THE PLIGHT OF IRAQ'S CHRISTIANS: ATTACK ON LADY OF SALVATION CHURCH

AND CONDITIONS OF REFUGEES TO LEBANON

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

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by

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Notre Dame University – Louaize
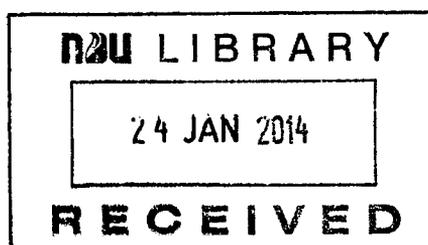
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I also thank my devoted Saint and intercessor, Mar Charbel.

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Abstract

This research[1] has contributed to an increased knowledge of the difficult circumstances Iraq's Christians are undergoing on the humanitarian, political, socio-economic and social levels, whether in their homeland or in diaspora. Ten years after the 2003 United States-led invasion of Iraq, Christians continue to be targeted by a wave of violence, threats, and intimidations executed by extremist Islamist military groups. They also face religious discrimination, political underrepresentation, and infringement of their fundamental rights.

The main theoretical orientation of this study is based on the provisions of the Spiral of Silence theory constructed by the German political scientist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. Also, the methodology employed includes a purposive sample of 128 Iraqi Christian refugees in Lebanon and a series of interviews conducted with Iraqi and Lebanese politicians, Iraqi religious figures, and United Nations officials.

The case of the assault on Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad in late 2010, which led to the killing of 58 and injuring of 75 others, was a turning point in terms of media coverage, since it has generated a large scale of international, regional and local media attention to the plight of Iraqi Christians.

The analysis of the major results collected by the survey, throughout the course of this work, showed that 78 percent of Iraqi Christian refugees in Lebanon are likely to return home, which supported hypothesis two that addressed this assumption, but they stressed that such a move is to be associated with a major improvement in the security situation. In addition, this requirement has been strongly linked to the accomplishment of a true political reconciliation between all Iraqi rival parties, as stated by all interviewed political and religious figures.

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[1] The terms research, thesis, work, and study are interchangeable so as not to confuse the readers.

On the other hand, the first hypothesis was moderately supported by the limited percentage of refugees who want to resettle in Lebanon (6%) or a third country (16%).

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 40 percent of registered Iraqi refugees in Lebanon are Christians and face several challenges and poor living conditions. Furthermore, the research showed that Iraqi Christians formed their communities and established their social networks based on sectarian affiliations, which was supported by the social isolation concept of the spiral of silence theory.

In addition, the situation of Iraqi refugees has worsened following the 2010 emerging Syrian crisis. They now receive less governmental and non-governmental assistance caused by the massive flow of Syrian refugees to Lebanon.

This research also has represented a list of recommendations to the Iraqi and host countries governments, international community, minority activists, media outlets, and Christian community, in order to address the plight of the Christians of Iraq and maintain their survival in the land of their ancestors.

Finally to pave the way for a free and democratic Iraq, concrete actions should be addressed urgently to improve the difficult situation of the Christian community and to avoid the eradication of an original component of the Iraqi population.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BBC News	British Broadcasting Corporation News
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMRS	Center for Migration and Refugee Studies
COR	Council of Representatives
GDB	Gross Domestic Product
HCHR	High Commission for Human Rights
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission
IDSC	Information and Decision Support Center
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Center
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IKR	Iraqi Kurdistan Region
ISOF	Iraqi Special Operations Forces
km	Kilometer
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
MP	Member of Parliament
ME	Middle East
MOMD	Ministry of Migration and Displacement
MNF-I	Multi-National Force Iraq
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
RRP	Regional Response Plan
sq	Square
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USCIRF	United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
U.S.	United States of America

Chapter One: Introduction

Since a combined force of troops from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Poland invaded Iraq and toppled the regime of the late President Saddam Hussein in 2003, a new era of addressing the plight of Christian minorities in Iraq has been raised in the media.

More specifically, the attack on Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad in October 2010 generated a large scale of international, regional and local media attention to the Christian community in Iraq. It was considered "the deadliest incident suffered by Iraq's Christians in modern times" (BBC News, 2010) and "the highest profile attack" against Christians in Iraq (USCIRF, 2011).

Despite the fact that the media coverage of the plight of Iraqi Christians was and is still considered weak, according to Christian Iraqi parliamentarians (such as Yunadim Kenna and Imad Youkhana[2], interview with authors, March 13, 2013), yet the coverage of the Baghdad church's assault shed the light on the fact that Iraq is not a homogenous Muslim state as some western governments and media portrayed. Moreover, many of these countries had an overly Euro-centric view of church history and were not even aware that Iraqi Christians formed one of the very oldest Christian communities worldwide.

This work has focused on the 2010 church attack and the degree of media attention it has generated without directly examining how various media covered the plight of Iraqi Christians. Nevertheless, the research has relied heavily on different media sources, among others, to document the subject matter.

According to Luo (2006), Christianity took root in Iraq near the dawn of the faith two thousand years ago, making it home to one of the world's oldest Christian communities. The

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[2] Member of Parliament Imad Youkhana was targeted by an assassination attempt by a car bomb in Kirkuk province on September 22, 2013. The blast caused the injury of two of his children and of members of his security team.

country is rich in biblical significance: scholars believe the Garden of Eden described in Genesis was in Iraq; Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees, a city in Iraq; the city of Nineveh that the prophet Jonah visited after being spit out by a giant whale was in Iraq. Both Chaldean Catholics and Assyrian, the country's largest Christian sects, still pray in Aramaic, the language of Jesus (Luo, 2006).

Despite the prominence of its culture and history, the Christian population in Iraq began to decline over the centuries, and more specifically after the U.S.-led invasion. Key Christian Iraqi figures including the Head of Rafidain (Mesopotamia) parliamentarian bloc, Yunadim Kenna, say that this community still has the potential to shoulder an important role in the process of building a free, democratic and peaceful country, considering its members' education and their political moderation (Interview with author, March 13, 2013).

Member of Parliament (MP), Imad Youkhana, notes that Iraqi Christians take a middle ground stand between the Christians of the West and the Muslims of the East, and could potentially act as a positive bond between the two cultures to prevent total polarization (Interview with author, March 13, 2013).

Since the war of 2003, Iraqi Christians waged a campaign to call attention to their cause, fearing the vanishing of the sacred language "Aramaic" and the traditions of one of the oldest churches in the world, and that they have been subject to frequent blasts (See Appendix VI), which attracted the attention of different global media outlets.

Due to mounting intimidation and oppression over years, Iraqi Christians were forced to flee their country in a more accelerated pace. This crisis decreased their number from around one million and two hundred thousand to less than the half of that number, according to the United Nations' agencies, noting that accurate statistics are unavailable.

According to Libal and Harding (2007), victims of forced migration found themselves "vulnerable" on multiple fronts, the West for granting a very limited permanent resettlement visas, and the inability of a fuller integration in neighboring countries, among many others.

Jenkins (2008, p. 249) highlighted the dangers of mounting persecution and the immanent risk of probable "extinction" that the Iraqi Christian community is facing after a vital presence that expanded over close to two millennia in the primordial land of Mesopotamia[3].

On the other hand, Archbishop of the Chaldean Church in Iraq and the world, Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako gives another and less pessimistic reading of the situation (Interview with author, March 29, 2013). He denies that Christians are victims of "organized attacks" despite the fact they were targeted by extremist groups. He stresses the necessity of creating awareness among Iraqi Christians and refugees regarding challenges they are facing. The Patriarch also warns against the possibility of Christians of losing their identity, their relationship with their own heritage, their history and their own people, which, if any of them were to occur, might lead to isolation and bleakness.

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[3] Also known as the lands between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

a. Background of the Topic

i. Historical Background

The origins of Christianity in Iraq are ancient and go back to more than two thousand years, unlike in other countries (e.g. Africa and South and East Asia) where Christian presence was a result of European missionaries that were evangelizing during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Jenkins (2008) showed in his book *"The Lost History of Christianity"* that the histories of both Nestorian[4] and Monophysite[5] traditions were "lost" to almost all the rest of Christendom[6].

According to Jenkins (2008, p. 6), "Mesopotamia or Iraq retained a powerful Christian culture at least through the thirteenth century. In terms of the number and splendor of its churches and monasteries, its vast scholarship and dazzling spirituality, Iraq was through the late Middle Ages at least as much a cultural and spiritual heartland of Eastern Christianity as was France or Germany, or indeed Ireland," to the Western Christianity.

Jenkins also described the "ferociously organized violence of Islam that conquered many of these Christian lands" (2008, pp. 101, 141). As a result of the Islamic conquest, sometime between the years 1200 and 1400, most of these churches had vanished except for significant

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[4] In 431 the Council of Ephesus declared the Nestorians heretical for their view that the two natures of Christ were not united but distinct (John, 1928).

[5] The Monophysites believed that Christ had only one nature, not two, and so were condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Both the Nestorians and Monophysites were labeled heretics by Protestant, Catholic, and the Eastern Orthodox churches (Kelly, 1977).

[6] The worldwide community of Christians, adherents to Christianity.

remnants like Coptic Christians in Egypt. By around the year 1900, Jenkins wrote, the whole Middle East accounted for just 0.9 percent of the world's Christians" (2008, p. 155).

On the other hand, Willey (2010) confirms that "A century ago, 20% of the population in the Middle East was Christian," adding that "today, Christians account for only about five percent and their numbers are still dwindling."

Moreover, Iraq's biblical history and prophecy are also considered primordial since it was the most mentioned land in the Bible after Israel, but entitled back then by historic names such as Babylon, Assyria, Land of Shinar, and Mesopotamia, as indicated by a review of Pastor David L. Brown, published on First Baptist Church of Oak Creek's website[7].

De Groote (2011) said that the Orthodox Church of the East was divided late 1500s when three bishops broke off and aligned themselves with the Roman Catholic Church; leading to what is known now as the Chaldean Catholic Church, the largest group of Christians in Iraq. He added that a similar split also happened during that time to the Syriac Orthodox Church, creating the Syriac Catholic Church.

De Groote (2011) also mentioned that Christians started in the 19th Century to identify themselves more as ethnic Assyrians and less as Arabs, and to consider themselves as the "heirs to these glorious days". But he noted that the Catholic churches declined this movement, fearing the lessening of their direct control on the people, and because it gives Christians "a more secular identity".

ii. Population and Christian Demography

The CIA World Factbook (2013) estimated the total of Iraqi population to be 31,858,481 persons, distributed among eighteen governorates (See Appendix V).

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[7] www.firstbaptistchurchoc.org

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF, 2011) estimated that 97% of the population is Muslim, divided between Shiites with 60-65% and Sunnis with 32-37%, while approximately 3% are Christians and other religious minorities consisting of Baha'i, Jews, Kaka'i, Sabeans and Yazidis.

The main Christian traditions in Iraq are the four following churches; nearly two-third are Chaldeans, one-fifth are Assyrians, and the rest are Syriacs, Armenians, Anglicans and Protestants (De Groote, 2011).

The census conducted in 1987 counted 1.4 million Christians in Iraq (IRIN, 2006), and since then no census had taken place nationally, despite the fact that the government passed a census law in 2008. Many Iraqis, especially those living in disputed territories in northern Iraq consider that the delay of conducting a census aims at hiding the new aspect of religious demography.

Christians primarily live in Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, Erbil and Kirkuk and in Assyrian towns and regions such as the Nineveh Plains in northern Iraq. There are no accurate statistics about the current Christian demography due to the violence, internal displacement and migration, and the lack of government's capacity, noting that numbers were often estimates announced by UN agencies and NGOs rather than official sources.

But, the USCIRF (2011) confirmed that half or more of the pre-2003 Christian community is believed to have left the country, quoting Christian leaders as saying that the current Christian population is between 400,000 to 600,000 members.

iii. Christian Minority in the Iraqi Context

1. Constitution

In an October 15, 2005 referendum, the Iraqi people voted on the new Constitution that includes 144 Articles. The Constitution mentioned the word "Christians" only once in Article 2,

"Chaldeans" also once in Article 125, "Assyrians" once in Article 2 and twice in Article 4, and "Armenians" once in Article 4.

Brown (2005) cites that some elements of the preamble of the Constitution published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, 2005) may present a source of controversy.

The preamble includes sentences such as "upon our soil, the saints and companions of the Prophet prayed," "we sought hand-in-hand and shoulder-to-shoulder to create our new Iraq, the Iraq of the future free from sectarianism, racism, complex of regional attachment, discrimination and exclusion," "strengthening our national unity," "providing equal opportunity for all," and "spreading the culture of diversity," yet, it refers to some religious minorities including Christians as "other components of the people", while it mentions Shiites, Sunnis, Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen by name.

Article 2 recognizes Islam as the official religion of the State and a foundation source of legislation. It adds that "no law may be enacted that contradicts the established provisions of Islam." According to USCIRF (2013), minorities objected to this article, considering that it gives Islam "a preferred status", which in turn provides a "potential justification" for discrimination against non-Muslims.

Article 2 also mentions that the Constitution guarantees the "full religious rights to freedom of religious belief and practice of all individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandean Sabeans," but these rights were violated on several occasions.

Article 4 states that the Arabic language and Kurdish language are the two official languages of Iraq but guarantees at the same time the "right of Iraqis to educate their children in their mother tongue, such as Turkmen, Syriac and Armenian, in government educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines, or in any other language in private

educational institutions." The article adds that the Turkmen language and the Syriac language are two other official languages in the administrative units "in which they constitute density of population."

Article 9 states that the Iraqi Armed Forces and Security Services will be composed of "the components of the Iraqi people with due consideration given to their balance and representation without discrimination or exclusion," but as Rafidain Bloc MP Yunadim Kenna stated, this article is being breached, saying that "our people (Christians) is not allowed to be appointed in high positions in the Iraqi Army, Air Forces or any other state position" (Interview with author, March 13, 2013).

Article 10 mentions the state's commitment to "assuring and safeguarding the sanctity of holy shrines and religious sites, and guaranteeing the free practice of rituals in them," Article 12 states that a law shall "regulate honors, official holidays, religious and national occasions and the Hijri[8] and Gregorian[9] calendars," Article 14 says that Iraqis are equal before the law "without discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, origin, color, religion, sect, belief or opinion, or economic and social status," and Article 16 points out that "equal opportunities shall be guaranteed to all Iraqis and the state shall ensure that the necessary measures to achieve this are taken," but unfortunately, the following chapters will give clear evidence on the violation of these rights.

Despite the fact that Article 20 guarantees to Iraqi citizens the right to "participate in public affairs and to enjoy political rights including the right to vote, elect, and run for office,"

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[8] The Islamic calendar; it is a lunar calendar consisting of 12 months in a year of 354 or 355 days.

[9] Western calendar or the Christian calendar; it is the most accepted and used civil calendar internationally.

the USCIRF (2013) mentioned that discrimination against minorities in the field of public participation remains "enshrined." Minorities have urged the Iraqi government to implement reforms to some provisions, but it "apparently has made no serious efforts" to address these proposals (USCIRF, 2013).

Article 23 says "expropriation is not permissible except for the purposes of public benefit in return for just compensation," but Christian MP Yunadim Kenna confirmed that many Christian lands were confiscated during the past decades and called on the Iraqi government to compensate Christians for withholding their properties (Interview with author, March 13, 2013).

Article 43 mentions that the "followers of all religions and sects are free in the practice of religious rites including the Husseini rituals (Shiite religious ceremonies), and management of religious endowments, their affairs and religious institutions". The article adds that the state guarantees "freedom of worship and the protection of the places of worship."

Article 49 states that "the representation of all components of the people shall be upheld in the Council of Representatives (COR)." The article adds that the COR shall consist of a number of members, at "a ratio of one seat per 100,000 Iraqi persons representing the entire Iraqi people."

This clause indirectly acknowledges the presence of at least 500,000 Iraqi Christians in the country, since the parliament elected in 2010 granted five seats for Christians. This issue will be discussed furthermore in the following part.

Article 102 of the Iraqi constitution mandates the establishment of an independent High Commission for Human Rights (HCHR). The parliament approved a law in 2008 governing the commission's operations, and stipulating that "minorities must be represented by at least one of

the 11 full members and one reserve commissioner," without specifying which religious minority.

Furthermore, Article 125, which states that "the Constitution shall guarantee the administrative, political, cultural and educational rights of the various nationalities, such as Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians and all other constituents," is being abused on the ground.

2. *Council of Representatives*

Six Christian parliamentarians were granted seats out of 275 in the Council of Representatives (COR) elected on January 30, 2005.

The COR elected on December 15, 2005 under the Transitional Law during the occupation of Iraq, allocated three parliamentarian seats out of 275 for Christians. The Christian seats are, however, voted for across the national constituency.

The Parliament's 2010 round held on March 7 reserved 14 seats out of 325 for religious minorities, five of which were allocated for Christians from Baghdad, Nineveh, Kirkuk, Erbil and Dahuk.

Baghdad's Sabean-Mandeans, Nineveh's Shabak and Nineveh's Yazidis were also granted one seat each, in addition to six additional Yazidis on the Kurdistan Alliance list.

Candidates of ten minority political parties participated in the 2010 elections along with 160 other parties and 36 independents. The U.S. Department of State (2012) noted that political parties in Iraq tended to be organized along either "religious or ethnic" lines.

Also, the USCIRF 2013 Annual Report mentioned that the parliament established for the first time a minorities' caucus supported by a civil society alliance, and included parliamentarians representing political parties of all religious and ethnic minorities. The alliance succeeded in 2012 in making progress on the educational system, as well as the enhancement of basic services in neglected minority areas.

The alliance reviewed history, geography, civics, and Arabic language textbooks for intermediate levels and recommended to the Ministry of Education the implementation of a number of reforms, according to the report.

As a result, the ministry released new textbooks in September 2012 that incorporated new approach of addressing minorities; through mentioning Christians, Yazidis, Shabak, and Mandeans as part of Iraqi history and society instead of referring to them as "others" when describing the constitution of the population in addition to Arabs and Kurds.

Moreover, the report said that members of the alliance made efforts to convince other parliamentarians to urge the central government of Baghdad to change federal budget procedures. They called for giving the privilege to provincial governments to distribute funds of construction and development based on the number of population, in order to ensure annual development funds to minority communities.

The Iraqi parliament passed a bill on November 12, 2012 banning "any act that forces an Iraqi citizen to change his or her ethnic affiliation," repealing a law ratified during the former regime era that forced Kurds and Turkmen to change their ethnic affiliation to Arab.

3. Government

Tareq Aziz[10] was the first Christian to be appointed as Foreign Minister (1983–1991). He was also appointed as Deputy Prime Minister (1979–2003) and was a close advisor to former President Saddam Hussein.

The December 2005 parliament resulted in the formation of the Iraqi Transitional Government led by Ayad Allawi.

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[10] He was sentenced to death on October 26, 2010 on charges of the suppression of Shiite religious parties in the 1980s, but the verdict has not been implemented yet.

The first full-term government in Iraq after the war was led by Nuri al-Maliki. It won the COR approval on May 20, 2006. It included 37 ministers, among whom one Christian woman, Minister of Human Rights Wajdan Mikhael.

The parliament approved the second cabinet on December 21, 2010. It includes 35 approved ministers, while seven other posts were filled temporarily by the Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki himself. One ministerial seat was allocated for Christians and filled by Minister of Environment Sargon Sliwah.

The U.S. Department of State (2012) reported that both the central government and KRG authorities implemented acts of "discrimination" and "abuse" of religious freedom in the disputed territories against Turkmens, Arabs, Yazidis, and Assyrians minorities. These acts included detaining members of these groups "in undisclosed locations without due process," denying services to some villages, and putting pressure on minority schools to teach in the Kurdish language, according to the report.

Christians, more specifically, complained that KRG authorities were "slow" to return churches and farmers lands confiscated by Saddam Hussein's regime, according to the State Department (2012).

USCIRF (2013) in turn accused Kurdish officials of "interfering with minorities' voting rights; encroaching on, seizing, and refusing to return minority land; conditioning the provision of services and assistance to minority communities on support for Kurdish expansion, forcing minorities to identify themselves as either Arabs or Kurds, as well as impeding the formation of local minority police forces."

4. Kurdistan National Assembly

Five Christians were voted into the parliament of the Kurdish Autonomous Region in the elections held on 30 January 2005. The total number of seats in the assembly was 111.

The latest parliamentary elections in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region were held on July, 2009. Christians were represented with four seats.

5. *Governorate Elections*

Iraq held the governorate elections on January 30, 2005. Two seats were allocated for Christians; one in Nineveh province and the second in Kirkuk.

On January 31, 2009, another elections took place and allocated three seats for Christians in three provinces; Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh.

6. *Socio-Economic Relations*

Rafidain Bloc MP Yunadim Kenna said that Christians living in Nineveh Plain are trapped into poverty, where 40% of the population is below poverty line (Interview with author, March 13, 2013).

On the other hand, Zaimov (2012) said Christmas season is a particularly dangerous period for the Christian minority in Iraq, where they are often not allowed to raise church buildings, and house churches often experience raids and harassment. He added that Christians are targeted for their faith, and women in some areas are forced to wear head-scarves to protect themselves from attacks.

According to BetBasoo (2007), "Christian female students were targeted in Basra and Mosul for not wearing veils, some had nitric acid squirted on their faces." He added that "elders of a village in Mosul were warned not to send females to universities".

The author also mentioned that extremist militias circulated letters warning all Christian women to veil themselves.

The Iraqi law restricts granting licenses to sell alcohol to Christians and non-Islamic groups, but alcohol stores and other shops providing un-Islamic goods or services were subject to targeting from extremist groups all over the country.

Bombs targeted liquor stores in Baghdad on April 13, 2010 and in Sinjar area in Nineveh on June 3, 2010, resulting in deaths and injuries. The Baghdad provincial council issued a resolution late 2010 banning all alcohol sales.

As a consequence, groups of men wearing civilian clothes and wielding pipes and handguns raided in mid-January 2011 three liquor stores and a Christian social club that served liquor. The U.S. State of Department reported in 2012 that the gunmen vandalized the three properties, stole some of the properties and threatened their owners, mentioning that "police officers or individuals posing as police officers accompanied the attackers."

According to USCIRF (2012), "mobs vandalized and burned" a number of Christian and Yazidi businesses in Zakho and several nearby towns in Dahuk governorate in the KRG region, for two consecutive days on December 2 and 3, 2011. These businesses included liquor stores, restaurants, and hair salons. Following the violence, KRG President Barzani promised legal action and compensation, and deployed police and peshmerga[11] forces to provide security to these areas.

The State Department mentioned in its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (2012) that security forces raided in September 2012 dozens of minority-owned businesses in Baghdad, including restaurants, bars, social clubs, and nightclubs. The report warned that "targeted violence and discrimination against ethnic minorities in Iraq remained a problem".

USCIRF (2013) also accused the Iraqi government of seeking "tolerating the private imposition of conservative Islamic religious norms on non-consenting individuals", giving examples of attacks on un-Islamic minority businesses in 2012, beating customers and staff and causing damage to property.

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[11] Kurdish Security Forces.

iv.   Casualties (2003-2012)

The Iraq Body Count Project (2013) stated that between 110,937 and 121,227 civilians were killed from the beginning of the U.S. invasion until December 2012, highlighting in different graphs that the year 2006 witnessed the most violent attacks.

The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq Human Rights Office put in a 2007 report the total civilian casualty figure for the year 2006 at 34,452 dead and 36,685 injured. It also highlighted a list of abuses ranging from attacks on women, minorities and professional groups to forced displacements, to the activities of the police and security forces and the U.S.-led Multi-National Force (MNF-I).

In regard to media workers, the Brussels Tribunal (2012, chart 1) mentioned that 382 were killed in violence between 2003 and 2012, among whom 352 were Iraqis and the remaining 30 were foreigners.

Some of these attacks also targeted the Christian community. A total of 2000 Christians were killed in several waves of violence between 2003 and 2010, as stated by Agenzia Fides (2010).

According to BetBasoo (2007), five priests were kidnapped and released after ransom was paid, 7 priests and 3 deacons were murdered. All these incidents occurred in Baghdad and Mosul. He also reported that 71 churches were attacked or bombed; 44 in Baghdad, 19 in Mosul, seven in Kirkuk and one in Ramadi. He added that at least 13 young women were abducted and raped, causing some of them to commit suicide.

