as these minorities are bound to follow government orders without questioning. Yazidis are deprived of many opportunities regarding jobs and religious freedom (Helm and Padovani, 2018). In 2011, Yazidis formulated a civil society association in order to stand for their rights and participate in political decisions. Kurdish political parties in Syria represent Yazidis as a part of them; therefore, it restricts their access to any kind of facilities (Tezcür,

2021). Yazidis are considered as a subset of the Kurdish community, so they are still marginalised in Syria, living without any political rights or protection from assault.

The political rights in Syria are compromised due to the ongoing civil war in the country and the regime also exhibits political opposition. The people are being suppressed of any freedom of speech, and corruption, along with enforced disappearances, are majorly identified in government-controlled areas. Due to this, the Christian minorities are politically disenfranchised, and if they are provided a position, they are not allowed to be involved in decision-making processes. The government does not act as an authentic vehicle for Syria's minorities' political interests, including Christians. However, Church law exists in Syria to govern issues related to personal status for Christians (Freedom House, 2020). These minorities should be given all the political rights similar to that of the Alawis minority but this is far from the reality.

The traditional political system in Syria was dominated by the French system, which ruined the political lives in general, including Christians and Yazidis. This system comprises elements regarding human and political rights that exhibit the minorities' collective rights in addition to social justice and some of the political rights. The minorities were also disregarded by the Ottoman Empire and denied any rights and treated as subjects of law (Cavanaugh & Castellino, 2013). Under the rule of the Ba'ath party, Christians were provided special facilities, including separate facilities for Christian religious education and allowing the option of state holidays for Christmas as well as Easter. The church authorities were also granted additional permissions for particular family laws. However, they have faced violence since 2011, which has also deprived them of all their fundamental rights, including political rights. Thus, they are scared about their future in Syria and the destruction of their churches adds to their fear (Minority Rights Group, 2018). It can be deduced that Christians face issues

related to political rights such as lack of government support and exclusion from holding senior government positions in Syria.

Similarly, the Yazidis, which are one of the religious minorities of Syria, are scattered throughout the country. They are found to be engaged in some of Syria's local administrative institutions on a particular scale. However, it is challenging for the Yazidi student to survive in the non-Yazidi city. Thus, to manage this issue, the Yazidis developed semi-stable relations with other religious neighbours, such as Arab and Kurdish people, to forge a link among the weaker minority. Earlier, Yazidis did not possess any political organisation and leadership position at leftist parties inside the official system of Syria. The lack of social discrimination led them to formulate their own civil society places after 2011. This difference is mainly because of the semi-secular nature dominant in Syria. Still, there were discriminations identified at the official level, including the one where Yazidis are not allowed to be in crucial positions in the military as well as judicial systems. Yazidis also lacked political rights in the country before 2011, and the government did not consider them as a separate entity. Along with this, the Yazidis were also not given the right to get Syrian citizenship (Ali & Hosseini, 2018).

Yazidis have reached a crossroads in Syria due to the circumstances prevailing in the country. In this context, they have been imposed to analyse their convictions and develop a new identity in Syria based on ethnic as well as religious groups in the country. However, Yazidis are reluctant to change who exists at the bottom of society and thus hold the lowest positions in Syria. The minorities, including Yazidis, once gathered people from other countries, including Turkey, to raise their representation quantity. Despite these efforts, the Yazidis were not granted any position and seats as a result. There were several incidences similar to this where Yazidis farmers who domiciled near Turkey borders faced land confiscation, which was later given to Arab farmers. Further, the official decree also made

them second-class citizens and the whole group were treated as impure by other citizens. As a result, Yazidis were denied constitutional rights, such as the right to amend places of residence and own property, vote, and have employment opportunities in the public sector (Maisel, 2016). It can be referred that the Yazidis were provided Syrian citizenship and were not treated as a separate identity.

In the earlier years, Yazidis were severely exposed to various expulsion policies and also the situation of assimilation in countries such as Syria and Iraq. Due to this, the majority of them fled to other European countries for a better future. The Yazidis, along with Christian minorities, faced genocidal attacks in Syria, which led to development of humanitarian crises in the country. The religious minorities, including the Yazidis, faced severe threats and were denied their fundamental rights. The primary reason for this inequality of rights provided to the religious minorities is the incompetence of the government in governing for favour of all the country (United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2014).

The females belonging to Yazidis were forced to convert post their puberty and put into slavery by ISIS. The boys were made to join the training camps so that they could be transformed into fighters for ISIS in the future. These people were deprived of fundamental rights and hence subjected to physical as well as sexual abuse. ISIS paved their support in these forceful actions and engaged in buying the Yazidis women to fulfil their needs (Nicolaus & Yuce, 2017). In this context, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also acknowledged the violations of human rights against one of Syria's minorities, namely Yazidis. The Yazidis women have especially faced violent situations for the long term and are deprived of fundamental political rights in Syria (De Vido, 2018). Therefore, it can be inferred that the Yazidis face massive discrimination in Syria's political rights as they have faced expulsion policies and have not been allowed to hold a superior government position in the country.

There are multiple areas in Syria that have been grabbed by ISIS, and in these areas, Christians have been instructed to switch to Islam or face death. In addition to this, senior Christian clerics have been abducted by terrorists and extremists. All these instances depict the plight of Christians that have been plagued by the brutality of ISIS, thereby, violating their political freedom, and leading to minimal political participation. They are one of the worst victims of sectarian violence started by militant groups that have also restricted their political participation (BBC, 2015).

ISIS is committing atrocities against Yazidis in Syria due to which they are migrating to other regions, including Europe. Additionally, many Yazidis are under the custody of ISIS, and it seeks to destroy this community in various ways, such as sexual slavery, emotional torture and segregation of Yazidi women and men. These incidents demonstrate the distressed situation of Yazidis and their inability to participate in Syrian politics (OHCHR, 2016). However, YPG is claiming to protect Yazidis from the brutality of ISIS, taking advantage of grabbing the territory, and it has established autonomous administration where Yazidis are promoted to positions in the ministry of religious affairs. Additionally, they are nominated in several local committees and councils. This administration also passed the law to recognise the Yazidi religion that has enabled Yazidis to overcome an identity crisis (Kaya & Whiting, 2017).

4.2.2 Christians and Yazidis' voting in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018

The population of the Yazidis in Syria is not known, as official statistics do not show it. This religious minority face a high level of discrimination in Syria as it was an unrecognised religion for many years. Moreover, the government did not allow Yazidis to take part in political activities until the civil war of 2011, due to which many of them emigrated. As per the Syrian government, they were stateless as they had come from Turkey after the Ottoman Empire broke down there. Due to this, they were deprived of numerous

opportunities, including holding political offices. In the past, they did not form a political organisation in Syria despite their valuable contribution to the communist movement in the 1960s and 1970s, which promoted equal rights of minorities in the country. The ideology of Marxist was gaining momentum in various Kurdish parties, yet Yazidis failed to grab leadership positions in Kurdish parties except for a few. Due to this fact, until recently, Yazidis did not have an established political organisation. In 2012, Yazidi diaspora in Germany had formed a political organisation called the Syrian Yazidi Council (SYC) that represents the Syrian Yazidis. This party facilitates the political participation of Yazidis that are being opposed by Kurdish parties in Syria (Ali & Hosseini, 2018).

The participation of every religious group in the politics of the country is essential so that its interests can be represented adequately. In this context, despite the minority status of Christians, they were one of the elite groups in Syria for many years. They also got representation in numerous political groups, which wanted to control the country. The Ba'ath party ruled Syria for many years, and its founder was a Christian due to which, their position was elevated in the party, army and government (BBC, 2015). However, with the rise of civil war in Syria, the political participation of Christians is dwindling. The condition of Christians is pathetic in the country as the majority of them stay in strategic areas where fighting takes place between the armed groups and the Syrian regime. Moreover, the conflict in Syria has incited Christians against Christians, and there is divided opinion of Christians about the Syrian regime; for example, only a few Christians believe that Bashar Assad is ruthless and does not let them represent in the Syrian regime while a lot of them have faith in Assad's regime. Also, Christians generally follow the instructions of the churches and their participation is low in Syrian politics (Khalilova, 2017; Gilbert, 2018). Some Christians in Syria are involved in demonstrations against the brutality of Assad and opposition parties in

Syria include numerous Christian people such as George Sabra and Abdelahad Steifo. However, the majority of Christians do not support the opposition (Fahmi, 2016).

Religious minorities in the Middle East countries are identified to be providing a new and emerging shape to their politics and society for a very long time now. One of the prominent minorities in the Middle East countries, including Syria, is the Christians. However, during the First World War, the Christian patriarchs were considered crucial interlocutors due to which they held a vital place in the country's political system. The Christians managed their position under Ba'ath successfully because of their trade practices as well as strong links with that of the Western capitals (Tasopoulos, 2014). The proper government access also boosted the expansion of these activities and possessed equal political rights in Syria. However, the significant rise in Islamic parties in 1990, along with a decline in Christians' presence, has transformed the situation for the Christian minorities in Syria. The situation worsened for the Christians when they decided not to participate in the protests and demonstrations in 2011. The Christians were excluded from the interim government, which affected their political rights (Tasopoulos, 2014).

McCallum (2012) further added that Christians served as various cabinet ministers and also high-rank positions in the Army, Intelligence, Police and other government agencies; however, they were not made heads of the state. Despite Article Three of Syria's constitution declaring that the President should only belong to Islam, the minorities of Alwis and Christians are controlling in government. The Ba'athist regime also perceives Christians as providing useful and necessary support (McCallum, 2012). It can be inferred that the Ba'athist secularism version of Syria has enabled Christian minorities to participate in the country's political life; however, this cannot be fulfilled without referring to religious identity that assists as well as blocks their political aspirations.

The Christians were identified as enjoying an increased degree of tolerance regarding their religious matters comparatively until 2011. They were allowed to worship freely in addition to holding senior government positions in the country. The Christians also abstained from participating in the protests due to the fear of losing religious privileges. However, the Christian leaders held pro-government rallies and provided support to their religious authorities. The main reason for these actions of Christians is the rising uncertainty of their future in Syria due to the decline in government support (BBC, 2011). Earlier politicised minority groups did not exist in Syria until 1920, which later developed alongside and also collaborated with its national identity. The Christians were motivated by political ideologies due to which, in 2011, they joined some of the opposition ranks. The politicisation of sects is one of the crucial facets of the emergence of politics in the country. Thus, Syria's political identities have led to the creation of complex interrelations due to the mobilisation of sectarian identities that discriminates against the minorities and does not provide all the political rights (Phillips, 2015).

As per the constitution of Syria, the president of the country should be a Muslim; thus, Christians or Yazidis cannot get this highest constitutional post, thereby, suppressing their political freedom. In general, since 1970 until now, Assad and his father have dominated as president, as per the current Syrian dictatorship, the political participation of all people, whether from the Muslim majority or minorities, is prohibited except for those who devote themselves to the regime. However, besides this rule, all religious minorities and majorities enjoy the same political freedom. Christians cannot form a political party as per the rule that demonstrates their pathetic political representation in Syria. There is a constant tension between Shi'ite Muslims and Sunni Muslims in the country, and due to this, Christians feel like refugees. Their miserable situation shows the current Syrian regime does not have adequate representation of Christians. They have great belief in the church leadership who

discourage them to participate in different political activities, including demonstrations that can destroy their interests (Karouny, 2011). Nevertheless, under the presidency of Assad and his father, Christians have contributed immensely to the politics of the country, and they are in the cabinet and national assembly. Additionally, several opposition thinkers, including Michel Kilo, have been arrested regularly not because of their religious identity, but due to opposition of ideology of the regime. While Christians are appointed as cabinet ministers and army officers, the view of all Syrian society is that they cannot lead the country as a president that confines their political freedom in the country. There are no official quotas regarding the number of Christians engaged in national institutes, but the regime makes sure that they are nominated in areas with the substantial Christian population. Likewise, the cabinet always has a minimum of one Christian minister. However, they are not supposed to represent the interests of their communities in the cabinet. The Ba'ath party has played a pivotal role to reduce religious identity when it comes to political participation that has promoted active participation of religious minorities, including Christians in Syrian politics (McCallum, 2012).

The population of Yazidis in Syria is around 10,000, which is meagre as compared to other communities, and it is one of the most vulnerable communities (Barbarani, 2018). The magnitude of persecution of Yazidis is high; for example, the naming of Yazidi villages has changed to Arabic names and Yazidis have been labelled as infidels by terrorist organisations that shows their misrepresentation in Syrian politics. The withdrawal of the US army from Syria may increase the persecution of Yazidis who are safe under American troops (Barbarani, 2018). Christians in Syria were one of the dominant political groups for many years. However, with the increase in extremism in Syria, their political participation is decreasing. The conflict in Syria has incited Christians against Christians, and there is divided opinion of Christians about the Syrian regime. Christians generally follow the

instructions of the church leadership and their political participation is low in Syria due to factors, such as dislike of violence and their inclination towards civilian careers.

The history of Yazidis is painful as they have been oppressed for generations; for instance, some people had labelled them as "devil worshippers". The brutality of ISIS against them was considered genocide that led to the refugee crisis in Turkey and Europe. The situation of Yazidis is not good even in refugee camps also; for example, they are punished if they complain regarding the pathetic condition of the camp. They are not permitted to organise public meetings that demonstrate their dismal political participation. Moreover, they cannot organise memorial gatherings to display their dissent on the anniversary of the mass killings of Yazidis. In these camps, they are being arrested for holding peaceful protests and for raising their voices on social media against political policies, which harms them (Barber, 2017). Although, Kurdish militants are striving to increase the political power of Yazidis by providing them with training to fight with ISIS forces who attempt to destroy their community. These militants have set up many training camps to train volunteers to make them ready for armed rebellion (Reuters, 2014). There are multiple Yazidis who stay in refugee camps in Syria as they have fled from Sinjar, an Iraqi city and home to the majority of Yazidis. There are thousands who are still displaced as their homes have been destroyed by ISIS (NRC, 2018).

Therefore, it can be concluded from the above that Yazidis face a high level of discrimination in Syria as it was an unrecognised religion for many years. ISIS is committing atrocities against the Yazidis due to which they are leaving Syria.

4.2.3 Christians and Yazidis' accessing public services in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018

In relation to the political rights of minorities in the constitution of Syria, Fildis (2011) stated that the constitution of Syria started to be formulated in 1926 and has undergone several amendments according to the will and ideology of the political parties. The constitution of Syria advocated equality for all citizens irrespective of their religion and provided freedom of religious observance and permission to conduct and maintain religious minority schools (Fildis, 2011). On the other hand, Radpey (2015) stated that the constitution of Syria provides equal religious rights to its citizens with any discrimination. According to the constitution of Syria, there is no official religion of Syria that is unlike most of the countries of the Middle East, and freedom of worship is provided to every citizen as per Article 31. The constitution of Syria provides a participative role to the minorities that is uncommon in the region of the Middle East. As per Article 32(c) of the constitution, the Yazidi religion is recognized by the constitution and protected. The Yazadi community faced a great threat to existence when ISIS captured this area and started to suppress them by killing, rape, and kidnapping of the people belonging to their religious community (Radpey, 2015).

Accordingly the constitution formed in 2012 maintained the same stance on the religious minority made by the constitution of 1973. Article 3 of the constitution states that the President must belong to the Muslim community, and Islamic jurisprudence should be considered as the main source of legislation. The difference in the constitution and working pattern of government prevents religious minority community such as Yazidis and Christian from enjoying their rights. For instance, Article 35(1) stated that the state government should respect all the religions and provide them the freedom to perform their rituals that do not violate public order and personal sentiments of other communities. However, the legislators have not exactly defined the ways in which rituals of minorities may cause violation of public

order that leads to create confusion and prevents the minorities from using their rights (Grote & Röder, 2016).

The constitution of Syria does not prevent any religious community from performing their rituals and advocates a religious pluralism. The personal legal status is provided to the marriages performed in the communities of Christians and Yazidis and provides facilities of their own courts in which matters related to religious conflicts are solved. The constitution has stated that all the citizens are equal before the law, and any discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, financial status, and religion will not be appreciated (Castellino & Cavanaugh, 2013). The regime's sectarian politics is the main reason due to which religious minorities such as Yazidis and Christians have less freedom and rights in comparison to the religious majority. However, the major discrimination is that the members belonging to minorities such as Yazidis and Christians are prevented from participating in government or becoming a president (Ismail, 2011).

The Constitution of Syria protects the rights of religious minorities such as Christians and Yazidis and causing harm to social harmony is a crime in Syria. The Syrian Penal Code, No. 148/1949 ensures to safeguard the interest of the minority. As per Articles 307, 308, and 319, a person is subjected to punishment on the condition that it is found to promote hate against a community and cause riots in the society. Additionally, as per Article 463, the act of defacing, damaging and destroying religious symbols and holy places of worship should be subject to penalty. The procedures of inheritance are based in Islamic laws and applied to all citizens except for Christians. The laws of divorce and marriage are governed by the laws of religion (Grote & Röder, 2016).

Article 32 (c) of the Syrian constitution considered Yazidis as a group that has suffered from the genocide and hardships in the invasion of ISIS, especially in the Mount

Sinjar area. The constitution has specified that no one should be persecuted on the basis of their religion, and it is a huge step to provide basic rights of living to the Yazadi people who did not have the right to live during the invasion of ISIS (Radpey & Rose, 2017). As per article 9 of the constitution, the official languages of the Syrian state are Arabic, Assyrian, and Kurdish, and all the communities such as Christians and Yazidis have the freedom to communicate, be taught, and teach their native language. However, the constitution of Syria declined it and suggested that Yazidis also have the freedom to worship and perform their religious rituals (Mahmoud & Rosiny, 2018).

On the basis of the above discussion, it is evaluated that the constitution of Syria provides rights to religious minorities such as Yazidis and Christians to a great extent. It does not define any religion as the national religion and does not prevent any freedom of practising their rituals on the condition that they should not violate public conduct. It also made provision that obstructing the path of the religious minority to practise their rituals and to damage their property is an offence. However, the government should take more steps and make amendments in the constitution in order to provide more rights to religious minorities such as Yazidis and Christians.

4.3 Similarities and Differences between the Level of Political Rights of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq and Syria

Yazidis have suffered internal and external conflicts because of political disturbance in Iraq. Along with that, ISIS attacks and sexual enslavement of Yazidi women and girls have greatly influenced the political relations of Yazidis in the country. In turn, even the Iraqi government does not favour the Yazidi government in Iraq (Zooneen & Wirya, 2017). At the same time, the government of Iraq is neglectful of the considerations of the Yazidis. In the very same manner, Yazidis and Christians are both considered to be minority groups in Iraq, and evidently, the representation in the political level is considerably low for both the

communities. Additionally, it has been assessed that Christians too, have been the victims of violence and representation. Yazidis and Christians both have been assessed not to have military support or tribal structure to help protect them by presentation in the official protection. Due to this, the violence experienced by the minority communities is continuing to increase in Iraq. Evidently, it has been assessed that the refugees from Iraq are substantially the majority and minority groups including Christians and Yazidis (USCIRF, 2008). Christians and other minority communities have faced abusive and indifferent practices by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). This indifferent attitude of the government is not limited only to the actions and practices of the government but also because of the terrorist and insurgent groups' activities in the country.

On top of that, it has been assessed that this indifferent attitude and abusive practice continuation is because of the lack of capacity of the minority groups of representation in the political groups of Iraq and the long-standing installation of the KRG. Similarly, Yazidis have suffered abuses and attacks because of the unfavourable perception of the government and political parties towards them as is the case with the Christian community. Women have been killed, threatened and disgraced publicly for having relationships with men who are not their relatives as a move to abuse and harass the Christian communities (USCIRF, 2008). It has been assessed that the reason for the significant problem with these two communities is because of the low representation of them in politics, which is because of the other powerful political groups in the country. Although the law of the country provides the right to freedom of religious practices and belief, there have been evidences of that not being achieved in practice or in intention. These two communities have been far from receiving political rights in the country. Even though the central government has a few participants from the Christian community, similarly, it has been observed that other participants from other groups support the Christians in integrating them in the power structure of the country. Still, it has been

assessed that Christians are still not provided with enough say in the decision-making and other political rights in the country. In that sense, it can be observed that Christians are not given political rights as expected and deserved (Oehring, 2017).

4.3.1 Christians and Yazidis' voting in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018

Christians in the political process because of the considerations of political power in the hands of a few were not able to address the dominant role played by political parties. Therefore it was assessed that they were not able to bring in practice any rights for themselves and other minorities in the country. Yazidis were not given enough representation in various elections of the country and therefore if at all the political change could be brought by Christians because they were represented a bit more than other minorities in the political parties of the country (Salloum, 2016). In a similar manner, Yazidis have been vulnerable in taking actions that could help in fostering change in the country in favour of them. Even in Baghdad, it was assessed that various businesses that were owned by Yazidis in the country were tightened because of their ownership and because of the favour of certain political parties (USCRIF, 2008). For both these communities, the recognition of the neglect of right of effective participation has implied that the involvement of minorities in Iraq has been critically low leading to unjust and indifferent behaviour towards these communities in all spheres of life leading to an unfair society. This, in turn, has led to a large number of refugees in the country. The rationale to this by the political powers of Iraq is that inclusion of different minorities in politics leads to a limit in the control of the power of one (Salloum, Salah & Hassan, 2016).

Christians have actively indulged in the political processes of the country since its initial stages; however, mere participation of this religious group is not sufficient to actively engage this religious group in the political process. It is because there are numerous other considerations which must be adequately addressed like the foremost role played by the

major prevalent groups and political parties. Christians in Iraq are classified into Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Evangelicals and alike. Such denominational diversity led to the development of a number of political groups and currents that are now profoundly representing Christians in Iraq. Even after having such diversity, the political heads of Christians depict themselves as the people of Chaldo-Assyrian Syriac. The prime motive behind such representation is to overcome the demerits of Christians; and stand together as a single body which can sufficiently voice the particular demands of Christians in Iraq (Salloum, Salah & Hassan, 2016).

Similarly, in the case of the Yazidis, in entirety this community was given one seat in each of the three elections in the entire political representation of the country along with other minority groups of the country, concluding that the level of political rights provided to them was deficient (Oehring, 2017). Christians took part in the election to the regional parliament that was conducted in the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan on the 25th July 2009. Still, it was found that the only way to be able to hold a position was to be in alliance with one the leaders of other powerful parties, therefore, the level of political rights was taken from the minority groups in the country (Oehring, 2017). With the intention to provide internal support to minority groups of Yazidis and Christians, the law of the country along with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has tried to incorporate internal law and procedures for providing support to the minorities. While the agenda of the internal support system is to provide comfort and support to the minority groups, it has been stated by the US that ‘the stupid politicians’ have created security threats for the refugee program in the country themselves. It can be concluded through this that the level of political rights is deficient for both the communities and other minorities of the country. Moreover, the internal factor of the political make-up itself is the reason for it (City University of New York. 2016).

In the political power of Iraq, there were many internal investigations and disciplinary actions taken by the government in connection with the violations of human rights being undertaken in the country but the ISF in the justice system was unable to prosecute and stop criminal activity against the minorities of Christians and Yazidis. The internal system of the country was inadequate in supporting the minority groups in receiving their rights (USIRF, 2018). The political set up in Iraq is highly favourable to certain political parties backed from the United States and Iran and is extremely indifferent to any other community especially Christians and Yazidis of the country. While the law in the country states that nominations and victory of participants shall be on the basis of loyalty and competence (Dogan et al., 2017), it is still entirely guided by certain political parties of the participation. Yazidis, on the other hand are considered even lower for representation in the political spheres. In addition, the efforts of political and national integration along with the characteristics of the corrupt politics of the country have led to limited opportunities for Christians and Yazidis in the country. Above that, the minimum representation of Christians is also considered as window dressing since they have no rights as required for change (Callum, 2012).

The political rights and representation is so low for Yazidis and Christians in Iraq that it has affected the choice of livelihood and financial control. It was being observed that was the reason questions by expelled from the old rules and shops, and criminals possessed it in the country because the law could not support the rights of these minorities. Additionally, in the Sinjar district of the highest military campaigns, a series of genocide attempts were made on the Yazidis, and it was assessed that even then nothing fruitful had been observed for the community in the country (Oehring, 2017). In the same way even after seeking legal justice after genocides by the Yazidis for justice, security, protection and reparations, for reconciliation and peace-building at the international level, they have not been able to get justice. The sole reason for the same is that to see the result of the same, it is indispensable

that Yazidis need to return back to their hometown, which is Iraq but the CDs are scared of a lack of security which is then amplified by the fact that the Iraqi government and Kurdish democratic governments are fighting over a disputed territory which is going to be the home for the Yazidis. Similarly, even though Christians with the KRG party had taken a step towards changing the entire life of minorities in the country, the political system of Iraq has not been supportive in reaching the objectives of a better life for the minorities there (Kangas & Fernandes, 2008).

As the Yazidi community falls under the minority groups, they are not provided with the benefits of safety attributes in the country and thus they have been the victim of various persecutions and violent attacks throughout the history of Syria. For instance, the Yazidis community were targeted by various religious violences and annihilations that became an important identity in their community's narrative by dictatorial regimes and terrorist groups (Kizilhan & Noll-Hussong, 2017). Similarly, in the case of Christians, they faced constant attacks against the church by the terrorist groups like ISIS presenting a clear example of a conflict with Syria for the Christian community. Trapped in the constant opposition, the Christian community in Syria faced challenges in terms of fear of the growing influence of extremist groups and the fear of being deteriorated to the basic services that are limited for the minority individuals or groups and creates a fear of survival in the country (Sahner, 2014). Henceforth, it is stabilized that the limitations towards the safety attributes were faced equally by both the communities in terms of violence, annihilation and the attacks making it one of the similarities in the level of political rights among both the considered communities in the country.

In different parts across the world, discrimination is the foremost reason of marginalisation of minorities, and it is regarded as the vital impediment for active engagement of minorities. It is essential to resolve the problem of discrimination as it is

hindering minorities in exercising their right to engage in varied aspects actively. These aspects include social, cultural, economic or political factors in the society they live in, and they require that for preserving their identity and assuring their presence. In this regard, it is crucial to determine the differences in the political rights of Yazidis and Christians in Iraq with a focus on recognising the leading factors contributing to such differences. Iraq law officially recognises fourteen denominations exclusively for Christians, and their engagement attained a ministerial-level wherein they have also gained a quota which permitted them to gain seats in the Kurdistan Regions Parliament, as well as the Federal Parliament. It is further examined that Christians are categorised as a dispersed minority as they are located in different regions of Iraq. However, security issues in the last few years followed by migration across the country and the internal displacement were the significant factors which have strengthened the presence of Christians in Erbil, Baghdad and the Ninewa Province (Salloum, Salah & Hassan, 2016).

It is further assessed that the representation of the Christians as a minority with heterogeneous features has become problematic due to its ranging demands and viewpoints. Such problems have compelled Christians to merge themselves with other currents, and political parties; thereby obstructing effective representation. In addition to this, personal pressures and interests due to an alliance with leading political currents distanced the representatives of this minority from their constituencies (Alishahi et al., 2019). Thus, Christians, as a minority ended up ineffective in making influential and critical decisions on issues of relevance to their communities and their involvement becomes symbolic instead of considerable participation. On the contrary, prior to the Gulf War in 1991, the social foundation of Yazidis in Iraq was extensively united to a certain level and denoted by the Emiri Institutions overseen by the Yazidi Spiritual Council and Emir Tahseen Bek. The scenario eventually transformed because of developments which took place following 1991;

from where militia and Kurdish parties ruled northern areas of the 36th parallel encompassing three major provinces; including Dohuk which was known to entail four large groups constituting Yazidi population (Salloum, Salah & Hassan, 2016).

4.3.2 Christians and Yazidis' accessing public services in the periods 2008-2013 and 2013-2018

Regardless of the social and cultural development, the Yazidis did not form a political party due to the regulation and influence of the main Kurdish parties particularly the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the Kurdish nationalist Peoples' Democratic Party and the Kurdish Democratic Party. These parties believed Yazidis as a constituent of the Kurdish ethnic heritage and thus as a regional factor, it was not important to develop a political party exclusively for the Yazidis on the grounds of religious variances as this group had certain ethnic roots in common with the Muslim Kurds. Overall, the political representation of Christians is certainly better than Yazidis concerning their positioning between the Kurdistan Region and the Federal Government depicting the need for addressing the political challenges witnessed by Yazidis to foster their participation in the region (Ismael, Ismael & Perry, 2015).

Yazidis go through various external and internal conflicts, and the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) do not enjoy a preferred stance among the Yazidis as KRG growingly emphasises on its own agendas whereas the Iraqi government directly neglects the Yazidis. In this situation, Yazidis as a minority group have started considering themselves as a separate ethnic group instead of acknowledging them as Kurds. Concerning political representation, most of the Yazidis do not feel they are properly represented as an outcome of the political affiliations of their immediate leaders (Zoonen & Wirya, 2017). In contrast, Christian participation continues to be realised in the societal and political life of Iraq through the religious agenda. This is evident from the reservation of a

number of parliamentary seats for the Christian communities as per the Constitution of 1924. The Christian community played an active role in the efforts for overcoming the conventional ecclesiastical divisions that however continued to influence the political domain. In this struggle, the Christian community was rewarded in their struggle for autonomy, and a minimum of five seats of the new Assembly comprising of 105 seats were allocated to Christians (Teule, 2012).

It is further examined that Christians are given a quota in the Federal Parliament which is regarded disproportionately small in terms of the proportion of the Christian population to the total population of other religious groups in the country. Thus, Christians demanded an expansion in the quota seats to strengthen Christian political participation. The key impediments to equitable Christian participation in Iraq include the internal interests held by the Islamic political parties which rule the government; frequent hate speeches and the absence of differentiation between state and region. All these internal factors together make Iraq a nation lacking neutrality. In addition to this, it is also perceived that the demands placed by the Christian community emphasise on the relevance of certain measures embraced by the state to escalate the involvement of parties, but it is necessary to understand their real dimensions. These demands not only stress on entitling a privileged status to the minorities rather they intend to create a balance and they would in the end award the same status to the minorities and the majority parties (Katzman, 2010). Therefore, engaging in the national social systems, political processes, supporting the public services and the policy-making mechanism should be valued for helping in bringing an end to their exclusion and marginalisation. On the other side, the political condition of the Yazidis in Iraq is very much hampered in comparison to Christians. There is no comprehensive political current or organisation which caters for the needs of Yazidis in Iraq, however; post-2003, a few Yazidis developed a political party inspired by the interim authority resolutions and ones of the

regulatory council. The party was formed under the name of the Yazidi Movement for Reform and Progress, and Hamad Matwe and Amin Farhan Jeju were its leaders. The impact of this movement was very much found in Sinjar, but not that much influential in the Walat (Shikan) area (Spät, 2018).

The migration of the Yazidis is much more complex than Christians migration due to the genocidal attacks targeted against them by ISIL. The attacks in 2014 on Yazidis in Sinjar were accompanied by internal displacement, and today also many Yazidis are consistently struggling for planning their future. Yazidis represent a group which suffered the most serious consequences of the ISIL conflict in comparison to other minorities in the country including Christians; early outlining the need for boosting their political representation to secure a distinctive position as a minority community in Iraq. Christians, on the other hand, are much better, however seeing the escalating levels of aggression and violence in the Ninewa Plains and surrounding areas, new security actors have been defined for looking after this minority. The most prominent one was the Christian militia; formed in 2015 by the KRG, which displaced the commitment of Christians to stay far from the direct confrontations and political conflicts. For overcoming such situations, the Christian community needs to value independent choices without discontinuing cooperation with the authorities (Salloum, 2020).

The political participation of both Christians and Yazidis highlights varied similarities and the differences in reconciling the regulations of equality in terms of maintaining the citizenship and public role in Syria. In the Arab world, religion and its belief play a major role in drawing its importance and its significance in political affairs (Schmoller, 2016). In Syria, the Christian community is not treated as one homogenous group and is politically divided as similar to other religious communities in the country. The political attitudes of Christians in Syria are shaped based on the public services and safety attributes wherein they

are dominated with the actual need due to its minority considerations in the country. In Syria, the Christians are majorly considered as a minority group and thus, they cut down their importance in considering them as a strong community. Thus, the Christians being in a minority group, face the issues related to public services in Syria that hinges their survival in the country (Haddad, 2015).

In the Kurdistan Parliament, there are 111 seats in total which are distributed among the different factions whereby the Kurds are given 100 seats, the Turkmen are given 5 seats, and the Chaldo Syriac Assyrians are given 5 seats while Armenians are entitled to one seat. There are a total of 328 seats in the Federal Parliament out of which; 320 are allotted to Muslims, 5 to Christians, 1 to Yazidis and 1 to Mandaean and 1 to Shabaks. Thus, Christians have been entitled to more seats than Yazidis, and the political representatives of Christians perceived that in comparison to their representation in Federal Parliament, the representation of their group is fair and equitable in the Kurdistan Parliament (Oehring, 2017). On the other side, the continual developments following the Gulf War, divided the Yazidi community between the Kurdistan region and the Central Government, leaving them politically fragmented in domains under a central authority. They failed in organising themselves and the situations prevailed until the fall of the regime in Baghdad in the year 2003 (Matsunaga, 2019).

Identically, in the case of Yazidis, they are considered in the group of religious minorities and as genocide victims as similar to Christians that makes them immune towards some of the political framework provisions of Syria. They were not considered as the “People of the Book” and thus, it eliminates them from the level of political rights in Syria. Most of the Yazidis do not feel represented in terms of the political affiliation by their leaders within the country. For instance, the enslavement of the Yazidi women has been one of the core problems that were justified as being a minority of non-believers in Syria as per ISIS

mentality. Thus, the Yazidi community was positioned in the undefined heretics that are cumulated since the French occupation in Syria due to their minority considerations (De Vido, 2018). Thus, it is interpreted that the issue of being considered under the minority groups limiting their reach towards the political rights and justice for the non-communal activities in the country is one of the similarities between both the communities.

Moreover, as per the case of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), it is manifested that the extremist groups limit the services for the Christian community and uses the violence factors against the religious minorities in the country. ISIS implemented various restrictions on the Christian community wherein they were charged to pay taxes in exchange for their safety in the country, no renovations in the church and displaying other religious symbols outside the church. These restrictions were put up by the ISIS to create the dominancy on the community and force them to accept the conditions, convert the religion or be killed by the opposition. ISIS focused on being dominant over the community and destroyed their existence by implementing various rules that hindered their survival in the country (Ahram, 2015). For example, in the year 2015, more than 200 individuals from the Assyrian village were held captive for more than a year in the Assyrian church unless a ransom was paid to release them (Hanish, 2009).

Similarly, in the context of dominancy and destroying the community, the Yazidi community faced various restrictions and actions in terms of enslavement, sexual slavery, restrictions of the birth of Yazidi children, transferring the Yazidi children to the ISIS families from their birth families, cutting them off from their religious practices and forcing them to erase their identities as a Yazidi in order to live peacefully in the country. ISIS committed unimaginable actions against the Yazidi community that hindered their survival in the country (Hawley, 2017). The main intentions of ISIS behind restricting the Yazidi community were to limit their growth of population, maintain the individuals in the minority

group and remove their existence from the country. To drive their motive, ISIS committed various crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide that created an unimaginable horror for the Yazidi community in Syria. However, the community felt abandoned by the government and the proof was generated by the sentiment of the absence of genocide recognition by the government (Spät, 2018; Van Schaack, 2018). Thus, it is implied that the restrictions of ISIS on hindering the existence and survival of the individuals that limit their political rights in the country is one of the cumulative similarities in both the Christian and Yazidi community.

Considering the internal factors in Syria, it is manifested that the Yazidi children from the Yazidi community were determined to be focused more on the Islamic teachings rather than following their religious beliefs. In Syria, the politics and religions were aligned together for accumulating the rights and decisions within the country. In this regard, the Yazidi community faced the pressure of learning the Islamic teachings in the education systems for the children in order to bring out the equality and dominance of the Alawi regime within the country (Hanish, 2009). Identically, the Christian community was forced to barge the dominance of the extremist groups due to its minority considerations, they were forced to display the symbols of the other religions in their church to respect the existence of the extremist groups within the country. The Christian community were obligated to follow the rule as being opposed to it led to their deaths in the country (Robson, 2011). Moreover, in the context of legal systems embedded by the law, it is manifested that most of the judges in the courtrooms denied the favours for the Yazidi and Christian community regardless of any guilty actions. The judges always decided to favour determining by the regime as both the communities fall under the minority group wherein their importance in the country is cumulatively faded (Van Schaack, 2018).

Henceforth, it is interpreted that the hindrance in the level of political rights for both the Christian and Yazidi community are majorly rooted under the fact of being the minority groups within the country. The similarities among the communities were majorly seen in terms of enslavement, slavery enactment, imposed regulations from the ISIS, no safety attributes, no public services, forced rules in imposing the other religions and death threats that hinged their living within the country.

On the other hand, there are multiple differences overlooked regarding political rights granted to Yazidis and Christians in Syria. While referring to the case of Yazidis, it is analysed that individuals belonging to this minority group mainly live in the North-Eastern region of Syria, wherein the political rights of individuals have been hugely violated. For instance, Yazidis in Syria have not been getting fair justice, political support, legal remedy and security in the Syrian region (De Vido, 2018). One of the evidences is that Yazidi females were caught in the year 2014 in Iraq and brought to the Syrian region for sexual slavery purpose. Although the activity of women-trafficking has been condemned by the UN Security Council, still Yazidi women are perceived as ISIS gangs' property due to which they are subjected to torture, slavery as well as sexual violence (De Vido, 2018). In contrast, Christians within Syria have been confronting issues of violence, discriminatory treatment and being kidnapped. Apart from it, in Syria, due to the factors of oppression and discrimination of the regime besides internal conflicts, Sunni Islamists used to oppose the government (State.gov, 2018). In contrast, while considering the case of Yazidis' political rights in Syria, it is evaluated that in the political hierarchy, the positions of Yazidis are not good because of being a religious minority (Maisel, 2014). Moreover, without the formal engagement of agendas of the state, the silence of the government, as well as denial for the safety of Yazidis, are analysed as internal factors that clearly indicate the antipathy of the Syrian state for individuals from Yazidi groups (Maisel, 2014).

It is also noticed that the political framework of Islam reflects the protection provided for individuals from religious minority groups. However, the political rights of Yazidis have been constantly violated in Syria due to internal and international factors like the increasing scenarios of genocide, violent attacks, threats given by ISIS, and forced religious conversion (Zoonen & Wirya, 2017; De Vido, 2018). However, while investigating the case of Christians in Syria, it is analysed that in the year 2010, the scenario of famous uprisings provided religious minorities like Christians with the chance of enjoying political rights as well as democratic rights. However, eventual violence within Syria and Iraq has placed all religious groups under unexpected fear of threat. It is evaluated that Christians living in the Syrian region perceive themselves to be grabbed between the evolution of extremist groups as well as the political regime's inefficiency in providing them with proper security and fundamental public services. In Syria, Christians have been categorised under political regime same as other ethnic groups as well as not being perceived as a single homogenous community (Fahmi, 2018). Political perception of Christians in Syria has been outlined through their level of interest within public services, security and safety. However, in Syria, Christians have been frustrated by the Syrian institutes' weakness and inefficiency in managing strong security as well as offering essential public services in the state for them (Fahmi, 2018).

On the other side, it is also noticed that in Syria, political roles have been assigned to Christian individuals; for example, Bassel Nasrallah got the role of Mufti Badr Al-Din Hassoun's advisor in Syria. This aspect led to assist the leadership of the Church as well as the range of Christians. However, the political positions assigned to Christian individuals have been appropriate only for Christians' survival in Syria, and it failed in determining Christians' position as against or for the political regime (Fahmi, 2018). Further, some religious forms of Christians were developed to assist the Christian people staying in the Syrian region by providing approximately 2,200 families of Christians with shelter, food as

well as medical treatment. However, this type of measure was only emphasised on safeguarding and assisting Syrian-based Christians but not enhancing the entire Christian community's situation in the long-run within the Middle-Eastern region (Fahmi, 2018).

While focusing on the case of Yazidis, it is noticed that their condition has been far worse than Christians in Syria in terms of their political and civil rights. As similar to Christians, Yazidis also seek for political rights in terms of security and protection. For example, Yazidi males used to be killed brutally and tortured and women were raped and enslaved. In addition, children from the Yazidi community used to be drawn away from home as well as family members and they were threatened for their forced Islamic conversion by ISIS (Mneimneh, 2016). It has been noticed that Yazidis did not receive proper political and legal support for protecting their rights and living a normal life as other people in civil society within Syria. As well as in Iraq, the incidence of destruction of worship places of Yazidis including Sinjar, Dohuk as well as Mosul and victimisation of Yazidis due to growing criminal activities against them could not be controlled by authorities in the state. As the consequence of factors related to the political system's collapse as well as destroying the structure of society, Yazidi females are seen to be in a highly vulnerable condition. Honour killings, sexual abuse of children, trafficking, slavery and inhuman behaviour with Yazidi individuals have been noted as a violation of all political as well as civil rights of these individuals. However, it is further observed that the UN Security Council has been concerned for improving Yazidis condition in Iraq and Syria for which it motivated judicial authorities, the court as well as government to offer proper legal help to this minority group for improving their livelihood and fulfilling their rights as the other common citizens in the states (De Vido, 2018).

However, in Syria, it is also seen that international factors have played a central role in making the conditions of Christians as well as Yazidis as highly vulnerable (State.gov,

2018). In addition, ISIS forced Christians to get their religion changed to Islam and make payment of particular taxation. Furthermore, the government courts have been replaced by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) with councils of Sharia which posed discrimination in opposition to the people belonged to religious minorities (State.gov, 2018). It is overall analysed that there has been no support of government and political parties for religious minorities which placed the lives of Christians and Yazidis in a vulnerable state. However, it is also noticed that the President of the US emphasised on national political transition within Syria so as to make the government inclusive which needs to take care of political rights of every individual and show respect for people's rights of performing religious practices in an independent and fearless manner (State.gov, 2018).

Yet, it is also analysed that voices of western politicians reflect more concern for Christians' protection than other religious minority groups to take them out of situations related to their political rights violation because of the factors of external threats, internal conflicts, limited freedom and low involvement in internal level affairs. However, there is need for empowerment of religious minority communities collectively so that other groups like Yazidis can also enjoy complete political rights of being involved in political affairs, attain proper security, receive public services equally and gain required freedom post to uprisings in the year 2010 (Fahmi, 2018). In this way, overall, it is noted that Yazidis political rights and Christians political rights are somehow different as means of lower concern for other minority communities like Yazidis as compared to Christians in terms of giving security, political engagement as well as public services. Yet, for collectively improving everyone's livelihood, equality needs to be promoted for offering and taking care of the political rights of all minority groups (Fahmi, 2018).

Iraqi law has finally provided a reserved quota to Christians, which allows them to reserve seats in the federal parliament. However, the mere political participation of Christians

is not sufficient in making them capable of making decisions. Political representatives are "Chaldo-Assyrian Syriac" people, so they can represent a diverse set of communities. This name is not accepted by the entire Christian political leaders because it does not recognise the original Christians (Schmidinger, 2019). There are 5 seats reserved for the Christian candidates in the federal parliament, whereas Yazidis have only one seat, which represent them politically.

Earlier, the Ba'ath party was dominating the other political parties in Syria, but later, Kurdish parties became stronger and dominated others. This situation left the Yazidis unrecognised as they became the subset and political support of the Kurdish party. In the year 2003, the first seat was reserved by the "Yazidi Movement for Reform and Progress" in order to stand for the rights of Yazidis. In 2010, this seat was again won by the Yazidi movement, which was considered a huge success by these people (Human Rights Watch, 2019). However, the genocide which took place in 2014 thrashed Yazidis very badly as half of them fled away from their parental homes. In recent times, Yazidis are still fighting for their rights so as to live an easier life.

A report published by Human Rights Watch (2020) outlined that the human rights issues are persistent in the minority groups and they are facing discrimination and suppression through arbitrary arrests and torture. Both Iraq and Syria are engaged in the war and conflicting activities and it has badly impacted the minority groups because such groups are forced to migrate to neighbouring countries or other regions in the same countries. The Syrian military forces are also detaining the people and mistreating them and thus violating the basic human rights of the people (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Since the year 2011, approximately 15000 people have died and 100,000 people have disappeared. Apart from the Sunni Arabs and Sunni Kurds, Iraq also has a minor proportion of Christians and Yezidis and in recent years, the minority groups are the victims of displacement, conflict and repression

as well as facing persecution. The minority remain the victims of the violence and out of the total displaced population, approximately 30% of the people belong to the minority and ethnic groups. The government dominated by the Sunni Arabs retained the power based on genocidal, divisive and discriminatory policies (Minority Rights Group International, 2014). Hence, it can be inferred that the political rights and human rights of minority groups in Iraq and Syria remain suppressed and it has worsened in the last two decades.

The below-mentioned graphs figure 2 and 3, show the religious minorities in both Iraq and Syria.

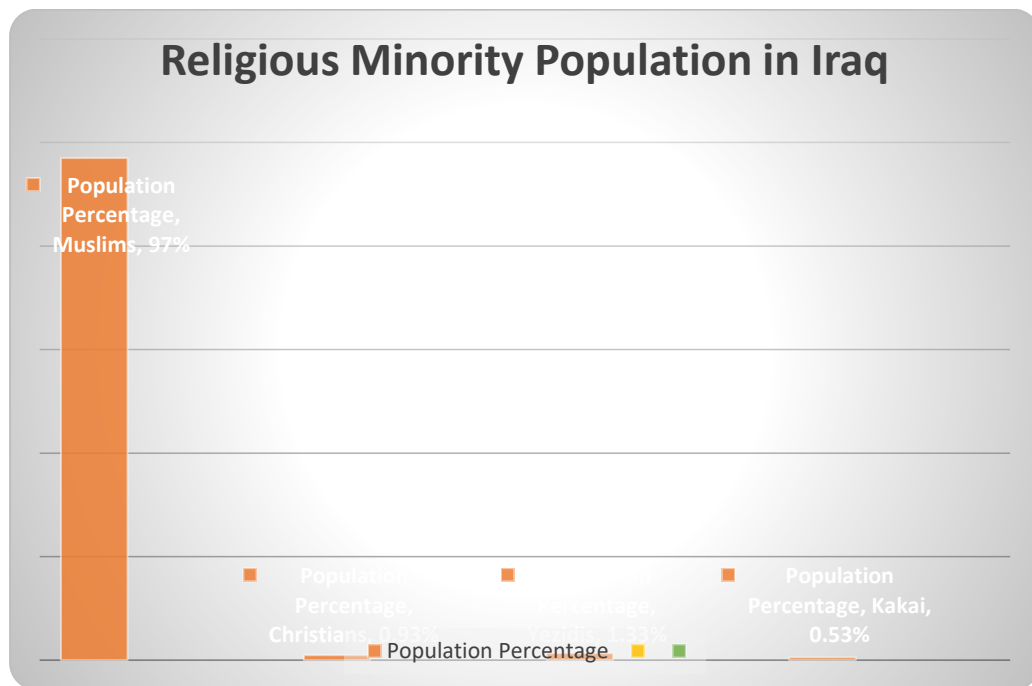


Figure 1: Religious Minority Population in Iraq (2018)

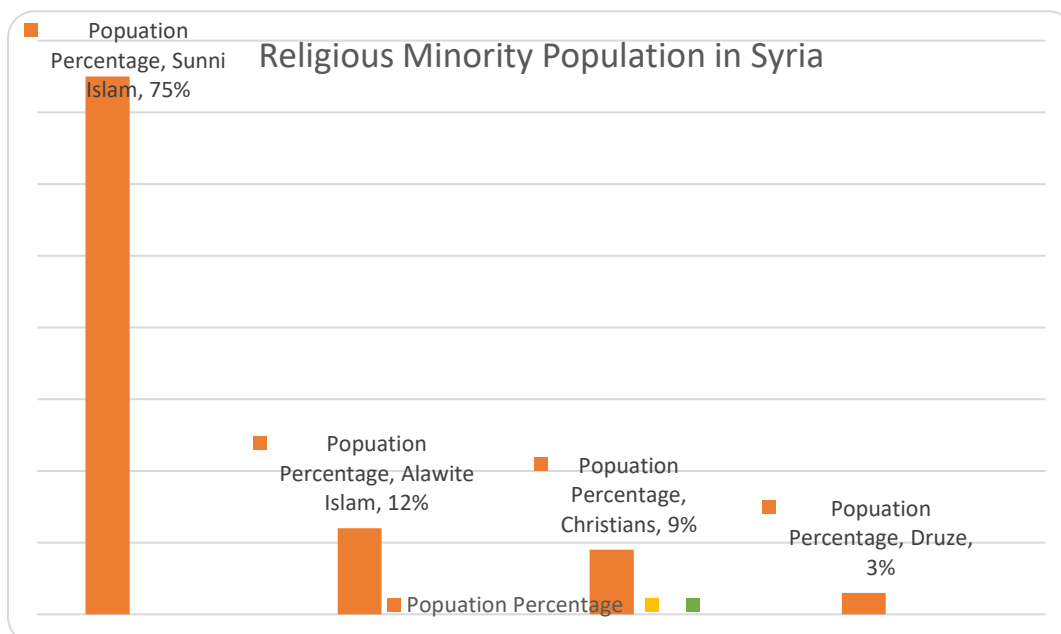


Figure 2: Religious Minority Population in Syria 2018

In the below-mentioned figure 4 and 5, the political and non-political issues in both Iraq and Syria are highlighted in black and orange colour. The orange colour represents the non-political issues persistent in Iraq and Syria and the black colour represents the issues in political rights of minority groups.