The body of Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Faraj Rahho was found in Mosul on March 13, 2008, two weeks after his reported kidnapping. Neff (2008) said Christians have responded in "a very Christian manner" to the Iraqi Central Criminal Court's death sentence for the al-Qaeda leader who abducted the archbishop; asking to be punished and not executed.

USCIRF (2011) warned against "continued terrorist attacks against the smallest religious minorities and their religious sites," despite an overall drop in violence in Iraq between 2010 and 2011. USCIRF (2013) also said that the Christian community suffers from an ongoing generalized "sense of fear", especially after an explosion near the Chaldean Catholic Sacred Heart Cathedral of Kirkuk in September 16, 2012 and three other attacks on churches in 2011.

But according to BBC (2010), "the deadliest incident suffered by Iraq's Christians in modern times was the one which targeted Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad late 2010."

v.   **Assault on Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad (2010)**

At 5 p.m. on October 31, 2010, ten militants some of whom wearing suicide vests stormed Our Lady of Salvation Catholic Church in al-Karrada district in central Baghdad during Sunday mass, commemorating the church's anniversary.

They took 120 worshipers hostage, demanding the release of detainees held in Iraq and Egypt, according to the Chaldean bishop of Baghdad, Shlimoune Wardouni (Murshadi, 2010). At 9 p.m., after a four-hour standoff with the Iraqi security forces and helicopters hovering overhead, the gunmen set off explosions as soon as members of the Special Forces raided the church.

The blast caused 133 casualties, killing 58 persons, including two priests; Saad Abdullah Thaer and Wasim Sabeh, seven security guards, a pregnant woman and a number of children including a 3 year-old Adam Udai, and wounding 75 others. Five of the attackers were also killed, while the Baghdad Operations Command announced the arrest of the other five.

This was the second attack on Our Lady of Salvation Church, since it was targeted along with other five churches by a series of car bombings on August 1, 2004.

The Islamic State of Iraq, an affiliate of Al-Qaeda extremist group, claimed responsibility for the assault in a statement posted on radical Islamic websites, vowing to "exterminate" Iraqi Christians.

The group said that the attack was in response to allegedly female Muslims being held against their will in Coptic Christian monasteries in Egypt after converting to Islam (Mohammed, 2010). It added that the attack targeted "the dirty place of the infidel which Iraqi Christians have long used as a base to fight Islam."

1. *Media Attention to Church Attack*

The assault on Our Lady of Salvation Church attracted the attention of international media, in addition to regional and local outlets.

It was described as the "Baghdad church hostage drama" by the Telegraph (2010), "bloodbath" by BBC News (2010), and "Iraq hostage drama" by Agence France Press (2010). Muir (2010) said in a piece written for BBC that "there have been many attacks on Christians in Iraq since the US-led invasion of 2003, but nothing like this."

Shadid (2010) wrote that "it was the worst massacre of Iraqi Christians since the war began here in 2003", and Healy (2012) mentioned it was "the single worst assault on Iraq's Christians since the war began." Both stories were published in the New York Times.

The Blade (2010) described the siege as "the worst attack by Islamic militants on the country's Christian minority since the 2003-U.S. led invasion." It was also considered a "massacre" by Asia News (2010) and "the deadliest ever recorded against Iraq's Christians since the 2003 US-led invasion" in a story written by Surk (2010) for the Associated Press.

In a 2013 report, the BBC mentioned that the attack was the "worst single disaster to hit Iraq's Christians in modern times."

2. Condemnations

In the wake of the October 2010 church attack, senior Iraqi officials expressed public condemnations, including President Jalal Talabani, Parliament Speaker Osama al-Nujaifi, and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki who said that it aimed at "reigniting sectarian strife in Iraq and driving more Christians out of the country."

President of the Kurdish Regional Government Massoud Barzani condemned the "terrorist" attack, as well as other Kurdish officials.

Grand Shiite Cleric Ali al-Sistani, based in Najaf province, advised the Iraqi security forces to shoulder more responsibility for the protection of Iraqi citizens. In addition to that, the majority of Sunni and Shiite clerics condemned the "barbaric attack" during Friday prayers all over the country and vowed solidarity with the Christian community.

Furthermore, international condemnation followed the attack; such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, France, Canada, Russia, Iran, Egypt among other countries.

Pope Benedict XVI in turn condemned the "senseless violence, made more ferocious because it was directed against unarmed people gathered in the house of God, which is a house of love and reconciliation" and called for the renewal of international efforts at "brokering peace" in the region.

Worldwide rallies were also organized on November 8, 2010, to express outrage over the deadly church siege, stand in solidarity with the victims, as well as calling on the international community especially the American and Iraqi governments to make more efforts to protect Iraq's Christians.

The event was dubbed "Black March" since all protesters from different religious background, Christians, Muslims and even Jews, were dressed in black. Several cities and states around the globe participated in rallies such as Washington, Chicago, New York, Detroit,

California, Arizona, as well as Toronto in Canada, London, France, Brussels, Germany, Sweden, Australia and Iran.

3. Government Policies

The Iraqi government opened an extensive investigation into the November 2010 church attack and arrested several suspects. It also ordered to increase security at the entrance of churches and in Christian areas. These measures included increasing patrols in Christian neighborhoods, using explosive device detectors, and providing training for Christians to protect churches.

Additionally, the government provided compensations to the families of those killed and injured during the assault, according to Article 132 of the Constitution which mentions that the State shall guarantee "compensation to the families of the martyrs and the injured as a result of terrorist acts".

The government also ensured financial assistance to restore the church. Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki addressed a speech during the inauguration ceremony of the church on December 14, 2012, in the presence of a representative of Pope Benedict XVI, key Sunni and Shiite political and religious figures, as well as the families of victims. Alsumaria News Iraqi website (2012) quoted Maliki as saying "we want Christians to remain in their homeland".

The prime minister also urged the European Union (EU) to stop encouraging the emigration of Iraqi Christians from the country, saying "we lived side by side in harmony and enjoyed good relations without any conflicts."

"I have asked Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican to issue a statement urging Christians to remain in Iraq, so the East will not be emptied of Christians just as the West is not emptied of Muslims," Maliki added, confirming that the Vatican has already responded "positively" to his

request by encouraging Iraqi Christians to stay in their native homeland (Alsumaria News, 2012).

Moreover, President Jalal Talabani called in December 2010 for the establishment of a special governmental office to address Christian affairs, but his call was not fulfilled.

4. Trial of Al-Qaeda Affiliated Attackers

On November 24, 2010, the Iraqi security forces arrested[12] 12 militants suspected of being involved in the church siege. The Baghdad chief of the Islamic State of Iraq, Huthaifa al-Batawi[13], was among those arrested.

Nine months later, the federal appeals court issued verdicts in August 2011, convicting and sentencing three individuals to death, and a fourth to 20 years of imprisonment, for "masterminding and preparing" the October 2010 hostage siege at Our Lady of Salvation Church. The three convicted men were executed in February 2012.

According to USCIRF 2013 report, these measures, starting from the investigation process until the execution were considered a qualitative step toward the Christian community, since the Iraqi government made little progress in investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of religiously-motivated attacks aimed at small minority communities.

vi. Post-Church Attack

1. Series of Attacks and Intimidations

Ten days following the Baghdad church assault, a series of coordinated bomb and mortar attacks targeted Christian homes across the capital, killing five and injuring 30; all victims were Christians.

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[12] Security forces carried out raids in al-Mansour neighborhood west Baghdad, and in Palestine Street, East of the capital.

[13] He died during an attempted takeover of a jail in Baghdad on May 8, 2011.

AFP (2010) reported that Iraqi towns in Kirkuk in Northern Iraq canceled Christmas festivities after receiving al-Qaeda threats.

Furthermore, ten bomb attacks targeted Christian homes in Baghdad on December 30, killing two and wounding 20 Christians.

A group of armed men stormed on January 15, 2011 a private medical clinic in Mosul city in Nineveh and shot and seriously injured a Christian cardiologist working there.

On April 24, 2011, a bomb exploded outside the Sacred Heart Church in Baghdad as soon as a truck of Iraqi police pulled away following the service of Easter Sunday. Worshipers were gone then, but two policemen and two passers-by were injured (USCIRF, 2012).

On August 2, 2011, 15 persons were wounded in a car bomb outside the Holy Family Syriac Catholic Church in Kirkuk. The explosion also damaged the church and nearby buildings. On the same day, Iraqi security forces detonated a number of bombs inside cars parked outside two other churches in Kirkuk (USCIRF, 2012).

According to USCIRF (2012), a bomb exploded near St. Ephraim Syriac Orthodox church also in Kirkuk on August 15, 2011, damaging the church. In addition to that, Iraqi security forces defused on the same day a bomb near a Presbyterian church also in Kirkuk.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported in its Review of Displacement and Return in Iraq (February, 2011) that the targeting of the country's Christians has become increasingly "acute", warning that some churches declared "sharp" declines in attendance since many of their parishioners have fled the violence, which has "severely" impacted the Christian community.

According to the U.S. State Department (2012), Christian groups in Iraq, more specifically in Mosul area in Nineveh, received death threats if they do not leave their homes, following the release of the controversial "Innocence of Muslims" Internet video[14] in September.

USCIRF (2013) announced that two Iraqi Christians were killed, and two others were kidnapped during the course of 2012.

Open Doors (2012) reported that 20 Christian families in Mosul received in May anonymous threatening letters urging them to leave Iraq "immediately".

2. *Christian Territorial Claims*

The Iraqi Constitution includes three articles that tackle issues related to regions and governorates; Article 119 states that "one or more governorates shall have the right to organize into a region based on a request to be voted on in a referendum," Article 120 states that "each region shall adopt a constitution of its own that defines the structure of powers of the region, its authorities, and the mechanisms for exercising such authorities, provided that it does not contradict the Iraqi Constitution," and Article 125 mentioned previously.

According to Katzman (2013), a number of Iraqi Christians advocate a "Nineveh Plains Province Solution," based on Article 125 of the Constitution.

This plan includes turning the Nineveh Plains into a self-administering and autonomous region but affiliated or under the control of the Kurdish government, and aims at safeguarding the Christian community in Iraq, and addressing their lack of security, as well as their political marginalization (Katzman, 2013).

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[14] A 14 minutes anti-Islamic movie trailer that was perceived as denigrating of the prophet Muhammad and sparked violent protests and demonstrations that broke out in Egypt and reached Arab and Muslim nations, as well as a number of western countries.

Christians are divided between supporters of this province solution who claim that "such a zone would pose no threat to the integrity of Iraq", and rejecters who argue that the inclusion of a separate Christian security force could "set the scene for violence and confrontation" (Katzman 2013).

However, USCIRF (2013) cited a list of concerns raised even by some proponents of the autonomous plan. It mentioned that "the law according to which the plan would be implemented, the territory that such an area would cover, its religious and ethnic make-up, how it would be secured, what governance and economic powers it would have, and how it would relate to the KRG and the central government" all remained disputed.

vii.   Increase of Internal Displacement and Emigration

Article 44 of the Iraqi Constitution states that each Iraqi has "freedom of movement, travel, and residence inside and outside Iraq," and "no Iraqi may be exiled, displaced, or deprived from returning to the homeland."

The U.S. war on Iraq has led to the displacement of more than 4.2 million people (Mowafi H, Spiegel P, 2008) and resettlement of more than 2 million refugees abroad (UNHCR, 2011), though many reside in asylum countries illegally.

The UNHCR Iraq Fact Sheet (June, 2012) said that there was an estimated 1.332.382 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Iraq as of May 2012, mostly in Baghdad, Diyala and Nineveh governorates. This number is based on figures provided by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MOMD). The international organization added that IDPs live either with families, in rented accommodations or in informal settlements.

The Country Reports on Human Rights Practices issued by the United States Department of State (2012) pinpointed that IDP children were "often prevented" from attending schools due to lack of paperwork, funds, and transportation.

Another report on International Religious Freedom issued by the U.S. Department of State (2011) also mentioned that an estimated 1.3 million people of all religious backgrounds remained internally displaced due to the sectarian violence between 2006 and 2008, but noted that the number of religious minorities internally displaced remained uncertain because many of them resorted to the houses of relatives and friends.

In a 2007 report, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)'s Human Rights Office noted that since the bombing of Al Askari[15] Shiite Mosque in Samarra in February 22, 2006, some 471,000 people have been forcibly displaced internally.

The November 2010 assault on Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad and other similar series of attacks that occurred between October 31, 2010 and late January 2011, led to the displacement of 1,078 Christian families (IOM, 2011). They left their homes in Baghdad and Mosul searching for safer areas in governorates in northern Iraq.

The Kurdistan region includes three governorates; Erbil, Kirkuk and Nineveh. They are relatively secure, but Nineveh and more particularly its capital Mosul, remains "extremely dangerous", and "control over this ethnically and religiously mixed area is disputed between the KRG and the central government" (USCIRF, 2013).

As per the refugees, the UN Regional Response Plan for Iraqi Refugees (2012) pointed out that the twelve countries[16] taking part in the RRP host a total of 149,897 registered refugees

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[15] One of the most important Shiite mosques in the world, it is built in 944. Its dome was destroyed in a bombing by Al-Qaeda linked extremists in February 2006 and its two remaining minarets were destroyed in another bombing in June 2007, causing widespread anger amongst Shiite Muslims. The remaining clock tower was destroyed later on in July 2007. As of April 2009, the golden dome and the minarets have been restored and the shrine reopened to visitors.

[16] Syria (87,741), Jordan (29,191), Lebanon (8,751), Turkey (11,321), Egypt (7,144), Iran (3,514) and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries that include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates (2,234).

as of the end of May 2012, mentioning that the number went down from 165,429 at the beginning of the year. These figures reflect the progress made on the security level.

The two major countries that received Iraqi refugees are Jordan and Syria; they have accepted 1.4 million and 750,000 persons respectively (UNHCR, 2011).

According to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (2012), 64,174 Iraqis have been granted refugee-status citizenship in the U.S. as of March 31, 2012.

With regard to the Christian community, around 40% left Iraq since 2003 (Ferris and Stoltz, 2008). Christians made up prior to the 2003 war around 3% of the Iraqi population.

Katzman (2013) said that about 1,000 Christian families fled their provinces in October 2008, in the run-up to the January 2009 provincial elections. He also mentioned that this issue faded in 2009, but then resurfaced between October and December, when about 10,000 Christians in Northern Iraq fled the areas near Kirkuk fearing bombings and intimidation.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also reported an increased registration of Iraqi Christians in Syria and Jordan in the last two months of the 2010, in reference to the period that witnessed the Our Lady of Salvation Church siege.

The U.S. Department of State (2012) announced that effective systems to assist IDPs, refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons "were not fully established" by the government, but noted on the other hand that the latter "generally cooperated" with the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to these persons.

viii. Return of IDPs and Refugees

Iraq witnessed a decrease of violence in 2008, despite some major security breaches. Consequently, many internally displaced and refugee families returned to their place of origin or relocated in other Iraqi areas.

But, it remains of high importance to note that no clear conclusion is reached on whether returnees have taken the decision voluntarily because the security in Iraq has improved, or due to numerous challenges they were facing in host countries.

Few members of minority groups are believed to be among these returnees for a range of reasons, such as obstructions caused by dominant groups, negative attitudes and hostility, violence threats by extremists, discriminatory employment and educational systems, limited access to health care, as well as difficulties in property restitution.

In its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (2012), the U.S. Department of State warned that "many displaced persons feared their religious affiliation would make them an unsafe minority in neighborhoods segregated along religious lines." Also, still experience difficulty in returning to areas where they would be in a numerical minority.

The numbers of the USCIRF (2011) showed that approximately 350,000 IDPs and nearly 60,000 refugees returned voluntarily in 2008 and 2009.

The statistical update on Return issued by the UNHCR Iraq operation (2012), showed that some 92,000 IDPs and nearly 26,500 refugees returned spontaneously in 2010.

The update reflected that permanent returns registered with the Iraqi government have more than doubled in 2011, with 193,610 IDPs and 67,080 refugees. It also noted that this upward trend has continued in 2012 with the return of 218,800 IDPs and 82,260 refugees.

The UNHCR Iraq Fact Sheet (2012) in turn has recorded 960,370 Iraqi refugee and IDP returnees between 2008 and May 2012, noting that 85% of the returnee population is IDPs and 90% has returned to Baghdad and Diyala governorates.

It is of high importance to note in this regard that many of Iraqis who fled to Syria

returned to their homeland after being subject to different attacks and intimidations, following

the military conflict[17] that erupted in that country in March 2010.

The war in Syria has not only affected the Syrian people, but also the Iraqi refugees.

According to USCIRF (2013), many Iraqis who fled to Syria at the height of the Iraqi conflict

have either returned to their homeland or joined Syrian refugees in neighboring countries,

including Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon.

The U.S. Department of State (2012) noted that many returnees received a grant of 4

million Iraqi dinar (approximately $3,500) from the MOMD. On the other hand, The UNHCR

Iraq Fact Sheet (2012) mentioned that some 467,000 persons, who include IDPs, returnees and

squatters, remain in more than 382 settlements throughout the country, with 191,163 of them

living in 125 illegal settlements in the capital, on public land or in public buildings.

The report warned that they are facing harsh living conditions, with limited access to

electricity, adequate sanitation, schools, as well as job opportunities, in addition to being at "risk

of eviction" by the authorities.

The U.S. State Department (2012) in turn accused the Iraqi government, of "largely"

unfulfilling its promises to provide essential services to support returnees in Baghdad, but

mentioned, on the other hand, that it provided some essential services to returnees in Diyala

governorate; it also highlighted that "high unemployment, lack of shelter, and a continuing

unstable political environment" created significant challenges for returnees, despite the fact that

"security gains and access to assistance" attracted them.

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[17] Syria witnessed a civil war, commonly known as the Syrian uprising, which
began on March 15, 2011 with peaceful demonstrations against the regime of
President Bachar Al-Assad and Baath Party rule, but evolved to an armed
conflict between the opposition and Syrian Armed Forces. The UN reported that
70,000 civilians were killed by the end of 2012.

b. Objectives and Significance

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the rights of the Christian minority as mentioned in the Iraqi Constitution, as well as its pragmatic representation in the Council of Representative, government and provincial councils, by showing very narrowly defined roles for minorities.

It also explores media's attention to the "deadliest incident suffered by Iraq's Christians in modern times", according to the British Broadcasting Corporation News (2010, Iraq, para. 7), which targeted Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad late 2010 leaving 133 casualties. Al-Qaeda extremist Islamist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

This study goes further to explore the church attack and other blasts' repercussions on the fate of the Christian community in Iraq, in regards with the significant increase of forced migration. Moreover, this thesis intends to provide valuable insights on issues related to the reality of internally displaced Christians, as well as tracking down the movement of Christian refugees from Iraq to Lebanon, and thus contributing to a deeper understanding of their situation and challenges they are facing.

Public Information Officer for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Lebanon, Dana Sleiman, said that Christians constitute 40% of the 6158 Iraqis registered with the refugee agency (Interview with author, November 13, 2013). The ultimate aim of the thesis is to study whether Iraqi Christian refugees in Lebanon succeeded in establishing their own community in light of several differences with the new Lebanese environment, or they were subject to division based on sectarian lines and unwillingness to work together as constructed by Stack 2008.

In addition, the study attaches particular importance to determining how the plight of Iraq's Christian minority should be addressed by the international community and Iraqi

government. It also strives to establish a connection between the current security situation in Iraq and the decision-making process of Christians whether to consider their current situation as a transitional phase before returning to their homeland or seeking a resettlement in host country or a third destination based on testing the two following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The refugee community of Iraqi Christians living in Lebanon is expected to resettle in Lebanon or a third western country.

Hypothesis 2: The refugee community of Iraqi Christians living in Lebanon is likely to return to homeland.

In addition, the following questions will also be addressing the purposes and objectives of this thesis:

RQ 1: What are the conditions of Iraqi Christian refugees to Lebanon on the legal and socio-economic levels?

RQ 2: How are these refugees forming their own communities? Are ethnic and sectarian lines a basic to this formation?

RQ 3: To which extent Christians in Iraq are facing political underrepresentation and violation of their fundamental rights? And how is this violation correlated with the territorial claim?

RQ 4: What is the course of actions and practices toward the situation of the Christian population in Iraq and host countries?

c. Thesis Structure

The thesis will follow the following structure: Chapter one covers a historical background of Iraq's Christians in terms of heritage, population, and different types of challenges. It also looks at the integration of the Christian minority in the Iraqi context according to the new constitution ratified in 2005, in addition to its rights and political representation.

Moreover, the chapter goes over the pragmatic relations between the Christian community on one hand and the Iraqi government and parliament on the other hand, besides decision-making dimensions and platforms granted to Christians.

Chapter one also describes some media coverage of the attack on Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad in November 2010, starting with the breakup of the siege, going through the series of condemnations, global demonstrations, Iraqi government policies, verdict rendered by Iraqi judiciary, renovation and re-opening of the church late 2012, and finalizing with the trial of al-Qaeda affiliated attackers.

Furthermore, this chapter reviews a series of attacks and intimidations against Christians that followed the church blast. It sheds the light on the renewal of Christians' territorial claims to form a separate federation, similar to the one established by the Kurds in northern Iraq, in addition to the increase of internal displacement and emigration to neighboring countries. The chapter also includes the citation and definitions of key concepts and terminologies used frequently in this work, in relation with minority, refugee and media terms.

Chapter two goes through a basic literature review of significant studies and relevant articles on the 2003 war, and violence that targeted Christians, as well as its repercussions in terms of displacement and forced migration, focusing on Christian community in neighboring countries, a part that will be discussed in-depth in chapters three and four.

In addition to that, it sets up the theoretical orientation of this study, exploring in particular the provisions of the Spiral of Silence theory constructed by the German political scientist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann.

Chapter three puts forth the methodology used for the research that includes the profile of a purposive sample of 128 Iraqi Christian refugees in Lebanon, observing the background characteristics of the group studied and examining whether they succeeded in forming their own community and social networks within the new environment, or they were obstructed by barriers that are shaped by the policies of asylum country's government.

The second part of this chapter discusses the course of actions and practices toward the situation of Christians in Iraq and host countries by interviewing Iraqi and Lebanese authoritative political and religious figures, in addition to UN officials.

Chapter four includes an in-depth evaluation and analysis of the results and data gathered in chapter three from field surveys and interviews. It also suggests a list of recommendations and action plans to address the plight of Iraq's Christian community.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main findings of the study and elaborates some limitations. It additionally suggests future research directions regarding the fate of Christian community in Iraq and abroad.

d. Definitions of Key Concepts and Terminologies

This part presents definitions of the most mentioned concepts as key theoretical frames of reference in the thesis. The concepts in question are Mesopotamia, Christianity, ethnicity, minority, sectarian violence, internally displaced person, refugee, community and media.

The word *Mesopotamia* means between the two rivers, more exactly between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Iraq means a country with deep roots.

Christianity is a "monotheistic religion whose adherents believe that Jesus of Nazareth is their savior and God the son, one person of the trinity consisting of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Christianity developed out of a sect of Judaism that believed Jesus was the messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. According to the Ancient Classical History Glossary, the main tenet of Christianity is that Jesus is fully God and fully man, has incarnated from the Virgin Mary, and was crucified and resurrected.

But a simple definition was given by the Foundation for Christian Studies, saying a "Christian is defined as one who believes in Jesus Christ."

According to UN (2010), *ethnicity* or ethnic group is "a population of human beings whose members identify with each other, on the basis of a real or a presumed common genealogy, related to cultural factors such as nationality, culture, ancestry, language and beliefs."

"Some of the bases upon which ethnic groups are identified are ethnic nationality, race, color, language, religion, customs of dress or eating, tribe or various combinations of these characteristics" (UN, 2010).

Many difficulties are present to identify a proper definition of the term *minority*, therefore, this thesis will adopt the description of the office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 1998) that states that "the most commonly used description of a minority in a

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given state can be summed up as a non-dominant group of individuals who share certain

national, ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which are different from those of the

majority population."