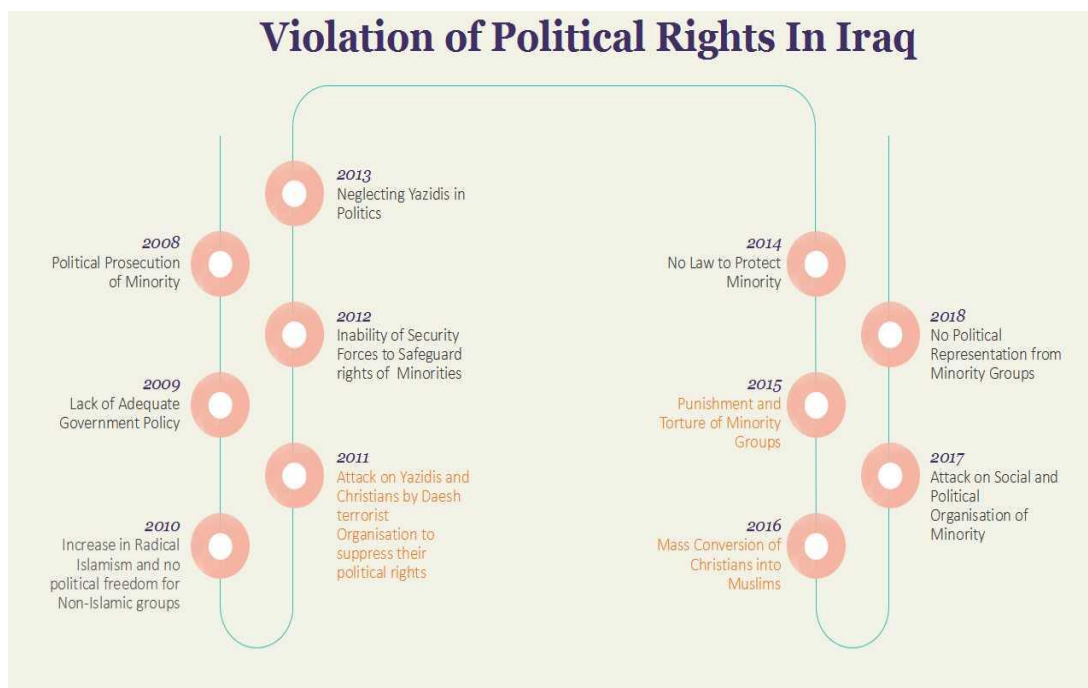


Figure 4: Timeline of Violation of Political Rights in Iraq for Minority Groups (2008-2018)

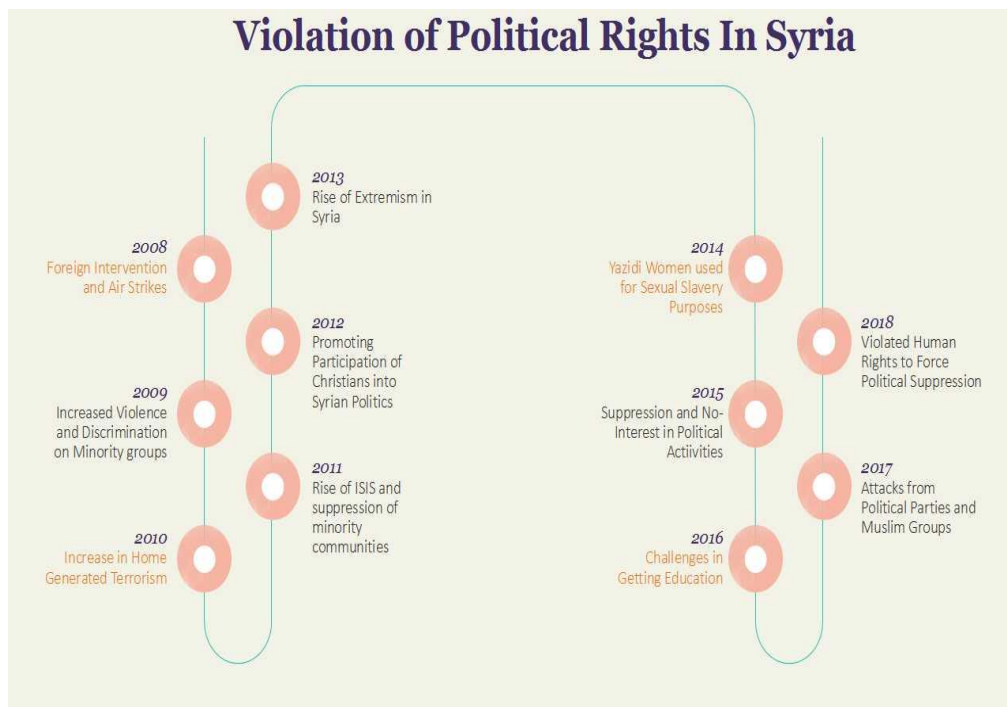


Figure 5: Timeline of Violation of Political Rights in Syria for Minority Groups (2008-2018)

Chapter 5: Testing of the Explanatory Hypothesis by Examining the Impact of External and Internal Factors on the Evolution of Political Rights of Christians and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq

Introduction

The presented chapter of the research has examined the impact of internal and external factors on the evolution of political rights of Christians and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq in detail and has tested the explanatory research hypothesis. Section 5.1 reflects, the Behaviour of the Dependent Variable, which is the outcomes in the Evolution of political Rights for Religious Minorities. Section 5.2 offers an in-depth analysis of the evolution of the behaviour of the independent variables or condition. Further, section 5.3 presents the Matrix of Analysis. Here, the study leverages the crisp-set model calibration. The matrix used in this section is the L-shaped Matrix, and it is a two dimensional model that relates two variables to each other. The variables are thus applied to independently in trying to relate to each of the cases that were under study. Section 5.4 describes the analysis of necessity of the individual conditions, which includes analysis of the consistency and coverage of the condition.

Finally, there is section 5.5 which is the summary featuring the calibration and analysis process of the study.

5.1 The Behaviour of the Dependent Variable: Outcomes in the Evolution of political Rights for Religious Minorities

With regard to the dependent variable or outcome, it is examined that in the case of Iraq 2008-2013 and 2014-2018 for Christians, despite the drafting of Iraq's constitution, formation of the Governing Council and participation of Christians in political affairs, it is evident they are not provided with equal rights to play an effective and dominant role in political affairs. Similarly, in the case of Yazidis in Iraq in 2008-2013 and 2014-2018, their participation and representation are almost negligible in Iraq's political affairs. In this, the

challenges like poor access to schools and education, ISIS attacks and pressure from the majority groups has reduced the representation of the minority population in politics (Basci, 2016). In the period of 2008-2013, the political participation of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq continues to deteriorate due to varied reasons, encompassing people's lack of interest in politics, along with experiencing continuous attacks, violence, discrimination, forced displacement and marginalisation (Allawi, 2008).

In the same regard, evolution in the rights of minorities in Syria is provided by the Constitution of Syria, which provides freedom to practise cultural and religious rituals to the minority, but in the case of Syria 2008-2013 for Christians, and Syria 2008-2013 for Yazidis, no absolute freedom is provided to the people as the constitution only provides rights in a manner that does not violate public morality and order in the country (Freedom House, 2020). The government of Syria did not provide any political role to Yazidis and Christians in respect of their culture as these minorities are bound to follow government orders without questioning. Further, in the case of Syria 2014-2018 for Christians and Syria 2014-2018 for Yazidis, the religious minorities were examined as facing a high level of discrimination in the country, but the forced conversion campaign that gained wider international attention helped in Yazidis in attaining certain political rights in Syria (MERI, 2017; Basci, 2016). This is showing that there is a positive evolution of the variables.

Evolution of political rights for religious minority groups in Syria as well as Iraq

The constitutional and legal framework provides various political and religious rights to the people. The 2005 Constitution declared Islam as the official religion of the country; however, it also recognises other ethnic and religious minorities and provides them freedom to practise religious things as per Article 2. In addition to this, Article 14 suggested that every Iraqi is equal before the law and without discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, ethnicity and race (Jawad, 2013). However, the actual conditions in the country are entirely

different as the provisions of constitutions have become ineffectual due to lack of implementation. The government of Iraq has also established a High Commission for Human Rights and a Ministry of Human Rights, which have duties to improve conditions of human rights for minorities in the country. Up to the year 2013, the commission was unable to function due to a lack of resources, independence and issues in cooperation (Minority Rights Group international, 2014).

The conditions in Syria between 2008 and 2013 were far worse as the religious minorities lived in constant fear. The reports of the Pew Research Centre suggested that religious minorities such as Christians were targeted for their association with religious groups (U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2013). In a similar period, the rise of the radical Islamist groups led to issues in the implementation of the rights of the people. The religious minorities in the country faced a lack of rights and political participation as most of the territories were captured by the Extremist groups. The groups implemented Sharia on the minorities and the cases of persecution increased in the country in this period of time. In addition to this, the regime also used fear in the minorities in order to gain political benefits from them. A large number of people from the minorities, unable to survive in conditions where they do not have any political rights, migrated in the period of 2008-2013 due to constant violence and lack of rights (Ferris, Kirişci & Shaikh, 2013).

Between the period of 2013-2018 a considerable territory of the country was captured by the Islamic State, the minorities were treated with great brutality and Yazidis and Christians were targeted for violence and enslavement. The Islamic State captured more than a third of the area of Iraq after the summer of 2014, and the brutal style of ruling caused the people in this area to face discrimination along with the people who were living in the areas under the control of the government of Iraq. Although the government developed several provisions to safeguard the interests of minorities and provide them political rights, however,

it was unwilling or unable to protect the rights of minorities in the country. The minorities were facing constant persecution and discrimination from the Islamic Militants and the regional officials due to their association with a particular religion. The state and the federal government of the country never bother to take practical and legal mechanisms in order to develop a protective framework for the protection of minorities. The authorities have shown no progress to remove or change discriminatory provisions from the constitution due to which it was unable to provide justice to the minority of the country, and they were exposed to the condition of extinction (Institute for International Law & Human Rights, 2013).

The areas captured by the Islamic State between the period of 2013-2018 in Syria has limited extent or practically no political rights provided to minorities; instead, they are subjected to the constant target of being killed and kidnapped for association with their religion. On the other hand, the legal framework was applicable to the areas ruled by the government; however, in the areas controlled by the government, breakdown in law and order was dominant due to leaving militants in the areas. The constitution suggested that it is the duty of the state to respect all the religions and provide them equal opportunities to survive and practise their religion. On the contrary, conditions were different as the people who belong to religious minorities face continuous discrimination in the country on the grounds of religion. The religious meetings of the groups except regular workshops need a permit from the government. During the period of 2013-2018, Christians faced violence and kidnapping from the extremist groups, and the government was unable to save them due to which the political rights served to them were useless to the minorities of Syria.

5.2 Description of the Evolution of Independent Variables (conditions)

5.2.1 Evolution of the level of government involvement

It can be analysed that for the assessment of the impact laid by the evolution of the governmental involvement on the political rights of the Yazidi and Christian religious

communities of Iraq and Syria, the indicators termed as the evolution of regulations, as well as plans for management of the violence-oriented activities planned by the government on an annual basis, are used (Stephanous, 2010). Therefore, the above background research helps in grounding a base to claim that the lack of governmental support is one of the major causes of intense disruption of the political rights of the minority religious populace within Iraq and Syria. It can be stated in the favour of the hypotheses that the evolution of the involvement of the majority nation-based government can cause problems in establishing equality in correctly disseminating the personal protection-based rights of the citizens belonging to the religious minorities.

It is further analysed that the lesser involvement of the government of Iraq is also identified to impose a potential impact on the political rights of Christians as well as Yazidis. From the evidence of Salloum, Salah & Hassan (2016), it can be examined that the government involvement in supporting the Yazidi and Christian minority communities within Iraq is low. This lower rate of governmental participation leads to an unfair as well as unresponsive attitude towards the individuals belonging to the minority communities. This has also resulted in the creation of an unfair society and results in a large number of refugees within the country. The Iraqi population also identifies problems in terms of including differing individuals from different minority groups as the inclusion of more than one political or religious group limits the control upon political power (Salloum, Salah & Hassan, 2016). Thus, with the help of the above inferences, it can be tested in regard if different evolutions of the political rights for Syria, as well as Iraqi communities, can be explained by different levels of involvement of the government within the minority groups, among other conditions. The Iraqi political ideology of not considering a large proportion of the groups for developing the political decisions is examined as the main hindering factor that negatively affects the political rights of the religious minorities such as the Yazidis as well as the

Christians. In order to determine a balanced distribution of the political rights among the minority communities like the Christians and Yazidis, there is a need to offer consideration to the smaller and minority groups in order to increase their involvement in the political decision- making.

In contrast to the above, the evidence of Besenyő and Gömöri (2014) helps in examining that the conflicts are identified in the Syrian dictatorial regime as well as the opposition groups. These conflicts involve the existence of the Sunni rebellion population on one side as well as the Shia government on the other. This Syrian regime has also caused problems for the Christian communities due to the crossfire between governmental practices of Shia militias and Sunni rebellion. Some members of Christian minorities are also identified to oppose the Assad-led government which has caused a severe impact on the harmony of the Syrian religious communities. This has resulted in the increased militarisation of the Christian minority groups. This has further increased threats towards the local-level Christian communities that also led to a cancellation of the Christian religious celebrations (Besenyő & Gömöri, 2014). With the help of the above data findings, it can be examined that the participation or involvement of the government in the opposing operations against the minority groups hinders the political and human rights of the minorities. This also increases the chances of revolt among the minority communities like the Christians as well as Yazidis. With the negative evolution of the government involvement against the minority societal sections in Syria, the celebrations and events of the minorities also tend to get affected on a negative basis.

On the other side, it is argued by IHCHR (2018) that the diversity of the armed as well as the security militant forces in the Iraqi communities has created problems for the re-integration as well as re-enforcement of the Yazidi community within their respective locations. It is further analysed that due to the occurrence of delay in renovation of the

Nineveh plains that comprises a group of subordinate districts as well as villages of the Yazidis, Shabaks and Christians, minority communities have experienced destruction in terms of the infrastructural balance as well as insufficiencies for the return of displaced individuals (IHCHR, 2018). In regard to another study of Jalal (2009), it can be argued that the displacement of the minority groups in Iraq as well as Syria is a key example that depicts the practising of the government force on the minority population for giving up their cultural beliefs as well as declining the standards of the human security (Jalal, 2009).

Hence, it can be examined that practising of the strong and explicit suppressive forces on the minority population causes a negative impact on their political as well as human rights because the forcible execution of the power on minority population groups like Christians, Shabaks as well as the Yazidis causes destruction of the infrastructure as well as it reduces the chances of the return of the minority population groups. Therefore, the unjustified suppression by the militant forces of the majority groups is required to be minimised for promoting the growth and development of the minority population segments.

On the other hand, in the context of the Iraqi government involvement, it can be analysed that the parliament of Iraq has enacted a law under which the importing, sales, as well as production of alcohol, is banned across the region. This law also stated that violating the anti-alcohol legislation can result in a fine of 10-25 million Iraq-based dinars that cost about 8,000-10,000 US dollars. Such types of acts imposed by the Iraqi government faced criticism and opposition from religious minorities such as Christians. The member of parliament of the Christian community opposed the above-defined legislative notion of banning the use of alcohol on the grounds of Article 2 of the Iraqi constitution (Oehring, 2017). Moreover, this act was not in favour of the Christian as well as the Yazidi communities as it imposed restrictions upon their religious practices. Such one-sided regulations are identified to impose a negative impact on the number of the minorities such as

Christians. The numbers of Christians that are living in Iraq have encountered a high rate of difference. During the year 1980, Christians tended to comprise about 7.4% of the total population residing in Iraq. By the year 2003, the total number of Christians living in the Iraqi governmental regime reduced to about 3.1%. During the final time period of 2015, the Iraq-based bishops also believed that the net proportion of Christians that were residing in Iraq reduced to about 200,000 and even to a much lesser population rate (Oehring, 2017).

Thus, it can be interpreted from the above-analysed data findings in relation to the testing of the explanatory hypothesis that the political and religious rights of the religious minorities in Iraq are forcibly hindered in an illegitimate manner. Article 2 which is defined in the Iraqi constitution is identified to be focused on preserving the personal freedom and rights of the minority citizens. However, despite the enactment of Article 2, the Christians and Yazidis faced problems in executing the religious customers as well as performing the religious rituals (Oehring, 2017). Moreover, the one-sided involvement of the government through the partial regulations further declines the preservation of the political and human rights of the minority religious communities. Hence, there is a need to reduce the partial or one-sided enactment of the parliamentary laws by the governments of Syria and Iraq.

5.2.2 Evolution of the behaviour of the social religious majority

While considering the social religious majority's behaviour in the last decade, it is seen that these majority groups in Iraq and Syria used to be forced to either leave the nation or get shifted to Iraqi Kurdistan. In the year 2008, only 675,000 Christians were left in Iraq. Due to some people of the majority's negative behaviour and discriminatory practices against Yazidis and Christians, these minority groups were brutally treated and were victims of sexual slavery, rape, murder and enslavement. Various attacks have been posed by criminals on Yazidis and Christians (USHMM.org, n.d). For example, in the year 2009, a café was attacked by two suicide-bombers within Sinjar city to kill Yazidis, while in the year 2013,

time bombs were set by criminals to explode as Christian worshippers were leaving churches during which 35 of these minorities' people were killed (USHMM.org, n.d). By some of the social religious majority of Iraqi people, Yazidis were considered as the double minority-based people because of both reasons including their ethnic background and religion. As a result, the government also denied political rights for the Yazidi minority group in the region (Holmes, 2020). However, the social religious behaviour of the majority in Iraq and Syria has evolved for eliminating the discrimination against groups of minorities like Yazidis and Christians. For example, Christian representatives demanded minorities' participation in political decisions as well as policy-making processes (Salloum, Salah & Hassan, 2016). Minorities' voter registration has started being considered as the vital part for the assurance of their involvement in the political procedures. However, the social religious majority determined that there were issues like language barrier, violence against Christians, discriminatory practices and no transferring of minority people's names in the new region. Thus, due to such behaviour and thinking about minorities, it still remained a complicated aspect to grant political participation rights to Christians and Yazidis. However, in the year 2014, Parliamentary Elections' law assigned a single seat to Yazidis but there was no decision regarding the authorised figure range. Even after huge objections shown by activists, the allocation of the seat was confirmed. The activists' majority said that the share of Yazidis' quota had been developed in an unfair manner. While considering the social religious majority, it is noted that although the democratic system has been promoted in Iraq and Syria, disproportionate poverty levels and political exclusion of minorities were found in these regions (Salloum, Salah & Hassan, 2016). The factual aspect was that the minority members' numbers were small due to which they were in a discriminatory position and were suffering from disadvantage. Therefore, the social and ethnic minority of Christians and Yazidis were inefficient in determining the decisions' outcome within the majority-ruling based democratic

political system. Therefore, minorities' representation within the advisory, administrative and legislative bodies required being transformed in their actual engagement in the process of decision-making. Apart from this, it has also been identified that the behaviour and attitude of the social religious majority has gradually evolved in the last years. Multiple strategies were introduced including the community of social religious majority to organise educational campaigns and awareness development programmes for the minority groups of Christians as well as Yazidis to make them capable of participating in the political elections. For example, customised programs of education are suggested to be formed for minority groups so as to improve the electoral awareness among them through offering desired information in relation to the ways of taking part in the process of election. It has been suggested for the communities to organise such awareness programs by knowledgeable and qualified individuals (Salloum, Salah & Hassan, 2016).

It is observed that over time, religious diversity has been fostered in Iraq. As per a report published in the year 2018, it is noted that social tolerance, economic competitiveness as well as entrepreneurship has boosted in the Iraq region which has also offered benefits to the minority people in this region. However, non-sectarian national identity's development remained a lengthy procedure for the minority groups as well as adverse situations faced by them in Iraq, and made it complicated for all the minorities to take active participation within the political matters of the region. In this support, it is illustrated that the Iraqi Yazidis and Christians still remain neutral in the disputes related to Iraqi politics as well as recurrently show mediatory prospects for reducing tensions among parties for addressing conflicts (Henne, 2018). With regard to the consideration of the importance of fostering social diversity and stability, the social religious majority has changed its behaviour towards Christians and Yazidis and has considered that these minority groups are valuable for maintaining political negotiations. It has been taken into account that while the smaller

groups like Yazidis and Christians would be involved in the political negotiation, the fear of every group regarding the gains of other groups would be decreased (Henne, 2018). In recent times, the social communities in Iraq have considered the benefits of involving Iraqi Christians in political matters. For example, Iraqi Christians showed concerns regarding the efforts of international parties for guiding their local communities to encourage sectarian problems within Iraq. In this way, the Iraqi Christians supported in opening the negative agenda of international politics against Iraq which provided the social religious communities and government of Iraq with the genuine reason to offer political rights to this minority group. Furthermore, the religious minority based in Iraq also encourages the non-sectarian identity by reminding politicians of Iraq about their liabilities in relation to protecting every Iraqi not only their local socio-religious people. Vian Dakhil, Yazidi Parliament member of Iraq, has a strong voice alarming the government of Iraq for safeguarding the Yazidi minority people. In this way, it is considered by the Iraqi social majorities that the involvement of Iraqi minority groups in the political concerns would not only help in revealing the evil intentions of international political parties but also support all the Iraqi people including majority groups and minorities in the region (Henne, 2018).

It has also been seen that after so many efforts, there is still a problem of negative perception about the Yazidi community among the social religious majority people. It is because the people have a belief that the Yazidis have been worshipping evil powers or the devil due to which brutal attacks were imposed on them. However, the political framework of Islam involved protection provision to certain social and religious minority people. It is still observed that the religious minorities' political representation within Iraq does not have the potential to efficiently administer and regulate the rights of minority people. It is found that there needs to be a proper education system wherein there are higher education facilities for minority people including Yazidis so that they might get proper political awareness and

attentiveness to have their rights about participation in the political matters. Apart from this, attacks and vulnerable conditions of ethnic minority groups are also prevalent in Iraq and Syria; therefore, the social religious majority within Iraq considered that for the ethnic minority groups to be safe in the region from the victimhood of ISIS, they need to keep themselves protected as well as receive international parties' protection. There have also been many efforts conducted for bringing the communities of minorities involving Yazidis together to reduce the level of conflicts. However, the government of Iraq used to neglect the minority communities in Iraq and did not show respect for them; due to which the political rights of these communities suffered to a huge extent. It is also seen that although the democratic culture has gradually evolved in Syria and Iraq, the minority communities are still vulnerable because of no access to participate in political affairs. It is also found that the Arab-Kurdish competition has affected the minorities' political representation within the conflicted territories. Socio-economic conflicts faced by an ethnic minority including Yazidis affected the political rights of these people (Zoonen, & Wirya, 2017). Overall, it is identified that the minority groups including Yazidis and Christians do not yet receive proper political rights even while the behaviour and attitude of social majority groups has evolved over time. The democratic system, planning of education for the minority community, consideration of the political benefits of minority groups and the values given to them over time, has raised the political involvement of the minority community. However, as a result of the discrimination, barriers in cultural understanding, conflicting political relationships and lack of facilities of education for Yazidis and Christians in Syria and Iraq deprive these minority communities of having access to their political rights and enjoying political participation. Thus, overall, it is identified that there needs to be a proper education system, an awareness campaign, strengthening of relationship and removal of discriminatory practices so that the social religious group's behaviour can be positively changed to promote the rights of the

minority community to participate in political affairs like elections or voting procedures and policy decision-making. The government needs to be aware of the benefits of involving the minority community in the political decisions as the minority community might raise international conflicts' concerns and disclose the adverse agendas of the international parties to safeguard the local people of Iraq (Henne, 2018). Thus, the social religious majority's behaviour needs to be evolved in a way that they put in efforts to encourage government and legal authorities to ensure access to political rights to the minority people in Iraq and remove the discriminatory practices.

5.2.3 Evolution of the Behaviour of Terrorist Groups

As per the reported data of NATO (2021), terrorism is posing a direct threat to citizens' security, international stability and prosperity, and thus, placing a persistent global threat to the countries by acknowledging no nationality, border or religion. Terrorist groups are reviewed as continuously exploiting social fragmentation and weak governance aspects for pushing the ideologies and gaining power via violence. In augmenting the evolution of terrorist behaviour in the countries, a range of factors is examined. The regional and intrastate conflicts, environmental degradation, demographic pressures and democratic retrenchment are playing a vital role in exacerbating the economic, political and social grievances terrorists are exploiting in the long term to train, organise and plot attacks (Director of the National Intelligence, 2021). The presence of all these factors has significantly affected the evolution of terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq and the overall ISIS.

In this regard, The Wilson Center (2021) has reported that the Islamic State, which is also known as ISIL, ISIS or Daesh, is emerged from the remnants of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which was founded in 2004 by Abu Musab al Zarkawi. It faded into several years' obscurity after the US troops surge in Iraq in 2007, but was found to re-emerge in 2011. This led to enhance instability in Iraq and Syria, which augmented the attacks and bolster them in the

coming years. RAND (2021) further explained that in the Islamic State, ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) is found as an extremist group, having a particularly violent ideology, calling itself as a caliphate. Al-Qaida is the key inspiration of the group.

In this essence, upon the evolution, The Wilson Center (2021) has claimed that from 2008 to 2012, a range of terrorist activities are found, depicting the rise in the terrorist groups in the country. In 2008, a strong fall in the ISI membership is found with the killing of 2400 ISI members and the capturing of 8800 members from the prior 15000 members, wherein, the Prime minister of Iraq supported ISI to enhance their reach into Sunni tribal areas and conducted suicide attacks, which killed hundreds of people in Baghdad. In 2010, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi became ISI leader, who sent operatives in 2011 to Syria. In 2012-2013, ISI has launched the campaign of “Breaking the Walls”, which carried out 24 bombings and breaking of 8 prisons, freeing jihadists, who participated in AQI attacks in 2006-2007. The terrorist acts of ISI were found constantly rising between 2013 and 2015, wherein, a range of militants’ bombs, armed assaults, airstrikes, battles, suicide bombs, and killing of a range of people, journalists, armed forces and others have been examined. Hence, by the end of 2017, the Islamic State, which was holding about one third of Syria and 40% of Iraq, was found as losing 95% of the territory, encompassing Mosul, the largest city of Iraq, and the northern Syrian city of Raqqa, its nominal capital.

A rise in the terrorism behaviour among the community of Yazidis in Syria and Iraq is examined to enhance the increasing violence against them. In this regard, Van Zoonen & Wirya (2017) have claimed that the socio-economic status of Yazidis in Iraq is shaped by the factors like the identity of them as the ethno-religious minority in the governance system of Iraq, and the continuing competition and land disputes on the resources between Erbil and Baghdad. Organised terrorist and violent attacks, and persecution against the Yazidi

community are evident throughout history, wherein, they largely faced forced conversion campaigns and religious violence. In 2007, the worst terrorist attack was noticed, which inflicted a devastating attack, detonating four truck bombs in Jazira and Kataniya villages. The attack reported the death of more than 500 people and 1500 people as wounded. IS attacked Yazidis without mercy, as in the Shingal area of Yazidis, the people are subjected to forced conversions, mass killing, young children abduction and sexual enslavement of many girls and women. This is affecting the human rights and political participation of Yazidis in Syria and Iraq. A crucial point in this regard is added by United Nations (2021), which highlighted that technological advancement has substantially augmented the terrorist acts. The use of lethal autonomous weapons, cyber-attacks, weaponization of drones and boats, and live streaming of extremist attacks is examined to give rise to criminal and terrorist acts. Apart from this, conflicts and violence are on the rise with varying levels of conflicts between the non-state actors. In this regard, the Syrian civil wars representing the regionalisation of conflicts, interlinking socio-economic, political and military issues across the borders are supporting the evolution of terrorism behaviour. Herein, conflicts remain the key driver of terrorism, wherein, the poor level of economic development, high state involvement in the external conflict, social alienation and poor economic opportunities are examined pivotal.

In support of the views, upon the evolution of terrorist behaviour, Byman (2017) also claimed that the Islamic State is posing the real terrorism threat, which was at its peak in 2015 then later suffered from numerous setbacks and the loss of numerous territories in Iraq and Syria. The US-led attacks against the Islamic State, also continues, and the Islamic State is posing a great danger to the US interests in the Middle East. In order to reduce terrorism tendencies in the state, President Donald J. Trump constantly produced distinct counter-terrorism policies, put greater focus on relations with crucial allies and continued the military campaigns, steadily driving the stronghold of an Islamic state in Syria and Iraq. Similarly,

Cordesman (2020) has reported that the official intelligence and military reporting of the US has made it clear that ISIS is still active in Iran, Syria and other countries. This is affecting adversely civil stability and posing a continuing threat to the people. The root causes of ISIS proliferation are ineffective governance, poor service delivery, sectarian division and lack of economic opportunity.

Furthermore, Katulis, deLeon & Craig (2015) reported that the Middle East has remained in the midst of the extended and disastrous battle of influence and power, shaping the political environment and the presence of extremist groups in the region. Sectarian and ethnic conflicts are contributing significantly to state collapse in Syria and Iraq. Herein, the status of Christians is concerning, wherein, a lack of sense of security and protection, conflicts and extremism issues for them are examined as dominating. The struggles of the Shia-Sunni sectarians in Iraq and Syria are found to be highly brutal for Christian communities, along with the extreme violence and order breakdown, which is creating devastating impacts on them. The Christians of Iraq found more support with the engagement of the US and coalition military than the Syrian Christians. On the other hand, the adverse impacts on the political rights of Yazidis are examined with regard to the poor relation of the community with the region's national party. Similarly, the poor state of political rights of Yazidis is examined in Iraq and Syria, wherein, its poor political environment played a vital role. In this regard, Van Zoonen & Wirya (2017) have claimed that the controversial withdrawal of Peshmerga prior to the IS attack has worsened the relationship between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Yazidi community. This is the dominant party in the region, the relationship with which has not mended yet despite distinct victories by the Peshmarga against IS. Also, there is a lack of consideration upon investigating terrorist attacks against Yazidis.

Darden (2019) also claimed youth vulnerability to the recruitment of terrorist groups is the key factor driving the growth of terrorists' activities. Armed groups are constantly exploiting youth in the countries affected by violent extremism, wherein, the children below the age of 15 are recruited in war crimes. The key factors giving rise to the youth's vulnerability to terrorist groups recruitment are geographic proximity to conflict, economic vulnerability, exposure to extremist and violent propaganda, social or political marginalisation, and permissive social and family networks.

In support of the views, Katulis, deLeon & Craig (2015) have reported that the evolution of terrorism behaviour is supported by equality and human rights issues. Across the regions like Iraq and Syria, the prevailing laws and political parties are evident as undermining the basic human rights and the general equality sense for all the citizens, which is placing significant burdens on Christians, who do not want some minority rights, rather, seeking equal treatment. For instance, blasphemy laws are creating a moderate effect on religious freedoms. Also, in the country, Christians often get threatened with imprisonment, for making any negative comments upon regimes in the Middle East countries. Institutional weakness is examined as another key factor supporting terrorism behaviour and lower political rights of Christians. In this regard, the uneven legal frameworks, ineffective rule of law, criminality and kidnapping by the extremist groups targeting Christians, the inadequacy of police and justice mechanism, and lack of trust and confidence of Christians are examined as the key threat to protect religious freedom and fundamental rights of the people. Hence, the review of the views of the authors has highlighted a range of factors concerning the social, political and economic state that are affecting the Yazidis and Christians' rights in the country and the political participation. In this, apart from the presence of the terrorist group, a range of factors is examined as affecting the rights and state of the regions' members.

Van Zoonen & Wirya (2017) further claimed that in Iraq and Syria, Yazidis are suffering from distinct external and internal issues. In an external context, the violent attacks by IS and sexual enslavement of Yazidis are found to be greatly damaging the relations of Yazidi-Sunni. Also, the Iraqi government and the KRG are found as not enjoying a favourable image among the Yazidis. All these external factors are causing frictions between the community members and the KRG, and the political participation of the community members. Internally, the rising acknowledgement of a minority of Yazidis as the separate ethnic group, rather than Kurds, and a wider gap between the community members and political representatives are giving rise to lower political rights acknowledgement among the members. Various Yazidis are not acknowledging themselves as the representatives of the political affiliations of the leaders.

5.2.4 Examining the Impact of External Factors on the Evolution of Political Rights of Christians and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq

5.2.4.1 Militant Operations

In the context of impact of militant operations on the evolution of political rights of Christians in Syria, it has been analysed that their political rights have been impacted negatively due to threat from extremist groups. Moreover, in areas captured by ISIS, they have been pushed to accept their extremist ideology as their religion or face death and as a result of this, thousands of Christians have been forced to leave their homes. Also, there has been kidnapping of senior Christian clerics by militants that shows the miserable condition of them in this area on account of absence of fundamental political rights, such as right to vote and participation in government formation. Extremist groups have enhanced the sectarian violence and due to this, dozens of churches along with Christian centres have been destroyed, because extremist groups, as well as rebels, consider that religious minorities support the Assad regime. At the same time, some other Christians assist opposition political

parties and many actively participate in political groups, like the Syrian National Council. These Christian political activists accuse government of inciting sectarian tensions by supporting Alawite militia men to kill Sunni civilians (BBC, 2015).

The Christians are mainly attacked by militant groups because of their association with Western ideals and secularism apart from supporting the Assad regime that is known for protecting them, including their political rights. In regards to this, in 2014, ISIS imposed brutal restrictions on this community; for instance, paying taxes for their safety, no renovations of churches or display of religious symbols outside them. Furthermore, in 2015, ISIS invaded Assyrian villages located in the region called Khabour and kidnapped around 200 Christians for a year in exchange for ransom from the Assyrian church. Moreover, during the tenure of the civil war in Syria, several attacks had occurred against Christians by various terrorist groups as they were opposing orthodox goals of them and in this process, some of them martyred also (Kerrin, 2014; Fahmi, 2018).

Yazidis have been in Greater Syria for a very long period of time and because of Islamisation and repeated massacres from the Ottoman Empire time and violent attacks by ISIS in 2014, their population has declined drastically. There is rampant practice of trading of people belonging to this community and many are compelled to pay ransoms to free their relatives that proves their pathetic condition and absence of basic political rights. It has been noticed that more than 50% of sacred shrines of Yazidis have been damaged by different militant groups in Syria making it impossible for them to practise their faith openly. In addition to this, some militias force them to give up their religion (Holmes, 2020).

In Iraq, Yazidis are the second-largest group of religious minority after the Christians and they have historically encountered violent attacks from ISIS that has adversely impacted their political rights. For instance, in 2014, when ISIS seized Mosul, they were forced to

convert to Islam or else face death and hundreds of Yazidis were killed in Badush prison. Many of the young children from the community were abducted and several girls and women were made sex slaves by ISIS. The alarming level of violence faced by them led to massive displacement and this ethnic cleansing by mass killings was widely regarded as a genocide act. This community had also faced challenges in accessing education services; for example, there are no universities in some areas of Iraq, including Shingal and thus, Yazidis had to go to Mosul for education wherein they were subjected to targeted violence and intimidation (Cheterian, 2019). Before ISIS took control of Mosul in 2014, Yazidis used to receive death threats that made them drop out of colleges. As a consequence of all this, they missed the opportunity to learn about the importance of political rights via education. Furthermore, Arab-Kurdish competition also affected the political representation of Yazidis in the disputed territories as every party wanted to attract minority communities, comprising Yazidis to either conflict side. This led to Yazidis being faced with pressure to be recognised as Kurds, thereby subversion of their separate religious identity. For example, in the area called Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), only 11 seats were reserved from 111 for non-Kurdish minority communities, like Turkmen and Christians and there was no reserved seat for Yazidis. Hence, the only way for them to get some political representation was affiliation with Kurdish political parties (MERI, 2017).

ISIS had been brutal with Yazidis as it sought to eradicate the identity of them by various means, like killings, torture, sexual slavery, forcing their children to become its fighters and separation of families. ISIS aimed to kill Yazidis in Sinjar, a town in Iraq that had most of the world's Yazidi population (Peacewomen, n.d). In order to protect themselves from the oppressive regime of ISIS, Yazidis demanded safety from other nations and in 2015, had established women only militia to safeguard them against various militant groups who

identified them as infidels. However, different militias of Yazidis lack necessary resources and manpower to fight effectively (Oehring, 2017).

The plight of Christians in Iraq was also like Yazidis with no political and religious rights on account of ISIS atrocities on them. For evidence, in the aftermath of capturing Nineveh Plains in Iraq by ISIS in 2014, the experience of Christians was similar to Yazidis and they were betrayed by Peshmerga, a Kurdish military force as it fled after the attack by ISIS. There was widespread destruction of Christian settlements that made them leave the nation in a hurry leaving their belongings behind. Additionally, political circumstances of that particular time in Syria did not augur well for their return and hence, they lived as internally displaced people residing in the Autonomous Kurdistan Region (Oehring, 2017).

Under the regime of Saddam Hussein in Muslim Iraq, there was enjoyment of political rights by Christians; for instance, Tariq Aziz, then deputy Prime Minister under the Hussein regime was a Christian. However, during 2004 and 2005 after the US invasion of Iraq, their situation started becoming worse in terms of political and religious rights and they were targeted by some extremist militant groups. This was because these groups accused them of collaborating with the US to attack them. In 2010, hundreds of Christians protested against the government after a series of killings of their community people (BBC, 2010). The quota of political participation of Christians in Iraq is inadequate in the Federal parliament as compared to its total population and hence, it is demanding to enhance it. In the same way, participation of Yazidis in the parliament has witnessed a decline and only Mamo Farhan, a Yazidi, had got the ministerial position in the government of Iyad Allawi. Hence, government should enhance the political participation of these minorities as it will help in ending their marginalisation and exclusion by putting them on a par with the religious majority (Heartland Alliance International, 2015).

5.2.4.2 Dominance of external countries

In Syria, peaceful protests started in 2011 against the Assad authoritarian and corrupt regime; however, it turned into civil war due to the regime's brutal repression. In 2012, Syria entered into full-scale civil war and from 2013 to 2015, the internationalisation of war gained pace by entry of regional actors, like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, which supported rebels by giving them war material. Moreover, Iran and Russia offered direct military support to Assad whereas the US and its important European allies were carefully examining and arming small groups of opposition. The growth of ISIS in 2014 prompted an intense European and US response sparking a campaign to support Kurdish partner forces in fighting ISIS (Makovsky and Hoffman, 2021). Christians and Yazidis got caught in this conflict from all sides which made their state pitiable with no political rights (de Silva, 2017).

It has been identified that the Yazidi community which has a population range falling between 300,000 to that of 700,000 in the year 2012 faced some sort of repression under the Prime Minister of Iraq named Nouri Al-Maliki. This was also being followed by a series of violence which took place after the US invasion in the year 2003. In addition to this, with the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL), the Yazidis suffered massacres as well as slavery which led to the wiping out of almost the whole community. The Christians were also severely impacted due to which the US announced provision of aid to the Iraqi Christians to build their community and provide them political rights in Iraq. The efforts of the US were also witnessed in the restoration of Christian and Yazidi communities as a response to genocide carried out by ISIL (Henne, 2018).

ISIS captured the Sinjar district of Iraq initially in the year 2014 wherein the first counter-offensive attack was aided by some external countries air forces, like the US, UK, Australia and Canada. However, this was only a partial successful attempt. Later in 2015, this attack was again done in order to take back Sinjar from the ISIS wherein support was

provided by the US Special Forces along with the UK as well as the Canadian air forces. This step not only helped Iraq in gaining back some of its districts from ISIS but also developed confidence among them to fight against ISIS and gain access to their political rights for the Christians and Yazidis especially (Oehring, 2017). It can also be inferred that in the case of Sinjar, although the problems started with removal of the regime of Saddam Hussein done by the US invasion in 2003, however, US airpower combined with the help of Kurdistan Workers' Party helped in rescuing the Yazidi victims from ISIS. Along with this, the US supported the battle against ISIS in 2017 also which helped in restoration of political forces in northern Iraq for Yazidis. This also provided the political decision-making power to the Yazidis in Iraq (Crisis Group, 2021).

Further, in 2016, several political bodies such as the U.S. House of Representatives along with the UK Parliament found the atrocities of ISIS against the majority of the Christians and Yazidis living in Syria and Iraq were genocide. It also identified that these people were not allowed to build churches and faced acts of violence because of the cultural differences. The US Secretary of State officially recognised all the atrocities of ISIS against the religious groups including Christians and Yazidis such as genocide and various crimes against ethnic cleansing along with humanity. Apart from this, the US helped in political rights evolution of this group by supporting these recognitions through its House of Representative as well as the Senate. In this regard, a report was prepared by Knights of Columbus documenting the crimes and violence done against Christians in Iraq and Syria so as to encourage the UN to provide help to them (Haider, 2017). Due to the dominance of the US, it has levied various sanctions on Syria which restricts the US individuals from engaging in any sort of transactional dealings which can potentially involve Syria's government. In 2019, it also initiated a new sanction which impacts anyone involved in preventing or obstructing a new political solution with regards to the Syrian conflict including both the

Syrians as well as all the foreign enablers. The prime motive of the US in implementing these sanctions is to identify as well as designate individuals and also entities involved in using chemical weapons with additional atrocities too against the people of Syria (State.gov, 2021). It can be referred that the US kept on putting in various efforts to highlight the atrocities carried out by ISIS in Syria and Iraq especially including the cruelties inflicted on the minorities group of Christians and Yazidis. With regards to this, in 2020, when the whole world was facing the global pandemic situation, the United States Institute of Peace brought the incidences demonstrating challenges for the democracy of Iraq before the world. This was done by the US with a hope to find peace for the minorities of Iraq and fight against ISIS (Gov.uk, 2021).

The US always insisted on offering local assistance to Syria through its stabilisation programs which was also backed by countries like the UK and France along with Germany. All these countries together issued integrated official statements regarding the President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, to give up his post. This was done to conduct political negotiation as well as transition in the country and thereby help the people residing there gain back their political rights. The US designed its policies for people of Syria with an ultimate aim to attain political state-building goals and thereby bring political transition at greater level (Brown, 2018). In terms of global coalition, the UK has provided help to Syria in the form of airstrikes to its Syrian Democratic Forces in order to assist its reforms so that political peace can be brought into the country. For instance, the UK has offered air support against operations done by Syria for Daesh so as to attain a national level political settlement to offer stability for the Syrian people. In this context, the UK also welcomed the efforts paid by Turkey as an aid to help Syria to fight against all kinds of political disruptions in the country including the one done by Daesh (ISIS). The ministers as well as senior officials of the UK have also urged the ministers of Syria to manage the issue of corruption and thereby fulfil their commitment to

democracy including provision of political rights to all the people belonging to different religious and even for minority groups like Christians and Yazidis (Parliament.UK, 2018).

On the contrary, there is evidence supporting the fact that the illegal invasion done by the US and the UK along with their plans for occupying Iraq which has been continuing since 2003 is one of the major reasons for the significant fall in the population of minorities in the country. It has also been observed that Iraq was developed artificially by Great Britain. However, this state building was done only with an aim to generate imperial interests and not work for the benefit of its religious minorities including Yazidis and Christians and their political rights (Bowring, 2012). The invasion led by the US and its military into areas of Iraq and Syria was identified to be huge occupation of the US due to the collapse of the regime of the Ba'thist along with the institutionalisation of the political system there. This situation also enabled the militias to manage the control of all the government institutions. At the time of this worse political transition, there were incidences related to intimidation of some of the public servants which also turned to be a normal routine for these countries. In the year 2008, some of the missiles by the US were found to have hit hospitals which also led to damage to some of their ambulances. The aim of these attacks lied in the negotiation of medicine to uphold political rights of the minority groups of Syria and Iraq. These negative outcomes not only worsened the healthcare system of Iraq and Syria but also snatched the political rights of their people (Dewachi et al., 2014).

The US and the UK were authorised by the Security Council to play the important role of Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and thereby administer the territories in and surrounding Iraq. It authorised them to include accountability regarding the crimes as well as atrocities done by the previous regime of Iraq. However, this did not generate success for the political and other rights for the religious minorities because Iraqis were not willing to trust the United Nations to manage their issues and challenges. Along with these, ISIS has been

joined by some of the foreign countries like Jordan, France and Australia. This issue took place as people joining ISIS are likely to be already committing crimes which are offensive under international criminals' law along with humanitarian law (Van Schaack, 2018).

5.2.4.3 High economic dependence on foreign countries

The intervention of many countries in Syria had impacted the political rights of minorities, including Yazidis. In this regard, as per the report of the United Nations (UN) Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI), Syrian armed opposition groups supported by Turkey had committed abuses that were tantamount to war crimes, comprising rape, torture, looting and stealing private property. There was also destruction of Yazidi religious sites by these groups (US Department of State, 2021). Furthermore, Russian military personnel, officers of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), Assad's principle backer, and the troops of Hezbollah, Iran's Lebanese Shiite proxy have carried out grave war crimes and crimes against humanity, strongly resembling the crimes committed by ISIS against the Syrian people on Assad's behalf. Moreover the Syrian regime have carried out grave war crimes and crimes against humanity. For example, in April 2017 Al Shayrat airbase had been used by Bashar al Assad's regime to launch a horrifying chemical weapons strike against the town of Khan Sheikhoun, in which more than 80 people were murdered and hundreds more severely wounded (US Department of State, 2021).

On the contrary, the US wants the UN to come up with a solution for the conflict and support respect for religious and political freedom of citizens of Syria. Moreover, the US is the largest donor to Syria for humanitarian purposes for war victims who have been displaced since the beginning of the civil war in 2011. It had also provided non-humanitarian assistance to the Syrian opposition that included support to local councils, civil society organisations and activists so that they could confront the influence of terrorist groups, like Al-Qaeda and offer services to communities. It also bolstered the education sector that helped children to

stay in schools in opposition-held regions (US Department of State, 2021a). All these aid programmes of the US were vital to improve the condition of oppressed religious minorities, including Yazidis and Christians that in turn had improvised their prospects of gaining political and religious rights.

There were many Christians of Syria who fled the country in 2015 due to civil war and went to the European Union (EU) borders for seeking asylum, which showed their economic dependency on these nations. At that point in time, the EU had introduced a plan to resettle migrants from Syria and some other nations to help them to provide good quality life. Slovakia, an EU nation, had said that it would only allow Christians to enter the country as refugees from Syria that helped them to improve their life by access to work and education (BBC, 2015a).

Religious minorities in Iraq can reduce the economic dependency of it on foreign countries that buy oil from it by involving in entrepreneurial activities. For example, Christians of Iraq have been historically well-educated as well as prominent in different types of trade, like weaving and medicine. Their displacement by terrorism activities and some foreign intervention is not only a concern for human rights but also weakens the Iraq economy. All this would be possible if the government provided them sufficient political rights besides safeguarding them from extremism (Henne, 2017).

The US is identified to be one of the largest single donors from the perspective of economic help as it contributed around \$12.2 billion with regards to humanitarian assistance in Syria. The prime aim of the US in this case was to support vulnerable individuals who were displaced and present inside Syria from the initial times of the crisis. Due to this, Syria was dependent on the US's economic help to support its emergency and other essential requirements for food, water and shelter. It was also dependent economically on the US as it

was the biggest provider of stabilisation assistance in the country. This in turn helped in strengthening the political background of Syria specially to work in the favour of Christians and Yazidis (State.gov, 2021). Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) offered help to the religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria amounting to around \$389 million so as to support them in recovering from the issue of genocide. This was done to help the selected groups including both ethnic and religious minorities to heal as well as restore their communities and gain back their political rights after the havoc situation developed by ISIS on them. In this regard, the US supported the Genocide Recovery and Persecution Response so that the minority groups can experience economic recovery (USAID.gov, 2021).

5.2.5 Examining the impact of internal factors on the Evolution of political Rights of Christians and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq

It has been claimed that different internal factors are found responsible for the evolution of the political rights of Christians and Yazidis in both Iraq and Syria. In context to Iraq, the country officially considers fourteen different denominations as Christians. Along with Christians, Sabeans, Mandaean, Yazidis and the Endowment Bureau are also recognised as Christian. Minorities in Syria and Iraq experience similar problems and challenges. These people are deprived of basic human rights and have to deal with the dominance of majority communities residing in Iraq and Syria. Internal power or the dominance of majority people highly influences the political power of the minority groups. In the context of the evolution of internal factors that influence the political rights of the minorities in Syria and Iraq, it can be stated that internal factors increased the desire among the minorities to regaining their rights (Saouli, 2019).

When the terrorist group, Al-Qaeda, ruled Syria, it highly hampered the political and religious rights of the people living in the country. This extremist group named Al-Qaeda or

ISIS ruled 40% of the territories of Iraq and Syria. ISIS aimed to target the minorities of Iraq and Syria, amongst which Yazidis and Christians were the most affected minorities (Werthmuller, 2020). The children and women of the Yazidi religious minority were assassinated, and these people were not allowed to migrate. Similarly, the worship points of the Christians were closed and destroyed, and these minorities were forced to change their religions and adopt the Islamic religion. However, earlier, the participation of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq and Syria in political affairs was not active; however, it has reached the ministerial level after the evolution of political rights with the time that provided them quota to have specific seats in the Kurdistan Region's parliament as well as the Federal Parliament. The high level of torture and destruction of religious places and educational institutes led to the formation of various internal factors that led to the evolution of the political rights of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq and Syria. The major internal factors that influenced evolution are no living or liberty rights, no political rights, hate speech and religious differences, deprivation of minorities from education, fear of survival, security factors, and disparity in representation of Christians and Yazidis.