In addition to that, the term could be expanded to "some groups of individuals that may

find themselves in situations similar to those of minorities. These groups include migrant

workers, refugees, stateless persons and other non-nationals, who do not necessarily share certain

ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics common to persons belonging to minorities"

(OHCHR, 1998).

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *sectarian*

violence implies a "symmetrical confrontation between two or more non-state actors

representing different population groups." It occurs between different sects of one particular

mode of ideology or religion within a community.

The institute noted that patterns of sectarian violence were "evident in some of the

world's deadliest armed conflicts and conflict-prone zones", including Darfur in Sudan, Iraq and

Pakistan.

SIPRI (2008) mentioned that the overall security situation in Iraq remained uneven in

2007, adding that "the rise of militant power brokers, ranging from neighborhood security groups

to street gangs and smuggling networks, contributed to the further fragmentation of violence."

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) defines the *Internally Displaced*

Persons(IDPs) as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to

leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid

the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or

natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border."

The causes given for involuntary movements have in common that they "give no choice to people but to leave their homes and deprive them of the most essential protection mechanisms, such as community networks, access to services, livelihoods" (IDMC). However, local authorities should grant IDPs the same rights as the rest of the population.

UNHCR(2011) estimated the number of IDPs around the world to be 26.4 million at the end of 2011, confirming that Colombia, Iraq and South Sudan are top three countries with the largest IDP populations.

This thesis attaches high importance to the Iraqi Christian refugees in Lebanon; therefore, it is crucial to understand first the concept of *refugee*.

Malkki (1995, p. 114) suggests that "refugeeness entails a process of becoming". She explains that it is not an automatic result of the crossing of a national border, but a "gradual transformation".

The author notes that becoming a refugee is a "continuous" process that engages several phases after crossing the borders; starting with learning what testimony or story should be given at the UNHCR to present a successful refugee claim, and being aware of the host government policies as well as the international community criteria to be given a refugee status.

Kunz (1973, p. 46) in turn identifies a "push-pressure-pull" model that categorizes refugees into three different subgroups.

The first is "majority-identified refugees" who are "firm in their conviction that their opposition to the events is shared by the majority of their compatriots and identify themselves enthusiastically with the nation, though not with its government" (Kunz 1981, p. 42).

The second category is "self-alienated refugees" who "have no desire to identify themselves with the nation for varied individual reasons" (Kunz 1981, p. 43).

A third category is "events-alienated refugees," which is also the case of Christians, the main focus of this thesis. This category covers individuals who became refugees "either because of events immediately preceding the refugee situation," such as the 2010 church siege, or "past discrimination", such as a series of attacks based on sectarian aims, or "their original desire to be identified with the nation and their subsequent realization of their rejection from the nation as a whole", such as Christian minority rights as mentioned in the Iraqi Constitution, or "by a section of its citizens", which is the case of Islamist extremists (Kunz 1981, p. 43).

According to Shelley (2001), *community* is "something that should be relevant and useful to those who are members, and thus must be understood by the community itself as meaningful."

Community formation is the process "whereby a group of people, finding themselves thrown together by their circumstances but sharing no other common personal history, developed the bonds that tied them together," according to Hammond (2004, p. 11). The author explains that community formation follows certain conventions that reflect "the social structure familiar to the returnees, and the disruption that structure necessarily underwent as a result of the displacement".

Moreover, Hammond (2004, p. 15) notes that "community formation is generated through the daily exchanges of goods, favors, and knowledge." She adds that this process involves a "reexamination of the criteria" based on which refugees make decisions, take actions and form judgments. The author stresses the importance of the "sharing" concept to fully understand how communities are formed by refugees in asylum countries. She also says that

"this concept is not only restricted to material resources, but also engages knowledge, assistance, and support."

In the case of Christian Iraqi refugees to Lebanon, this thesis examines whether they share different commonalities; such as city of origin, reasons behind forced migration, and being subject to discrimination, attacks or threatening, in order to assess if these communalities helped bringing them together and led to the establishment of strong ties between them or a sense of community belonging.

There are many definitions given for the term *media*.

According to Grossberg (1998, p. 8), media are "technologies that can be described as the term of hardware of production, transmission, and reception," but adds that "although technology is obviously crucial to contemporary communication media, the latter cannot be understood simply as hardware, as if they existed independently of the concepts people have of them, the uses people make of them, and the social relations that produce them and that organized around them every day."

Another definition by Gauntlett (2002, p. 20), considers media as "cultural industry" and Riggins (1992, p. 3) explains how "all mass media could be analyzed from the perspective of what is revealed about ethnicity."

Media nowadays carry out a crucial role in defining the rights of minorities, and preserving or weakening their identity. With regard to the Iraqi context, the government could resort to different media tools to spread policies toward the Christian minority in an effective manner. It also can facilitate methods of communication, better understand the community's fears and demands in order to shorten the gap between them and other communities, and

encourage Christians to participate into the development process of the country and be more

integrated into society.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

a. Literature Review

The first part of this section will review studies on the costs of the 2003 war on the United States as well as Iraq, and how the latter that was considered the most advanced in the Middle East turned out into a state of destruction (Dawisha, 2009), through examining different aspects of dysfunction (e.g. on the political, economic and social levels).

The second part will assess studies on religious minorities, mainly Christians, who are subject to continuous harassments by militias and targets of suicide bombings, abuses or forced migration (Madhani, 2010; Grim and O'Keefe, 2008).

The third part will examine the work of well known authors who reviewed the conditions of the two million Internally Displaced Persons and other two million refugees abroad (Margesson, Bruno, and Sharp, 2009; Libal and Harding, 2007), specifically in Jordan, Syria, and Egypt.

This section will be concluded with some overall remarks on the existing literature and comments on how this study will contribute to the body of literature on Iraq's Christians and refugees.

i. Costs of the War

"Our mission is clear: to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people", declared the U.S. President George W Bush (Bush, 2003), announcing the beginning of the U.S.-led war on Iraq in March 2003.

According to Butler (2004), most Iraqis "despised" the 2003 invasion under the umbrella of the Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF–I). He added that they considered it as a "twin comparison" to the 1258 Mongol occupation[18] and destruction of Baghdad, "if not far worst".

After seven years, the U.S. President Barack Obama declared on August 31, 2010 the end of combat operations in Iraq and withdrawal of his troops by December 2011, but thousands of Americans remained in a so-called advisory position based on Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) of 2008[19] (Harvey, 2010).

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF, 2013), a "Strategic Framework Agreement[20]" has been governing the U.S.-Iraq bilateral relations since 2008.

The agreement includes employing approximately 16,000 Americans in the embassy in Baghdad, consulates in Erbil and Basra, two embassy branch offices in Mosul in Nineveh governorate and Kirkuk, as well as five offices of security cooperation, three police training centers and three air hubs. However, the State Department has planned to downsize the staffing by 25% by the end of 2013 because it is "larger than necessary."

The war efforts cost the U.S. trillion of tax dollars (National Priorities Project, 2010), and 4486 military deaths (Iraqi Coalition Casualty Count, 2010), besides "immoral acts" of

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[18] The Siege of Baghdad between January 29 and February 10, 1258, in which the Ilkhanate Mongol forces and allied troops captured the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, the city of Baghdad.

[19] The agreement called for the withdrawal of all US troops from Iraq by December 31, 2011.

[20] It emphasizes cooperation in specified areas such as political and diplomatic, defense and security, cultural, and law enforcement and judicial.

torture in Abu Ghraib prison[21] (Hersh, 2005), and phosphoric bombing of Iraqi cities[22] (Jamail, 2009).

Tripp (2007) said Iraq was considered a few centuries ago the world of learning center for science and philosophy; it witnessed the birth of civilization and humanity's first cities, codified laws, writings, states, and administrative cadre and system. Moreover, Marr (2011) noted that several decades ago, Iraq was considered the strongest and more advanced country in the Middle-East, and Alnasrawi (2002) mentioned that its massive oil wealth is considered the world's second largest reserve, but despite all that, the country has deteriorated into such a state of chaos, disorder, and destruction, as constructed by Dawisha (2009).

Iraq witnessed different aspects of dysfunction; starting with the destruction of the administrative cadre and state apparatus (Zunes, 2010), ramped corruption in the norms of everyday life (Global Research, 2010), as well as incompetence, inefficiency, waste, nepotism[23], tribalism, sectarianism and ineffectiveness (Lendman, 2010).

Despite its 41 billion U.S. dollars' annual revenue (Hafidh, 2010), oil revenues are systematically being robbed due to the lack of transparency and accountability (Chulov, 2010). Iraqis continue to suffer from poverty and unemployment (Abdul Rahman, 2010), lack of basic services, mainly electricity (Myers, 2010), problems of sanitation, deteriorated sewage system and lack of clean water (White, 2010).

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[21] The U.S. Department of Defense announced that military and governmental agencies personnel in Iraq committed between end of 2003 and beginning of 2004 violations of human rights in the form of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, including torture, rape, sodomy, and homicide of prisoners held in the Abu Ghraib prison, which is currently known as the Baghdad Central Prison.

[22] There have been several cases in which white phosphorus (WP) has been used or has been claimed to have been used as an anti-personnel weapon in Iraq by the Saddam Hussein regime and the United States military.

[23] Favoritism granted to relatives regardless of merit.

The education system nearly collapsed (Zehr, 2008; Hassan, 2005) and school buildings and infrastructures deteriorated (ABC, 2007; Agresto, 2007).

Furthermore, there was shortage in the number of hospitals, and in medical equipments and cadres, as a result of the escape of many doctors and medical professionals after being subject to kidnapping, suicide bombing and militia interferences (Flintoff, 2008).

Iraqi scientists and teachers were also targeted by ethnic and sectarian violence (BRussells Tribunal, 2011; Tripp, 2007, p. 288; Hoskins, 2005).

On the other hand, Iraqi police was also infiltrated by sectarian militias and continually engaged in kidnapping, murder, political intimidation and ransom (Parker, 2010; Sharp, 2005), despite the fact that Article 9 of the 2005 Constitution states that "the Iraqi Armed Forces and security services shall not be used as an instrument to oppress the Iraqi people."

Torture, summary executions, and illegal detention or imprisonments were ongoing (Dagher, 2010; Kukis, 2009).

But above all, the proliferation of sectarian violence was threatening the very fabric of complex and diverse society (Herspring, 2008), and still plaguing the country despite its decrease in volume (Al-Dulaimy, 2010; Allawi, 2008).

In fact, nine years after the war and one year after the U.S. troops' withdrawal, Sobel, Furia, and Barrett (2012) warned that terrorism, in forms of kidnapping, car bombing, and suicide bombings, especially during religious celebrations are "still part of life in Iraq".

Also, the USCIRF (2012) expressed concern about the targeting of religious sites and worshippers often with "impunity", and the "vandalizing of businesses viewed as un-Islamic".

The USCRIF 2013 report mentioned in turn that "diminished" minority communities, mainly living in disputed areas in northern Iraq, are still facing a pattern of "official discrimination, marginalization, and neglect."

ii. Christian Minority

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (UN, 1948). According to Smith (2005), "this basic premise highlights the conceptual universality of human rights." The author argues that this consequently "entails the prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of those rights as an integral part of the notion of universality".

Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN, 1966) requires state parties to "ensure equal enjoyment of human rights for all the people regardless of their "race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".

Kymlicka (1996, p. 9) states that "the majority of the world's nations are heterogeneous since they contain various degrees of cultural, ethnic and religious variations and almost every nation in the world has a national or ethnic minority within its borders."

However, minority rights have been historically marginalized within international human rights protection and conflict prevention, as argued by Baldwin, Chapman and Gray (2007, p. 2). Governments and the international community have been extremely slow, as well, to address violations of minority rights in a systematic way.

Regarding Iraq, which was facing years of sanctions and international isolation, it became difficult for the consecutive post-2003 governments to address the situation of minorities, knowing that this issue would contribute to further intercultural dialogue and cooperation among religious communities.

Gertz (2003) said that Saddam Hussein's regime, while "cruel and despotic", tolerated the church for many years, until 2002 when it started ratifying laws in favor of Islam, a step that was considered alarming to the Christian community.

After Hussein's government was deposed in 2003, Christians were expected to be celebrating along with the majority of their Shiites and Sunnis fellows, but to the contrary, Gertz (2003) said they feared an "Islamic takeover" of the government after the withdrawal of U.S. and British forces. He stated that a debate over Islam's relationship to a post-war government aroused; this explains one of the reasons behind the massive exodus of Christians from Iraq.

According to Lattimer (2006), the "exodus" of Christians in Iraq has gone largely unreported, despite the fact that both former U.S. President George Bush and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair have spoken about how their "own Christian beliefs" have shaped their policies in Iraq.

Christians, as all Iraqis from different religions, could not prevent being targeted by the wave of violence since the beginning of the war. Tripp (2007, p. 285) said that they were regarded as benefitting from the occupation, due to their work with the Americans as translators based on their knowledge of the English language (Woordewind, 2008).

Woordewind (2008) also highlighted that Christians were being associated with the U.S. troops because of their "western religious conviction," which led many Muslims to believe that the coalition, with the help of Iraq's Christians, was waging a "modern-day crusade" against Islam, according to Maher (2006).

Moreover, Bandow (2007) said that "if Iraqi Christians do not flee, they increasingly risk slaughter." He added, conversely, that the "good news is that most of them are being driven from their homes rather than massacred."

Woordewind (2008) explained that Iraqi minorities, especially those living in small villages in northern Mosul, are not protected by any armed force and lack assistance from international humanitarian organizations, which do not dare to enter an area declared as "unsafe". He also noted that Christians were threatened and that it was easy for extremists to target them since they lived in "discernable" areas.

According to Madhani (2010), the attacks that targeted Christians reflected how daily life remained tenuous for many of them in Iraq, where complex and long-lasting religious conflicts and sectarian violence among Muslim militants persisted despite several official statements claiming the improvement of security situation.

Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN, 1966) prohibits any propaganda for war, and advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred."

Islamist extremists succeeded in enhancing "hate speech" against Christians (Maher, 2006), especially that they owned liquor stores which were considered against Sharia[24].

Hate speech is "directed to a person or a group of persons who are considered by some to be inferior on the basis of some characteristic that is constitutive to their identity and generally innate, such as race and ethnicity," (Cortese, 2006). Gelber (2002) argues that hate speech is "intended to incite violence, discriminatory treatment, or the offence to human dignity of targeted persons."

The promotion of intercultural dialogue and ethnic diversity has failed in this regard, and intimidations against Christians were continuous during the following years, which urged American and British Christian agencies to commission missionaries to distribute humanitarian relief to Iraqi churches (Gertz, 2003).

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[24] The moral code and religious law of Islam.

Al-Haideri (2007) warned, in a report written for the Institute for War and Peace

Reporting (IWPR) that while millions of Iraqi citizens lived in fear, Christians were "especially

vulnerable" because of their religion.

Schemm (2009) also warned that the situation of Iraq's Christians held "practical

implications" for the future of the country. He explained that Christians historically made up a

large portion of the middle class, including key jobs as doctors, engineers, intellectuals and civil

servants.

Muir (2010) also stated that the "exodus of Christian emigrants" has continued despite

the general improvement in Iraq's security in the past three years.

A survey conducted by the Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research[25] in 2010 showed that

64% of Christians remaining in Iraq thought that things were going in the wrong direction, and

62% said security was getting worse.

The survey also revealed that 55% of the participants considered that conditions for

minorities were getting worse; with 72% saying they or someone in their family were physically

attacked, 77% having experienced exclusion from their job, 81% lacking government services

and 71% having experienced feeling uncomfortable outside their neighborhood.

On the other hand, the survey highlighted some improvements that might be considered

contradictory to the above, with 61% of Christians saying that Iraq was a good place to raise a

minority group family, 54% saying minority group had a good chance at prosperity compared

with other Iraqis, 56% considering Iraq today a real democracy and 74% saying making Iraq

more democratic would likely improve services and quality of life.

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[25] The Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a nation-wide survey for
the National Democratic Institute, in which 1,200 Iraqis of different
minority groups participated, 400 of whom were Christians from Baghdad, Basra
and Nineveh (November 7-14, 2010).

The survey also mentioned that only 26% of Christians supported the creation of autonomous region where minority groups can live and govern themselves. This finding undermined the recent calls for territorial claims among the Christian community.

The survey also showed that 73% supported the integration of more minorities into the army and police force, and a same percentage supported making it illegal to hire for government jobs based on religion, ethnicity or party membership, while 65% supported the introduction of mandatory quotas so the government had to hire a certain number of minorities at all levels. In addition, 55% supported allowing local government administration by minority group in the areas where they had noticeable presence.

Furthermore, on the tenth anniversary of the war on Iraq, the USCIRF recommended in its 2013 Annual Report to designate Iraq as a country of particular concern (CPC), a status that was already present since 2008. The report warned that attacks against minorities were threatening the country's already fragile stability and further exacerbating the poor religious freedom environment.

Religious minorities lacked militia or tribal structures to defend themselves against attacks, and have received inadequate official protection or justice, the report USCIRF explained. It also accused the Iraqi government of "continuing to tolerate systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations, including violent religiously-motivated attacks", despite mentioning some governmental efforts in "increasing security for religious sites and worshippers, providing a stronger voice in parliament for smallest minorities, and revising secondary school textbooks to portray minorities more positively".

Also, according to the U.S. Department of State (2012), some members of religious minority groups accused the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of sectarian discrimination

and harassment, including threats of physical harm, despite "significant decrease" of reporting cases of sectarian violence in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, compared to other areas.

On the other hand, Oleszczuk (2012) explained that the main problem did not remain in the policies adopted by the Iraqi "secular" government, but the fact that it was "too weak to keep extremist elements in check." She warned that while the government struggled to restore order in the country, many feared "protecting religious minorities has been moved to the back burner."

For the above reasons, half or more of the Christian community who lived in Iraq before the 2003 war was believed to have left the country (USCIRF, 2013). Also Roelle (2009, p. 44) said that many Christians left early in the U.S. war but "the exodus gained speed when Christians became targets in Iraq's ranging sectarian war."

iii. Departure from Iraq: Pre-U.S. Invasion

Before addressing the issue of refugees, it is crucial to note that the phenomenon of leaving Iraq was not only a consequence of the U.S.-led war in 2003, because the past three decades witnessed an increasing number of refugees settling throughout the world. This flow was generated by the Iran-Iraq War[26], the Iraqi Invasion to Kuwait[27], and the Persian Gulf War[28].

According to Galbraith (2003), the Gulf War led to the fleeing of between two and three million refugees from Iraq, as well as having a significant number of people who also left

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[26] Also known as the First Persian Gulf War (1980-1988), when Iraq invaded Iran by air and land simultaneously without formal warning. It cost both sides the death of half a million soldiers, as well as hundreds of civilians.

[27] Also known as the Iraq-Kuwait War (1990), when Saddam Hussein occupied Kuwait and announced that it was the 19th province of Iraq, with the apparent aim of acquiring its large oil reserves, canceling a large debt Iraq owed Kuwait, and expanding his country's power in the region.

[28] Also known as the Gulf War (1990-1991), when the U.S. and its western European NATO allies rushed troops to Saudi Arabia to deter a possible attack from Iraq, following the invasion of Kuwait.

Kuwait and other Gulf States. He added that the largest single group of refugees was made up of

Iraqi Kurds, when 450,000 escaped to Turkey and 1,400,000 to Iran.

Marfleet (2007, p. 408) suggested that the cumulative effect of pressures on the Iraqi

population was the key to understanding this mass movement of people, suggested. The author

did not limit his work to the living conditions of refugees in countries of asylum, as the majority

of researchers did, but rather he went further to offer a holistic approach to the reasons behind

this massive departure, which focused on historical factors including years of war[29] followed by

economic sanctions, individual persecutions and oppression under Saddam Hussein regime,

considerable internal displacement in addition to post-2003 conflicts.

According to Chatelard (2008), "the scope of migration from Iraq is ancient, durable and

global." The author pointed out in turn that the newest wave of forced migration was not in

reality a trend that was distinct or unique from what had been happening for years under Saddam

Hussein era and even before him.

She also considered that the UNHCR's declaration of the situation of Iraqi refugees in

Jordan and Syria to be a crisis aimed at diverting attention from the UN's lack of action pre-

2003, arguing that the international organization had not paid attention for years to the Iraqis that

had been displaced in the Middle East region, the U.S. and Europe.

Chatelard (2009) confirmed that the history of Iraqi forced migration to Jordan predated

the 2003 invasion. She argued that Jordan was considered the "western frontier" of Iraq due to

the strong ties between the two countries on different levels; mainly politically and

economically, as well of what so-called porous borders, which facilitated the infiltration of

refugees (Chatelard, 2009).

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[29] Iraq-Iran, Iraq-Kuwait and Persian Gulf wars.

iv.   Christians Flee Iraq

Tripp (2007, p. 309) said one in eight Iraqis has been uprooted following the 2003 war, considering it "the largest displacement" in the region since the 1948 Palestinian exodus[30]. Marfleet (2007, p. 408) explained in turn that the departure of entire communities could make it impossible for individual families to stay.

Despite of the assumption that the refugees were expected to return after the defeat of Saddam Hussein regime, the year 2005 witnessed a steady flow out of Iraq largely due to security vacuum and extreme violence characterized by car bombs, suicide bombers and gunmen, according to Libal and Harding (2007). The authors also warned against challenges compounded by the inability of host countries to confront the consequences of absorbing some two million refugees without formally recognizing them or seeking extensive international assistance.

The Human Rights Report (2011) warned that hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees "remain trapped in poverty and chronic uncertainty, and are unable to return home or to resettle elsewhere."

More specifically, USCIRF (2012) warned against the threatening of the "ancient communities' very existence" in Iraq due to the fleeing of large percentages of the smallest religious minorities to neighboring countries.

Gavlak (2011) mentioned in turn that "many fear that the Christian community was on the verge of extinction." He explained that "a large percentage of Iraq's ancient Christian population has fled the conflict-ridden country after being targeted by insurgents and Muslim militants since the 2003 war."

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[30] Approximately 711,000 to 725,000 Palestinians left, fled or were expelled from their homes during the 1947-1948 Civil War in Mandatory Palestine and the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (Smith, Andrews, McDowall, 1987).

1. Refugees in Jordan

Historically, Jordan has received "a small but steady influx" of Iraqi forced migrants, most notably during 1991, according to Chatelard (2002).

Chatelard (2002) criticized Jordanian policies toward Iraqi refugees in an article entitled "Jordan as a transit country semi-protectionist immigration policies and their effects on Iraqi forced migrants". She stated that the Jordanian government employed "semi-protectionist" immigration policies, allowing Iraqis to cross its borders as a first step, but depriving them later on from legal residency and status in order to push them to leave later on. Therefore, Jordan served as a transit country for Iraqis before the final destination.

Chatelard also argued that these governmental measures "might have led many Iraqis to resort to smuggling or trafficking[31] networks" (Chatelard 2002).

It is essential to note, hereby, that this is not only the case of the Jordanian government, since governments of host countries generally offer minimal assistance to refugees and, therefore this task is shouldered by UN commissions, NGOs and religious charities.

The Norwegian Institute for Labor and Social Research Fafo (2007) conducted a survey entitled "Iraqis in Jordan: Their Number and Characteristics". The results showed that there were between 450,000 to 500,000 Iraqis living in the country as of May 2007, although the UNHCR (2007) has estimated the number between 500,000 and 750,000.

Fafo survey stated that the majority of refugees coming from Baghdad lived in the capital Amman, and identified as Sunnis 68%, Shiites 17% and Christians 12%.

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[31] According to Heartland Alliance (2007, p. 19), Iraqi women and children were susceptible to trafficking, especially in both Jordan and Syria. It notes that women were subject to frequent trafficking for prostitution purposes, or were forced into this act once they arrive to asylum country. The phenomenon of trafficking has increased especially after 2003.

The survey also found that 35% of the refugees had chosen to be registered with UNHCR, noting that such registration was more common among Christians.

In an article entitled "Iraqi forced migrants in Jordan: conditions, religious networks, and the smuggling process," Chatelard's (2002) underscored the support provided by religious institutions to refugees. She emphasized the role of Church charities which were "solely" allowed to assist Iraqis. Nevertheless, she noted that aid was reportedly accessed by Christian refugees only.

Chatelard also pointed out that churches, Shiites "majlis" or prayer rooms, and a large number of NGOs were involved in providing refugees with "information and financial assistance for migration to the West through legal and illegal means, including smuggling."

Seven years after Chatelard's criticism of the Jordanian government, De Bel-Air (2009) also disapproved the latter's policy toward Iraqi refugees. He criticized the "segmented assimilation", according to which the government "discriminates between different socio-economic statuses and only grants rich people rights and privileges, despite its claims that these refugees are guests through the notion of pan-Arab nationalism."

The author went further to explain that this issue was embodied by the fact that Iraqis were spread out in different neighborhoods based on their classes and statuses (De Bel-Air, 2009).

Olwan (2009) in turn accused Jordan of allegedly failing to uphold its international obligations, since refugees without legal papers could be forced to return to Iraq anytime. He discussed a range of aspects regarding the legal status of Iraqis and called on the Jordanian government to put forward legal channels of migration, as well as to take concrete steps to pave

the way for integration within the community, especially since he considered that the majority

would not be able to return.

2. *Refugees in Syria*

According to BetBasoo (2007), 1.2 million Iraqi refugees fled to Syria, out of whom

70,000 to 500,000 are Assyrians.

Wilkes (2008) mentioned in a report published on the UNHCR website that the

international organization has registered around 220,000 Iraqi refugees in Syria, 15,000 of whom

are Christians from Nineveh province.

Taking the patterns of Iraqi refugees' settlement in Syria, Leenders (2008) and Niedhardt

(2008) offered contradictory descriptions and analyses. While Leenders' article "Iraqi refugees in

Syria: causing a spillover of the Iraqi conflict?" showed that Iraqis have segregated themselves

demographically based on sectarian lines, Niedhardt stated in his paper entitled "The integration

process of Iraqi refugees in Syria" that they were not fragmented and have chosen their residence

merely based on socio-economic factors.

Niedhardt (2008) went further, by using the term "Iraqization" as a symbol of unity

which he said was "obviously manifested in the neighborhoods of Damascus," whereas he

mentioned that clashes occurred between Iraqis and Syrians, and not among Iraqis of different

religious affiliations.

In addition to that, Leenders (2008) demonstrated that among the refugees were middle

class professionals who did not involve themselves in the sectarian conflict, but rather were

victims of it.

This thesis will consider adopting Leenders' approach, using sectarianism to define the

major factor upon which the community formation of Iraqi refugees in asylum countries was

based, and not Niedhardt's which constructed that networking and communities were formed according to similar classes, socio-economic statuses, professions, and families.

3. Refugees in Egypt

Unlike Jordan and Syria, Egypt does not have a long history of Iraqi forced migration to its soil. The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) in cooperation with the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) affiliated with the Egyptian government, estimated in a study published in 2008 that between 15,000 and 20,000 Iraqis live in Egypt.

CMRS and IDSC's survey (2008) mentioned that Iraqi refugees were concentrated primarily in the capital Cairo and its surrounding area; such as Six of October city, Nasr city, Rehab city, Haram, Maadi and Heliopolis, with a smaller number in Alexandria, as well as other governorates.

The survey showed that 92.4% of the refugees surveyed were from Baghdad, including 79.2% Sunni, 5.5% Shiite, 13.4% unspecified Muslim, and 1.8% Christian.

Roman (2009) accused the Egyptian government of banning the majority of NGOs from assisting Iraqi refugees, unlike other nationalities. She explains that refugees expressed facing employment limitations and great difficulty in acquiring legal permission to work.

Badawy (2009) seemed to be agreeing with Roman in her overview of Iraqi refugees' legal situation in Egypt. He disclosed that they experienced discrimination as opposed to other nationalities. This discrimination was clear especially when it comes to residency demand; they were able to obtain it only through investment visas or a student visa of a family member.

Consequently, the author added that a large number of refugees preferred to resort to registration with the UNCHR, despite the fact that this process could lead to some constraints on traveling.

4. Refugees' Demands

In her article entitled "Observations and recommendations on the resettlement expectations of Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria," Riller's (2009) stated that the expectations of refugees on both financial and social levels became higher once they crossed the borders of asylum country.

The author indicated that the majority of interviewed refugees stressed the importance of maintaining the future of their children as a primary feature in choosing resettlement. A large number denoted that they aim at residing in an Arab country near their homeland, if they had to choose an alternative to resettlement. Additionally, they called for being granted legal residency and the right to employment (Riller, 2009).

Riller explained that many refugees revealed that they were "unhappy" in their country of resettlement, mainly because of limited employment opportunities and poor living conditions. She went further by elucidating that refugees insisted on considering themselves in a transitional stage, if they were granted resettlement in an "undesirable country", and proceed to reach their chosen destination.

v.   UN Refugee Protection Space

In a 2009 study entitled "Surviving in the City: A Review of UNHCR's Operation for Iraqi refugees in Urban Areas of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria," UNHCR highlighted challenges in achieving the international refugee protection regime standards in Middle Eastern countries.

The study highlighted an obstructing point to the protection space in the above countries, which it described as "fragile". It explained that the international organization did not sign any official understanding or agreement with host countries to "secure durable solutions for refugees, devote more resources to community services and assistance, and income generating activities in order to allow refugees to be more self-reliant."

On the other hand, the study mentioned that the UNHCR has succeeded in introducing its novel approach to the urban situation of Iraqis such as using ATM cards to distribute salaries and text messages to deliver important information.

A second UNHCR study, also published in 2009, entitled "Realizing Protection Space for Iraqi Refugees: UNHCR in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon" cites used strategies to deal with governments which are not signatories of the 1951 Refugee Convention[32].

The study underlined that the countries mentioned above have allowed Iraqi to stay on their territories as "guests according to the pan-Arab nationalism pretenses", but at the same time, they have raised concerns toward the unresolved situation of Palestinian refugees, security challenges, as well as overburden refugee rights and services which they are incapable to ensure them for own populations, in the first place.

However, the UN organization stated in the study that it succeeded in expanding the "protection space" of Iraqi refugees in host countries, through directly supporting their governmental and nongovernmental institutions and sustaining a large-scale resettlement.

The study also drew attention to many difficulties leading to "involuntary return" of refugees and stressed the necessity of seeking more durable solutions.

vi.   Community and Social Network in Host Countries

This thesis aims at examining whether Iraqi refugees, particularly Christians, succeeded in establishing their own communities and social networks in host countries in order to save their shared identity.

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[32] The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. The 1967 Protocol removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention. (http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html)

Marx (1990, p. 197) explained how some refugees succeeded in quickly re-establishing their "full-fledged" networks, communities and livelihoods in their new environment, while on the other hand, others had more trouble after they have lost their relatives and livelihoods in flight.

Malkki (1995, p. 3) suggested that "it is possible to discern how the social, imaginative processes of constructing nationness and identity can come to be influenced by the local, everyday circumstances of life in exile, and how the spatial and social isolation of refugees can figure in these processes."

Grabska (2005, p. 10) also mentioned that "the common experience of being or becoming a refugee can foster a sense of community." He explained in his study on Sudanese refugees to Egypt that the latter "rely on family and community support networks by borrowing money to meet daily needs, and sharing food or childcare responsibilities."

Grabska (2006) noted, on the other hand, that there are several obstacles to community formation such as lack of rights and freedoms, as well as restrictions on the right to freedom of movement, education and employment.

Shelley (2001, p. 491) in turn attributed the reasons behind the failure of Vietnamese refugees in Milwaukee[33] in forming their own community to some policies adopted by the government, and the fact that the means responsible for the formation process may not be "culturally present." The author explained that having a common "enemy" or ethnic identity is not enough to form a community.

"Community must be viewed as a viable tool for survival and adaptation," stressed Shelley (2001). This point could be applicable when examining the case of Iraqi Christian refugees to Lebanon.

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[33] The largest city in the U.S. state of Wisconsin.

Studying refugee situations in Kenya and Somalia, Hyndman (1999) stated that they are

fragmented based on ethnic and religious lines. He explained that "most refugee groups are not a

homogeneous, unified community, but instead composed of several different subgroups each

allied by a shared interest or based on different shared characteristics."

Moreover, in her book entitled "A Quest for Family Protection: The Fragmented Social

Organization of Transnational Iraqi Migration", Chatelard (2008, p. 6) showed that Iraqi

refugees are fragmented based on their ethnicity, religious and political affiliations, in addition to

their socio-economic status, which is responsible for defining the level of access to certain

destinations.

Moreover, Chatelard (2008, p. 8) also observed strategies related to family and network

during migration. She noted that they make "sectarian or ethnic identities meaningful for

migrants and exiles, sometimes more than they were before leaving Iraq."

De Bel-Air (2009) in turn revealed that Iraqis lived alongside of other communities and

lacked integration in the Jordanian social fabric, which he said was "already fragmented". He

also stated that ties between refugees seemed to be "fragile" to an extent that they did not

succeed in establishing their own community.

In contrast, a survey conducted by The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies

(CMRS, 2008) found that Iraqi refugees in Egypt have defied the "expectations of carrying over

sectarian tension from Iraq," through succeeding in forging strong links and local networks, in

addition to transnational networks with Iraqis in different countries including their homeland.

The survey went moreover to affirm that refugees made a decision to move to Egypt

based on reviews of friends and family living there transmitted through social networks.

Didem (2007) highlighted in his article "A Faith That Binds: Iraqi Christian Women on the Domestic Service Ladder of Istanbul", the role religion plays in forging a social network in the host country. He explained that the church managed to ensure employment opportunities for Christian refugees in the Turkish city, mainly to women, and therefore, construct a local and transnational social space for them.

Nonetheless, Didem (2007) underlined that despite the fact that Iraqi women thrived to guarantee the assistance of religious networks, the process also bore obligations such as undergoing poor and exploitative working conditions.

Social networks and communities formed by refugees in asylum countries include family members, friends, colleagues, members of same religion or ethnicity, and common city of origin. These networks aim at assisting newcomers, through sharing with them the right information, advices and resources.

vii. Conclusion

In spite the 2003 war on Iraq that theoretically aimed at establishing a free and democratic country, it led to a series of negative repercussions mentioned above, on Iraq, the U.S., and many other countries as we have just observed.

Madany (2008) noted that after the "scant" attention to the persecution of Christians in the Arab world, and more specifically in Iraq, more people became aware of it in the 21st century due to the marvels and speed of world-wide communication.

Between 2006 and 2012, concerns toward the ongoing proliferation of sectarian violence and the threatening of religious minorities in Iraq, particularly the "diminishing" Christian community, were expressed by a number of authors, academics, military experts, and international organizations; such as Maher (2006), Al-Haideri, Bandow (2007), Woordewind

(2008), Roelle, Schemm (2009), Madhani, Muir (2010), Gavlak (2011), Oleszczuk, Sobel, Furia and Barrett (2012), USCIRF (2012, 2013).

Moreover, a 2010 Greenberg survey showed that 62% of Iraq's Christians believed that the situation in Iraq would get worse.

Baldwin, Chapman and Gray (2007) highlighted the "marginalization" of minority rights by governments and the international community. More specifically, the USCIRF (2013) and the U.S. Department of State (2012) criticized both, the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdish Region Government, for allowing sectarian discrimination and violence.

Authors are divided between an approach that argues that sectarianism is a prominent factor under which communities and networks in asylum countries are hindered, and a second approach debating that refugees activate their social networks based on socio-economic statuses.

Based on the above literature and all mentioned reasons that urged the displacement of thousands of Iraqi Christians internally and across borders to neighboring countries, this work attempts to fill a much-needed gap in the studies on Iraqi Christian who fled to Lebanon. There are many significant aspects to examine regarding this community, which has been underrepresented in academic research.

Reports led by journalists and local and international NGOs focused mainly on Jordan and Syria, which hosted the largest number of refugees, whereas Lebanon and other countries received less scholarly attention. There were also some researches and statistical overviews lacking accuracy due to the large number of refugees who fled the country illegally and did not register their names in asylum countries.

This thesis attempts to give a more detailed picture of the situation of Iraqi Christians in Lebanon. It will assess the challenges, obstacles and difficult circumstances that they are facing and how they are coping with their new environments.

The study stresses a particular importance to providing a solid context for understanding whether Iraqi Christian refugees succeeded in establishing their own communities and social networks in Lebanon in order to maintain their shared identity, as well as whether sectarianism is still considered a significant factor in dividing them or defining the interaction process, even outside their homeland.

This work will conclude whether this community is planning to return to Iraq, a matter that is correlated to the security situation there, or is seeking resettlement in Lebanon, or perceive their current residence as a transitional phase in quest of asylum in western countries such as Europe, the U.S., Canada or Australia.

Therefore, the study will focus on to which extent Christians are oriented toward going back to Iraq, because the orientation toward the homeland influences the community formation and integration processes.

For example, some refugees might decline making any investment in asylum country or forming their own community since they are strongly oriented toward their homeland and they plan to return.

Some others are also strongly oriented toward homeland, but are more pragmatic. They know that they may not be able to return in the short term, so they tend to form networks or political platforms with people who share the same interests. This step could serve as a collective strategy for survival.

b. Theoretical Orientation

i. The Provisions of Spiral of Silence Theory

The spiral of silence theory constructed by the German scholar and political scientist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in 1974 contributed significantly to the study of public opinion and minorities rights. This thesis explores the mentioned theory as a framework for analyzing the coverage of Iraq's Christian minority and the influence of silencing its views and thoughts.

The theory suggests that "minority opinions are silenced as a result of individuals' perceptions of public opinion" (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). The author cites five hypotheses that test the formation of public opinion. This process includes the threat of isolation, fear of isolation, quasi-statistical sense, willingness to speak out, and spiral of silence.

1. Threat of Isolation

Noelle-Neumann (1984) develops the above theory in her book entitled *"The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion-Our Social Skin"*, stating that the minority faces threat and fears to destroy the social order and structure, and therefore, isolation, as "one opinion gains the interest of the majority" or "violates the consensus."

Noelle-Neumann (1991, p. 258) explains the concept of consensus in the course of stressing that members of society must constantly ensure a "collective cohesion" based on a certain agreement on values and goals.

2. Fear of Isolation

Noelle-Neumann (1977) develops Tarde's idea suggested in 1969 that "to fear social isolation is to need to agree with other people." She states that the majority of society members fears being isolated and aims at being popular and respected.

In 1984, the author also suggests that the "social nature of human beings pushes them to fear separation and isolation from our fellows and to want to be respected and liked by them", (Noelle-Neumann, 1984, p.41).

Griffin (2009) also stresses that the fear of isolation within minority members, such as the case of Iraqi Christians, is the "centrifugal force" that escalates the spiral of silence. Glynn and McLeod (1984) suggest, in turn that, the "spiral model may be improved if fear of isolation were measured and used as a variable, rather than being an assumption."

As a result of being accused as a supporter of the U.S.-led coalition, the Christian community in Iraq feared being rejected by the Muslim dominant society. Therefore, the concept of "spiral of silence" was clearly embodied through the formation of Christian clans, who lived in specific areas or chose to flee to neighboring asylum countries. This issue facilitated somehow the process of integration and communication among all Iraqi Christians.

3. Quasi-Statistical Sense

Noelle-Neumann (1977) suggests that, as a result of fear of isolation, people become cautious and "constantly observe their environment very closely," in order to express themselves and perform based on prevalent views and modes of behavior.

Twenty years earlier, Cooley (1956) suggested that the behaviors and ideas of individuals are often affected by their perception of other people's attitudes and thoughts. This idea was developed by Sanders, Kaid, and Nimmo in 1984, suggesting that people's fear of becoming "social isolates" affects their views and actions.

Miller (2004, p. 278) described the quasi-statistical sense as an individual's "innate ability to estimate the public opinion." Also Scheufele and Moy (2000, p. 6) stress the importance of the perception of public opinion because people "attend to their environment and these perceptions potentially influence individual behavior and attitudes."

The Iraqi Christians were mainly observing their environment in order to define the tendency and orientation of the public opinion before taking any action. They adopted this policy in order to protect themselves and remain an essential fabric of a diverse society.

Noelle-Neumann (1993, p. 229) states that the perception of the climate opinion is achieved through "mass communication and interpersonal communications and observations" at a time.

Glynn, Hayes and Shanahan (1997) examine in-depth the key relationship between an individual's readiness to speak out and the majority's perceptions. They go further to explain, in two books published in 2005, how this process is related to the differences among individuals living in the same society. The authors suggest that some people tend "more than others" to use different signs and indications in assessing the climate of opinion, in order to decide whether to express themselves or not.

4. Willingness to Speak Out

Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1977, 1984, 1991, and 1993) studies the influence of the fear of isolation on individuals' willingness to speak out.

Nisbett and Kunda (1985, p. 297) suggest that the "mere knowledge of discrepancy" between an individual's opinions and public opinion could lead him or her to "steer away from controversial topics so as to avoid offending others." Also, Miller (2004, p. 278) states that a person who feels oneself within a minority group is less likely to "voice an opinion on a topic of morality for fear of reprisal or isolation" from the majority.

According to Brossard, Nesbitt, and Shanahan (2007), individuals have a tendency to go with the flow and agree with the majority's opinion even if they consider it "wrong." They only freely express their views when they perceive them to be "dominant or on the rise." The three authors suggest that an individual's reluctance to publically express oneself is influenced by the

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perception of others and demographic variables, warning that it would lead to several

implications at the social level.

Noelle-Neumann (1977) distinguishes between two kinds of behavior; the first when one

acts according to "definite and static" opinions, such as society's customs, to avoid becoming

isolated, and the second when attitudes are subject to change, as opinions are "in flux or

disputed."

5. Spiral Process

According to Scheufele and Moy (2000, p. 10), the interaction of the previous four

hypotheses leads to the "formation, change and reinforcement" of public opinion.

Noelle-Neumann states in her book *"Turbulences in the climate of opinion:*

Methodological applications of the spiral of silence theory" (1997, p. 44) that "the tendency of

the one to speak up and the other to be silent starts off a spiraling process which increasingly

establishes one opinion as the dominant one."

Moreover, Noelle-Neumann (1984) suggests that "as the opinion gains momentum by the

majority, the minority continues to be threatened and falls deeper into silence." This

phenomenon, she adds, "continues until the minority no longer speaks out against it, and the

opinion of the perceived majority ultimately becomes a social norm."

In many cases, Christians in Iraq were threatened and forced to remain silent in order to

protect themselves and families. They reached an extent where they were no longer convinced

that a change in their situation could take place. Therefore, a feeling of surrender became

dominant within the Christian community, which fell into a deeper silence.

The spiral of silence theory is supported by numerous experiments; such as how the

results of opinion polls influence the voter turnout in the German election in 1965 (Noelle-

Neumann, 1993), and how some people refrain from expressing their concerns toward any

physical harm for "fear of appearing naïve or foolish if their concerns proved to be unjustified" (Miller and Prentice, 1994).

Noelle- Neumann (1993) also referred to Asch conformity study[34] (1956) on how individuals selected a line that matched another in length just because the majority did, as well as Milgram study[35] (1974) on the selection of the longer of two acoustic tones.

This theory could also be applicable when examining the context of the Iraqi Christian minority, which for several years now, was scanning the Muslim dominant environment and decided to remain silent about its situation concerning the neglect of their rights. In order to preserve social conformity and reduce personal and societal isolation, Christians who decided to remain in Iraq, had to go with the flow and abide by the rules and norms of the Iraqi Muslim majority.

ii.   Spiral Model and Media

Given the coverage of the Christian community in the Iraqi mass media, and the controversy it has created among a Muslim-dominated society, this topic seems appropriate for investigation under Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence theory.

According to Miller (2004, p. 278), Noelle-Neumann describes the spiral of silence theory of political science and mass communication as a "dynamic process, in which predictions about public opinion become fact as mass media's coverage of the majority opinion becomes the status quo." He also warns against misperceptions of public opinion in the media.

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[34] Asch conducted and published a series of laboratory experiments that demonstrated the degree to which an individual's own opinions are influenced by those of a majority group (Asch, 1956).

[35] Milgram measured the willingness of study participants to obey an authority figure who instructed them to perform acts that conflicted with their personal conscience (Milgram, 1974).

Noelle-Neumann (1984) also highlights the effect of how media portray some events

based on the attitudes and perceptions of the public, as well as the role of media in urging

minority groups to remain silent by promoting "unwanted publicity". She also stresses that any

"scientific approach to the spiral of silence disregarding the media as a critical factor refutes the

theory whenever the tone of the media diverges greatly from public opinion" (Noelle-Neumann,

1993, p. 200).

Baudrillard (1983, p. 66) explores the role of media in silencing the voice of some

groups. He posits that "media, all media, information, all information, act in two directions:

outwardly they produce more of the social, inwardly they neutralize social relations and the

social itself."

Considering the media role in Iraq, it was responsible for reflecting the fabric of the

Muslim society and announcing it as the prevailing general public, so that other minorities, such

as Christians, did not dare to express their views before the majority. More specifically, in the

case of war coverage, Blidook (2008, p. 357) suggests that "public perceptions and preferences

are altered based on media framing of issues." According to Glynn and McLeod (1984, p. 44),

Noelle-Neumann cites ubiquity[36], cumulation[37], and consonance[38] as three common

characteristics in all mass media, that influence the individuals' perception of public opinion.

Gingras and Carrier (1996) argue that the public opinion could not exist without the

media. They add that "ideas, images and texts are the contemporary tools for the governance of

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[36] Media as a source of information (Glynn and McLeod 1985).

[37] Ongoing repetition of same messages (Glynn and McLeod 1985).

[38] Congruence of the values of media practitioners and the content of messages they communicate to the public, which are products of discursive practices (Glynn and McLeod 1985).

today's democratic societies," which the media are responsible for their transmission and, therefore, shaping the public opinion formation.

In democratic systems, the public is involved in the decision-making process. Therefore, individuals are in constant need for information, in order to be able to form their opinions. Here comes the role of media in communicating events and other people's views to the public. Soderlund, Hildebrandt, Romanow, and Wagenberg (2005, p. 31) describe information as the "oxygen of democracy", which they stress is "crucial to citizens who wish to provide rational input on issues that affect them."

There are different factors that influence the news content such as the pressure of government, power of media ownership, legitimacy of sources, fairness and balance of representation, and the used discourse. Considering the spiral of silence theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), people are influenced by the "dominant" opinions represented in the media, and by so doing, they suppress themselves.

Furthermore, Fürsich (2010, p. 117) states that "journalists tend to favor cultural proximity by preferring stories that are close to their own and their audiences' perceived cultural background."

Iraqi Christian parliamentarian Yunadim Kenna states that "the voice of Christians is often silenced" (Interview with author, March 13, 2013). He explains that the Iraqi media have taken a pro-Muslim position and underestimated the representation of the Christian community, despite all "announced" efforts to fulfill responsibilities in promoting minorities' rights.

Kenna also says that the Iraqi media have participated in framing the way other religions perceived the Christian community, and played a role in omitting the latter's perspectives and views, through the use of "various dominant discourses and classifications," such as the used

terms and the content of the broadcasting, print media and radios. This statement shows that the way in which the conditions of Christians are portrayed in the Iraqi media, promotes a downward spiral of the Christian minority's opinions.

Considering the above, this study emphasizes the crucial necessity of an objective, unbiased and democratic media that allow all Iraqi individuals to express themselves, without taking into consideration their religious, political affiliations, and socio-economic status.

iii. Theory Criticism

Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence theory generated a series of criticisms and commentaries, from the author herself as well as other academics. She mentioned that the theory could not be valid in all cases, and several limitation factors should be taken into accounts; such as when there is a misperception of the public opinion, the media play a role in misrepresenting this public opinion, looking-glass perception[39], or pluralistic-ignorance[40] (Noelle-Neumann, 1993).

Also Salwen, Lin, and Matera (1994, p. 284) warn that the perception of individuals of the climate opinion is not necessarily accurate.

According to Scheufele and Moy (2000), the spiral of silence theory could not be applicable in cross-cultural studies, in which different aspects might influence the willingness of individuals to express their views. The authors contend that studies conducted on the spiral of silence theory "have failed to take into account culture-specific variables that may mitigate the

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[39] A social psychological concept created by Charles Cooley in 1902 stating that a person's self grows out of society's interpersonal interactions and the perceptions of others (McIntyre, 2006).