Disparity in representation

One of the major internal factors affecting the evolution of the political rights of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq was associated with the disparity in representation of minority groups in politics that in turn was affecting their sustainable development, peace and democratic security. The ways Christians and Yazidis have been politically controlled because of the limited representation of minorities in politics and poor work of minority representatives in safeguarding and protecting the presence of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq have encouraged these minorities in the countries to start participating in political affairs in partnership with majority parties. Similarly, although Christians have remained an elite group in Syria who have been represented in different political groups for the country's wellbeing

and control of activities, they also have very limited political and civil freedoms in comparison to other Syrians (BBC, 2015).

In general, the majority political parties in Iraq and Syria had not been giving priority to the issues faced by minorities groups and hence their programmes were focused more on giving importance to the majority population. Although the majority parties in Iraq and Syria were defending the rights of Christians and Yazidis, their major purpose for selecting the candidates from these minorities was focused on increasing their popularity among minority groups rather than to tackle issues faced by them. Though some exceptions exist that actually worked for the welfare of Christians and Yazidis, they were majorly for-profit motive; also, another reason that raised the need for political currents of Christians and Yazidis has been associated with the lacking focus on the promotion of diversity by the majority parties (Heartland Alliance International, 2016).

Hence, the Secretary-General, Abd Al-Afram, from the Chaldean Democratic Union party in Iraq, recognised the little resources and weak influences of minorities and the need for aligning them with dominant parties not only for gaining their trust rather also to help them fulfil their demand. Along with the Christian representative, the voice for political participation of minorities has also been raised by some Christian political currents and government in the Kurdistan region in later years for increasing the participation of minorities in parliament with the aim to enhance their access to services, meeting demands and especially an issue that was creating disparity and in turn was threatening the existence of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq (Heartland Alliance International, 2016).

Security challenges

Christian and Yazidi communities in both Iraq and Syria have been found major victims of persecution and violent attacks throughout history. These minorities were targeted

by religious violence as well as campaigns and programmes for forced conversion. For example, in Iraq, a total of 72 genocide attempts had been experienced by Yazidis; also, the IS attacks subjected a significant number of them to forced conversions, mass killings, sexual enslavement of a large number of girls and women, and kidnapping of a large number of young children. The estimation made by the UN indicates more than 7000 girls and women were enforced in sexual slavery and 5000 men were executed (Zoonen & Wirya, 2017). Similarly, in Syria, the targeted violence killed nearly 1000 Christians and dozens of Christian centres and churches were destroyed and damaged that in turn made a significant number of Christians leave the country (BBC, 2015). Therefore, it has been analysed that the increased insecurity and instability remains a central internal factor that affects the lives of many Christians, Yazidis and other minority groups, displacing from Iraq and Syria and encouraging them to raise voices for increasing their political representation; also, the failure of regimes in both Iraq and Syria to resolve the security-related challenges whether through military or political means provide direct impact on the political outlook in both countries.

Philosophical differences

Most of the Christians and Yazidis recognised that their increased political representation could help them protect their basic rights in Iraq and Syria. However, the extremist environment provided an additional burden and in turn, affected their political participation. In both Iraq and Syria, religion holds higher significance that also influences political affairs (McCallum, 2012). Although the increased efforts, campaigns and voices by Christians, Yazidis and other minorities have resulted in evolving their political participation in both Iraq and Syria and as always the Islamic thought has respected their rights related to worship and also provided the opportunities for them to participate in society and state. Yet, the political philosophy in both Iraq and Syria still assigns high positions to Muslims rather than minorities. The contemporary thought still considers keeping Muslims in leadership

positions in both spiritual as well as temporal activities (McCallum, 2012). More specifically, for Yazidis, participation in political affairs was more difficult as unlike Christians who have been provided 11 from a total of 111 seats in parliaments, Yazidis were one such minority group in Iraq and Syria with no reserved seats (Zoonen & Wirya, 2017). However, for strengthening social cohesion, achieving democratic security and ensuring peace and sustainable development, Yazidis in both Syria and Iraq started making political representation to some extent by affiliating themselves with known Kurdish political leaders and parties and this is how the political rights of Yazidis evolved.

Societal tolerance

Another internal factor that resulted in the evolution of the political rights of Christians and Yazidis in both Syria and Iraq was the increased discrimination affecting the life quality of minority citizens. In Syria, Christians and other minorities were experiencing increased societal intolerance. The report by IRBC (2015) has reflected that the situation of Christians and Yazidis is really difficult and more specifically in areas of the clash between armed groups and the Syrian regime. Further, it has been opined that the Christians in Syria are highly vulnerable as most of them reside in strategic areas such as in military camps or nearby places with heavy fighting and attacks taking place on a regular basis that in turn leads them to be attacked, killed and abducted frequently. In a similar manner, the Christians and Yazidis in Iraq often found themselves feeling helpless, bitter and abandoned. Though, the government in Iraq started recognising the need for minority protection. This in turn provided protection as well as near equal rights to Christians with the Muslim majority in Iraq under the leadership of Saddam (The Associated Press, 2021). Yet, Christians and Yazidis in both Iraq and Syria are major groups who are being targeted and discriminated against in political affairs and hence rethinking political systems is required for sustainable development.

Fear of survival

The most important factor that influenced evolution in Syria and Iraq was the fear of survival. The living conditions of the minority groups living in Syria and Iraq deteriorated highly during the time period of ISIS. This extremist group only favoured people following their rules and considered minorities as slaves. The people were brutally punished without any reason, and it has highly affected the living conditions of the Christians and Yazidis in Iraq and Syria. Regular attacks on Christians and Yazidis increased the fear of survival among these minority groups. Along with this, the minority groups also faced the fear of death and physical torture. All these factors forced the minorities to stand for their rights and fight for their survival (Schmalz, 2020).

No living and right to liberty to the minorities

The Christians and Yazidis, and other minority groups in Iraq and Syria were deprived of basic human rights. ISIS killed a large number of minority people who did not practise their ideology, which highly violated the right to live in both countries. The communities like Christians and Yazidis have been living in Syria and Iraq for centuries and have been a part of the nations for a long time. The condition deteriorated when ISIS conquered Syria and Iraq. ISIS is of the opinion that Christians should not be a part of Syria and consider these communities as their enemies. This totally deteriorated the living conditions of Christians and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq as these people were treated badly and were deprived of basic human and living rights (Ferris & Kirisci, 2016). This factor highly influenced people to stand up for their rights and fight against ISIS to regain their living rights. This internal factor highly influenced the evolution of political rights to the religious minorities.

Right to liberty refers to the right that people are not allowed to arrest any individual without legal proof. This right provides power to people to safeguard themselves from arbitrary detention, arrest, and punishment (Fleming & McClain, 2013). The religious minorities living in Syria and Iraq were not provided liberty as they were punished without any reason, and ISIS inflicted mental and physical torture to the people belonging to the Yazidi and Christian communities. Along with this, the women belonging to these communities were raped and were ill-treated by the people of ISIS groups, depicting the lack of right to liberty for these groups. The whole purpose behind all these activities performed by ISIS was related to the destruction of Christian and Yazidi communities from Syria and Iraq (Ochab & Zorzi, 2016). In addition to the violation of the right of liberty, the minority communities in Syria and Iraq were also forced to live as per the rules of ISIS. These practices highly hampered the mental and physical wellbeing of the minority groups and led to the rise of evolution to fight against these inappropriate and insignificant practices.

No political rights to the minorities

Political rights refer to the rights provided to the people which help them in practising equal participation in the social and political activities of a nation. There are various types of political rights that are provided to the citizens of every nation, like the right to vote, the right to criticise, and the right to oppose the current government in power. All these rights increase the extent of equality and fairness among all the communities residing in a nation (Schmalz, 2020). The religious minorities were not provided political rights and were punished if people presented their opinion against the government or ISIS. The lack of political and living rights to the minorities increased the extent of the rebellion in these communities. Along with this, the findings also show that conflicts between the majority and minorities residing in Syria are political and religious. The minorities have been constantly forced to move out of their homes by extremist groups (Ferris & Kirisci, 2016). These facts show that Syria faces both political

and religious conflicts and these conflicts force people to rise against injustice and fight for their political rights (Saliba, 2016). The lack of political power and rights, inequalities, and injustice are proved to be the most significant factors that have positively influenced the evolution towards the political rights of minorities.

Hate speech and religious differences

Yazidis and Christians were referred to as inferior ones, and their language and speech were hated by ISIS. As these people practise their religion and every religion shares different norms and culture, the cultural differences are not respected by extremist groups living in these two nations. The extremist groups destroy the homes and worship places of these people. The hate towards the speech and religious differences forced these minorities to stand up for their equal rights and recognition, leading to evolution by these communities. The lack of good level jobs and unfair treatment has highly deteriorated the living standard and conditions of the minorities living in Syria and Iraq. The people following Christian and Yazidi religion suffer from the problem of unemployment which ignited a spark within these communities to fight for their survival (Corstange & York, 2017). ISIS did not allow Christians and Yazidis to access good health facilities, which increased the mortality rate among these communities. The lack of resources and money decreased the number of people living in these communities, and Syria and Iraq witnessed a high decline in the total percentage of Christian and Yazidi community people. This inadequate treatment of the minority groups and the extent of increasing discrimination ignited the spark of the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria (Castellino & Cavanaugh, 2013).

Deprivation of minorities from education

Every nation provides its people and children with the right to education. The minorities of Syria and Iraq were treated as low-class communities by ISIS, and their children

were not allowed to enter schools and complete their education. The lack of education not only created illiteracy among the minorities but also increased the extent of unemployment and poverty. ISIS also conducted regular attacks on the schools of the Christians and Yazidis to prevent them from accessing education. The major motive behind the prevention of children and people from education is to keep them uninformed about their political rights and freedom (Ochab & Zorzi, 2016). As education increases the knowledge of the people, ISIS destroyed the schools of the minorities so that they do not gain significant knowledge and support from the world. In the year 2015, among 4.8 million children living in Syria, 2.2 million did not attend school, most of whom were Muslims but also from minorities. These figures highlight the diminishing literacy rate of Syria. The deteriorating education conditions have imposed a serious threat to the social stabilisation and economic growth of the country. This situation created a huge impact on the life of the minorities living in Iraq and Syria, which helped in the formation of a major evolution in order to fight for their rights and freedom. It can be stated that evolution helped the minorities to complete their studies until the 12th class. Furthermore, the evolution also helped people in establishing their presence among the majorities with a significant level of rights (Teschendorff, 2015).

The condition of the country worsened when ISIS forced children to stop their education and join the armed groups. The worse education system in Syria increased the need for protest among the people, which helped in the formation of the evolution to gain their basic living and educational rights (Teschendorff, 2015).

5.3 Matrix of Analysis

The matrix of analysis used here is the L-shaped Matrix (Dong et al., 2016), which is a two dimensional model that relates two variables one to another. In this case, the variables are used independently to relate to cases that were under the test. The L-shaped matrix helps

to summarize relationships and requirements. Eventually, it forms an upside-down L, which is the most common as well as basic matrix format (Xi & Liping, 2014).

The dependent variable or outcome in our Crisp-set QCA analysis is the evolution of political rights for religious minority groups in Syria as well as Iraq. Internal, regional, and international factors are considered as conditions. These are: the evolution of the level of government involvement (GI), the evolution of the behaviour of social religious majority (RM), the evolution of the behaviour of terrorist groups (TG), and the evolution of external powers influence upon the political rights observed (EP).

In the research, crisp-set technique is applied with dichotomous value for the interest outcome and conditions:

- Y=1 means improvement in the protection of the religious minority political rights protection / Y= 0 means absence of improvement.

- GI=1 means increment of the level of government involvement /GI=0 means absence increment.

- RM=1 means positive change in the behaviour of the social religious majority /RM=0 means absence of positive change.

- TG=1 means reduction of the terrorism intensity/TG=0 means absence of reduction.

- EP=1 means increment of external power influence on the political rights /EP=0 means absence of increment.

Crisp-set Model

	Y	GI	RM	TG	EP	PR
Iraq 2008-2013 Christians	0	0	0	0	0	0
Syria 2008-2013 Christians	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iraq 2014-2018 Christians	0	0	0	0	0	0
Syria 2014-2018 Christians	1	0	0	0	0	0
Iraq 2008-2013 Yazidis	0	0	0	0	0	0
Syria 2008-2013 Yazidis	1	0	0	0	0	0
Iraq 2014-2018 Yazidis	0	0	0	0	0	0
Syria 2014-2018 Yazidis	1	0	0	0	0	0

The calibration matrix above provides a wide extent scenario of the outcome on evolution of the political rights for the religious minority groups in Syria and Iraq. As provided, the indications are that Iraq 2008-2013 for Christians case have recorded a ‘no increment’ (0) scenario for the evolution of political rights, and the same is the case with Syria 2008-2013 for Christians. At the same time Iraq 2014-2018 for Christians have registered a ‘no increment’ (0) scenario for the evolution of political rights, while Syria 2014-2018 case for Christians registers an ‘increment’ (1) in the evolution of political rights. In the case featuring the Yazidis, there is an evidence that similar scenario as that of Christians are occurring. For instance, the case for Iraq 2008-2013 for Yazidis records a ‘no increment’ (0) scenario for the evolution of political rights, while the case with Syria 2008-2013 for Yazidis is as well a ‘no increment’. At the same time, the case for Iraq 2014-2018 for Yazidis have registered a ‘no increment’ (0) scenario for the evolution of political rights, while Syria 2014-2018 case for Christians registers an ‘increment’ (1) in the evolution of political rights. The

matrix model above has explored the evolution factors of the independent variables, where all entries indicate a ‘no evolution’ scenario.

The matrix model shows as well the evolution factors of the independent variables, where all entries indicate a ‘no evolution’ scenario. For instance, the evolution of the level of government involvement for the case of Iraq 2008-2013 for Christians is ‘none’ (or 0), as well as for Syria 2008-2013 for Christians, Iraq 2014-2018 for Christians, Syria 2014-2018 for Christians, Iraq 2008-2013 for Yazidis, Syria 2008-2013 for Yazidis, Iraq 2014-2018 for Yazidis, and Syria 2014-2018 for Yazidis. The same case applies with the next independent variable, evolution of the behaviour of social religious majority, where all cases record a ‘no evolution’ scenario. The variable ‘evolution of the behaviour of terrorist groups’ has also recorded a ‘no evolution’ (0) across all the 8 cases. The last two independent variables ‘evolution of external powers influence upon the political rights’ and ‘plans and regulations for the management of violent activities’ have also registered a ‘no evolution’ (0) scenario across all the 8 cases.

5.4 Analysis of Necessity

Table x offers the analysis of the necessity of the presence and absence of the four conditions observed for the outcomes $Y=1$ and $Y=0$). We consider the least conservative raw consistency index (CI), 0.8 to estimate the need for the conditions. The table also includes the coverage of the conditions.

TABLE 1. Analysis of Necessity

Condición	Y=1		Y=0	
	IC	Coverage	IC	Coverage
Gi				
~gi	0.3750	0.3750	0.6250	0.6250
Rm				
~rm	0.3750	0.3750	0.6250	0.6250
Tg				
~tg	0.3750	0.3750	0.6250	0.6250
Ep				
~ep	0.3750	0.3750	0.6250	0.6250
gi= increment of the level of government involvement rm= positive change in the behaviour of the social religious majority tg= reduction of the terrorism intensity ep = increment of external power influence on the political rights Note (~) means absence of the condition				

As the table shows, it is impossible to calculate the consistency index and the coverage of the conditions gi, rm, tg and ep because they do not occur in any case. Furthermore, the table

shows that none of the conditions that do occur ($\sim gi$, $\sim rm$, $\sim tg$ and $\sim ep$) are necessary to explain any of the results because they do not meet the consistency threshold. Since outcomes vary between cases, but the conditions remain as constants, we can conclude that all the conditions analyzed are irrelevant to explain the outcomes. As a consequence, the crisp- set analysis cannot go further.

5.5 Discussion

The theory leveraged in the explanation of the hypotheses has critically grounded the bases of the explanatory suggestions and testing the research through an expansive descriptive approach. The connotation suggests that the lack of government support is the fundamental cause of the intense disruption of the political rights of the minority religious populations both in Iraq and Syria. Being in favour of the hypotheses, it can be presumed that the evolution of the involvement of the majority nation-based government is bound to be problematic even with the creation of equality and the appropriateness in the disseminating the personal protection based rights of the citizens belonging to the religious minorities.

However, the theory is not working in this study, for several reasons. It is critical to consider the fact that minority group members both in Iraq and Syria are practically bound to undergo or experience divergent kinds of identity threats. For instance, in both countries, group-status threats are bound to happen whenever the perceived competence of such factions is devalued. These religious minority members are equally poised to undergo a lot of other forms of identity threats, one of which happens whenever the moral behaviour of their groups is called in question. This ultimate form of threat is occasionally experienced even by the very factions who can be in no way be held personally accountable for the behaviour of their groups, as when the citizens of these two countries may be having the feeling of guilt of shame for the atrocities or discriminations committed by their country.

The religious minorities are equally bound to undergo social identity threat whenever they might show the thought that their faction is not sufficiently recognized as a distinct and independent entity with unique attributes. The group distinctiveness threat is usually experienced when diverse factions of people are mingled or included in a larger, or more inclusive groups, nations, or organizations like those minorities striving to gain even socio-economic and political autonomy over a particular jurisdiction.

These inferences, can sufficiently be tested in relation to the explanatory hypothesis suggesting that the political rights for Syria, together with those in Iraqi communities, are disrupted or thwarted because of the low levels of involvements of the regulatory leviathan force within the minority groups. For example, the Iraqi political ideology is not grounded on the consideration of a large faction of the groups for the reasons of creating political decisions and this is considered to be a major threat affecting political rights of these religious minorities negatively and it cuts across the Yazidis and Christians equally. For the study to reach a balanced distribution of the political rights among these minority communities, there is need to provide a profound consideration to the tinier and minority factions for the increment of their involvement in political decision-making.

Another reason for the failure of the theory to explain or support the hypotheses is the discriminatory approaches from the government through some partial regulations which are further declining the preservation of the political and human rights of the minority religious communities. There is a critical value in reducing or eliminating the partial or discriminatory enactment of the legislative laws by both the two governments.

Even from the calibration and model analysis herein, contextually, the various conditions contributing to the independent variables were calibrated in a multiple crisp model featuring 8 instances from the y-axis and those variable from the row x-axis. The variables are somewhat five-some and are covered as the test study comprising of evolution of the level

of government involvement, evolution of the behaviour of the social religious majority, those behaviours of the terrorist groups, the external powers influencing upon the political rights and indeed the plans and regulatory frames for managing violent activities. From the analysis in the table, it is acknowledged, for example, that the development of the degree of government association for the instance of Iraq 2008-2013 for Christians is 'none' (or 0), as well with respect to Syria 2008-2013 for Christians, Iraq 2014-2018 for Christians, Syria 2014-2018 for Christians, Iraq 2008-2013 for Yazidis, Syria 2008-2013 for Yazidis, Iraq 2014-2018 for Yazidis, and Syria 2014-2018 for Yazidis. A similar case applies with the following autonomous variable, advancement of the way of behaving of social strict larger part, where all cases record a 'no development' situation. The variable 'advancement of the way of behaving of fear based oppressor gatherings' has likewise recorded a 'no development' (0) across every one of the 8 cases. The last two free factors 'development of outside powers impact upon the political privileges' and 'plans and guidelines for the administration of rough exercises' have additionally enlisted a 'no advancement' (0) situation across every one of the 8 cases.

The suggestion is that coping with the very identity threats, the members from the minority groups will have to exude diverse responses based on the extent to which they identify the groups. In addition to this, the perceived attributes of the social structures plus the various opportunities of restrictions implied, the critically of the psychology of the groups and the loyalty and commitment to the groups to pursuit of political rights would also be a significant determinant on the people to cope and thus provide a theoretical basis for its explanation.

5.6 Summary

This section features the calibration and analysis process of the study. The crisp-set model calibration is featured as a multi-dimensional analysis tool, where dependent variable

was marked as 1 (for increment) or 0 (for non-increment) and independent variables marked as 1 (for evolution) or 0 (for non-evolution). The cases enlisted for the analysis of the behaviour of dependent variable are; Iraq 2008-2013 for Christians, Syria 2008-2013 for Christians, Iraq 2014-2018 for Christians, Syria 2014-2018 for Christians, Iraq 2008-2013 for Yazidis, Syria 2008-2013 for Yazidis, Iraq 2014-2018 for Yazidis, and Syria 2014-2018 for Yazidis. Whereas, the variables (independent) are i) Evolution of the level of government involvement, ii) Evolution of the behaviour of social religious majority, iii) Evolution of the behaviour of terrorist groups, iv) Evolution of external powers influence upon the political rights, and v) Plans and regulations for the management of violent activities. On the other side, the dependent/outcome variable is evolution of political rights for the religious minority groups (Behaviour of dependent variable). These are described in this section with the use of an L-shaped matrix.

In conclusion, chapter five is quite extensive and it has dealt with an array of issues. For instance, it has inspected the effect of inward and outside factors on the advancement of political freedoms of Christians and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq exhaustively and has tried the logical exploration speculation. Area 5.1 mirrors the Behaviour of the Dependent Variables, which are the results of in the Evolution of political Rights for Religious Minorities. Area 5.2 offers a top to bottom examination of the development of the way of behaving of the autonomous factors. The factors picked in such manner are advancement of the degree of government contribution, development of the way of behaving of social strict greater part, development of the way of behaving of psychological oppressor gatherings, development of outer powers impact upon the political freedoms, and plans and guidelines for the administration of rough exercises. Further, segment 5.3 presents the Calibration. Here, the review use the fresh set model alignment which is portrayed by a multi-faceted variable prospects with checking of ward factors as 1 hinting the addition of political privileges

security for the strict minority gatherings or as 0 which is meaning a stagnation or decline of political freedoms insurance for them. The free factors are set apart as 1 or 0 too. For example, 1 can address the addition of the degree of government inclusion and 0 meaning the stagnation or the downfall of the degree of government association. This part additionally describes the alignment of the results with a wide degree of advancement situation of the political privileges for the strict minority bunches in Syria and Iraq. The lattice utilized in this segment is the L-formed Matrix, and a two-layered model relates two factors to one another. The variables are subsequently applied to freely in attempting to connect with every one of the cases that were under study. Segment 5.4 portrays the two examinations, one that makes sense of the after-effects of interest and the other managing general outcomes. Every one of the segments incorporates examination of the consistency of the factors and investigation of consistency for causal arrangements and without a doubt the minimization cycle. Momentarily, this part is partitioned to make sense of 5.4-1 Explaining positive advancement and 5.4.2. Making sense of no advancement or negative development. At long last, there is segment 5.5 which is the rundown highlighting the adjustment and examination cycle of the review. Here, the fresh set model adjustment is included as a complex investigation instrument with the reliant variable market as 1 for augmentation and 0 for non-addition and autonomous factors set apart as 1 for development and 0 for non-advancement. For the investigation, the cases enrolled to show the way of behaving of the reliant factors and autonomous factors.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The present study aims to identify the main conclusions on the present research on the evolution of the political rights of the religious minorities in Iraq and Syria from 2008 to 2018. The first question addressed was how did political rights for religious minorities evolve in Iraq and Syria from 2008 to 2018. The second question examines the similarities and differences between the level of political rights religious minorities have in Syria and Iraq. The final question evaluates the contextual factors that explain similarities and differences. To this regard we hypothesized that:

1) The political rights of voting and accessing public services have been reduced for religious minorities in Iraq and Syria from 2008 to 2018.

2) There are differences between political rights of each religious minority in Iraq and Syria concerning political decision-making within the political system.

3) The evolution of the religious minorities' political rights in both countries is determined by internal, regional, and international factors.

In relation to the first question and hypothesis, we conclude that the first hypothesis of the research is verified.

The Saddam Hussein regime fell in Iraq on the 9th April 2003, and the minorities like Yazidis had to face a wide range of difficulties and problems. Some of the people started discriminating against them, and their water supply was cut, which caused a shortage of water in their colonies. Christians also had to face a wide range of issues after the fall of the Saddam regime. These conclusions connect with the existing literature on political rights of the religious minorities which state that the churches of Christians were destroyed, and people were attacked. Christians and Yazidis faced a similar inequality and high-level discrimination situation in Syria (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007). These problems of

discrimination and deprivation of equal rights increased further in these areas because of weak laws and constitutional policies.