[40] When people who form a majority of a certain opinion incorrectly believe they are in the minority and publically support another view because they tend to believe that the majority accepts it (Katz and Allport, 1931).

importance of public opinion perceptions as predictors of individual behavior or attitude" (Scheufele and Moy, 2000, p. 3).

A cross-cultural test of the theory done by Huang (2005) showed that citizens in the United States, whether they were a majority or minority, are more likely to speak out since they live in an "individualistic" society unlike the Taiwanese society which is more "collectivist."

Ross (2007) also suggests that an individual's willingness to speak out could also be correlated to culture and personal traits. He argues "not every culture holds freedom of speech in as high regard as the United States, and in some cultures, open expression of ideas is forbidden." The author also explains that "naturally, if one has a positive self-concept and lacks a sense of shame, that person will speak out regardless of how she or he perceives the climate of public opinion."

In addition, Moy, Domke and Stamm (2001) suggest that the fear of isolation to some individuals is stronger within their close family, group or environment than their big circle or society.

Miller (2004, p. 279) also states that the spiral of silence theory defines a "vocal minority" that is ready to speak out regardless of public opinion. This minority, he adds, is formed by elite and highly educated people who can make an influence, as well as other individuals who do not fear being rejected by society.

Accordingly, the very same "elite and educated" Christians are capable of putting a pressure on the Iraqi government and international community and persuade them to pay significant attention to the situation of the Christian community in Iraq and abroad.

Griffin (2009) goes further to explain that the theory divides the vocal minority between the "hardcore nonconformists" who have nothing to lose by expressing themselves for having

been rejected for their opinions in the past, and are willing to resist public pressure, and the "avant-garde" who are educated and intellectual people and reformers who voice new minority ideas.

Furthermore, Van Alstyne and Brynjolfsson (1996, p. 24) state that "internet users can seek out interactions with like-minded individuals who have similar values, and thus become less likely to trust important decisions to people whose values differ from their own."

In addition, Wallace (2001) states that human beings feel safer to express their views online as they are represented in an "anonymous setting where their actions are not attributed to them personally." He explains that the internet helps reducing the fear of isolation and repression by "social conventions and restraints."

Hence, Iraqi Christians could resort to the web in order to express their opinions and concerns, without necessarily revealing their true identity. This step would pave the way for the formation of an online group, which shares several similarities and objectives and might play a crucial role in pushing forward the cause of Iraq's Christians.

According to Williams (1980), "group hierarchies that develop in face-to-face interaction emerge less clearly in a mediated environment." Stromer-Galley (2002) mentions, in turn, that online-mediated discussions liberate individuals from "psychological barriers that keep them from engaging in a face-to-face deliberation." He adds that the lack of non-verbal communication and physical distance leads to a "lowered sense of social presence and a heightened sense of anonymity."

Dahlberg (2001) states that the "blindness of cyberspace to bodily identity allows people to interact as if they were equals," where the assessment of the content is not correlated to the social status of the person. Therefore, a minority group with like mindsets can be brought

together through the internet and freely engage in deliberations without fearing to be isolated, in contrast with the spiral of silence theory as suggested by Noelle-Neumann.

iv.   Conclusion

The German political scientist Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann's theory of spiral of silence not only describes how the opinions of a certain minority could be silenced, but also provides a significant clarification of how the mass media influence the audience's views and consequently, their perceptions and behaviors. This model will keep on generating discussions and criticisms among communication theorists and scholars, especially in political context dominated by media influence.

Considering the above representation of findings discussed in terms of the Iraq's Christians spiral of silence, it may seem essential for this minority to refute the spiraling process and forge peer-pressure groups to express its voice and concerns.

Iraqi institutions' efforts to foster a democratic system emphasize the necessity of ensuring the public and minorities' right to express their views, through an un-biased and socially responsible discourse in the media. The role of media in Iraq includes paving the way for national minorities such as Christians to communicate and share their opinions with their fellows, instead of silencing the portrayal of the conflict within society.

Thus, the discourses that are used in the media can serve a democratic role of informing and communicating events to the public, or hinder citizens' basic right to communicate vis-à-vis forming and expressing their opinions.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Results

It is crucial for this study to shed the light on the impact of migration and conditions of the Iraqi Christian community in Lebanon. The circumstances of refugees are a pressing concern that should be seriously addressed as soon as possible, especially within the developing crisis and continuous increase of violence in Iraq, which is delaying their return.

The method used is divided into two major sections. The first includes a structured survey questionnaire assessing the situation of Iraqi Christian refugees to Lebanon, while the second part consists of a series of interviews with Iraqi Christian religious leaders and Iraqi parliamentarians, as well as UN officials.

a. Survey: Purposive Sample of Iraqi Christian Refugees in Lebanon

The purpose of the survey questionnaire is to generate information about the refugee experience by interviewing some of relevant and interested Christian Iraqi refugees in the asylum country, Lebanon.

According to Patton (2002, p. 230), "qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases, selected purposefully." The author also argues that "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth," adding that these cases "are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling."

Also, Stake (2005, p. 451) states that purposeful sampling aims at "acknowledging opportunities for intensive study," which is the case of this work.

i. Questionnaire Design

The gathering of information process sought in this survey questionnaire consists of nine parts that include 40 questions. The first part aims at collecting demographic information about

participants. The second includes questions to determine the decision-making process of migration from Iraq to Lebanon. The third and forth parts measure the refugee status and cases of arrest or detention respectively.

The fifth part assesses daily livelihood of the Christian Iraqi community in Lebanon, while the sixth and seventh parts examine to which extent this group was able to forge a social network and form a community in the new environment. The eighth and ninth parts aim at evaluating refugees' relationship with their homeland and how this issue is correlated to their future plans, to be discussed in the last part.

ii.   Selection Process

In order to present a reasonable sample size of the Iraqi Christian refugee community in Lebanon, this study has used a purposive sample of 128 respondents, who were interviewed in April through July 2013.

All participants were recruited personally and interviewed face-to-face, during several site visits to different refugee camps located in Sid-Bauchrieh, Jdeideh, Fanar, Jal-el-Dib, and Dbayeh in Mount Lebanon. Some of the interviewees helped the author identify other potential participants, who in turn participated in the study.

The duration of each interview reached approximately 40 minutes. All interviews were all conducted in Arabic and all questions were translated orally from English, despite the fact that some of the respondents were English educated.

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and were assured that their identities will remain anonymous. I also stressed on the voluntary nature of the study and apologized in advance if any of the questions would remind some participants of unpleasant moments.

In order to generate an acceptable and trustworthy response-rate, the interviewees were notified that they could write their email address and phone number at the end of the survey in case they were interested in receiving a summary of the study's results.

Despite some minor challenges, survey was successful because all 128 participants were willing to contribute to the study, expressed their concerns, and communicated their struggles and expectations.

iii. Presentation of Results

1. Demographic Information

The study collected information on the demographic characteristics of each interviewed Iraqi Christian refugee. The variables included: sex, age, city of origin, date of arrival to Lebanon, marital status, number of children, educational background, current occupation, previous occupation in Iraq, current occupation of spouse, and monthly income.

The majority of the participants were males representing 82% of the sample, while females represented 18% (See Appendix IX, Figure 1). The respondents aged between 23 and 76 year-old, and those from the age group 25 to 45 were 74% of the respondents (See Appendix IX, Figure 2).

The survey polled 42 people from Baghdad (33% of respondents), 25 from Nineveh (19%), 19 from Erbil (15%), 17 from Mosul (13%), 14 from Basra (11%), and 11 from Kirkuk (9%) (See Appendix IX, Figure 3). The overwhelming majority of the participants fled to Lebanon after the 2003 invasion of Iraq with 97%, while only 3% arrived to Lebanon prior to 2003 (See Appendix IX, Figure 4).

Regarding the marital status of the respondents, 67% are married, 19% are widowed, seven percent are single, and another seven percent are divorced (See Appendix IX, Figure 5). Sixty four percent of the married, divorced or widowed participants have children between 10

and 18 year-old, 24% under nine year-old, and 12% over 19 year-old (See Appendix IX, Figure 6). On the educational level, 37% of the respondents went to college, 27% went to high school, 24% went to grade school, while 12% did not pursue their education (See Appendix IX, Figure 7).

The top five current occupations of male refugees are mechanics, constructors, electricians, technicians and agricultural workers, while back in their home country Iraq, the top five occupations were in the following fields: own business, education, health care, engineering and construction, and technical support.

On the other hand, the top five occupations for female interviewees in Lebanon are housekeeping, tailoring, cooking, factories and agricultural workers.

The majority of the participants are remunerated on a monthly basis as follows: Thirty six percent of them receive a salary ranging between 501 and 700 U.S. dollars, 31% between 701 and 900 U.S. dollars, 17% between 301 and 500 U.S. dollars, 13% between 901 and 1100 U.S. dollars, 1% less than 300 U.S. dollars, while the monthly salary of only 2% exceeds 1100 U.S. dollars (See Appendix IX, Figure 8).

2. Migration Decision-Making

In order to understand the motives behind the decision of interviewed refugees to leave their city of origin, this migration decision-making section was divided into three parts. Participants were first asked whether they had experienced or witnessed any violent incident prior to their departure from Iraq; 86% responded positively while the remaining 14% indicated that they haven't observed any violence (See Appendix IX, Figure 9).

When requested to specify the reason for fleeing Iraq, the answers were almost common. The top five motives are the following; threats and intimidations, violation of religious freedom, direct violent attack, unstable security situation, and lack or insufficient governmental protection.

Respondents were also asked to state why they have chosen Lebanon as an asylum country. The top five replies were; rare cases of legal prosecution, friendly environment for Christians, employment facilities, preferred transit country, and lack of governmental suppression.

3. Refugee Status

One of the variables this study has plans to examine is the refugee status, in order to shed the light on the current legal situation of concerned refugees. Participants were split down in the middle with 51% saying they have entered Lebanon illegally, and 49% saying the opposite (See Appendix IX, Figure 10).

As regards the application for refugee status, 91% of participants said that they have officially applied for this status, while the remaining nine percent said they have not yet (See Appendix IX, Figure 11). Fifty six percent of those who submitted their applications did so in person, while 44% were assisted by a mediator (See Appendix IX, Figure 12). These mediators were either a UNHCR officer (43%), a friend (28%), a family member (17%), or a government official (12%) (See Appendix IX, Figure 13).

When asked whether official papers issued in Iraq are accredited and recognized by the Lebanese government, a clear majority of 88% responded positively, and the remaining 12% said they were not (See Appendix IX, Figure 14).

4. Arrest or Detention

Despite the fact that almost half of the respondents entered Lebanese territories illegally, only 19% were arrested or detained, while the overall majority of 81% were not subjected to any legal prosecution (See Appendix IX, Figure 15).

5. *Daily Livelihood*

As mentioned previously, nearly all respondents are employed and gain a regular income. Therefore they are able to cover their daily expenses. Yet, they were asked if they receive assistance from the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees or other nongovernmental agencies. Sixty nine percent replied positively and 31% negatively (See Appendix IX, Figure 16). The results also showed that 75% of those assisted were receiving aid from the international organization, while the other 25% from different NGOs (See Appendix IX, Figure 17).

Regarding education, a consensus representing 100% of the participants said they or their children were allowed to enroll in public schools. None of them was enrolled in a private school, noting that the tuition of the latter is very expensive in Lebanon.

Health care is also crucial for daily livelihood, especially in the case of refugee communities. Eighty nine percent of the respondents confirmed receiving health coverage from Caritas Lebanon[41], while the remaining 11% said that they cover their medical expenses from their personal income, or through the assistance of a family member or a friend (See Appendix IX, Figure 18).

6. *Networking*

The networking section consists of seven questions reflecting how Christian Iraqi refugees live in their new surrounding in Lebanon. Interviewees were asked if they have been able to adapt with their new Lebanese environment. A clear majority of 82% answered positively, while 18% replied negatively (See Appendix IX, Figure 19).

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[41] Founded in 1972, Caritas Lebanon is the official socio-pastoral arm of the Church to assist both individuals and communities and to support charitable and social activities. It is a member of Caritas Internationalis, one of the largest humanitarian networks globally.

Only 13% of the respondents said they had Lebanese acquaintances or friends, while the overall majority said the opposite (See Appendix IX, Figure 20). Also when asked whether they had contact with other refugee communities, the majority (96%) of the answers was negative, while only 4% responded positively (See Appendix IX, Figure 21).

Respondents were asked whether they believe that refugees were influenced by the legal, social, and political context of the host country on a scale from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Participants had mixed views and the results were 27%, 21%, 16%, 14%, and 22% respectively (See Appendix IX, Figure 22).

Seventy six percent of the sample reported feeling safe in their Lebanese neighborhood, while the remaining 24% said the opposite (See Appendix IX, Figure 23). The top three reasons stated for lack of safety were the presence of other refugee communities, illegal status, and security concerns.

On whether free movement is a problem, 43% of the respondents replied negatively, while 57% said they found difficulty in moving (See Appendix IX, Figure 24). The most frequently cited reason was fear of getting caught since they are illegal residents.

A broad-spectrum question was asked at the end of this section on whether refugees were generally welcome in Lebanon, 31% said they strongly agree, 36% agreed, 17% had a neutral view, 14% disagreed, and 2% showed strong disagreement (See Appendix IX, Figure 25).

7. Community Formation

In order to assess whether Iraqi Christian refugees succeeded in forming their own community in the asylum country, the survey raised five questions. The first one addressed how refugees identified themselves in Lebanon. A high percentage, 79% of respondents, reported that they introduce themselves as belonging to an Iraqi church, compared to 19% who identify themselves as Iraqi citizens and only 2% as strictly Christians (See Appendix IX, Figure 26). The

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second question showed that the ultimate majority has family or friends living in Lebanon with 100%.

The above results corresponded with an overwhelming majority of 96%, saying that they strongly agree that communities formed by Iraqi refugees in Lebanon are based on sectarian, ethnic, or religious affiliation. On the other hand, two percent said they agreed to the statement and the remaining two percent felt strongly the opposite (See Appendix IX, Figure 27).

Respondents confirmed clearly with 73% that they do not communicate with Iraqi refugees from other religions (See Appendix IX, Figure 28), narrowing down the reasons to three; continuous sectarian conflict, fear of being attacked, and lack of spare time.

When asked whether they practice their faith in Lebanese churches, only 2% said no, while 98% responded positively (See Appendix IX, Figure 29).

8. *Relationship with Homeland*

The participants' overall relationship with their homeland was assessed through raising three questions. The absolute majority of respondents reported that they still have family members or friends in Iraq. Ninety two percent assisted them with remittances and 76% assisted them with migration papers as well.

In addition, refugees were rather cynical about security improving in their home country. 82% described the situation in Iraq as unsafe, 17% said that it was both safe and unsafe at the same time, while only 1% said they did not know.

Safe	0%
Unsafe	82%
Both	17%
I Don't Know	1%

Table 1: Security Situation in Iraq

9. Future Plans

In the last part of the survey questionnaire, participants were asked three questions and an open-ended space was given for them to write their comments. In the future, 78% of the interviewed Iraqi Christian refugees were optimistic, confirming they are willing to return to their country of origin, compared to the other 16% saying they are planning to settle in a third country, and 6% saying they are aiming at staying in Lebanon.

Return to Iraq	78%
Settle in a Third Country	16%
Settle in Lebanon	6%

Table 2: Refugees Future Plans

In addition, 73% of the respondents stated that they had never applied for a citizenship, while the remaining 27% said that they had.
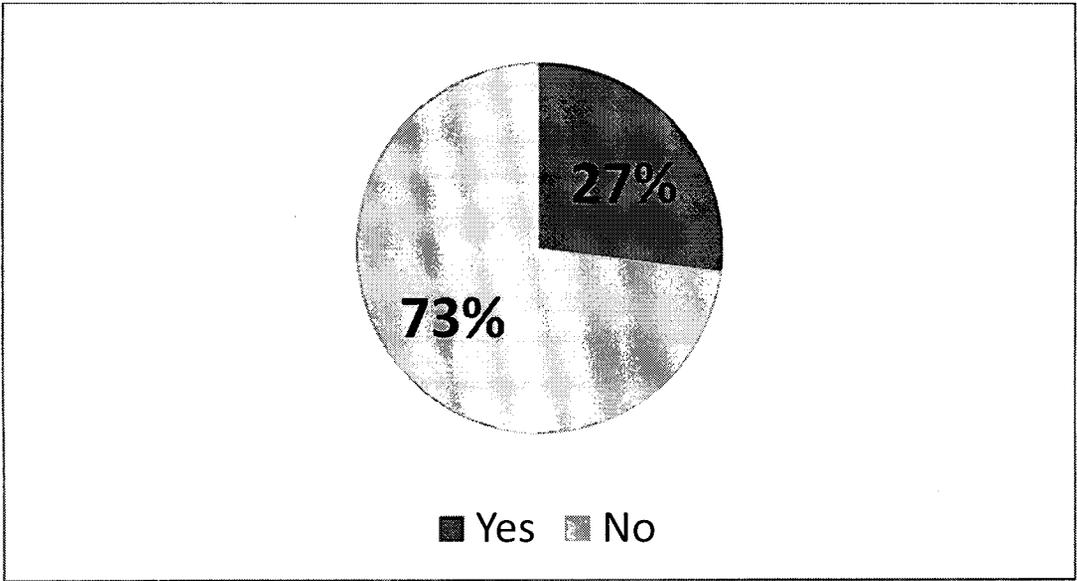
Table 3: Application for Citizenship

Among those who have applied; only 2% submitted their papers to be granted the

Lebanese citizenship, while the overwhelming majority of 98% said they wanted to leave to a

third country. The top preferred countries to them are; Canada, the United States, Sweden,

Australia and Norway.
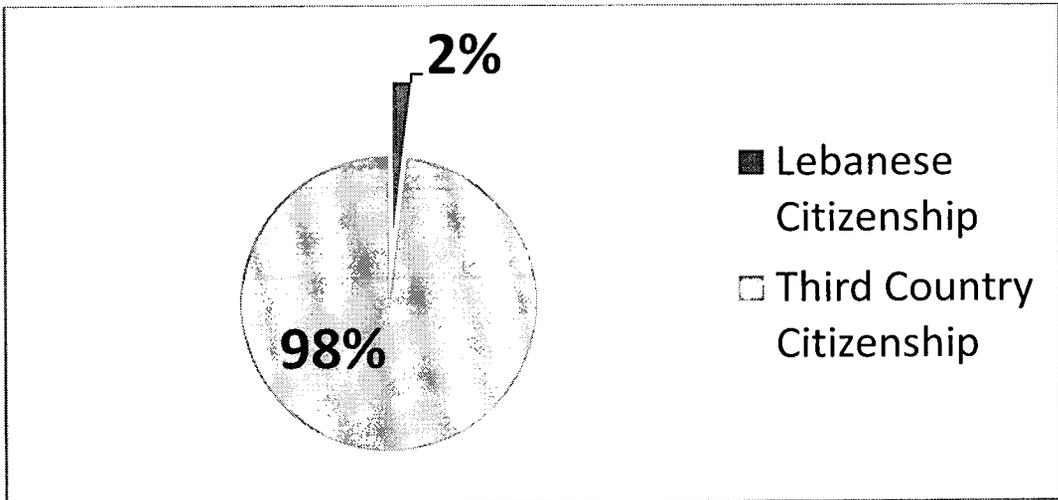
Table 4: Submission for Citizenship

When asked about specific issues such as citing three major needs of the Iraqi Christians that should be met in Lebanon, the survey found mixed responses, But, the top three were the following: more speed in paper work (residency, travel, visa, and citizenship), employment opportunities, and a better future for children (education and health care).

The comments of the respondents can be categorized into the following three topics: The refugees insisted that they would return to their homeland once the security situation improves, they expressed concerns about the future of their families, more specifically their children, and that they fear that the Lebanese government would abandon providing them with services, especially within the ongoing large flow of Syrian refugees to Lebanon and media attention given to them.

b. Interviews with Authoritative Figures

The interviews gathered information from key figures in relation to the topic of the study. They were conducted with the following Iraqi Christian religious leaders, Archbishop of the Chaldean Church in Iraq and the World, Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako (March 29, 2013), and Auxiliary Bishop of the Patriarchate of Babylon, Iraq, of the Chaldean Catholic Church, Mar Shlemon Warduni (March 28, 2013).

Also interviewed were Iraqi parliamentarians such as members of Christian Rafidain Bloc Yunadim Kenna and Imad Youkhana (March 13, 2013), and head of Culture and Media commission and member of State of Law alliance42 Ali Shlah (March 17, 2013). In Lebanon, interviews included Minister of Interior Marwan Charbel (April 12, 2013), Minister of Social Affairs Wael Abou Faour (April 16, 2013), and Public Information Officer for the UNHCR, Dana Sleiman (November 13, 2013)

In order to ensure accuracy and fairness, all interviews were recorded on a voice recorder and approached in a proper, consistent and systematic manner. Interviews with Iraqi figures were conducted over the phone, while interviews with Lebanese officials were carried out in person. At the beginning, interviewees were briefed about the purpose of the study and asked for their permission to use their responses.

A sample of interview questions is included in Appendix VIII. The questions for Iraqi parliamentarians and Christian religious leaders focused on the Christian representation in the Iraqi context, their follow-up with migrant Christians, specifically in Lebanon.

In contrast, the questions addressed to the Lebanese ministers mainly focused on the situation of Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, on Lebanese government's role, on exploring refugees'

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42 Headed by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

socio-economic status, legal and political rights, and to what extent Iraqi refugees have been affected by the recent flow of Syrian refugees to Lebanon.

All interviews had a unidirectional orientation since a set of systematic and focused questions was prepared in advance; nonetheless, it was necessary to adjust a few during the course of the interview to match the interviewee's responses or to follow-up on some important points raised in their answers.

i.   Christian Political Representation

In an interview conducted on March 13, 2013, Member of Parliament (MP) on Rafidain Bloc (Christian bloc), Yunadim Kenna, said that allocating only five parliamentarian seats for Christians in the Iraqi Council of Representatives "does not reflect" the content of constitutional documents.

He explained that "the constitution states that every 100,000 persons should be represented by one parliamentarian, and the law grants Christian expatriates the right to cast their votes during elections, therefore, Christians should be granted at least between 12 and 15 seats in the parliament," estimating the total of the Iraqi Christian population to be "1,500,000 persons." But on the other hand, Kenna highlighted the difficulty in "reaching all Iraqi Christians abroad", who he said, are distributed over 25 countries.

When asked about what measures is the Rafidain Bloc taking to preserve the rights of the Iraqi Christian community, Kenna stressed the importance of "implementing the amendment of the electoral role in a manner to fulfill Christians' rights."

Auxiliary Bishop of the Patriarchate of Babylon, Iraq, of the Chaldean Catholic Church, Mar Shlemon Warduni, in turn, called for "enhancing the representation of Christians in the parliament, as well as preserving their rights."

On the other hand, Archbishop of the Chaldean Church in Iraq and the World, Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako, considered granting five seats for Christians "a good representation," adding that "the problem does not remain in the number but how Christian parliamentarians cannot be independent because they announce their candidacy for the elections as part of the lists of political alliances, therefore, they should abide by the latter's agendas."

In addition, Rafidain Bloc MP Imad Youkhana seemed to agree with Patriarch Sako, stating that "increasing Christians' representation in the parliament might be helpful in terms of reassuring the Christian community in Iraq and abroad," but he stressed the importance of "respecting all Christian rights mentioned in the constitution and Iraqi laws."

He added that "Christians seek more representation in different governmental institutions and decision-making positions such as in the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) and the Federal Court."

State of Law alliance MP Ali Shlah stressed the necessity of "paying special attention to the Christian community in Iraq after being marginalized," vowing his "full support" for allocating more parliamentarian seats for Christians.

ii. Land Seizure

MP Kenna accused what he called "mafias" without specifying their identity, of "threatening and terrorizing Christians to push them to flee their houses or sell them at low prices," considering that this issue "aims at achieving a demographic modification and depriving Christians from their rights."