Furthermore, the problem of discrimination among religious minorities like Yazidis and Christians is so high that most feel unsafe going to work and school. Iraq has been regarded as the most dangerous place for religious minorities. The Christians participate in the political practices of Iraq to a small extent and the political participation of minority religions is even less in Syria and it represents the persecution of political rights of the minority religious communities. However, for Yazidis it is extremely difficult to be a part of the government and represent their community. It highlights the high level of inequality faced by these religious communities in both Syria and Iraq.

Regarding the second question, we conclude that in Iraq and Syria Yazidis are highly deprived of the equal right to vote. The second research hypothesis is verified which shows that minorities are not provided equal voting rights. It is because the constitution of Iraq does not provide equal rights and freedom to these communities. However, the constitution of Iraq aims to provide protection and freedom to Christians. Yet still, their problems are not considered severe. Therefore, despite the representation of Christians in Iraq's political and governmental activities, this community cannot receive a significant level of representation in the overall community of Iraq.

Along with this, it can also be concluded that the majority of the people in the Yazidis community in Iraq live in villages and rural areas. They perform farming, are engaged in different types of occupations and are least interested in their representation in the governmental bodies of Iraq. It has further forced the community to stay deprived of their political and religious rights. The existing literature on political rights of the religious minorities also states that despite the discrimination faced by Yazidis in Syria and Iraq earlier, it was not possible for this community to get educated in their own language.

Moreover, in 2010 ISIS attacked Christians in Syria, which reduced the overall population of Christians to a high level (Parliament.UK, 2018).

Moreover, many Christian families escaped from Iraq and Syria to other nations, which further decreased their overall influence in the nation. 2013 to 2018 was the most horrifying period for the religious communities in Iraq and Syria. The minorities like Yazidis were attacked and killed brutally by ISIS. The women and children of Yazidis were also killed or forced to convert to their religion by extreme groups. This era highlights the genocide done by ISIS on the minority communities of Iraq. In a similar manner, the Yazidis and Christians living in Iraq and Syria are also being tortured and persecuted by the ISIS militants and the people from minority religious communities are forced to flee the religion as well as convert to ISIS ideology. On the other hand, the human rights of women and girls are being suppressed to a higher extent and the women and girls are living in unspeakable trauma. These scenarios are increasing the vulnerability and are being used to displace the population of minority religious communities.

However, the religious minority communities such as Christians and Yazidis have been granted political and social rights due to international pressure as well as from political rights organisations so that these minority communities can also serve the nations by enhancing the socio-economic conditions while protecting the minority rights and ensuring the development of minority groups in Iraq and Syria. The Christians and Yazidis have also been enabled to exercise their social and political rights between the years 2008 and 2018.

Finally, the test of the hypothesis for the third question leads us to conclude that the hypothesis is wrong. The internal, regional, and international factors considered are irrelevant to explain why some cases show an improvement in the protection of the political rights of the religious minorities and others do not.

A high level of political pressure is also faced by religious minorities in Iraq and Syria from different political parties as they abuse them to vote in their favour. The people are threatened and physically and mentally abused to gain votes. When the political parties win the election, they do not help these religious minorities. It shows the high level of brutality witnessed by Christians and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq. Even after many transformations and global political pressure, the situation of the religious communities in Syria and Iraq remains poor.

Along with the high level of political discrimination faced by the religious minorities, these people also faced inequality in accessing essential public services. Moreover, the previous literatures also support that religious minorities are killed and threatened when they rebel against such criminal activities. The cases of genocide have highly decreased the overall percentage of Yazidis and Christians in Iraq and Syria. It has created high terror and fear among the religious communities (Nicolaus, & Yuce, 2017). The decreasing population of Christians and Yazidis has further decreased the fire among the people to fight for their rights and gain equal representation in the country.

Moreover, the children of Yazidis and Christians are forced to join the forces of ISIS to increase their army. The men and women are forced to convert their religion to live peacefully and gain equal rights under ISIS domination. Along with the high level of violence, the corrupt dictator regimes in both countries ensure that the minorities do not get access to their political rights, which has degraded the overall living standard of minorities in Syria and Iraq. Witnessing a high level of discrimination, in 2012, Yazidis formed the Syrian Yazidi Council (SYC) to fight against the evil practices conducted by the corrupt dictator regime against minorities. These actions further motivated other communities to form their religious parties and unite to fight for equal rights and representation. In the case of Christians, it can be concluded that they never fight for their rights. As they represented their

community in the army and the constitutional bodies of Iraq, they were satisfied with it. Although they were provided with the right to worship at Churches and live like ordinary people, they feared that if they rebelled against ISIS, their fundamental living rights would also be snatched from them.

This way, the main contribution of this research is the verification that in the period 2008 to 2013 and from 2014 to 2018, various transformations took place in the constitution of Iraq, which aims to provide equal rights to religious minorities. However, Christians and Yazidis are also not provided political rights. A similar case of discrimination has been observed in Syria. The influence and fear of corrupt political parties have forced the government of these nations to keep depriving the religious minorities of their rights. In addition, the rise of extremist groups in Syria and Iraq worsened the condition of religious minorities like Yazidis and Christians in these nations. It has created a fear of survival among Christians and Yazidis in Iraq and Syria.

The previous research conducted in a similar domain also outlined that the political rights of the minority religious communities in Iraq and Syria are suppressed and the minority communities are facing consistent physical, security and mental threats from extremist groups such as al-Qaeda, ISIS and others. The outcome of this research is found to be somewhat similar to the previous research but also unveiled the unique challenges that the minority communities in Iraq and Syria faced from the year 2008 to the year 2018.

Furthermore, the government of Iraq and Syria also provided voting rights for religious minority groups such as Yazidis and Christians as well as providing the rights to equal access to social services and it is considered to be an improvement in enhancing the social and political status of the religious minority communities.

On the other hand, this research study also has limitations. In order to conduct the research, the secondary information is taken into consideration and thus, neglecting the sentiments and opinions of the religious minority community in the consideration. In this context, there was also a need to conduct semi-structured interviews as well as conducting a survey so that the specific issues faced by the religious minority communities in Iraq and Syria can be outlined and included in the present research. The reason for not conducting the interviews is concerned towards visiting such countries and there are higher chances that the scholars and researchers might not be able to conduct the interviews due to the political scenarios. Conducting the online interviews might be a possible option for enhancing the outcome of this research study but it does not seem to be a feasible option in Iraq and Syria due to the communication and religious restrictions as well as considering the time and cost aspects.

From the overall analysis of the results, it can be stated that in future also the researchers can make use of some of the factors such as education and political participation to explain different outcomes but the selection of the factors needs to be in line with the research objectives.

In the context of the data, more quantitative data can further be gathered from secondary sources to address the research questions in the most appropriate manner. The use of quantitative figures will increase the reliability of research findings. The qualitative analysis of the information from the secondary sources such as official reports of the United Nations, and Human Rights Commissions as well as the indexes used for measuring the political rights and political stability so that the real-time scenarios can be evaluated. The analysis in the future research will also enable the researchers to identify the model recommendations that need to be adopted to bring a positive change in the political participation of minority religious communities.

Nonetheless, the present research study may be of use to help the Iraq and Syria governments to identify and explore the issues and problems being faced by the religious minority communities in their countries so that the most appropriate policies and protocols can be adopted and implemented to enhance the social and political status of the religious minority communities. This research also highlights the status of the religious minority communities in Iraq and Syria and this research study can be taken as a reference for the international institutions so that the human rights issues can be highlighted and international policies can be developed.

References:

- Abdelfattah Amor, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/ 40, U.N. ESCOR, Comm'n on Hum. Rts., 59th Sess., Agenda Item 11(e), ¶ 53, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/2003/66 (2003).
- Abdulkader, D. (2019). Yezidi Minorities Continue to Suffer after the Defeat of the Caliphate, FIKRA FORUM, July 22, 2019. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ar/fikraforum/view/yezidi-minorities-continue-to-suffer-after-the-defeat-of-the-caliphate>.
- ACNUK. (2016). Persecuted and Forgotten? A report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2013-2015. Surry: Aid to the Church in Need UK. <http://www.acnuk.org/persecuted#countries>.
- Ahmed, A. M., Et al. (2012). The Minorities in Iraq: Seeking Justice, Equality, and the Fear from the Future, April 2012, Al-Masalla Organization.
- Ahmed, R. SH. (2012). "alhimaya alqanunia lil'aqaliat fi aliraq", [Legal Protection of Minorities in Iraq], Research published in the Journal of Rights Letter, second issue, Faculty of Law, Karbala University.
- Ahram, A. I. (2015). Sexual Violence and the Making of ISIS. *Survival*, 57(3), 57-78.
- Al Jazeera, 'How suicide bombings shattered Iraq. The secret files catalogue thousands of suicide attacks', 24 October 2010. <http://www.aljazeera.com/secretiraqfiles/2010/10/20101022161025428625>. HTML (accessed 22 March 2020).
- Alam, W. A. (1994). "Hamayat huquq al'aqliat fi alqanun alduwali alaam", [Protection of Minority Rights in Public International Law]. Dar Al Nahda Al Arabeya For Publishing.

- Aldeeb, S. S. I. (1996). "Hamayat huquq al'aqliat fi alqanun alduwali alaam almeaser", [Protection of minority rights in contemporary international public law]. PHD thesis. *Cairo University*.
- Al-Fawwaz, A. 2018. Motives of Political Violence in the Middle East with Special Reference to Syria. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 5(1), pp. 249-263.
- Ali, M. H., & Hosseini, S. B. (2018). Between Rights, Political Participation and Opposition: The Case of the Yezidi in Syria (Rojāva). *Syrian Studies Association Bulletin*, 23(1).
- Alishahi, A., HosseinPour, Z., Souchelmaei, H. S., & Mahdipour, A. (2019). The Impact of Different Ethnicities in the Realisation of Political Federalism in Iraq, from Post Saddam to 2018. *Journal of Cultural and Social Anthropology*, 1(3), 23-36.
- AlKhazraji, A. J. (2012). "alqanun alduwaliu lihuquq al'iinsan", [International Law on Human Rights], Dar Al-Thaqafa, Amman, Jordan.
- AlKiali, A. (1990). et al, "almawsuea alsiyasia", [Political Encyclopedia], Dar al-Naama for Printing and Publishing, Beirut, First Edition.
- Allawi, A. A. (2008). The occupation of Iraq: Winning the war, losing the peace. Yale University Press.
- Altabal, L. (2010). "alaitifaqia alduwalia walaqlimia lihuquq alainsan", [International and Regional Convention on Human Rights], Modern Book Foundation, Tripoli.
- Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations, Vol.2, No.2, Summer 2003.
- Alwan, M. Y. & Al Mousa, M. Kh. (2011). "alqanun alduwali lihuquq al'insan", [International Law for Human Rights], Dar Al-Thaqafa Publishing - Amman.
- Amnesty International report, Iraq: Ethnic cleansing on historic scale: the Islamic State's systematic targeting of minorities in northern Iraq, 02 September 2014.

Amnesty International, 'Iraq: "Honour Killing" of teenage girl condemned as abhorrent', 2 May 2007.

Amor, A. (2000). Civil and Political Rights, Including Intolerance. Report Special Rapporteur, in Accordance with Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2000/33, U.N. ESCOR, Comm'n on Hum. Rts., 57th Sess., Agenda Item 11(e), 160, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/2001/63 (2001). In Turkey, there were reports of the banning of religious seminaries. Id. In Iran, the directors of religious minority schools had to be Muslims. Report submitted by Abdelfattah Amor, Special Rapporteur, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1995/23, *supra* note 12, 42.

Amy Biegelsen, Torture techniques haunt interrogator, *Style*, 11 October 2006, online at <http://www.styleweekly.com/article.asp?idarticle=13151>.

Anwar, M., Blaschke, J., & Sander, Å. (2004). State Policies Towards Muslim Minorities: Sweden, Great Britain and Germany. Final Report, Berlin.

Arjomand, S.A. (2018). Constitutional Politics in the Middle East: With Special Reference to Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Asher-Schapiro, A. (2014). Who Are the Yazidis, the Ancient, Persecuted Religious Minority Struggling to Survive in Iraq? Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/8/140809-iraq-yazidis-minority-isil-religion-history/>

Assembly, U. G. (1992). Declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Adopted by General Assembly resolution, 47, 135.

Assyria Council of EU and Assyria Foundation, Human Rights Report on Assyrians in Iraq, 2013.

Assyrian Universal Alliance Americas Chapter, Joint Appeal to Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues and the Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom, 30 June 2014

Baldwin, C. (2006). *Minority Rights in Kosovo under International Rule*. London: Minority Rights Group International.

Baldwin, C., Chapman, C., & Gray, Z. (2007). *Minority rights: the key to conflict prevention*. London: Minority Rights Group International.

Barbarani, S. (2018). Syria's Yazidis will suffer the consequences of US withdrawal: activist. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/syria-s-yazidis-will-suffer-the-consequences-of-us-withdrawal-activist-1.807472>

Barber, M. (2017). *The KRG's Relationship with the Yazidi Minority and the Future of the Yazidis in Shingal*. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/52708793/Barber_-_The_KRGs_Relationship_with_the_Yazidi_Minority_and_the_Future_of_the_Yazidis_in_Shingal.pdf?1492658386=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DThe_KRGs_Relationship_with_the_Yazidi_Minority_in_Shingal.pdf&Expires=1602507576&Signature=IXtd~shOYpARS08wcmggaomueyoAjtNPYaO453vpB88l80HlatDLRfW69tRJe2HLlEzt9FMrrJkvXqBVIfkyjqHB1hC3r1b5mjgOmaPKvFU2jFADrqwyakxPkuPzY8rflsJnT8fVmiF7i2rR81zsH~2tXyyukoTUMMO~2z7aJVrWuMC5T2AF2kHs-4C~Bf3ka62dfPb80IsVnqIszsSf2HI7sJd~xrO1yX-rggbh0UE9-rk4V2vBULaGH-fz6qWDMxzhVoHhLr1~OugKoyHBTDKu6FAZO8NMdlyXYY02erPI4cQYEeQ6woQYO6CQWrgBLXzeOiBF5A5yetqWrRdwg__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

- Barbieri, W. A. (1999). Group rights and the Muslim diaspora. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 21(4), 907-926.
- Barzilai, G. (2010). *Communities and law: Politics and cultures of legal identities*. University of Michigan Press.
- Basci, E. 2016. Yazidis: A community scattered in between geographies and its current immigration experience. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies* 3(2), pp. 1-13.
- Bashir, S. M. (1970). "alqanun alduwali alaam fi alsilm walharb", [International Public Law in Peace and War], *New Gala Library*, Mansoura, 6th Printing Press, p. 142.
- BBC News online, 20 September 2005, Iraq Chaos Threatens Ancient Faith, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4260170.stm.
- BBC News, "Iraq profile leaders," 11 August 2015.
- BBC. (2010). Iraqi Christians' long history. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11669994>
- BBC. (2011). Guide: Syria's diverse minorities. Retrieved 12 October 2020 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16108755>.
- BBC. (2015). Syria's beleaguered Christians. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-22270455>.
- BBC. (2015). Syria's beleaguered Christians. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-22270455>
- BBC. (2015a). Migrants crisis: Slovakia 'will only accept Christians'. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33986738>
- BBC. 2018. Iraq profile - timeline. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14546763> [Accessed on: 11 March 2021].

- BBC. 2019. Syria profile - Timeline. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995> [Accessed on: 08 December 2020].
- Beck, M., & Collet, L. (2010). *On Syrian Politics and the Situation of its Christian Minority*. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS).
- Beinin, J., Benjamin, A., Bond, D., Halperin, L. R., Hanoosh, Y., Liebhaber, S., ... & Volk, L. (2016). *Minorities and the Modern Arab World: New Perspectives*. Syracuse University Press.
- Ben-Meir, A. (2016). The persecution of minorities in the Middle East. Working Paper, December.
- Berkley Center. (2021). Religious and Sectarian Identity in Syria. Retrieved June 04, 2021, from <https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/sectarian-messaging-and-perceptions-in-the-syrian-civil-war>
- Between, M. (2006). Non-Muslims in the Islamic state: Majority rule and minority rights. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 10(02).
- Besenyő, J., & Gömöri, R. (2014). CHRISTIANS IN SYRIA AND THE CIVIL WAR. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Janos-Besenyő/publication/279186094_Christians_in_Syria_and_the_civil_war/links/558d151e08ae591c19da2faa/Christians-in-Syria-and-the-civil-war.pdf
- Bielefeldt, H. (2018). *Freedom of Religion or Belief: Thematic Reports of the UN Special Rapporteur 2010-2016*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Blanchard, C.M. 2014. *Conflict in Syria and Iraq: Implications for Religious Minorities*. [Online]. Retrieved 08 December 2020, Available at: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/IN10111.pdf>

- Boudon, R., & Bourricaud, F. (1982). *Dictionnaire critique de la sociologie*. Presses universitaires de France.
- Bowman, S. (1983). Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, editors. *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functioning of a Plural Society. Volume I. The Central Lands*, pp 447. *Volume II. The Arabic-Speaking Lands*, pp. 207, New York and London, Holmes and Meier, 1982. Bibliography and index. *Balkan Studies*, 24(1).
- Bowring, B. (2012). Minority rights in post-war Iraq: an impending catastrophe? *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*, 5(3), 319-335.
- Boyle and Sheen, above n. 11, xx-xxi. Further clarification has been supplied by the European Court of Human Rights. In the Case of Silver and Others, 61 Eur. Ct.H.R. (ser.A) 37–8 (1983), the Court required that the limitations clauses be applied in keeping with the principles of necessity and proportionality. Cited in Cole Durham, Jr., *Perspectives on Religious Liberty: A Comparative Framework*, in Witte and van der Vyver, above n. 3, 33ff. See also Tahzib, above n. 11, 334–43.
- Boyle, K. (1992). *Religious intolerance and the incitement of hatred. Striking a Balance: Hate Speech, Freedom of Expression and Nondiscrimination*. London, Article, 19.
- Brown, F. Z. (2018). *Dilemmas of Stabilization Assistance: The Case of Syria*. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/10/26/dilemmas-of-stabilization-assistance-case-of-syria-pub-77574>
- Brownlie, I. (1992). *The Rights of Peoples in Modern International Law*, in Crawford, *The Rights of Peoples*.
- Bryman, A. (2017). *Quantitative and qualitative research: further reflections on their integration*. Routledge.

- Byman, D. L. (2017). Beyond Iraq and Syria: ISIS' ability to conduct attacks abroad. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/beyond-iraq-and-syria-isis-ability-to-conduct-attacks-abroad/>
- Callum, F. (2012). Christian Political Participation in the Arab World. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://research-repository.standrews.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/10023/4130/Christian_Political_Participation_in_the_Arab_World_author_version.pdf?sequence=1
- Capotorti, F. (1979). Study on the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. United Nations. Document E/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Rev.1 paragraph 568 and Pentassuglia, G (2002) Minorities in International Law: An Introductory Study Council of Europe Publishing 57.
- Castellino, J., & Cavanaugh, K. A. (2013). *Minority Rights in the Middle East*. OUP Oxford.
- Cecil, A. R., Jenifer, F. G., & Taitte, W. L. (1997). The Essence of Living in a Free Society. Cf. HRC General Comment No. 23(50), supra n. 17, at para. 5.2, with regard to Article 27 ICCPR.
- Chapman, C. (2008). Why a Minority Rights Approach to Conflict?: The Case of Southern Sudan. Minority Rights Group International.
- Chapman, C. (2012). Improving security for minorities in Iraq. Minority Rights Group International, 1-16.
- Chapman, C. (2012). Improving security for minorities in Iraq. Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt.
- Charlesworth, H. (1997). No principled reason [The challenge of human rights law for religious traditions. Edited version of concluding lecture in the St Patrick's Cathedral

- Centenary Lecture series, sponsored by the Australian Catholic University.]. Eureka Street, 7(9), 24.
- Cheterian, V. (2019). ISIS genocide against the Yazidis and mass violence in the Middle East. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1-13.
- Christopher M. Blanchard, Conflict in Syria and Iraq: Implications for Religious Minorities, Congressional Research Service reports, July 24, 2014.
- CIA World Factbook, Iraq. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>.
- City University of New York. (2016). As The World Watches. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1153&context=gj_etds
- Conduit, D. 2014. Hizballah in Syria: the limits of the democracy/moderation paradigm. *Orta Doğu Etütleri* 5(2), pp.81-114.
- Congress 114th, 'Resolution 75 – Expressing the sense of Congress that the atrocities perpetrated by ISIS against religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria include war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide', 2015-2016.
- Cordesman, A.H. (2020). The Real World Capabilities of ISIS: The Threat Continues. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/real-world-capabilities-isis-threat-continues>
- Corstange, D., & York, E. (2017). Sectarian Framing in the Syrian Civil War. *Columbia University*, 1-65.
- Costa-Buranelli, F. (2014). May we have a say? Central Asian states in the UN General Assembly. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 5(2), 131-144.
- Crampton, R. J. (2002). Eastern Europe in the twentieth century—and after. Routledge.

- Crisis Group. (2021). Winning the Post-ISIS Battle for Iraq in Sinjar. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/183-winning-post-isis-battle-iraq-sinjar>
- Cronqvist, L., & Berg-Schlosser, D. (2009). Multi-value QCA (mvQCA). *Configurational comparative methods: Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and related techniques*, 51, 69-86.
- Danchin, P.G. (2008). Suspect Symbols: Value Pluralism as a Theory of Religious Freedom in International Law. *Yale J. Int'l L.* 33, 1.
- Danilovich, A. 2016. Iraqi Kurdistan in Middle Eastern Politics. Taylor & Francis.
- Darden, J. T. (2019). Tackling Terrorists' Exploitation of Youth. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/report/tackling-terrorists-exploitation-of-youth/Tackling-Terrorists-Exploitation-of-Youth.pdf>
- De Silva, P. L. (2017). *Quo Vadis? Ethnic and Cultural Genocide: Chaldean and Assyrian Christians and Yazidis in Northern Iraq and Syria* 1. Routledge.
- De Vido, S. (2018). Protecting Yazidi cultural heritage through women: An international feminist law analysis. *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 33, 264-270.
- DEID, Art. 1.3; cf. ICCPR, Art. 18.3.
- Del Re, E. C. (2015). The Yazidi and the Islamic State, or the Effects of a Middle East without Minorities on Europe. *Politics and Religion Journal*, 9(2), 269-293.
- Dewachi, O., Skelton, M., Nguyen, V. K., Fouad, F. M., Sitta, G. A., Maasri, Z., & Giacaman, R. (2014). Changing therapeutic geographies of the Iraqi and Syrian wars. *the Lancet*, 383(9915), 449-457.
- Director of the National Intelligence. (2021). The Future of Terrorism: Diverse Actors, Fraying International Efforts. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from

<https://www.dni.gov/index.php/gt2040-home/emerging-dynamics/international-dynamics/the-future-of-terrorism>

- Dodge, T., & Mansour, R. (2020). Sectarianization and De-sectarianization in the Struggle for Iraq's Political Field. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 18(1), 58-69.
- Dogan, S., Gurkan, C., Dogan, M., Balkaya, H. E., Tunc, R., Demirdov, D. K., ... & Marjanovic, D. (2017). A glimpse at the intricate mosaic of ethnicities from Mesopotamia: Paternal lineages of the Northern Iraqi Arabs, Kurds, Syriacs, Turkmens and Yazidis. *PloS one*, 12(11), e0187408.
- Dong, Y. Y., Dong, C. X., Xu, J., & Zhao, G. Q. (2016). Computationally efficient 2-D DOA estimation for L-shaped array with automatic pairing. *IEEE Antennas and Wireless Propagation Letters*, 15, 1669-1672.
- Dostal, J. M. (2014). Analyzing the domestic and international conflict in Syria: Are there lessons from political science?. *Syria Studies*, 1-80.
- Drissi, T. & Lamamra, A. (2013). "aliat himayat alaqtyat fi alqanun alduwali", [Mechanisms for minority protection in international law], Université Abderrahmane Mira - Bejaia.
- Eligür, B. (2019). Ethnocultural nationalism and Turkey's non-Muslim minorities during the early republican period. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 46(1), 158-177.
- Eric Pichon and Eulalia Claros, Minorities in Iraq Pushed to the brink of existence, Briefing February 2015 European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), Members' Research Service, PE 548.988.
- Erickson, C. (2019). Leaving England: essays on British emigration in the nineteenth century. Cornell University Press.

- EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, COURT (CHAMBER) "CASE OF CAMPBELL AND COSANS v. THE UNITED KINGDOM" (Application no. 7511/76; 7743/76), JUDGMENT, STRASBOURG, 25 February 1982.
- European Parliament, IRAQ: The Situation of Ethnic and Religious Minorities, Briefing paper, D-IQ Meeting, 20 June 2013, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, Brussels.
- European Parliament, Systematic Mass Murder of Minorities by ISIS. 4 February 2016, European Parliament Resolution (2016/2529(RSP), P8_TA-PROV(2016)0051.
- Fahmi, G. (2016). Most Syrian Christians Aren't Backing Assad (or the Rebels). Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2016/12/most-syrian-christians-arent-backing-assad-or-rebels>
- Fahmi, G. (2018). The future of Syrian Christians after the Arab Spring. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/55924/RSCAS_2018_04.pdf
- Fahmi, G. (2018). The Future of Syrian Christians after the Arab Spring. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/55924/RSCAS_2018_04.pdf
- Farrior, S. (Ed.). (2017). *Equality and Non-Discrimination under International Law: Volume II* (Vol. 2). Routledge.
- FCO – UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Human Rights and Democracy: The 2012 Foreign & Commonwealth Office Report - Country updates: Iraq, 31 December 2013 <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1209333.html>. (accessed on 1 February 2020).
- Ferris, E. G., & Stolz, K. (2008). Minorities, displacement and Iraq's future. Bern: Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement.

- Ferris, E., & Kirisci, K. (2016). *The consequences of chaos: Syria's humanitarian crisis and the failure to protect*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Ferris, E., Kirişçi, K., & Shaikh, S. (2013). *Syrian crisis: massive displacement, dire needs and a shortage of solutions*. Brookings Institution.
- FGD conducted by NCA, Beirut, Lebanon, September 2016.
- FGD with Yezidi representatives, NCA, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq, September 2016.
- Fildis, A. T. (2011). The troubles in Syria: Spawned by French divide and rule. *Middle East Policy*, 18(4), 129-139.
- Fleming, J. E., & McClain, L. C. (2013). *Ordered Liberty Rights, Responsibilities, and Virtues*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Forum on minority issues, Preventing and addressing violence and atrocity crimes targeted against minorities. seventh session, 25–26 November 2014, Contribution of the UN Network on Racial discrimination and Protection of Minorities, paragraph 14.
- Fox, J. (2013). Religious discrimination against religious minorities in Middle Eastern Muslim states. *Civil Wars*, 15(4), 454-470.
- Fox, M. W. (2003). Domestic cats. *The new encyclopedia britannica*, 15, 561-564.
- France Diplomacy. (2021). France's action to help the victims of ethnic and religious persecution in the Middle East. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/north-africa-and-middle-east/france-s-action-to-help-the-victims-of-ethnic-and-religious-persecution-in-the/>
- Francesco, C. (1991). Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. Human Rights Study series, (5).
- Freedom House, Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa 2010.
- Freedom House. (2020). Freedom in the World. Retrieved 12 October 2020 from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/syria/freedom-world/2020>.

- Gaer, F. D., Cromartie, M., Prodromou, E. H., Argue, D., Bansal, P. D., Eid, I. T. L., ... & Hanford, J. V. (2008). United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, 1-54.
- Geneva Conventions common article 3, Additional Protocol II Article 13(3) and the Rome Statute of the International Court article 8(2) c–e.
- Ghanea, N. (2004). Human rights of religious minorities and of women in the middle east. *Human Rights Quarterly*.
- Ghanim, D. (2011). Iraq's dysfunctional democracy. ABC-CLIO.
- Ghari Seyed Fatemi, M. (2003). treaties of human rights, law journal, issue 28, Publications of university of office of international law services.
- Gilbert, G. (1996). The Council of Europe and minority rights. *Hum. Rts. Q.*, 18, 160.
- Gilbert, G. (1997). Religious Minorities and their Rights: A problem of Approach. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 5.
- Gilbert, G. (2005). “Individuals, Collectivities and Rights”. In *Minorities, Peoples and Self-Determination*, Nazila Ghanea and Alexandra Xanthaki (eds.), 139–161. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Gilbert, L. (2018). Bitter Split Among Syria's Christians Over Loyalty to Assad. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.hudson.org/research/14271-bitter-split-among-syria-s-christians-over-loyalty-to-assad>
- Giles Fraser, ‘A Cross to Bear: The Vanishing Christians of the Middle East’, *The Guardian*, 16 June 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/16/Christians-middle-east-religion-Islamic-state-lindadorigo-andrea-milluzzi> (accessed 20 December 2019).

- Glazer, N. (1997). Individual Rights against Group Rights and Michael Walzer, Pluralism: A Political Perspective both in Will Kymlicka (ed.), *The Rights of Minority Cultures* 123D54, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Global Coalition, Military Progress Update, 29 July 2016; Council on Foreign Relations, CFR Backgrounders, The Islamic State, 10 August 2016; SDIR, Evidence, 15 November 2016, 1315; SDIR, Evidence, 24 November 2016, 1355.
- Goldsmith, L. (2013). ‘God Wanted Diversity’: Alawite Pluralist Ideals and their Integration into Syrian Society 1832–1973. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 40(4), 392-409.
- Gomes, A. D. T., & Mikhael, M. M. (2018). Terror or Terrorism? Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Comparative Perspective. *Brazilian Political Science Review*, 12(1).
- Gov.uk. (2021). Country Policy and Information Note Iraq: Religious minorities. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1006265/Iraq_-_Religious_Minorities_CPIN_v3.0_July_2021.pdf
- Greckhamer, T., Furnari, S., Fiss, P. C., & Aguilera, R. V. (2018). Studying configurations with qualitative comparative analysis: Best practices in strategy and organization research. *Strategic Organization*, 16(4), 482-495.
- Grote, R., & Röder, T. J. (2016). *Constitutionalism, Human rights, and Islam after the Arab spring*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hadad, H. 2016. Has Democratization in Iraq Failed?. [Online]. Retrieved 08 December 2020 Available at: <https://www.bayancenter.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/232615.pdf>
- Haddad, R. M. (2015). *Syrian Christians in a Muslim Society: An Interpretation*. Princeton University Press.

- Haeri Yazdi, M. (1962). Article on Islam and human rights declaration, journal of Tashayo, fourth year, Qom, 1341.
- Haider, H. (2017). The Persecution of Christians in the Middle East, University of Birmingham.
- Haider, H. (2017). The Persecution of Christians in the Middle East. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/59786a0040f0b65dcb00000a/042-Persecution-of-Christians-in-the-Middle-East.pdf>
- Hammourabi Human Rights Organization, Report on Human Rights Situation of Minorities in Iraq 2013, http://www.hhro.org/hhro/file_art/hhro%20report%202013/hhro_report_2013/hhro_report_2013.pdf
- Hammourabi Human Rights Organization, Report on Situation in Ninewa, June 2014, <http://www.unpo.org/article/17270>.
- Hamoudi, H. A. (2013). Religious Minorities and Shari'a in Iraqi Courts. BU Int'l LJ, 31, 387.
- Hanish, S. (2009). Christians, Yazidis, and Mandaean in Iraq: A survival issue. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 18(1), 1-16.
- Hanish, S. (2009). Christians, Yazidis, and Mandaean in Iraq: A survival issue. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 18(1), 1-16.
- Hanish, S. B. (2014). Eastern Christians are fleeing in the Middle East. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(10), 62-71. http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_4_No_10_1_August_2014/9.pdf.
- Hanish, S. B. (2015), The Islamic State Effect on Minorities in Iraq. American Research Institute for Policy Development. Vol. 4, No.1. pp. 7-11

- Hannum, H. (1990). Contemporary Developments in the International Protection of the Rights of Minorities. *Notre Dame L. Rev.*, 66, 1431.
- Harris, D. J., O'Boyle, M., Bates, E., & Buckley, C. (2014). *Harris, O'Boyle & Warbrick: Law of the European convention on human rights*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Hawley, E. (2017). ISIS Crimes Against the Shia: The Islamic State's Genocide Against Shia Muslims. *Genocide Studies International*, 11(2), 160-181.
- Hayden, R. M. (1996). Schindler's fate: genocide, ethnic cleansing, and population transfers. *Slavic Review*, 55(4), 727-748.
- Heartland Alliance international. (2015). Political Participation of Minorities in Iraq. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.heartlandalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/HumanRightsViolationsReport-English.pdf>
- Heartland Alliance International. (2016). Political Participation of Minorities in Iraq. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.heartlandalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/HumanRightsViolationsReport-English.pdf>
- Heartland and Alliance. (2016). Political participation of minorities in Iraq. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.heartlandalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/HumanRightsViolationsReport-English.pdf>
- Helm, F. and Padovani, C. 2018. *Rethinking the Transition Process in Syria: Constitution, Participation and Gender Equality*. Ireland: Research-publishing.net.
- Henkin, L. (1990). *The age of rights*. Columbia University Press.
- Henne, P. S. (2018). Economic Integration and Political Reconciliation in Iraq. Retrieved October 10, 2020, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/04/17/449687/economic-integration-political-reconciliation-iraq/>

- Henne, P.S. (2017). Economic Integration and Political Reconciliation in Iraq. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/04/17/449687/economic-integration-political-reconciliation-iraq/>
- Henrard, K. (2000). Devising an adequate system of minority protection: individual human rights, minority rights and the right to self-determination (Vol. 62). Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Hinnebusch, R. 2016. The sectarian revolution in the Middle East. *Revolutions: global trends and regional issues* 4(1), pp. 120-152.
- Hof, F.C. & Simon, A. (2013). Sectarian violence in Syria's Civil War: Causes, consequences, and recommendations for mitigation. Paper commissioned by the Center for the Prevention of Genocide, United States Holocaust Museum.
- Hoffman, Y.S., Grossman, E.S., Shrira, A., Kedar, M., Ben-Ezra, M., Dinnayi, M., Koren, L., Bayan, R., Palgi, Y. and Zivotofsky, A.Z. 2018. Complex PTSD and its correlates amongst female Yazidi victims of sexual slavery living in post-ISIS camps. *World psychiatry* 17(1), pp. 112-113.
- Holmes, A. A. (2020). Syrian Yezidis under Four Regimes: Assad, Erdogan, ISIS and the YPG. *WC Paper Series*, 37, 1-20.
- Holmes, A.A. (2020). Syrian Yezidis under Four Regimes: Assad, Erdogan, ISIS and the YPG. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/MEP_200710_OCC%2037_FINAL.pdf
- Hourani, A. H. (1947). *Minorities in the Arab World*, (London: Oxford University Press).

House of Commons, Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development [SDIR], Minutes, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 16 June 2016.

House of Commons, Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development [SDIR], Minutes, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 27 October 2016, 1310. SDIR, Evidence, 22 November 2016, 1325. and SDIR, Evidence, 15 November 2016, 1315).

House, F. (2014). *Freedom in the world 2014: The annual survey of political rights and civil liberties*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

House, F. (2014). *Freedom in the world 2014: The annual survey of political rights and civil liberties*. Rowman & Littlefield. Retrieved 20/12/2019, from [http://www.un.org/French/documents/view_doc.asp?Symbol= A/Res/217\(III\).](http://www.un.org/French/documents/view_doc.asp?Symbol= A/Res/217(III).)

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/english/publications/creed-religion-policy.shtml>>

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/houseconcurrent->

[https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4973/destruction-middle east-antiquities](https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4973/destruction-middle-east-antiquities) (accessed 20 November 2019).

Hughes, M. M. (2011). Intersectionality, quotas, and minority women's political representation worldwide. *American Political Science Review*, 105(3), 604-620.

Human Rights Committee general comment No.23 (1994) on the rights of minorities, para. 9.

Human Rights Council, *Alawites, a Religious Minority in Syria, a Community in Danger of Extermination*, 2015.

Human Rights Council, New York: UN General Assembly, paragraph 60.

Human Rights Council, UN Permanent Commission of Inquiry for Syria “Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic – Rule of Terror: Living under ISIS in Syria.” 19 November 2014.

Human Rights Council, UN Permanent Commission of Inquiry for Syria “Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic” .15 June 2016.

Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Human Rights Office. Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 6 July – 10 September 2014. OHCHR, 02/10/ 2014.

Human Rights Watch, After Liberation Came Destruction: Iraqi Militias and the Aftermath of Amerli, 2015.

Human Rights Watch, Iraq: Protect Besieged Minorities, 10 November 2009.

Human Rights Watch, On Vulnerable Ground: Violence against Minority Communities in Nineveh Province’s Disputed Territories, 10 November 2009.

Human Rights Watch. (2011). At a Crossroads: Human Rights in Iraq Eight Years after the US-Led Invasion. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/02/21/crossroads/human-rights-iraq-eight-years-after-us-led-invasion>

Human Rights Watch. 2019. World Report 2019: Events of 2018. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Human Rights Watch. 2020. Syria Events of 2020. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/syria> [Accessed on: 17 September 2021].

- Hunault, M. (2009). Freedom of religion and other human rights for non-Muslim minorities in Turkey and for the Muslim minority in Thrace (Eastern Greece). Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4a51eb342.pdf>
- Hurd, E. S. (2013). The international politics of religious freedom. *IIC Quarterly*, 40(1), 225-237.
- Hurd, E. S. (2017). *Beyond religious freedom: The new global politics of religion*. Princeton University Press.
- ICRC and Syrian Arab Red Crescent Maintain Aid Effort Amid Increased Fighting, August 2012.
- IHCHR. (2018). Report on Iraq's Compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/IRQ/INT_CERD_NGO_IRQ_32978_E.pdf
- IILHR. (n.d). Minorities and the Law in Iraq. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <http://iilhr.org/exsummaryen.pdf>.
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. (2014). Iraq: Situation of religious minorities, including practitioners of "Zoroastrianism" and [Yazidi]; treatment by other groups (including the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham, ISIS) and the government; state protection (2011-July 2014). Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/54bf62684.html>
- Institute for International Law & Human Rights. (2013). Iraq's Minorities and Other Vulnerable Groups. Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/droi/dv/702_iraqsminorities_/702_iraqsminorities_en.pdf

Institute for International Law and Human Rights, et al., No Way Home: Iraq's minorities on the verge of disappearance, July 2016.

Institution for International Law & Human Rights. (2013). Iraq's Minorities and Other Vulnerable Groups: Legal Framework, Documentation and Human Rights. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/droi/dv/702_iraqsminorities_/702_iraqsminorities_en.pdf.

International Religious Freedom Report. (2013). Iraq 2013 International Religious Freedom Report. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/222503.pdf>.

International Religious Freedom Report. (2018). Iraq 2018 International Religious Freedom Report. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/IRAQ-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>.

Iraq Body Count Database. <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/> (accessed 20 November 2019).

Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights. (2018). Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/IRQ/INT_CERD_NGO_IRQ_32978_E.pdf.

Iraqi Minorities Council. (2011). Iraq's Minorities: Participation in Public Life. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/6987782/Iraqs%20minorities%20-%20participation%20in%20public%20life.pdf?1323373146=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DIraqs_Minorities_Participation_in_Public.pdf&Expires=1602501369&Signature=HOHp-

42lWgHfNAEx6heZHsuY9fl41w7xGgpuAp3ImRGv8Nxz1aOMqOaucnH0YRMv8
 tgpkrQysSPpTQtHJ~NE1mNdQheDPmrlGicVqYyJuJ1-
 8VN321lGe3zjRXwVzRk9v-
 sUOudBegIGp0Cmktr7bCKhtu~jMFUU9NDBtoGUixkcv33aed8qtXUuK44iCDo03
 7DyWtOzpcJju1OM6r3g1Y5pVc7NxQRq2PULM~8o2KU0Z6U~-
 7HoeirGFQi1i0vjPpPgZ8I~Oxqg-
 IPRTthVOPER8JiikgVvoiZf7mGcu~JN1ttumaRuA7wEmYNjQRyxxAdUhOI9BM
 8Mt1S~x6t7JA__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

IRBC. (2015). Situations of Christians. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from
<https://www.refworld.org/docid/55deba764.html>

ISDP report 2006 in <http://www.aina.org/reports/isdppb20060802.pdf>.

Ismael, J. S., Ismael, T. Y., & Perry, G. (2015). Government and politics of the
 contemporary Middle East: Continuity and change. London: Routledge.

Ismail, S. (2011). The Syrian uprising: Imagining and performing the nation. *Studies in
 Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 11(3), 538-549.

Jäger, P., Rammelt, C., Ott, N., & Brand, A. (2019). Narrative review: The (mental) health
 consequences of the northern Iraq offensive of ISIS in 2014 for female Yezidis.
International journal of environmental research and public health, 16(13), 2435.

Jalal, T. (2009). The Displacement of Minorities in Syria and Iraq: Implications for Human
 Security. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from
<https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:3193/pdf0209JALAL-2.pdf>

Jalal. (2015). The Displacement of Minorities in Syria and Iraq: Implications for Human
 Security. Retrieved from
<https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:3193/pdf0209JALAL-2.pdf>

- Jasser, M. Z. (2014). Sectarian Conflict in Syria, Institute for National Strategic Security, National Defense University, PRISM, Vol. 4, 58-67. Syria Supplement.
- Jawad, S. (2013). The Iraqi constitution: structural flaws and political implications. *LSE Middle*.
- Kalin, W. (2008). Guiding principles on internal displacement. *Stud. Transnat'l Legal Pol'y*, 38, 1.
- Kane, H., Lewis, M. A., Williams, P. A., & Kahwati, L. C. (2014). Using qualitative comparative analysis to understand and quantify translation and implementation. *Translational behavioral medicine*, 4(2), 201-208.
- Kangas, T. S. & Fernandes, D. (2008). Kurds in Turkey and in (Iraqi) Kurdistan: A comparison of Kurdish educational language policy in two situations of occupation. *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 3(1), 43-73.
- Karouny, M. (2011). Syria Christians fear for religious freedom. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-christians-idUSTRE74H35820110518>
- KAS. (2017). Christians and Yazidis in Iraq: current situation and prospects. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/253252/7_dokument_dok_pdf_49220_2.pdf/bfc19076-af7c-f2a4-bbb8-1a3e8d7f4c39
- Katulis, B., deLeon, R. & Craig, J. (2015). The Plight of Christians in the Middle East. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ChristiansMiddleEast-report.pdf>
- Katulis, B., DeLeon, R. and Craig, J. (2015). The Plight of Christians in the Middle East Supporting Religious Freedom, Pluralism, and Tolerance During a Time of Turmoil. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

<https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ChristiansMiddleEast-report.pdf>.

Katzman, K. (2010). *Kurds in Post-Saddam Iraq*. Diane Publishing.

Katzman, K., & Humud, C. E. (2016, March). *Iraq: politics and governance*. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service.

Kaya, Z., & Whiting, M. (2017). Sowing division: Kurds in the Syrian war. *Middle East Policy*, 24(1), 79-91.

Kelsay, J., & Twiss, S. B. (Eds.). (1994). *Religion and human rights: religion and the roots of conflict: religious militancy or "fundamentalism": universality vs. relativism in human rights: positive resources of religion for human rights*. Human Rights Watch.

Kerrin, J. D. (2014). *Religious Trends within the Syrian Civil War: An Analysis of Religion as a Dynamic and Integral Part of the Conflict* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).

Khalilova, L. (2017). *Syria's Christians: A Personal Story of a Stolen Legacy*. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/syrias-christians-a-personal-story-of-a-stolen-legacy>

Khan, S., & Kirmanj, S. (2015). Engineering confederalism for Iraq. *National identities*, 17(4), 371-385.

Kikoler, N. Our (2015), *Generation is Gone: The Islamic State's Targeting of Iraqi Minorities in Ninewa*, Simon Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, November 2015.

Kinloch, G. C. (1979). *The sociology of minority group relations*. Prentice Hall.. Ine. N.j. p.p. 5-12.

Kizilhan, J. I., & Noll-Hussong, M. (2017). Individual, collective, and transgenerational traumatization in the Yazidi. *BMC medicine*, 15(1), 198-203.

- Kizilhan, J.I. 2019. Changes in the Yazidi Society and Religion after the Genocide—A Growing Rapprochement with Human Rights?. *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 7(7), pp. 7-17.
- Knights of Columbus. (2016). Genocide against Christians in the Middle East A report submitted to Secretary of State John Kerry by the Knights of Columbus and In Defense of Christians. <http://stopthechristiangenocide.org/scg/en/resources/Genocide-report.pdf>.
- Kokkinakis v Greece (1994) 17 EHRR 397 paragraph 31, chapter 1 and Hasan and Chaush v. Bulgaria (30985/96) [2000] ECHR 509.
- Kraft, K. and Manar, S. (2016). Hope for the Middle East: The impact and significance of the Christian presence in Syria and Iraq: past, present and future. Open doors, served, UEL and MEC. <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/campaign/documents/H4ME-report.pdf>.
- Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2003). Problems of studying minorities in the Middle East. *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 2(2).
- Kymlicka, W., & Pförtl, E. (Eds.). (2014). *Multiculturalism and minority rights in the Arab world*. OUP Oxford. pp. 320.
- Lalani, M (2010) *Still Targeted: Continued Persecution of Iraq's Minorities*. MRG.
- Lawless, H.T. and Heymann, H. 2010. *Sensory evaluation of food: principles and practices*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Lemon v. U.K., Decision of the Commission of Human Rights, May 7, 1982, reported at 5 EHRR 123, as discussed by Sheldon Leader, *Blasphemy and Human Rights*, 46 Mod. L. Rev 338–45, 339 (1983).
- Lerner, N. (1999). *Religion, Beliefs, and International Human Rights* 35 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books).
- Lesch, D. W. (2012). *Syria: The fall of the house of Assad*. Yale University Press.

- Lillich, R. B. (1990). *International Human Rights Instruments* 490. 1.
- Lindkvist, L. (2014). *Shrines and Souls: The Reinvention of Religious Liberty and the Genesis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Lund University.
- Linton, R. (1945). *The science of man in the world crisis. "the protection of Minority Group"*. New York, NY, US: Columbia University Press.
- Lockyer, A. 2008. *Foreign Intervention and Warfare in Civil Wars*. [Online]. Retrieved 17 April, 2021 Available at: <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/handle/2123/4987/Foreign%20Intervention%20and%20Warfare%20in%20Civil%20Wars.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Longva, A. N., & Roald, A. S. (Eds.). (2011). *Religious minorities in the Middle East: Domination, self-empowerment, accommodation* (Vol. 108). Brill.
- Lundgren, M. 2015. *Peacemaking in Syria: Barriers and Opportunities*. [Online]. Retrieved 08 December 2020 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Magnus_Lundgren3/publication/283892529_Peacemaking_in_Syria_Barriers_and_Opportunities/links/56498e8008ae451880aed2ac/Peacemaking-in-Syria-Barriers-and-Opportunities.pdf
- Maathai, W. (2008). *State of the World's Minorities 2008: Events of 2007*. Minority Rights Group International.
- MacHenry, R., & Goetz, P. W. (Eds.). (1994). *The new encyclopaedia Britannica*. Encyclopedia Britannica, Incorporated. vol, 8, 15th edition.
- Mahmood, S. (2015). *Religious difference in a secular age: A minority report*. Princeton University Press.
- Mahmoud, R., & Rosiny, S. (2018). *Opposition visions for preserving Syria's ethnic-sectarian mosaic*. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 45(2), 231-250.

- Mahmud, T. (1995). Freedom of Religion & (and) Religious Minorities in Pakistan: A Study of Judicial Practice. *Fordham Int'l LJ*, 19, 40.
- Maisel, S. (2014). Sectarian-Based Violence: The Case of the Yezidis in Iraq and Syria. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.mei.edu/publications/sectarian-based-violence-case-yezidis-iraq-and-syria>
- Maisel, S. (2016). *Yezidis in Syria: Identity Building Among a Double Minority*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Maisel, S. (2016). *Yezidis in Syria: Identity Building Among a Double Minority*. Lexington Books.
- Makovsky, A. and Hoffman, M. (2021). Northern Syria Security Dynamics and the Refugee Crisis. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2021/05/26/499944/northern-syria-security-dynamics-refugee-crisis/>
- Marx, A. (2010). Crisp-set qualitative comparative analysis (csQCA) and model specification: Benchmarks for future csQCA applications. *International journal of multiple research approaches*, 4(2), 138-158.
- Marx, A., & Dusa, A. (2011). Crisp-set qualitative comparative analysis (csQCA), contradictions and consistency benchmarks for model specification. *Methodological innovations online*, 6(2), 103-148.
- Master class. (2012). Paragraph. Retrieved June 04, 2021, from <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-perfect-paragraph#5-tips-for-structuring-and-writing-better-paragraphs>
- Matsunaga, H. (2019). *The Reconstruction of Iraq after 2003: Learning from Its Successes and Failures*. The World Bank.