As for the reasons of decreasing security deployment near churches, Kenna explained that "Iraq has witnessed a general improvement on the security level, therefore, it is a normal step to reduce security and intelligence efforts," adding that "the government is still deploying a few security guards to protect all religious sites, including churches."

MP Youkhana also said that "some armed groups threaten Christians or attack their houses because of they covet their properties," warning at the same time that this issue is "as dangerous as killing."

He explained that "forcing Christians to leave their houses or sell them for cheap is a step toward the extinction of the Christian faith from Iraq."

iii.   Extinction Attempts

MP Shlah stated that "al-Qaeda terrorist group and supporters deal with Christians as their enemy," adding that "these groups aim at emptying Iraq from Christians in order to transform it into an Islamist country."

He underestimated these efforts, confirming that "these hopes turned out to be illusory." He also explained that "the 2010 attack on Our Lady of Salvation church in Baghdad was met with sympathy from all Iraqi fabrics, who no longer perceive Christians as a different but as an oppressed component."

Shlah also said that "the State of Law alliance insists that the presence of Christians in Iraq is crucial for the country's existence and diversity."

MP Youkhana also expressed "serious concerns toward the emigration of Christians from Iraq, especially within the ongoing political crisis," adding that "Christians became more afraid of being targeted after the 2010 attack on Our Lady of Salvation church in Baghdad, and the series of threats that followed."

He also accused "terrorists of implementing some foreign countries' agendas in Iraq, leading to the victimization of the Christian community."

Patriarch Sako, in contrast, said in response to whether Iraqi Christians are facing an "organized attack", that "there are few extremist Islamic movements who are announcing radical

slogans and stances against Christians, but the majority of Iraqi parties and people emphasize nowadays the importance of preventing the uprooting of Christians from Iraq."

iv.   Christian Territorial Claims

On the Christian territorial claims and calls for a "Nineveh Plain Province Solution", Kenna said that "no Christian political party has such demands based on religious or national background," describing those who are behind these suggestions as "the enemies of Christians and Iraqi society."

He went further to explain that "it is true that Christians advocated the creation of a self-administering and autonomous region in the Nineveh Plains, but they insisted on including all the Iraqi social fabric living in that area without any exception, such as Arabs, Yazidis, and Shabak."

He also said that "this project aims at achieving prosperity, and improvement on the administrative and development levels, after years of neglect, discrimination, and exclusion," explaining that the area "lacks governmental projects, investments, services, infrastructures, schools, universities, and hospitals."

MP Shlah, who is close to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, fully backed this proposal and went even further to support "granting the autonomous region necessary allowances from state budget."

v.   Iraqi Government Policy

Bishop Warduni described the policies of the international community and Iraqi government toward Christians as "prejudiced," calling on the government to "shoulder its responsibilities in ensuring equality among all religious communities and treating Christians as first-class citizens or at least as equal to their Muslim brethrens."

He added that "Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, Speaker Osama al-Nujaifi, and the majority of political parties call on Christians to return to their homeland and vow to restore their rights, despite their conviction that this step is difficult to be achieved within the current security situation," noting at the same time that "all Iraqis lack peace because terrorists, for the most part, do not differentiate between Christians and Muslims."

Bishop Warduni also stressed the importance of "achieving a real reconciliation between all parties without any personal or religious discrimination among religions."

MP Youkhana, in turn, called for resolving the political crisis in Iraq, which he said "is threatening minorities, more specifically Christians." He criticized the government for "simply arresting some of the perpetrators who targeted Christians without investigating the parties behind them and their objectives."

He also urged the international community, European countries, and the United States to "assist the Iraqi government in ensuring shelter, employment, education, and investment projects for internally displaced Christians and refugees, in order to encourage them to return to their areas of origin."

MP Shlah said that "Christians are victims of both former and current political regimes," explaining that "political parties have not yet reached a level where they consider Christians as an independent component."

On the other hand, he confirmed that "the current Iraqi government aims at paying exceptional attention to Christians in order to bring them back to Iraq, and reassure the remaining ones not to migrate," giving an example that "all Christian religious festivities are now being covered live on state televisions."

vi.   Iraqi Christian Refugees to Lebanon

Public Information Officer for UNHCR in Lebanon, Dana Sleiman, said 6158 Iraqis are currently registered with the refugee agency, adding that 40% of them are Christians.

Sleiman confirmed that "the attention is currently directed toward the 800,000 Syrian refugees registered with the UNHCR rather than toward Iraqis." Nevertheless in terms of the agency's policy, she said, "there is no change in the assistance programs provided for Iraqi refugees who continue to benefit from several programs with a budget of thirteen and a half million dollars." She also explained that "some cash assistance targets the most vulnerable families, along with ensuring education for Iraqi children and primary health care services."

The UN officer admitted that "the Syrian crisis has exacerbated the suffering of the Iraqi refugees in Lebanon because of the little attention they are getting, even in the media," but noted on the other hand, that "the funding for Iraqi refugees was limited even prior to the flow of Syrians, and has always been inhibited by shortfalls in terms of budget levels."

Lebanese Social Affairs Minister Wael Abou Faour stated that "Iraqi refugees, more specifically Christians, are facing a very difficult and dangerous situation in Lebanon," warning against "a big catastrophe, which is emptying the Middle East from Christians, if the current circumstances were to remain the same."

Also, Faour said that the government did not commission his ministry to "assist Iraqi refugees financially," confirming at the same time that "they are not receiving any kind of governmental support." He added that "the Lebanese state is now overloaded with trying to meet the needs of Syrian refugees."

On whether Iraqi Christians form their refugee communities based on sectarian affiliation, Faour said "it is their right to do so, due to the racism they are facing in their country as well as in Lebanon."

In addition, Minister of the Interior Marwan Charbel confirmed that his ministry is "making efforts to help refugees for humanitarian reasons, whether they came from Syria or Iraq, but the available budget is not keeping pace with the increasing needs of refugees." He admitted that "the government's attention and priority are now given to the Syrian refugees."

MP Youkhana, in turn, warned that "the Syrian crisis and the large flow of Syrian refugees are affecting the Iraqi Christian community in Lebanon," adding that "some of the Iraqi Christian refugees still lack basic needs such as food, healthcare, shelter, and education."

Regarding the legal aspect, the UN agency representative noted that Lebanon lacks a clear legal framework for refugee status. Moreover, minister Charbel noted that "the interior ministry is following-up on this issue, and working along the General Security to regulate the status of Iraqi refugees who have entered Lebanon illegally, provided they have not committed any illegal activity,"

Moreover, MP Youkhana called on the Iraqi state and foreign ministry to "shoulder their responsibility in following-up on the conditions of Iraqi migrants and providing them with tangible solutions before calling on them to return to Iraq." He also stressed the importance of "paying special attention to Christians who were victimized during the past years."

On the other hand, Patriarch Sako warned that "refugees face several challenges in asylum countries; such as financial problems, legal status, and family detachment especially in western countries, in addition to losing their identity and relation with their history, heritage, and their own people."

He admitted that "the security situation in Iraq is still facing some difficulties," but noted that "a noticeable progress was made, more specifically in the capital Baghdad."

Sako also stressed the importance of "the Christians' influence and participation in the process of change," adding "we are ready to assist them along with both the Central and Kurdish governments to provide them with proper shelter and employment."

In addition, Kenna did not give much credence to reports which claim that Europe and the United States still welcome Iraqi refugees, especially within the "economic crisis they are facing." He called on Iraqi refugees, more specifically those living in Beirut, Damascus, Amman, and Istanbul to "return to their homeland and take advantage of its rich resources," confirming his readiness to "assist them and help them regain their rights."

Bishop Wardouni expressed a more pessimistic approach, saying that "we need a divine power to help all these numbers of IDPs and refugees." He added that "they have the right to question who will assist them and grant their children a decent future."

He called on concerned countries to "assist Christians and grant them all their rights, as well as resolving all crises through dialogue and stopping wars in the Middle East."

MP Shlah agreed with Bishop Wardouni, saying that "the conditions of Iraqi Christians are very difficult, and only a few of them are considering coming back to their areas of origin." He also called on the Christian refugees to "return to their homeland and carry out a positive and influential role in solving the political crisis."

Chapter Four: Results Analysis and Recommendation Plan

a. Evaluation of Results

The analysis of the results gathered through conducting a field-survey questionnaire with 128 Iraqi Christians who took refuge in Lebanon and a series of interviews with concerned high-ranking officials is twofold. It aims at shedding the light on the conditions under which this community is living, and focuses on testing the combined influence of the security situation in Iraq and the refugees' current situation, in determining their future plans.

Based on the literature review and theoretical background, four research questions and two hypotheses will be addressed.

i. Answering Research Questions

The first research question addresses the conditions of the Iraqi Christian community in Lebanon, acknowledging the fact that studying the socio-economic status of these refugees cannot be set apart from their legal status.

The second research question seeks to examine whether Christian refugees succeeded in forming their own communities in the new environment, and to which extent this formation is based on sectarian and religious affiliation.

The third research question offers a more holistic analysis of the perception of Iraqi Christian refugees toward the current security situation in Iraq. The factors described in this question will determine to which extent Iraqi Christian migrants build their decision-making regarding returning to their homeland on the security situation there.

The fourth research question assesses the policies and course of actions adopted by the governments of Iraq and asylum countries toward the Christian refugee population. The intention

behind this question is to determine whether these governments are respecting and securing the rights of Iraqi Christians.

RQ 1: What are the conditions of Iraqi Christian refugees to Lebanon on the legal and socio-economic levels?

Starting with the demographic characteristics, the results of the first question clearly describe male gender specific prevalence among the participants in purposive sample, since only 18% females accepted to be part of this survey. The majority (74%) of respondents is between 25 and 45 years-old, which reflects the fact that young and middle age generations of Iraqi Christians left their homeland. This issue could raise alarming concerns, because the most productive generation is currently living outside the country.

The 2003 U.S.-led war forced a massive migration among all Iraqi fabric to neighboring or western countries. This problem also overshadowed the Christian community, who found itself trapped between different political and religious rivals. Baghdad is the city of origin of 33% of the interviewed refugees. This fact may show that the Iraqi capital is losing its Christian community, more specifically, as a result of a series of threats and intimidations.

The majority of the participants are married, and the percentage of those who have children under 19 reaches 88%. This finding also replicates the fact that the young Christian generation is growing-up away from Iraq.

Regarding respondents' educational background, none of them is illiterate, 88% have elementary and junior grade school levels or went to high school and college, whereas 12% did not pursue their education. This information proves what was mentioned in the first chapter regarding how Iraqi Christians attach an utmost importance to education and knowledge.

Referring to the employment status, the findings of the study revealed that very few governmental positions in Iraq are filled by Christians. This community used to face, in Iraq, discrimination in its search for employment, especially in the military service and governmental institutions. While in Lebanon, the law imposes restrictions on the work of refugees, therefore, many of them find themselves cornered between either working illegally without a permit, or facing even harsher living conditions.

Furthermore, participants' responses to questions number 8, 9, and 10 allow us to make a direct comparison between their previous occupations back in Iraq and the current ones in Lebanon. Present findings reveal that none of them succeeded in establishing their own business in Lebanon. Refugees witnessed a complete degradation in terms of occupation; Most of the males who used to work in the education, health care, engineering and construction, and technical support sectors, are now working as mechanics, constructors, electricians, technicians, and agricultural workers. Also in order to support their husbands and families, female refugees are working in housekeeping, tailoring, cooking, factories, and agriculture fields, despite the fact that the majority of them used to be unemployed in their homeland.

As per the monthly income, the majority (84%) of respondents' salaries range between 301 and 900 U.S. dollars. These numbers are considerably good compared to the minimum wage in Lebanon, 500 U.S. dollars. But the difficulty in this regard emerges from the fact that all their savings and properties in Iraq are running out.

The gathered figures offer clear evidence that a high majority (86%) of the Iraqi refugees investigated in this study has experienced or witnessed violence prior to their departure from Iraq. More specifically, the participants reported that the incidents included personal attacks,

threats and intimidations, loss of family members or friends, kidnapping, violation of religious freedom, sexual abuse, and forced separation from family.

Moving to the top five motives behind Christian emigration from Iraq listed in chapter three: threats and intimidations, violation of religious freedom, direct violent attack, unstable security situation, and lack or insufficient governmental protection; they all fall under the same category "security". This concern will be raised again in the answering process of RQ 3 and testing of hypotheses.

Not surprisingly, the above incidents along with the unstable security situation led to massive flow of Christians from Iraq.

On the other hand, this study has examined the reasons for choosing Lebanon as asylum destination. Respondents stated that rare cases of legal prosecution of refugees were registered in Lebanon, whether they were Iraqis or citizens of any other country. They also listed four other main motives: friendly environment for Christians, employment possibilities, preferred transit country, and lack of Lebanese government's suppression. These given reasons prove that Lebanon is considered one of the top destinations for Iraqi emigrants, apart from whether they regard it as a lasting refuge, or a transit country before resettling in a western country or returning to Iraq.

On the refugee status, the results showed that half of the participants have crossed the Lebanese territories illegally. Furthermore, many respondents reported that the majority of refugees are illegal residents in Lebanon and face difficult conditions, due to the country's regulations. The Citizenship Law for example, similarly to universal regulations, states that "refugees who enter Lebanon without authorization or overstay their visas are at risk of arrest, detention, and deportation."

Yet, given these two conditions in Lebanon, only 19% of the participants were detained or arrested upon their arrival, which verifies previous statements regarding the tolerance of the Lebanese government and institutions toward refugees.

A high percentage of refugee status application, 91%, shows that participants are willing to legalize their status in Lebanon. Though 56% applied in person, the remaining 44% were assisted by a UNHCR or a governmental employee, a family member, or a friend to submit their applications.

The Lebanese government's lenience toward refugees is also shown in the recognition of official papers issued in Iraq, noting that many of the participants reported that they had to flee their homes without having the time to carry with them their identity cards and official papers. Consequently, it is crucial for the refugee status to be legitimized in the host country in order to prevent vulnerability and further hardships.

In spite of the fact that all respondents are employed, some of them are being exploited by their Lebanese employers due to their illegal work permits. Consequently, they were not able to cover their daily expenses and sought assistance from the UNHCR and other nongovernmental organizations.

Regarding education, although all refugee children are enrolled in public schools, they are encountering significant difficulties in the integration process. None of them was reported enrolled in private schools due to expensive tuition, which is similar to the case of some Lebanese children. This finding shows that Iraqi Christian parents prioritize schooling for their children despite all constant challenges and difficulties they are facing.

More findings reveal that Caritas Lebanon assists 89% of the respondents to cover their medical expenses.

The most common concerns referred to by the subjects of the study include the necessity of legalizing their status through achieving a faster process in the bureaucratic work, lack of employment opportunities, and the future of their children, prioritizing education and health care.

On the official level, all interviewees warned that the Iraqi Christian emigrants are facing difficult circumstances. Forty percent of the 6158 Iraqi refugees registered with the UNHCR are Christians and all those living in Lebanon lack government assistance, as stated by Lebanese Social Affairs Minister Wael Abou Faour and Minister of Interior Marwan Charbel, who attributed the reasons to the immense flow of Syrian refugees since 2010.

Both ministers explained that the Lebanese state is undergoing a financial hardship, therefore, it is unable to meet the needs of Iraqi refugees. Nevertheless, Interior Minister confirmed that the general security is attempting to regulate the status of refugees, a step to be considered aiming at reducing the burden imposed by the refugees on the host country.

Iraqi MP on Rafidain Bloc Imad Youkhana also warned against the impact of the Lebanese government preoccupation with the Syrian refugees, in worsening the situation of the Iraqi community there, especially since some of its members still lack basic needs (such as food, shelter, etc.) and rights.

MP Youkhana called, along with Patriarch Sako, Bishop Warduni, MPs Ali Shlah and Yunadim Kenna, on the Christian Iraqi refugees to return to their cities of origin and participate in the new transitional phase in Iraq. This call reflects the perception toward Iraq's Christians, in terms of their ability to make a difference within the political and socio-economic contexts, and emphasizes their crucial role and presence to build a new, free, and democratic country.

In addition, they all admitted that the current security situation in the country is not encouraging, but vowed to cooperate with the Iraqi government and international organizations

in order to address returnees and IDPs' fundamental rights, including housing, health care, education, and employment. In this regard, they appealed to the Iraqi government, United Nations, and donor countries to contribute to the assistance of Iraqi Christians.

The findings of the first five parts of the survey questionnaire give a clear description of the demographic profile of members of this community in Lebanon, as well as several common problems and difficulties they are facing. Also, the responses to the questions addressed to officials in the second part of chapter three on the Christian political representation, seizure of Christian lands, extinction attempts by extremists groups, territorial claims, government policies, and conditions of Iraqi refugees, offer a comprehensive explanation of the situation of the Iraqi Christian community.

Accordingly, it can be concluded in this analysis that despite the fact that Christian Iraqi refugees live in a considerably safer environment, their post-migration legal and socio-economic conditions remain unsatisfactory.

RQ 2: How are refugees forming their own communities? Are ethnic and sectarian lines a basic to this formation?

Lebanese Social Affairs Minister, Wael Abou Faour, confirmed that the Iraqi Christians who sought refuge in Lebanon form their communities based on sectarian affiliation.

This statement was not surprising given the findings of the sixth and seventh parts of the survey questionnaire on networking and community formation.

The majority of the respondents reported that they were able to adapt to and feel safe in their new environment, given the fact that refugees are generally welcome in Lebanon. When asked about the ability to move freely, many noted that they usually do not cross outside their

residence areas and pay great attention not to get involved in problems, in order to stay safe and avoid getting arrested for their illegal residency.

Those who reported feeling unsafe in Lebanon replicate the previous findings, which state that illegal status and security concerns are a top priority for refugees.

In addition, the statement on whether refugees are influenced by the legal, social and political contexts of the host country was perhaps the sole issue that generated significant differences in the responses. This issue might have two explanations. The first is that participants have not clearly understood the statement, or second, they could have gone through different experiences in Lebanon which was reflected in their answers.

Furthermore, it has been remarked that the presence of family and friendship support is significant in examining the community formation process of the Iraqi Christian refugees in Lebanon. The absence of this emotional and social support may lead to isolation and a number of problems associated with the refugee psychological experience. The findings showed that family unity is paramount.

Despite the fact that all respondents have family members and friends in Lebanon, the majority stated, on the other hand, that they did not succeed in establishing connections neither with Lebanese friends or acquaintances, nor with other refugee communities, including Muslim Iraqis. One of the reasons is due to their fear of the transmission of sectarian conflicts from Iraq. They also strongly admitted that the formation of Iraqi refugee communities is strictly based on sectarian, ethnic, and religious affiliation.

Those two findings might explain the non-surprising result regarding the strong attachment of the Christian refugee community in Lebanon to its Christian faith and national origin at a time, through how the majority identify themselves as belonging to an Iraqi church.

Respondents also expressed gratitude and pride for being members of this particular faith and culture.

All previous findings could lead to a conclusion that Iraqi Christians in Lebanon aim at establishing a high structure of collective solidarity and unity, by keeping different features of their faith and heritage. They made a choice to behave properly within their new environment without integrating into other cultures and social fabrics.

The importance of maintaining the Iraqi Christian culture and perpetuating it to future generations was stressed by the majority of respondents. Yet, they were uncertain about how this step could be achieved within the ongoing difficulties and challenges.

RQ 3: To which extent Christians in Iraq are facing political underrepresentation and violation of their fundamental rights? And how is this violation correlated with the territorial claim?

MPs Yunadim Kenna and Ali Shlah called, along with Bishop Warduni, for respecting Christians' rights mentioned in the constitution, as well as enhancing their representation in the parliament, and in governmental and military institutions. This step would be considered as a reassurance for the Christian community's fate in Iraq.

In contrast, MP Imad Youkhana and Patriarch Sako considered that the problem remains in the political independence of Christian parliamentarians and not in their number. In fact, all of them make part of a political alliance.

Accordingly, enhancing the political representation of Christians in Iraq will definitely pave the way for offering this community an official platform to further express its demands and needs. Once implemented, this positive progress will lead to a significant recognition and

inclusion of Christians in the decision-making process of the Iraqi political scene. But also, it is

of a great importance to grant Christians independent seats, based on a political quota.

Concerning Christian properties, the findings of the study showed that a large number of

Christian families were forced to sell their houses and lands for an unfairly low price, as stated

by MP Yunadim Kenna (Interview with author, March 13, 2013). Consequently, they became

impoverished and had to rely on the assistance of their family members and acquaintances living

abroad.

In addition, many pieces of territories were exploited or built upon without the

permission of their legal owners, who were not in most cases even compensated for the loss of

their property. Christians attempted through different formal and legal means to retrieve their

lands, but these efforts were met with neglect by the central and Kurdish governments.

The phenomenon of land seizure that targeted the Christian community for years was

regarded as an attempt to change the demography of Iraq, deprive Christians of their

fundamental rights, and in extreme cases emptying the country from Christians.

MP Youkhana expressed deep concerns toward the continuous targeting of Christians in

Iraq. He stated that Christians became more frightened after the 2010 blast of Our Lady of

Salvation church in Baghdad. These statements are considered conventional once announced by

a Christian parliamentarian, but for the same statements to come from a Muslim MP such as

Shlah, who is close to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, they definitely carry a heavier weight.

Shlah confirmed that Christians in Iraq were facing extinction attempts by some Islamist

extremist groups, who perceived them as enemies and a factor of destabilization in an Islamic

country. He also emphasized the importance of the Christian presence in Iraq, in order to

preserve the country's culture and diversity.

All these violations of Christians' wellbeing, flagrant transgressions against their fundamental human rights, and illegal seizure of their properties can be put in the context of the attempts of extremists to uproot Christians from Iraq. But as stated by Patriarch Sako, the Islamist movements who are behind these aggressions do not represent the whole Iraqi fabric.

Moving to the proposal suggesting Nineveh Plain as a province which would grant citizens the privilege of self-government, it is crucial to note that this area lacked public services, health and educational infrastructure, as well as development and reconstruction projects for years. MP Kenna stressed that while territorial claims are supported by a large number of Christians, many others reject them completely.

Supporters see in this proposal a solution to the situation of Iraqi Christians, since it will contribute to the return of emigrants and IDPs, establishment of development projects, increase of employment, reduction of poverty, enhancement of democracy and political representation, strengthening of collective identity, and promotion of the Christian culture.

In addition to that, supporters stress the necessity of understanding well their proposal. They insist on explaining that this solution does seek a Christian state within Iraq, but also involves other minority groups, such as Arabs, Yazidis and Shabak, as stated by MP Kenna.

In other words, supporters of such a proposal believe that it will entitle Christians to achieve autonomy and social justice, freely express their political will, and improve their socio-economic and cultural development.

A surprising stance in this regard was also announced by MP Shlah who said, expressing his personal conviction and not the official position of the State of Law alliance, that this autonomous region should also be granted allowances from the national budget.

On the other hand, opponents of this solution claim that this step will further isolate the Christian community from the Iraqi fabric after acquiring a wave of supportive positions due to the attack on Our Lady of Salvation church. They add that such a proposal will also increase hate speech against Christians, delay reconciliation between warring groups, and fuel sectarian strife.

RQ 4: What is the course of actions and practices toward the situation of the Christian population in Iraq and host countries?

Despite the fact that the Iraqi government has pledged to protect the rights of religious minorities and their places of worship, more specifically Christians, the unstable security situation and the expansion of religious radicalism and extremism make such promises difficult to enforce on the ground.

In addition, the Iraqi government is undergoing financial deficiency in spite of Iraq's rich oil resources. The annual budget is not sufficient to implement investment projects in different sectors, and to meet the basic needs and fundamental rights of citizens, therefore, it would be irrational to expect it to manage a system for minorities.

Christians are becoming gradually more deprived of their political and socio-economic rights. In order to avoid discrimination and injustice, they should be granted the platform that would help them to maintain their culture and faith.

Bishop Warduni accused the Iraqi government and the international community of discrimination against the Iraqi Christian community, while MP Youkhana criticized the Iraqi judiciary for adopting a sympathetic approach toward those responsible for the attacks on churches and Christian facilities.