- McCallum, F. (2012). Christian political participation in the Arab world. *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 23(1), 3-18.
- Mellen, R., ‘ISIS is Making Millions from the Art Market. Here’s How Congress Wants to Stop That’, Huffington Post. 11 April 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/islamic-state-smugglingbill_us_56324969e4b0c66bae5b5c4d (accessed 20 November 2019).
- Menkes, J. (1992). Nathan Lerner. Group Rights and Discrimination in International Law. Dordrecht/Boston/London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. *Pol. Q. Int'l Aff.*, 1, 200.
- MEPS. 2020. Challenges to the Middle East North Africa Inclusionary State. [Online]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Morten_Valbjorn/publication/339774280_Be_careful_what_you_wish_for_-_The_Multiple_Strategies_of_De-Sectarianization/links/5e63a85592851c7ce04e5415/Be-careful-what-you-wish-for-The-Multiple-Strategies-of-De-Sectarianization.pdf#page=23 [Accessed on: 08 December 2020].
- MERI. (2017). The Yazidis Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Yazidis-Perceptions-of-Reconciliation-and-Conflict-Report.pdf>
- MERI. (2017). The Yazidis: Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Yazidis-Perceptions-of-Reconciliation-and-Conflict-Report.pdf>
- Merino, M.E. & Tileagă, C. (2011). The construction of ethnic minority identity: A discursive psychological approach to ethnic self-definition in action. *Discourse & Society*, 22(1), 86-101.

- Mihandoost, F., & Babajanian, B. (2016). The Rights of Minorities in International Law. J. Pol. & L., 9, 15.
- Minority Rights Group International interview, Amman, Jordan, July 2006.
- Minority Rights Group international. 2014. From Crisis to Catastrophe: the situation of minorities in Iraq. Retrieved from https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/IRQ/INT_CRC_NGO_IRQ_19113_E.pdf
- Minority Rights Group International. 2014. From Crisis to Catastrophe: The Situation of Minorities in Iraq. [Online]. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/IRQ/INT_CRC_NGO_IRQ_19113_E.pdf [Accessed on: 17 September 2021].
- Minority Rights Group. (2018). Christians, Armenians and Assyrians. Retrieved 12 October 2020 from <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/christians-armenians-and-assyrians/>
- Minority rights. (2014). The Situation of Egypt minorities. Retrieved June 04, 2021, from <https://minorityrights.org/publications/justice-denied-promises-broken-the-situation-of-egypts-minorities-since-2014/>
- Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation, (2010). United Nations Human Rights Office of the Commissioner (HR/PUB/10/3) 1/ E/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Rev.1, para. 568.
- Mneimneh, H. (2016). Arab Culture and the Yazidi Tragedy: Context and Accountability. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/arab-culture-and-the-yazidi-tragedy-context-and-accountability>
- Morsink, J. (1999). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: origins, drafting, and intent. University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Mousa, S. (2012). To Protest or not to Protest? The Christian Predicament in the Syrian Uprising. *Syrian Studies Association Bulletin*, 17(2).
- National League of Mandaean Sabians, Special Report Concerning Violations to which the Mandaean Sabians are Exposed, 20 April 2006.
- NATO. (2021). Countering Terrorism. 2021. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_77646.htm
- NCA. (2016). Chapter 2 – The Social And Historical Background To Conflict In Syria And Iraq. Retrieved from <https://www.kirkensnodhjelp.no/en/news/publications/publications/the-protection-needs-of-minorities-from-syria-and-iraq/chapter-2--the-social-and-historical-background-to-conflict-in-syria-and-iraq/>
- Nepstad, S. E. (2013). Mutiny and nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring military defections and loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria. *Journal of Peace Research*, 50(3), 337-349.
- Nesira, H. (November 20, 2014). Religious minorities in the Arab world between terrorism and crises of fragile States: Observation and Analysis. GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE. <http://www.gchragd.org/sites/default/files/Nesira-religious-minority.pdf>.
- Nga Longva, A., & Sofie Roald, A. (2011). Religious minorities in the Middle East: Domination, self-empowerment, accommodation, Brill.
- Nicolas, L. (2016). Minority rights In Arab Levant: Between extremism and the envisioned future regional system. Paper presented at ISA conference "Human Rights in an Age of Ambiguity" in "Minority and Indigenous Rights" panel, Fordham University, NY, 13- 15 June. <http://web.isanet.org/Web/Conferences/HR2016-NYC/Archive/39f7d67a-979f-4d2c-a428-df806e57e5b0.pdf>.

- Nicolaus, P., & Yuce, S. (2017). Sex-slavery: One aspect of the Yazidi genocide. *Iran and the Caucasus*, 21(2), 196-229.
- Norris v. Ireland (10581/83) [1988] ECHR 22 (26 October 1988).
- NRC. (2018). Close to 200,000 Yazidis remain displaced. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.nrc.no/several-hundred-thousand-yazidis-remain-displaced>
- Ochab, E. (2016). What Will We Tell Christian Minorities in The Middle East This Christmas? *Forbes*, 23 December. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2016/12/23/what-will-we-tell-christian-minorities-in-the-middle-east-this-christmas/#77c940be661c>.
- Ochab, E., & Zorzi, K. (2016). Effects of Terrorism on Enjoyment of Human Rights: ISIS/Daesh and Boko Haram. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/NegativeEffectsTerrorism/ADF.pdf>
- Oehring, O. (2017). *Christians and Yazidis in Iraq: Current situation and prospects*. Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.
- Oehring, O. (2017). Christians and Yazidis in Iraq: Current Situation and Prospects. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/253252/7_dokument_dok_pdf_49220_2.pdf/bfc19076-af7c-f2a4-bbb8-1a3e8d7f4c39
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Minorities – Working Group. <http://www.unhcr.ch/minorities/group.htm>.
- Ohchr. (2010). Minority Rights. Retrieved June 04, 2021, from https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinorityRights_en.pdf
- OHCHR. (2016). They came to destroy: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/A_HRC_32_CR P.2_en.pdf

Omar, H. H. (2005). "haq alshaaub fi taqir almasir wa'iiqamat dawla filastinia" [The right of peoples to self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian state]. Dar Al Nahda Al Arabeya For Publishing.

Ontario Human Rights Commission, Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances.

Ounce, d. (2001). "asihamat al'umam almutahida fi himayat huquq alainsan", [United Nations Contributions to the Protection of Human Rights], Master's thesis in international human rights law, Faculty of Law, Mouloud Mameri University, Tizi Ouzou.

Parliament.UK. (2018). Kurdish aspirations and the interests of the UK: Government response to the Committee's Third Report. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmfaif/983/98302.htm>

Paustyan, E. (2020). *The Political Economy of the Territorial Regime in Post-Soviet Russia* (Doctoral dissertation, Central European University).

Peacewomen. (N.D). THEY CAME TO DESTROY”: ISIS CRIMES AGAINST THE YAZIDIS. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.peacewomen.org/resource/%E2%80%9Cthey-came-destroy%E2%80%9D-isis-crimes-against-yazidis>

Penninx, R., & Garcés-Mascreñas, B. (2016). The concept of integration as an analytical tool and as a policy concept. In *Integration processes and policies in Europe* pp. 11-29. Springer, Cham.

Pew Research Center (2014) Religious Hostilities Reach Six-Year High. Pew Research Center Religion & Public Life Project, 2014. <http://www.pewforum>.

- org/2014/01/14/religious-hostilities-reach-six_year-high/ (accessed 25 November 2019).
- Phillips, C (2015). Sectarianism and conflict in Syria. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(2), 357-376.
- Pichon, E (2015) Minorities in Iraq: Pushed to the Brink of Existence. Briefing, European Parliamentary Research Services, European Parliament.
- Poulton, H. (1993). The Balkans: Minorities and states in conflict. Minority Rights Group.
- Puttick, M. (2014). From Crisis to Catastrophe: the situation of minorities in Iraq, London, Minority Rights Group International, and Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights.
- Puttick, M. and Verbakel, D. (2016). Middle East and North Africa. In P. Grant (ed.) *State of the world's minorities and indigenous peoples 2016: Events of 2015* (pp. 184-201). London: Minority Rights Group International. <http://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/MRG-SWM-2016.pdf>.
- Quanrud, P. (2018) The Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS: A Success Story, *The Foreign Service Journal*, January / February 2018.
- Radpey, L. (2015). The Kurdish self-rule constitution in Syria. *Chinese Journal of International Law* 14(4), pp. 835-841.
- Radpey, L., & Rose, G. (2017). A new creative Kurdish constitution in the Middle East. *Creativity Studies*, 10(1), 72-83.
- Ragin, C. C., & Sonnett, J. (2005). Between complexity and parsimony: Limited diversity, counterfactual cases, and comparative analysis. In *Vergleichen in der Politikwissenschaft* (pp. 180-197). VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- RAND. (2021). The Islamic State (Terrorist Organization). Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.rand.org/topics/the-islamic-state-terrorist-organization.html>

- Rehman, J. (1995). An analysis of the rights of minorities in international law (Doctoral dissertation, University of Hull).
- resolution/75/text (accessed 21 January 2020).
- Reuters, 'Mastermind of Iraq Yazidi attack killed: US military', 9 September 2007.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-Iraq-Yazidis-idUSL0930932320070909> (accessed 22 March 2020).
- Reuters. (2014). Kurdish militants train hundreds of Yazidis to fight Islamic State. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://in.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-yazidis/kurdish-militants-train-hundreds-of-yazidis-to-fight-islamic-state-idUSKBN0GH0G220140818>
- Rihoux, B., & De Meur, G. (2009). Crisp-set qualitative comparative analysis (csQCA). *Configurational comparative methods: Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and related techniques*, 51, 33-68.
- Robson, L. (2011). Colonialism and Christianity in mandate Palestine. University of Texas Press.
- Rohwerder, B. 2015. Conflict dynamics and potential for peacebuilding in Iraq. [Online]. Available at:
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08967e5274a27b200007d/HDQ1263.pdf> [Accessed on: 08 December 2020].
- Sahner, C. (2014). Among the ruins: Syria past and present. Oxford University Press.
- Salah, S., & Hassan, M. (n.d.). Political Participation of Minorities In Iraq. Heartland Alliance International, 1-56.
- Saliba, I. M. (2016). Syria: Treatment of Religious Minorities. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/file/882901/download>

- Salih, A. H. (2012). "dirasa mqarna bayn alqanun alrumani walshariea al'islamia", [Comparative Study between Roman Law and Islamic Law], Legal Center for Minorities, CU Theses.
- Salloum, S, Salah, S., & Hassan, M. (2016). Political Participation of Minorities in Iraq. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.heartlandalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/HumanRightsViolationsReport-English.pdf>
- Salloum, S. (2017). At Crossroads Iraqi Minorities after ISIS, library of minorities rights 1, Buirut.
- Salloum, S. (2020). BARRIERS TO RETURN FOR ETHNO-RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN IRAQ Identity Politics and Political Patronage Among Yazidi and Christian Communities from Ninewa Governorate. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343787692_BARRIERS_TO_RETURN_FOR_ETHNO-RELIGIOUS_MINORITIES_IN_IRAQ_Identity_Politics_and_Political_Patronage_Among_Yazidi_and_Christian_Communities_from_Ninewa_Governorate
- Salloum, S., Salah, S., & Hassan, M. (2016). Heartland Alliance International. Retrieved October 10, 2020, from <https://www.heartlandalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/HumanRightsViolationsReport-English.pdf>
- Saouli, A. (2019). *The War for Syria Regional and International Dimensions of the Syrian Uprising*. Taylor & Francis.
- Savage, A. L. (2014). 'Turning the other cheek: The persecution of the Christian minority'. Florida Journal of International Law, 26, 373-398. http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/fjil26&div=19&g_sent=1&collection=journals.

- Schmalz, D. (2020). *Refugees, Democracy and the Law Political Rights at the Margins of the State*. Taylor & Francis.
- Schmidinger, T. 2019. *Beyond ISIS: History and Future of Religious Minorities in Iraq*. London: Transnational Press London.
- Schmoller, A. (2016). 'Now My Life in Syria Is Finished': Case Studies on Religious Identity and Sectarianism in Narratives of Syrian Christian Refugees in Austria. *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 27(4), 419-437.
- Scott, J., & Marshall, G. (Eds.). (2009). *A dictionary of sociology*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Seide v Gillette Industries Ltd [1980] IRLR 427 at 431. H. J. Heinz Co v Kenrick [2000] IRLR 144, with O'Neill v Symm & Co. Ltd. [1998] IRLR 233.
- Sevdeen, B. M., & Schmidinger, T. (Eds.). (2019). *Beyond ISIS: History and Future of Religious Minorities in Iraq*. London: Transnational Press London.
- Shea, N. (2016). The ISIS genocide of Middle Eastern Christian minorities and its Jizya propaganda ploy. Washington, DC: Hudson Institute.
<http://www.aina.org/reports/igmecmajpp.pdf>.
- Sinclair, C. & Kajjo, S. (2011). The evolution of Kurdish politics in Syria. Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), 08-31.
- Skaaning, S. E. (2011). Assessing the robustness of crisp-set and fuzzy-set QCA results. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 40(2), 391-408.
- Smihula, D. (2008). National Minorities in the Law of the EC/EU. *Romanian J. Eur. Aff.*, 8(3).
- Smith, B., Brook-Holland, L., & Page, R. (2014). *Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) and the takeover of Mosul*. House of Commons Library, 20.

- South, C., Jermyn, L., & Spence, K. (2016). Syria. New York: Cavendish Square Publishing, LLC.
- Spät, E. (2018). Yezidi identity politics and political ambitions in the wake of the ISIS attack. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 20(5), 420-438.
- Stahnke, T., & Martin, J. P. (Eds.). (1998). Religion and Human Rights: basic documents. Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University.
- State.gov. (2018). 2018 Report on International Religious Freedom: Syria. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/syria/>
- State.gov. (2021). U.S. Relations with Syria. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-syria/>
- Stephen Kalin, Syria Massacre? Nusra Front Fighters Reportedly Kill Women, Children, Elderly Men In Alawite Village, The Huffington Post 'Report, 9 December 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/12/Syria-massacre_nusra-front_n_3912376.html.
- Stephen Pound, MP to House of Commons, UK, 8 December 2004.
- STERN, Jessica and BERGER, J. M. (2015), ISIS: the state of terror. New York: Harper Collins.
- Stratfor, Tartus, the Mother of Martyrs, June 2015. <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/tartus-mother-martyrs> (accessed 25 November 2019).
- Sunga, L. S. (1995). The Protection of Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities in Europe.
- Taneja, P. (2007). Assimilation, Exodus, Eradication: Iraq's minority communities since 2003. London: Minority Rights Group International.
- Taneja, P. (2011). Iraq's Minorities: Participation in Public Life. Minority Rights Group International.

- Taneja, P. (Ed.). (2010). State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010: Events of 2009: Focus: Religious Minorities. Minority Rights Group International.
- Tasopoulos, I. (2014). Religious minorities in turbulent periods: the recurring dilemmas for Christians in Syria. *Hemispheres. Studies on Cultures and Societies*, 29(3), 71-85.
- Tayyar.org. (2014, October 30). Yazidis and the religious minorities after ISIS. Ankawa.com. <http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php?topic=757742.0>.
- Tekin, A., Karadağ, H., Süleymanoğlu, M., Tekin, M., Kayran, Y., Alpak, G. and Şar, V. 2016. Prevalence and gender differences in symptomatology of posttraumatic stress disorder and depression among Iraqi Yazidis displaced into Turkey. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* 7(1), pp. 1-9.
- Teschendorff, M. G. (2015). Loss of Access to Education Puts Well-being of Syrian Girls at Risk. Retrieved October 18, 2021, <https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/loss-of-access-to-education-puts-well-being-of-syrian-girls-at-risk>
- Teule, H. G. (2012). Christians in Iraq An analysis of some recent political developments. *Der Islam*, 88(1), 179-198.
- Tezcür, G. M. 2021. Kurds and Yezidis in the Middle East: Shifting Identities, Borders, and the Experience of Minority Communities. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- The Associated Press. (2021). A timeline of disaster and displacement for Iraqi Christians. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-islamic-state-group-saddam-hussein-baghdad-iraq-296b5588995cf7be62b49619bf1a7bb6>
- The Constitution of Iraq 2005.
- The Kurdish Globe, Another political fallout in Kurdistan at a time when need for unity greatest', 10 December 2011. <https://www.kurdishinstitute.be/en/the-kurdish-globe/>
- The Law on the Protection of Minority Rights issued by the European Central Initiative on 18 November 1994. (Article 1).

- The Manoussakis and Others v. Greece (18748/91) [1996] ECHR 41 case paragraph. 48.
- The New Humanitarian (IRIN), Thousands Were Unable to Vote in North, 10 February 2005.
- The New York Times, Church Attack Seen as Strike at Iraq's Core, by Anthony Shadid. 1 November 2010, (accessed 22 March 2020).
https://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/02/world/middleeast/02iraq.html?_r=0.
- The UN Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries, (1998). The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (General Assembly resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948) (Art. 3), and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (adopted by the UN Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, 17 July 1998) (Art. 7).
- The Wilson Center. (2021). Timeline: The Rise, Spread, and Fall of the Islamic State. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/timeline-the-rise-spread-and-fall-the-islamic-state>
- Thlimmenos v. Greece (34369/97) [2000] ECHR 161 (6 April 2000).
- Thornberry, P. & Estébanez, M.A.M. (2004). Minority Rights in Europe: a Review of the Work and Standards of the Council of Europe. Council of Europe.
- Thornberry, P. (1994). International Law and the rights of minorities (1991). S. 126f.
- Toft, M. D. (2005). The geography of ethnic violence: Identity, interests, and the indivisibility of territory. Princeton University Press.
- Toole, M. J. (2013). 11 Forced Migrants: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. Social injustice and public health, 187.
- Tsirlis and Kouloumpas v Greece, European Court of Human Rights, (54/1996/673/859-860), 29 May 1997.
- Tzouvala, N. (2018). 'These Ancient Arenas of Racial Struggles': International Law and the Balkans, 1878–1949. European Journal of International Law, 29(4), 1149-1171.

U.S. Government Publishing Office. 2013. Religious minorities in Syria: caught in the middle. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-113hhrg81692/html/CHRG-113hhrg81692.htm>

U.S. House of Representatives, Religious Minorities in Syria: Caught in the Middle, Committee on Foreign affairs, Testimony of Nina Shea, Director Hudson Institute's center for Religious Freedom, June 25, 2013.

UN doc. (2010). Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_minori.htm.

UN General Assembly, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, August 2015, A/HRC/30/48.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 'UNHCR reports increase in flight of Iraqi Christians; reiterates advice on protection needs', 17 December 2010, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d0f0bcc2.html>

UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), CCPR General Comment No. 23: Article 27 (Rights of Minorities), 8 April 1994, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.5, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/453883fc0.html> [accessed 27 December 2019].

UN Human Rights Committee, (1994). General Comment No. 23: The Rights of Minorities (Art. 27), CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.5, April.

UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 25: The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting Rights and the Right of Equal Access to Public Service (Art. 25), 12 July 1996.

UN Human Rights Committee, Länsman et al. v. Finland, Communication No. 671/1995.

UN Permanent Commission of Inquiry for Syria (2013) Fifth Report, June 2013

UNAMI, Background Information on Situations of Non-Muslim Religious Minorities in Iraq, October 2006.

UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Iraq, 2012, p51, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=4fc77d522>.

UNHRC, 2016, paras. 23 31 and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq Human Rights Office, A Call for Accountability and Protection: Yazidi Survivors of Atrocities Committed by ISIL, August 2016.

UNHRC, 2016; Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 11 August 2016.

United Nation. (2015). Security Council. Retrieved June 04, 2021, from <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11840.doc.htm>.

United Nations Human Rights Council, “They came to destroy”: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis, A/HRC/32/CRP.2, 15 June 2016, paras. 7-8.

United Nations work in the field of human rights, (1990). United Nations publications, Volume I, New York.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Forum on Minority Issues, 2nd session, "A Basic Document on Minorities and Active Participation», 12- 13 November, 2009, paragraph 5.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Forum on Minority Issues, 2nd session, A memo submitted by Gay McDougall, Independent Expert on Minority Issues on <Minorities and effective political participation, Geneva, 13-21 November, 2009, paragraph 1.

United Nations. 2021. A New Era of Conflict and Violence. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.un.org/en/un75/new-era-conflict-and-violence>

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2009 Annual Report on Iraq.

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Annual Report 2013, April 2013, Washington, DC: U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs & Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa. (2014). Genocidal Attacks Against Christian and Other Religious Minorities in Syria and Iraq. U.S. Government Printing Office.

Unrepresented Peoples and Nations Organization, “Iraqi Turkmen: Hopes For A Better Future,” 17 February 2009.

US Department of State. 2021. 2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: Syria. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/syria/>

US Department of State. 2021a. U.S.-SYRIA RELATIONS. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-syria/>

US State Department, International Religious Freedom Report for 2015 – Iraq.

US State Department, International Religious Freedom Report for 2015- Syria.

US State Department, International Religious Freedom Report for 2011.

US States Department, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013.

US States Department, International Religious Freedom Report, August 2006.

USAID.gov. (2021). Support to Religious and Ethnic Minorities in Iraq. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.usaid.gov/iraq/genocide-recovery-and-persecution-response>

USCIRF. (2008). Report of the United States Commission On Religious Freedom On Iraq. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/resources/iraq%20report%20final.pdf>.

USCIRF. (2016). 2016 Annual Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). <http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRF%202016%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

USHMM.org. (n.d). “Our Generation is Gone”. Retrieved October 10, 2020, from <https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Iraq-Bearing-Witness-Report-111215.pdf>

Van Schaack, B. (2018). The Iraq investigative team and prospects for justice for the Yazidi genocide. *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 16(1), 113-139.

Van Zoonen, D. &Wirya, K. (2017). The Yazidis Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Yazidis-Perceptions-of-Reconciliation-and-Conflict-Report.pdf>

Vander Zanden, B. T., Taylor, H. M., & Bitton, D. (1986, August). Estimating Block Accesses when Attributes are Correlated. In VLDB.

Vliegthart, R., & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2007). Real-world indicators and the coverage of immigration and the integration of minorities in Dutch newspapers. *European Journal of Communication*, 22(3), 293-314.

Waechter, N. (2019). The Construction of European Identity among Ethnic Minorities: ‘Euro-Minorities’ in Generational Perspective. Routledge.

Watt, W.M. 2013. Islam and Christianity today: a Contribution to Dialogue. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

WCC & NCA. (2016). The protection needs of minorities from Syria and Iraq. Retrieved from

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2016%20minority%20report%20FINAL%202%20Single%20pages.pdf>

Weiner, J. R. (2014). Middle Eastern Christians: Battered, violated, and abused, do they have any chance of survival? Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. <http://jcpa.org/text/book.pdf>.

Weller, M. (2005). The Rights of minorities in Europe. Oxford University press.

Weller, M. P. (2007). Effective participation of minorities in public life. In Universal minority rights: a commentary on the jurisprudence of international courts and treaty bodies (pp. 477-516). Oxford University Press.

Werthmuller, K. (2020). UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1249881/download>

Wilkinson, D. (2000). Rethinking the Concept of Minority: A Task for Social Scientists Practitioners. J. Soc. & Soc. Welfare, 27, 115.

Willy Fautr, A Christian Assyrian killed by Kurdish Muslim in Kirkuk, 6 May 2006, Human Rights Without Frontiers, http://www.hrwf.net/html/iraq_2003.html#AChristianAssyriankilledbyKurdish.

Wirth, L. (1945). The Problem of Minority Groups. In The Science of Man in the World Crisis. Ralph Linton, Ed. New York: Colombia University Press.

Wood, P. 2013. The Chronicle of Seert: Christian Historical Imagination in Late Antique Iraq. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

World Council of Churches. 2016. THE PROTECTION NEEDS OF MINORITIES FROM SYRIA AND IRAQ. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/filer/2016%20minority%20report.pdf> [Accessed on: 08 December 2020].

World council of churches, the protection need of minorities from Syria and Iraq, Norwegian Church Aid, November 2016.

Xi, N., & Liping, L. (2014). A computationally efficient subspace algorithm for 2-D DOA estimation with L-shaped array. *IEEE signal processing letters*, 21(8), 971-974.

Yaqo, M. Y. (2010). "huquq alaqliat alqawmia", [The Rights of National Minorities], Egypt, Dar Shatat Publishing, Without edition number.

Yearbook on Human Rights for 1950,1952.

Yoon, S., ‘Islamic State is Selling Looted Art Online for Needed Cash’, Bloomberg, 29 June 2015. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-28/isis-has-new-cash-cow-art-loot-it-s-peddling-on-eBay> facebook (accessed 20 November 2019).

Youash, M. (2008). Iraq's minority crisis and US national security: Protecting minority rights in Iraq. *Am. U. Int'l L. Rev.*, 24, 341.

Zonen, D. V. & Wirya, K. (2017). The Yazidis Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Yazidis-Perceptions-of-Reconciliation-and-Conflict-Report.pdf>

Zoonen, D. V., & Wirya, K. (2017). The Yazidis Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict. Middle East Research Institute, 1-26.

Zoonen, D.V. & Wirya, K. (2017). The Yazidis Perceptions of Reconciliation and Conflict. Retrieved October 18, 2021, from <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Yazidis-Perceptions-of-Reconciliation-and-Conflict-Report.pdf>