Moreover, the official religion in the state of Iraq is Islam; therefore, all official institutions and media channels promote the values, traditions, and practices of the religion of the

state. But a remarkable progress was noticed during the past few years, with the new policy of official television channels and radio stations. After carrying the role of exclusively promoting the state's interests, they started broadcasting live coverage of Christian religious festivities, a step that is regarded as a serious and positive improvement.

However in order to confront the widespread prejudice against Christians, more space is needed to cover special programs tackling issues related to their current conditions, as well as their educational, cultural, social, economic, and political interests.

Despite the fact that the course of actions of the Iraqi government toward religious minorities, more specifically Christians, has witnessed a slight improvement, the situation remains unsatisfactory due to the ongoing violence against Christians. Serious procedures should be taken to alleviate their living conditions.

The government should achieve real reconciliation amongst all rival parties, enhance stability, promote equal opportunities and access to political, governmental and military positions, economic institutions, education, health care, and civil rights among all citizens disregarding their religion, pay attention to the Christian community which was marginalized for years, prosecute those behind the attacks on churches and other Christian institutions, and cooperate with the United Nations, United States, and European Union to ensure the basic rights of refugees and IDPs.

ii. Testing Hypotheses

The first hypothesis proposed that the refugee community of Iraqi Christians living in Lebanon is forecasting a resettlement in Lebanon or a third western country, while the second hypothesis posited the opposite, that this community is persistent to return to homeland.

For addressing this issue, participants were first asked whether they still have family members or friends in Iraq. While all of them responded positively, 92% reported that they assist

them with remittances and 76% said they try to provide them with migration papers. Predictably, this finding shows that the majority of Christians remaining in Iraq, and who have relatives and acquaintances in Lebanon, are planning to emigrate too.

Further, the previous result could be due to that 82% of respondents described the current security situation in Iraq as unsafe.

The relationship with homeland section aimed at testing refugees' sense of identity and belonging. Results indicated that, despite all challenges, they succeeded in maintaining their bond and strong connection with their land, family members, and friends in Iraq.

In the last part of the questionnaire related to refugees' future plans, significant results showed that a clear majority, 78% of the respondents, are willing to return to their cities of origin, and that another majority of 73% did not apply for a citizenship, whether in Lebanon or any other western country.

The findings on those who consider their current situation as a transit period while seeking to be granted a visa permit to migrate to the United States, Canada, Australia or any other western country represent only 16% of the sample. It is worth noting that usually the process of arranging immigration paperwork needs at least two years to take place, and eventually their application may be rejected.

The above findings may seem contradictory but the possible explanations for the contrast could be related to the perception of the Iraqi Christian refugee community toward the security situation in Iraq.

In conclusion, the first hypothesis was not supported because only few Christians in this survey aim at resettling outside Iraq on the long term. On the other hand, the results support the

second hypothesis that Christians are willing to return to their homeland, but not on the short term. They need to make sure first that the security situation got stabilized.

This study was also able to generate informal discussions with the participants in the survey. They unsurprisingly expressed deep concerns toward the security situation, ongoing threats, intimidations, discrimination, and constraints on freedom of expression against Christians in Iraq, despite all announced efforts to preserve the rights of this community. They consider that targeting Christian religious sites and kidnapping for ransom aim at oppressing the practice of the Christian faith and, consequently, compel this minority group out of Iraq.

In a country weighed down by political conflicts, instability, corruption and external interference, this study found that Christian migrants have relatively high expectations about their future. They are extremely persistent to return to Iraq on the long term and raise their children in the land of their ancestors.

b. Recommendations to Address the Plight of Iraq's Christians

This study aims at offering relevant recommendations to address the plight of the Christian community in Iraq and its members who sought asylum in neighboring and western countries. This plan could also be applied ideally to all societies. This work also seeks to achieve a better understanding of how the Iraqi and host countries' governments, as well as the international community can better assist this minority group, who is an original inhabitant of Iraq.

i. Government Action Plan

The Iraqi government's step in putting forward promises for the Christian minority would be regarded as incomplete, without being supported by a genuine political determination and action plan to respect its members' rights, improve their conditions, and preserve their existence in Iraq.

These recommendations identify several priority areas that require pressing plans, including: resolution of political conflicts, reinforcement of security, securing housing, health, education, and employment, enhancement of political representation, and religious freedom.

In order for Iraq to become a real democratic country, the government and all rival political parties should push forward toward achieving a real reconciliation and enhancing dialogue and peaceful solutions to all disputes. Once implemented, these efforts will be reflected on the ground through increased stability and security.

The government is asked to reinforce security measures in Christian areas and near religious sites in order to prevent religiously-motivated violence. In addition, governmental and non-governmental institutions are requested to resolve ethnic and religious conflicts, in order to protect the well-being of the Christian community among others. But in order to prevent these

conflicts, a recommendation appears to be relevant in this regard, that the government eliminates religion from identification cards.

On the political level, the government is urgently called upon to ensure fairness and pledge fair proportional participation in official elections for all citizens disregarding their religious affiliation. As part of this recommendation, the percentage of Iraqi Christians entitles them to be allocated more parliamentarians seats to reinforce their representation in the political scene.

In addition, the government must shoulder the responsibility of promoting intercultural dialogue and implementing understanding among different religious communities, through organizing seminars and conferences in different areas.

The government should initiate tangible measures to ensure all citizens equal access to housing, education, health care, and employment in governmental and military institutions. It is also requested to resolve Christian land seizure issue and compensate their losses to pave the way for refugee and internally displaced families to retrieve their rights and return to their cities of origin.

Moreover, the government is asked to contribute to the revitalization and preservation of the Christian cultural heritage, as well as the rebuilding and renovation of religious sites and monuments, which were targeted by Islamist extremists.

On the other hand, it is crucial for the judiciary authority to press charges against all perpetrators who have transgressed against human rights, and committed sectarian-motivated crimes, as a first step to strengthen legal protection of Christians and achieve justice. The verdicts should also hold accountable all police officers who have participated in such violations.

The government is also requested to establish a media system that is compatible with the Iraqi context and employs effective communication tools, with the purpose of enhancing the presence of minority Christian group in mainstream media and on different social media platforms. The media must carry an informational role, and increase the quantity and content of Christian-related programs in order to enhance public acceptance and strengthen tolerance to the Christian faith. This step will pave the way for fighting hate speech, discrimination and intolerance toward Christians, and offer them an opportunity to promote their culture, fulfill their socio-economic development, and communicate to the government their concerns and demands.

In relation to education curricula, it is important to address the government's promotion of a common history book of Iraq where Christians would be properly addressed as an integral part of the Iraqi history and identity.

The government should enhance significant contribution of international organizations in the Iraqi framework, and fulfill international norms on the rights of religious minorities in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992).

The Declaration urges states to "protect the existence of minorities within their respective, as well as to adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends" (UN, 1992).

ii. International Community Action Plan

The international community, in turn, should contribute in building a comprehensive strategy to preserve the presence of Christians in Iraq, and therefore, guarantee diversity and multiculturalism. It is pledged to prevent discrimination in aid programs, prioritize development and investment projects in Christian marginalized areas, grant Christian students substantial

scholarship, finance relief and health care projects equally in all Iraqi areas, and provide wide-ranging assistance to Christian IDPs and refugees.

Furthermore, the international community is requested to urge the Iraqi government not to allow any violation of religious, political, socio-economic, and legal freedom, based on the provision of the Iraqi Constitution, which states that "no law may contradict the established provisions of Islam."

Moreover, the international community should urge host governments to demonstrate further tolerance, sympathy, and protection space toward the Christian refugee community.

iii. Minority Activists Action Plan

Christian Minority activists are expected to promote the fulfillment of Iraqi Christians' rights worldwide. They should appeal to the governments of Iraq and host countries, as well as the international community to take tangible actions to grant Christians their stipulated rights on the legal, socio-economic and political levels, emphasizing their right to return to their homeland with dignity.

Furthermore, Christian political activists are asked to put pressure on governments to take determined actions to protect the Christian minority in Iraq, prevent its extermination, and curb all violence, in particular sectarian and ethnic based violence.

These activists, who reflect the views of suppressed Christians, should also campaign for investigating all attacks that targeted this community and holding the perpetrators accountable, and taking appropriate legal actions against them.

iv. Christians Action Plan

All above recommendations will appear ineffective, if the Iraqi Christians did not contribute themselves into this process. Instead of being caught in the middle, Christians should carry a reconciliatory role between rival political parties in order to resolve conflicts and ease

tense environment. They should also establish peer-pressure groups to urge Iraqi and host countries governments to ensure their basic rights.

Christians are supposed to work toward changing the perception of other members of the Iraqi fabric, through abandoning their isolation and make efforts to integrate with other religious communities.

This study attempted to present worthy and reliable initiatives for the international community, and governments of Iraq and asylum countries, in order to mitigate the suffering of Iraqi Christians.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

a. Summary

The in-depth evaluation of salient results gathered throughout the course of this research, and from the survey and interviews with authoritative figures showed that Iraqi Christian refugees strongly relate their decision to return home to the security situation there. In other words, Christian emigrants will not consider returning to Iraq –at least on the short term– before having a clearer picture of the security situation and the action plan of the Iraqi government.

This work has examined the representation and status of Christians in the Iraqi context, and has showed that their rights have been unmet as they should and as required in the constitution and other official documents. Another objective of this study was to achieve a notable progress in the literature of minority groups that has been useful in shaping an emerging research examining the conditions of the Iraqi Christian refugee community in Lebanon.

The theoretical provisions of the Spiral of Silence theory, developed by the German political scientist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, and their correlation to the case of the Christian minority were explored thoroughly as the main theoretical orientation of this study. As a result, it seems crucial for Christians in Iraq to counter the spiraling process and build a peer-pressure network to express their concerns and reclaim their rights. Here lies the role of media in ensuring unbiased platforms that pave the way for this community to communicate its views.

The methodology employed in this research included a purposive sample of 128 Iraqi Christian refugees in Lebanon and a series of interviews with Iraqi and Lebanese politicians, some religious figures, and UN officials.

The results answered topics related to refugees' demographic information, decision-making process of migration, legal and socio-economic statuses and conditions, and to identify

and evaluate the course of actions and practices taken by the Iraqi and Lebanese governments to address the rights and needs of refugees. Moreover, the findings showed that Iraqi Christians living in Lebanon formed their own community and social networks based on sectarian lines already prevailing in their homeland.

Based on the findings of the research, this study has highlighted a number of recommendations to understand the challenges facing the Christian community in Iraq and in asylum countries. These recommendations should be addressed by the governments of Iraq and host countries, international community, minority activists, media outlets, and the Iraqi Christian community worldwide. They are all requested to take concrete actions to provide Iraqi Christians with better accommodation, and to grant them their constitutional rights and just demands.

Accordingly, this thesis supports the approach that significant measures should be taken into consideration as a crucial step to maintain the survival of Christians in the land of their ancestors. These measures include –but are not limited to– the enhancement of political representation, insurance of legal and socio-economic rights, and preservation of cultural and religious diversity.

It is important to acknowledge the necessity of dealing with the Iraqi Christian refugee population from a humanitarian perspective. Christian advocates should create awareness among the citizens of host countries that to leaving one's homeland is very difficult. It involves leaving the environment in which refugees have been raised, their lands, homes, culture, traditions, history, goals and dreams, and undergoing hard circumstances, hoping to shape a new life in a new country.

Furthermore, it is of high significance to emphasize that the suggested action plans could also be applicable to other refugee communities.

In fact following the 2003 U.S.-led war, Iraq witnessed the proliferation of religious discrimination and sectarianism into the social and political fabrics, as well as the expansion of extremist Islamist military groups. Hate speeches, religiously-motivated violence, and incitement of ethnic intolerance against the Christian community have also spread across Iraqi territory, aggravated by patterns of political marginalization and official discrimination.

Many journalists, academics, international NGOs and concerned governmental institutions reported hundreds of acts of violence against Christians in Iraq. Some reports highlighted a pattern of structural discrimination against this community, while some others considered that these attacks also targeted Shiites and Sunnis, and therefore denied any systematic attack against Iraqi Christians.

The Christians of Iraq face a real threat of survival in the land of their ancestors. They continue to endure many difficult experiences associated with heavy concerns about their fate and the future of their children. They find themselves trapped in chronic poverty, and a large number of them are unable to maintain a regular source of income, and their children end up deprived of getting an education. They also lack sufficient assistance from the Central and Kurdish Regional governments, as well as from the international community.

The escalation of violence and the lack of the Iraqi government action generated a wave of internal displacement and massive migration among the Christian community to neighboring countries, and led to the renewal of Christians' territorial claims to form a self-governing federation in the Nineveh Plain.

Furthermore, the already massive forced emigration of Iraqi Christians witnessed a considerable increase following the assault on Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad late 2010. The assault not only led to the killing of 58 Christians and the injuring of 75 others, but

also in a series of intimidations and threats that targeted Christian families. Nonetheless, this incident generated unprecedented and well overdue attention of local, regional, and international media to the plight of Iraq's Christians.

On the other hand, the sample of Iraqi Christian refugees in Lebanon studied in this thesis has experienced underprivileged living conditions and political, legal, and socio-economic hardship during the pre and post-migration period. Their situation is of particular concern and remains very challenging and unsettling.

Therefore, the aspiration of this study was to suggest tangible solutions for these difficulties, starting with securing basic needs such as nutrition, shelter, health, education, employment, in addition to essential rights, such as right to a decent life, a safe settlement, to freedom of speech and belief, development, and inclusion in the decision-making process.

In conclusion, it is a very pressing concern to highlight that the Christian community in Iraq is facing a serious humanitarian and existential crisis, in light of the current security situation. Christians who are still targeted by violence continue to encounter threats and intimidations, whereas internal displacement and forced emigration are on the rise.

This religious minority in Iraq has formed one of the oldest Christian communities worldwide (Luo, 2006), and may currently face a risk of extinction in Iraq due to the fact that more than half of the population has fled the country since 2003. This issue is quite alarming and raises concerns toward the future of this community, especially because it is unjustly and inhumanly deprived of just and efficient governmental protection, and of overdue international attention.

In order to pave the way for establishing a free, democratic, pluralistic and prosperous Iraq, urgent actions should be taken to alleviate the dire situation of the Christian community to

avoid the expulsion and eradication of an original component of the Iraqi population native mix, namely the Christians of Iraq.

Political and sectarian conflicts are the primary challenges to stability. Therefore, it is naturally and morally expected of the Iraqi government to push forward toward a serious reconciliation, a step that will enclose positive influence on the security level, and enhance the welfare of religious native minorities, among them specifically are the Christians.

On the other hand, the situation of Iraqi refugees in Lebanon began to worsen dramatically in 2010 due to the emerging Syrian crisis. Unsurprisingly as a result of the massive flow of Syrian refugees to Lebanon, the already existing Iraqi refugees receive even less attention and accommodation.

This work has highlighted the situation of Iraq's Christians through offering a holistic presentation of the reasons behind the forced emigration of almost more than the half of that country's population. It has also raised awareness toward their plight and shed much-needed light on their urgent existential needs and fundamental human rights. It is a pilot initiative to secure their presence and future in the land of their ancestors, Iraq.

a. Limitations of the Study

A few limitations are associated with this thesis. The first is related to the inability to go to Iraq in person due to security and safety concerns. Nonetheless, the four-year experience working with an Iraqi online news agency, "Alsumaria News," presented the author with a clear understanding to the study and contributed greatly to enhancing my knowledge of the Iraqi political, economic, and social contexts.

Moving to difficulties correlated to the field work with Iraqi Christians refugees in Lebanon, it was a big and much time-consuming challenge to locate all the 128 participants in

the survey questionnaire, because they were distributed over several refugee camps. But, a number of refugees introduced me to their acquaintances and family members, which made the searching process less challenging and created the snowball sample of 128 respondents.

Also despite the fact that a large number of respondents were educated, I had to translate orally the questions into Arabic in order to avoid any misunderstanding, especially those issues that are pertaining to private, religious, and financial topics.

In some camps, my being a young female journalist searching for Iraqi refugees all by herself posed a challenge as it was perceived as unfamiliar in a traditional environment, but for the most part, I was welcome, and was graciously assisted by the people there.

The final limitation remains in the degree of adequate representativeness of the used sampling procedure, which resulted in a purposive and snowball sample. This sampling may not present a full representation of the Iraqi Christians living in Lebanon, but it definitely provides clear indicators about the issues involved in this study. It also offers plenty of alarming data and facts about their situation, and through them about the tragic situation of the Christians in Iraq who by all means they may be facing extinction.

b. Recommendations for Future Research

This work has aimed at offering a pilot study for addressing the plight of Iraq's Christians. It provides a preliminary research that may be expanded to put forward a plan for a wider range of refugee welfare and requirements. It is suggested that future studies increase the sample size to include a larger scope that engages samples of all Iraqi Christians around the globe, in order to be able to generalize the results to this community and other minority groups.

Though the research focused on the 2010 attack on Our Lady of Salvation church per say and did not address directly the role of the media coverage, this work however, has relied heavily

on media sources, among others, to document the subject matter. Therefore, it would be pertinent for upcoming studies to examine how various media covered the plight of Iraqi Christians using a comparative study of the coverage of the Baghdad church attack that employs content analysis approach. Such examination can probably show the different views presented by the media testing more specifically, their objectivity in covering the attack. Such studies may highlight how the media biases, if existed, create an image of certain social and religious dilemmas.

Other studies may also further investigate the religious and sectarian conflict in Iraq between Sunnis and Shiites, leading to explain its implications on the conditions of the Christian and other minority groups in Iraq.

This study did not examine the psychological status of the participants, which could be of a particular concern for future works. Many respondents may have experienced significant mental health difficulties or traumas, as a result of the pre and post forced migration process.

In conclusion, one cannot ignore the massive flow of Syrian refugees into Lebanon, which may have serious negative effects on the hardship and impoverishment of Iraqi refugees. In other words, future studies may significantly require a broader research and generate a deeper-level analysis of how the Syrian crisis represents a considerable burden on Lebanon's economic conditions, thus impacting the Iraqi Christian community as well.

Taking into account the importance of the suggested future research, the results of the current study should be considered, however, as a foundation to build on for the literature on the plight of the Christian community in Iraq and diaspora.

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# Appendices

Appendix I – Iraq's Flag
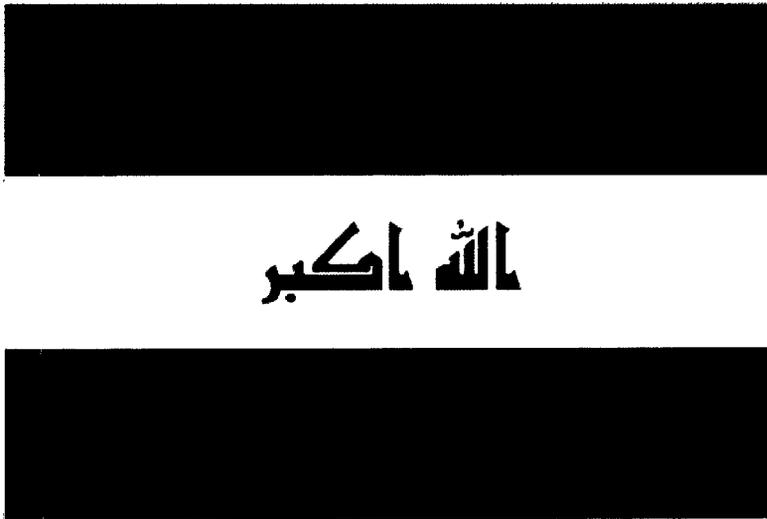
- The Council of Representatives approved the new Iraqi flag in 2008 as a compromise temporary replacement for the flag of Saddam Hussein era.

- It is composed of three equal horizontal bands that derive from the Arab Liberation flag and represent oppression (black), overcome through bloody struggle (red), to be replaced by a bright future (white). It also includes the Takbir, an Arabic expression meaning "God is great", in green script centered in the white band.

Appendix II – Map of Iraq in the Middle East

Source: Central Intelligence Agency

Appendix III – Division of Iraqi Population

TURKEY

SYRIA

Mosul

Irbil

Al Sulaymaniyah

Kirkuk

Tikrit

Samarra

IRAN

Al Ramadi

Al Rutbah

Baghdad

Karbala

Al Kut

Al Najaf

Al Samawah

Al Nasiriyah

Al Basra

Umm Qasr

SAUDI ARABIA

KUWAIT

JORDAN

☐ Sunni Kurd 17%	☐ Sunni Arab/Sunni Kurd	Turkoman
☐ Sunni Arab 20%	☐ Shia Arab/Sunni Arab	Yezidi
☐ Shia Arab 60%	☐ Shia Kurd (Faili)	Assyrian/Chaldean

Source: University of Texas Libraries

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Appendix IV – Iraqi Individuals Registered in the Middle East Region (May 2012)
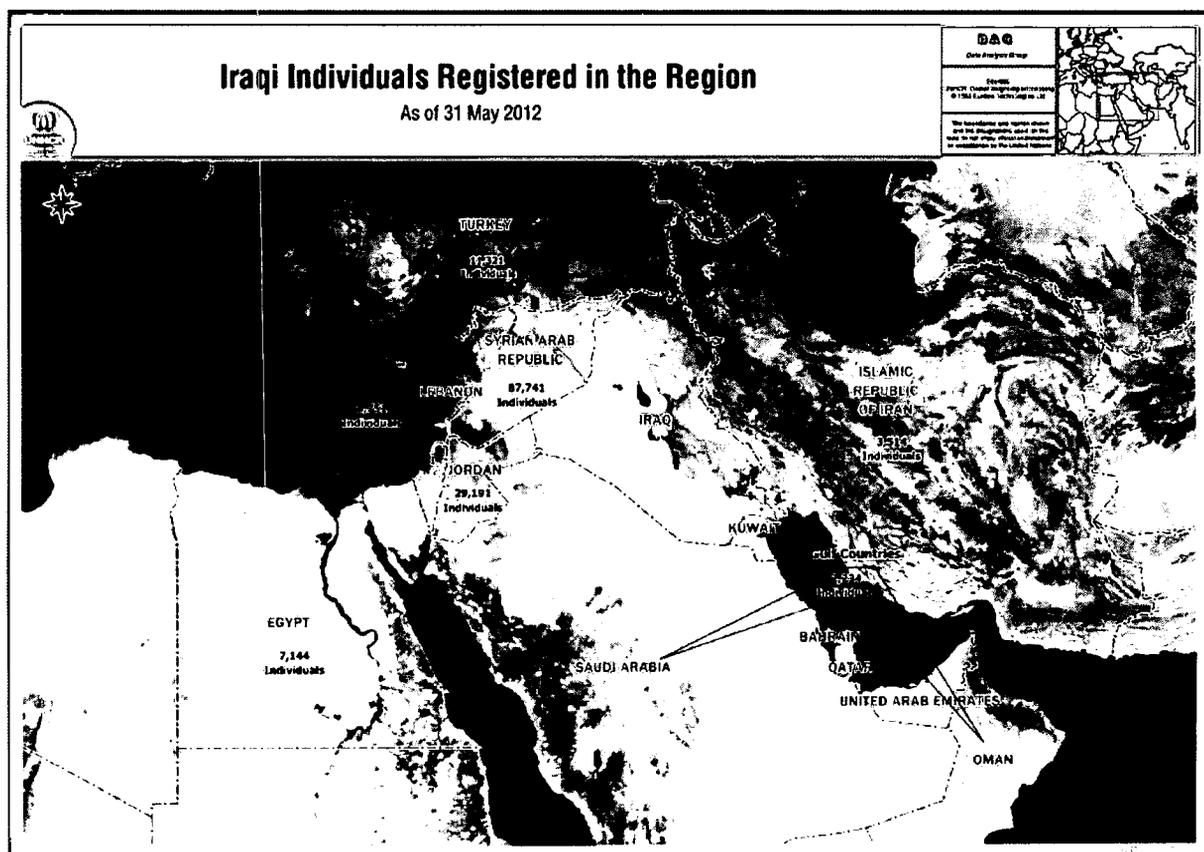
Source: United Nations Response Plan for Iraqi Refugees Mid-Year Review 2012

Appendix V – Basic Facts about Iraq

Background

- Iraq attained its independence as a kingdom in October 3, 1932, from League of Nations mandate under British administration in the course of World War I.

- Iraq was admitted into the League of Nations or the United Nations in 1932.

- The Republic of Iraq was proclaimed in 1958.

- Population: 31,858,481 (July 2013).

- Ethnic groups: Arabs 75%-80%, Kurds 15%-20%, Turkmen, Assyrians, or other 5%

- Religions: Islam (official) 97% (Shiites 60%-65%, Sunnis 32%-37%), Christians or others 3%.

- Languages: Arabic (official), Kurdish (official), Turkmen (a Turkish dialect) and Assyrian (Neo-Aramaic) are official in areas where they constitute a majority of the population), Armenian.

- Iraq was controlled by the Ba'ath Party (Iraqi-led faction) from 1968 until the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 and the overthrow of President Saddam Hussein.

- Paul Bremer was appointed head of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in 2003.

- The CPA was dissolved and sovereignty was handed to the Iraqi Interim Government led by Ayad Allawi on June 28, 2004.

- In October 2005, Iraq approved a new constitution in a national referendum.

- Islam is the state religion and a basic foundation for laws.

- Baghdad is the capital of the Republic of Iraq.

- 275 members of Council of Representatives (COR) were elected in December 2005.

- The COR approved cabinet ministers in May 2006, marking the transition to Iraq's first constitutional government in nearly a half century.

- The Prime Minister is the direct executive authority responsible for the general policy of the State and the commander in chief of the armed forces.

- The Council of Representatives shall elect the President of the State and two Vice Presidents who shall form a Council called "the Presidency Council," which shall be elected by one list and with a two-thirds majority.

- In January 2009, Iraq held elections for provincial councils in all governorates except for the three governorates comprising the Kurdistan Regional Government and Kirkuk Governorate.

- Iraq held a national legislative election in March 2010, choosing 325 legislators in an expanded COR.

- The constitution mandates that female members of parliament constitute 25 percent of the COR (81 out of 325).

Government, Constitution and Legal System

- Type of government: Parliamentary democracy

- Administrative divisions (18 governorates): al-Anbar, al-Basra, al-Muthanna, ad-Diwaniya, an-Najaf, Erbil, As-Sulaimaniya, Babylon, Baghdad, Dahuk, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Karbala, Kirkuk, Maysan, Nineveh, Salaheddine and Wasit.

- The constitution was ratified on October 15, 2005 and it is subject to review by the constitutional Review Committee and a possible public referendum.

- Mixed legal system of civil and Islamic law

Executive Branch

- Chief of State: President Jalal Talbani since April 6, 2005

- Head of Government: Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki since May 20, 2006

- Cabinet: The Council of Ministers consists of the prime minister and cabinet ministers the prime minister proposes; approved by an absolute majority vote by the COR.

Legislative Branch

- Council of Representatives: 325 seats, including 8 seats reserved for minorities.

- Members serve four-year terms.

- Speaker: Osama Al-Nujeifi

- March 7, 2010 elections results: Iraqi National Movement 25.9%, State of Law coalition 25.8%, Iraqi National Alliance 19.4%, Kurdistan Alliance 15.3%, Change List 4.4%, Tawafuq Front 2.7%, Iraqi Unity Alliance 2.9%, Kurdistan Islamic Union 2.3%, Kurdistan Islamic Group 1.4%.

Judicial Branch

- The Iraq Constitution calls for the federal judicial power to be comprised of the Higher Judicial Council, Federal Supreme Court, Federal Court of Cassation, Public Prosecution Department, Judiciary Oversight Commission and other federal courts that are regulated in accordance with the law.

Appendix VI – List of Attacks against Christians (2003-2010) [43]

e	City	Province	Killing	Injury	Abduction	Mean
Dec-10	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			Bomb on a Christian house
Dec-10	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			Bombs and grenades on Christian houses
Dec-10	Mosul	Nineveh			1	Breaking into a Christian house
ec-10	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			Gunfire on a Christian house
Nov-10	Mosul	Nineveh	1	7		Gunfire and car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-10	Mosul	Nineveh	2			Gunfire on a civil car
Nov-10	Mosul	Nineveh	2			Car Bomb in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-10	Baghdad	Baghdad	6	33		Bombs and mortar shells on houses and shops
Oct-10	Baghdad	Baghdad	58	75		Suicide bombs and gunfire on a church
ct-10	Baghdad	Baghdad			1	Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-10	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped despite paying ransom
un-10	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
ay-10	Mosul	Nineveh	2	80		Bomb on a convoy of university buses
Dec-09	Mosul	Nineveh			1	Gunfire near a university
Dec-09	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire and car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
Dec-09	Mosul	Nineveh	1	4		Bomb on a church
Dec-09	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
Dec-09	Mosul	Nineveh	1	6		Bombs on two churches
Nov-09	Mosul	Nineveh		2		Bombs on two churches
Oct-09	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
ep-09	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-09	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1		1	Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ul-09	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a soft drinks factory
ul-09	Mosul	Nineveh		2		Bomb on a church
ul-09	Baghdad	Baghdad	4	18		Bomb on seven churches
ul-09	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
un-09	Hamdaniya	Nineveh	7			Car bomb near a hospital
ay-09	Ain Sifni	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Apr-09	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	2	4		Gunfire on two Christian houses
pr-09	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
pr-09	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a restaurant
pr-09	Dora	Baghdad	2			Stabbed to death in an attack on a Christian

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[43] The information mentioned in the table are gathered by the author based on several media sources.

						house
Mar-09	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Throat slashed in an attack on a Christian house
n-09	Dora	Baghdad	1			Strangled to death in an attack on a Christian house
Dec-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Raped and killed after being kidnapped
Nov-08	Mosul	Nineveh	2	1		Attack on a Christian house
Oct-08	Mosul	Nineveh	4			Car Bomb in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-08	Mosul	Nineveh		1		Bomb attack on a church
ct-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire near a Christian home
ct-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a pharmacy
ct-08	Mosul	Nineveh	2			Gunfire on a Christian house
ct-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
ct-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
ct-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire near a Christian house
ep-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
ep-08	Karrada	Baghdad	3			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ep-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Killed after being kidnapped
Aug-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Killed after being kidnapped
Aug-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
l-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
l-08	Telkaif	Nineveh			2	Near a high school
n-08	Mansour	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
or-08	Karrada	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a church
or-08	Baghdad	Baghdad	3			Gunfire on a civil car
Mar-08	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Mar-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Mar-08	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Bomb attack in a Christian neighborhood
Mar-08	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Feb-08	Mosul	Nineveh	3			Gunfire near a church
Feb-08	Baghdeda	Nineveh		7		Bomb attack on a Christian shop
b-08	Mosul	Nineveh			1	Near a university
b-08	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Bomb attack on a Christian shop
an-08	Mosul	Nineveh		2		Car bomb near a church
n-08	Kirkuk	Kirkuk		3		Bomb attacks on three churches
n-08	Baghdad	Baghdad		2		Bomb attacks on three churches
n-08	Mosul	Nineveh		3		Bomb attacks on five churches
Dec-07	Baghdeda	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Dec-07	Baghdad	Baghdad		3		Gunfire on a Christian house

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ec-07	Basra	Basra	2			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
ec-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ec-07	Karrada	Baghdad	3			Bomb attack in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ov-07	Mosul	Nineveh	3			Gunfire on a church
Oct-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
Oct-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a civil car
Oct-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
ct-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
ct-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ct-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ep-07	Mosul	Nineveh	5	15		Suicide car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
ep-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-07	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-07	Dawoudi	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-07	Dohuk	Dohuk	3			Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
ug-07	Karrada	Baghdad	2			Gunfire on a Christian house
ug-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ul-07	Baghdeda	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ul-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
ul-07	Teleskuf	Samarra	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
l-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	8			Gunfire on a Christian shop
l-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
l-07	Mosul	Nineveh	7			Gunfire in Christian neighborhoods
l-07	Zaafarania	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
l-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	4			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
un-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a civil car
un-07	Mosul	Nineveh	2			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
un-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
un-07	Baghdad	Baghdad			8	Breaking into a university
un-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood

Date	City	Province				Description
un-07	Mosul	Nineveh	2			After being kidnapped despite paying ransom
un-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
n-07	Suleikh	Baghdad			6	Near a church
n-07	Dora	Baghdad	4			Gunfire on a church
n-07	Mosul	Nineveh	4			Gunfire near a church
n-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
l-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
May-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
May-07	Mosul	Nineveh	3			Gunfire on a civil car
May-07	Baghdad	Baghdad			1	In a Christian neighborhood
May-07	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a civil car
May-07	Dora	Baghdad		2		Bomb attack on a church
May-07	Baaquba	Diyala	2		2	Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
May-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
ay-07	Baghdeda	Nineveh			2	In a Christian neighborhood
Apr-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Apr-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Apr-07	Kirkuk	Kirkuk			1	In a Christian neighborhood
Apr-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Bomb attack on a university
Apr-07	Teleskuf	Nineveh	10	20		Suicide car bomb near a school
or-07	Baghdad	Baghdad			1	In a Christian neighborhood
Mar-07	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Stabbed to death in a Christian house
Mar-07	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
Feb-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Feb-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Car bomb near a university
Feb-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
b-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped despite paying ransom
b-07	Sadriyya	Baghdad	1			Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
b-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
an-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a civil car
an-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a civil car
an-07	Sadr	Baghdad	1			Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
an-07	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
an-07	Mosul	Nineveh	2			Gunfire on a Christian house
an-07	Mosul	Nineveh	1	2		Gunfire on a civil car
Dec-06	Karrada	Baghdad	3		5	Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Dec-06	Baghdad	Baghdad			3	In a Christian neighborhood
Dec-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1	1		Bomb in a Christian neighborhood

ec-06	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ec-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
ec-06	Baghdad	Baghdad			1	Near a university
Nov-06	Dora	Baghdad	2			Gunfire on a Christian house
Nov-06	Mosul	Nineveh			2	In a Christian neighborhood
Nov-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-06	Baghdad	Baghdad			1	Near a church
Oct-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-06	Baaquba	Diyala	1			Throat slashed in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-06	Mosul	Nineveh		3		Gunfire on a Christian house
Oct-06	Baaquba	Diyala	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped near a church
ct-06	Basra	Basra	1			Stabbed to death in a Christian neighborhood
ct-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1	7		Two bomb attacks on a church
ct-06	Mosul	Nineveh		1		Gunfire on a church
ct-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	12	56		Bomb attacks in a Christian neighborhood
ct-06	Kirkuk	Kirkuk		1		Bomb attack on a Christian house
Sep-06	Mosul	Nineveh		1		Rockets and bomb attacks on a church
Sep-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	2	17		Bomb and grenade attacks on a church
Sep-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
Sep-06	Mosul	Nineveh	13			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
ep-06	Baghdad	Baghdad		3		Bomb attacks on a church
Aug-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Bomb attack in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-06	Mosul	Nineveh	2			Gunfire on a Christian shop
ug-06	Dohuk	Dohuk	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ug-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped despite paying ransom
ul-06	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1	6		Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
ul-06	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ul-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	3			After being kidnapped and raped
ul-06	Baghdad	Baghdad			1	Near a church

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ul-06	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	5	7		Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
l-06	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
l-06	Hamdaniya	Nineveh	2	2		Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
un-06	Hamdaniya	Nineveh		3		Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
un-06	Karrada	Baghdad	1			Bomb attack in a Christian neighborhood
n-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Bomb attack in a Christian neighborhood
n-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
n-06	Basra	Basra	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
n-06	Baghdad	Baghdad		1		Rocket attack on a church
May-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
May-06	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
May-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
pr-06	Mosul	Nineveh		2		Gunfire on a church
pr-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
pr-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
or-06	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
or-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
or-06	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a civil car
or-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
ar-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
eb-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
eb-06	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
an-06	Mosul	Nineveh		17		Attack on university students
an-06	Baghdad	Baghdad		3		Bomb attacks on six churches
an-06	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	3			Bomb attacks on two churches
an-06	Baghdad	Baghdad		1		Gunfire on a Christian house
an-06	Baghdad	Baghdad			1	Breaking into a Christian house
n-06	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
n-06	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
n-06	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Dec-05	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ec-05	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-05	Mosul	Nineveh	2	2		Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-05	Ghadir	Baghdad	4			Gunfire on a Christian house
ov-05	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	3	1		Bomb attack on a church
Oct-05	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
Oct-05	Tikrit	Salaheddin e	1	2		Gunfire on a Christian house
Oct-05	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
Sep-05	Baghdad	Baghdad	4	1		Gunfire on a Christian politician convoy

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Date	City	Province				Description
Aug-05	Bartella	Nineveh	1	1		Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Aug-05	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a civil car
Aug-05	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Stabbed to death after being kidnapped
ug-05	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ug-05	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
ug-05	Mosul	Nineveh	2		1	Gunfire on a pharmacy
ul-05	Dora	Baghdad	1	3		Gunfire on a civil car
ul-05	Habbaniya	Anbar		1		Rocket attack on a church
l-05	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
l-05	Baghdad	Baghdad	1	1		Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
n-05	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1	2		Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
n-05	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped from a Christian shop
May-05	Mosul	Nineveh	1	1		Rocket attack on a Christian house
Apr-05	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
Mar-05	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped from a Christian shop
Mar-05	Dora	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
Mar-05	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Gunfire on a civil car
Mar-05	Basra	Basra	2	15	20	Attack on university students
Dec-04	Mosul	Nineveh	2			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
ec-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			After being kidnapped from a Christian shop
ec-04	Ramadi	Anbar	1			Gunfire on a clinic
ec-04	Mosul	Nineveh		3		Bomb attacks on two churches
ec-04	Baghdeda	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a civil car
ec-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-04	Baiji	Salaheddine	1			Car bomb in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Nov-04	Mosul	Nineveh	2			Mortar shell on a Christian shop
ov-04	Dora	Baghdad	3	52		Bomb attacks on two churches
ov-04	Falluja	Anbar	1	2		Gunfire on a civil car
ov-04	Dora	Baghdad	2	1		Gunfire on a civil car
Oct-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
Oct-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
Oct-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-04	Baghdad	Baghdad		7		Bombs and artillery shells on five churches
ct-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	3	1		Gunfire in Christian neighborhoods
ct-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian

						neighborhood
t-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1	3		Gunfire on a Christian house
ep-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	9	4		Gunfire on a civil bus
ep-04	Mosul	Nineveh		2		Burned with acid near a university
ep-04	Mosul	Nineveh	2			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
ep-04	Baghdad	Baghdad		1		Car bomb on a church
ep-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1	2		Mortar shells on Christian houses
ep-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Bomb on a church
p-04	Mosul	Nineveh	2			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
p-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gun fire on a civil car
p-04	Karrada	Baghdad	1			Bomb attack in a Christian neighborhood
ug-04	Bartella	Nineveh	3	1		Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
g-04	Mosul	Nineveh	12	60		Bombs on five churches
ul-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
ul-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire on a Christian shop
ul-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			Gunfire on a Christian house
ul-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	2			Rockets on a Christian house
un-04	Mosul	Nineveh		1		Hand grenade on a church
un-04	Basra	Basra	2			Gunfire on a civil car
un-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
un-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
n-04	Dora	Baghdad	6			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
n-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			After being kidnapped in a Christian neighborhood
May-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Grenade on a civil car
May-04	Baghdad	Baghdad		1		Bomb in a Christian neighborhood
or-04	Miqdadiya	Diyala	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
Mar-04	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Gunfire on a Christian house
Mar-04	Dora	Baghdad	2			Gunfire on a Christian house
Mar-04	Baghdad	Baghdad	4	2		Bomb on a Christian house
eb-04	Mosul	Nineveh	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
an-04	Basra	Basra	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
an-04	Tel Kepe	Nineveh		1		Gunfire on a civil car
an-04	Falluja	Anbar	4	5		Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-03	Kirkuk	Kirkuk		1		Grenade in a Christian neighborhood
Oct-03	Falluja	Anbar	2			Gunfire on a Christian house
ct-03	Mosul	Nineveh	1	1		Gunfire on a Christian shop
ct-03	Khalidiya	Anbar	2			Gunfire on a Christian house
Aug-03	Tikrit	Salaheddin	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood

		e				
ul-03	Mosul	Nineveh	1			After being kidnapped from a Christian house
ul-03	Baghdad	Baghdad	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood
Apr-03	Kirkuk	Kirkuk	1			Gunfire in a Christian neighborhood

Appendix VII – Survey Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

My name is Christine El Cheikh. I am a graduate student at Notre Dame University- Louaize. The present questionnaire is conducted as part of my MA thesis. I am studying the cause and conditions of the refugees of Iraqi Christian community in Lebanon. I would like to ask you to spare a few minutes and provide me with your candid response to the following questions. I apologize in advance if any of the questions would remind you of unpleasant moments.

I would like to assure you that your opinion does count, your identity will remain anonymous, and your information confidential. I am very thankful for your generous participation.

Demographic Information

1. Sex: Female (__) Male (__)

2. Age: ____

3. City of origin in Iraq: _____

4. Date of arrival to Lebanon: _____

5. Marital status: Single ___ Married ___ Divorced ___ Widowed ___

6. Number of children (if any): 0–9 years ___ 10–18 ___ 19–over ___

7. Educational background: Grade school ___ High school ___ College ___ None ___

8. Current occupation (if any): _____

9. Previous occupation (in Iraq): _____

10. Current occupation of spouse (if any): _____

11. $ Income per month: (__) 0–300   (__) 301–500 (__) 501–700

   (__) 701–900 (__) 901–1100 (__) 1101 +

Migration Decision-Making

12. Were you a victim of violence or have you witnessed any incident prior to your departure from Iraq?

    Yes (__) No (__)

13. Why did you decide to leave Iraq?

    _____

    _____

14. Why did you decide to come to Lebanon?

    _____

Refugee Status

15. How did you enter Lebanon? Legally (__) Illegally (__)

16. Did you apply for refugee status? Yes (__) No (__)

    If yes, who helped you apply? _____

17. Are official papers issued in Iraq recognized and accredited by the Lebanese government? Yes (__) No (__)

Arrest or Detention

18. Were you or any members of your family arrested upon your arrival to Lebanon?

    Yes (__) No (__)

    If yes, why?

    _____

    _____

Daily Livelihood

19. Do you receive assistance from the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees or other nongovernmental agencies? Yes (__) No (__)

    If yes, please specify: _____

20. Are your children allowed to enroll in Lebanese schools? Yes (__) No (__)

    If yes: Public (__) Private (__)

    If no, why? _____

21. Do you have any medical coverage? Yes (__) No (__)

    If yes, please specify: _____

    If no, how do you pay for health needs? _____

Networking

22. Have you been able to adapt to your new environment in Lebanon? Yes (__) No (__)

23. Do you have Lebanese acquaintances/friends? Yes (__) No (__)

24. Do you have contact with other refugee communities? Yes (__) No (__)

25. Refugees are influenced by the legal, social, and political context of the host country.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

26. Do you feel safe in your Lebanese neighborhood? Yes (__) No (__)

    Why? _____

27. Is free movement a problem? Yes (__) No (__)

    If yes, how? _____

28. Refugees are generally welcome in Lebanon?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	`			

Community Formation

29. How do you identify yourself in Lebanon?

(__) As Iraqi

(__) As belonging to a certain Iraqi region

(__) As belonging to an Iraqi church

(__) As a Christian

30. Do you have family or friends living in Lebanon? Yes (__) No (__)

31. Communities formed by Iraqi refugees in Lebanon are based on sectarian, ethnic or religious affiliation.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

32. Do you communicate with Iraqi refugees from other religions? Yes (__) No (__)

If no, explain why?

_____

_____

33. Do you practice your faith in Lebanese churches? Yes (__) No (__)

Relationship with Homeland

34. Do you still have family members or friends in Iraq? Yes (__) No (__)

35. If yes, do you assist them with remittances Yes (__) No (__) or migration papers?

Yes (__) No (__)

36. How do you describe the security situation in Iraq?

(__) Safe

(__) Unsafe

(__) Both

(__) I don't know

Future Plans

37. In the future you want to:

(__) Return to Iraq

(__) Stay in Lebanon

(__) Settle in a third country

38. Have you ever applied for a citizenship? Yes (__) No (__)

If yes: Lebanese ___, or any other country ___? Please specify: _____

39. Please cite, in your opinion, three major needs of the Iraqi Christians that should be met

in Lebanon:

i _____

ii _____

iii _____

40. Other comments:

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this questionnaire.

In case you are interested in receiving a summary of the results of this study, please write your email address and phone number:

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Appendix VIII – Sample of Interview Questions

1. Are you satisfied with the current representation of Christians in the Iraqi Council of Representatives?

2. How would the Iraqi government confront the phenomenon of Christians' land seizure?

3. Do you believe that Christians in Iraq are subjected to an organized attack?

4. Do you expect any future attacks on Christians after al-Qaeda threatened to exterminate Iraq's Christian?

5. How do you perceive Christians' call for a Nineveh Plain Province Solution?

6. What measures are the Iraqi government and political parties taking to preserve the rights of the Christian community?

7. Do you consider that the recent decrease of security deployment near churches reflects a positive progress on the security level?

8. How do you perceive the role of media in defending Christians' rights in Iraq?

9. How are you following-up on the conditions of Iraqi Christian refugees in neighboring countries?

10. Effectively, how would you convince Christian refugees to return to Iraq within the current political and security situations?

11. To which extent refugees are influenced by the legal, social and political context of the host country?

12. What are the challenges and obstacles of working with Iraqi Christian refugees?

13. How do you describe Lebanese government's measurements toward Iraqi refugees?

14. To which extent is engaging in community-building activities important to refugees?

Appendix IX– List of Graphs
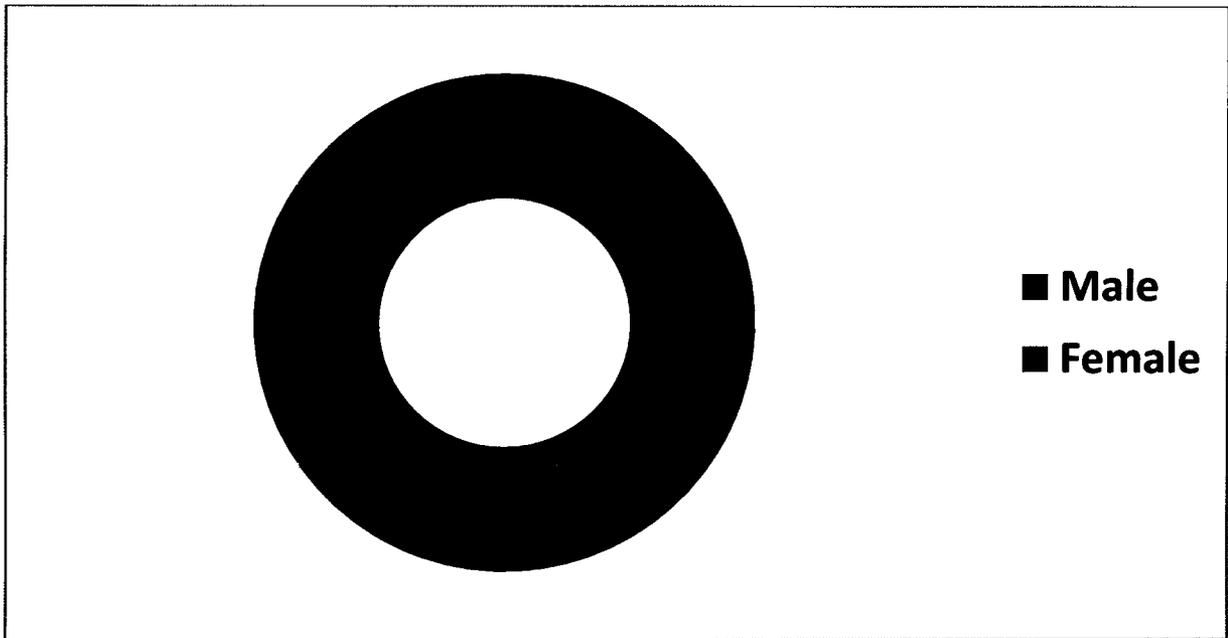
Figure 1: Sex of the Participants
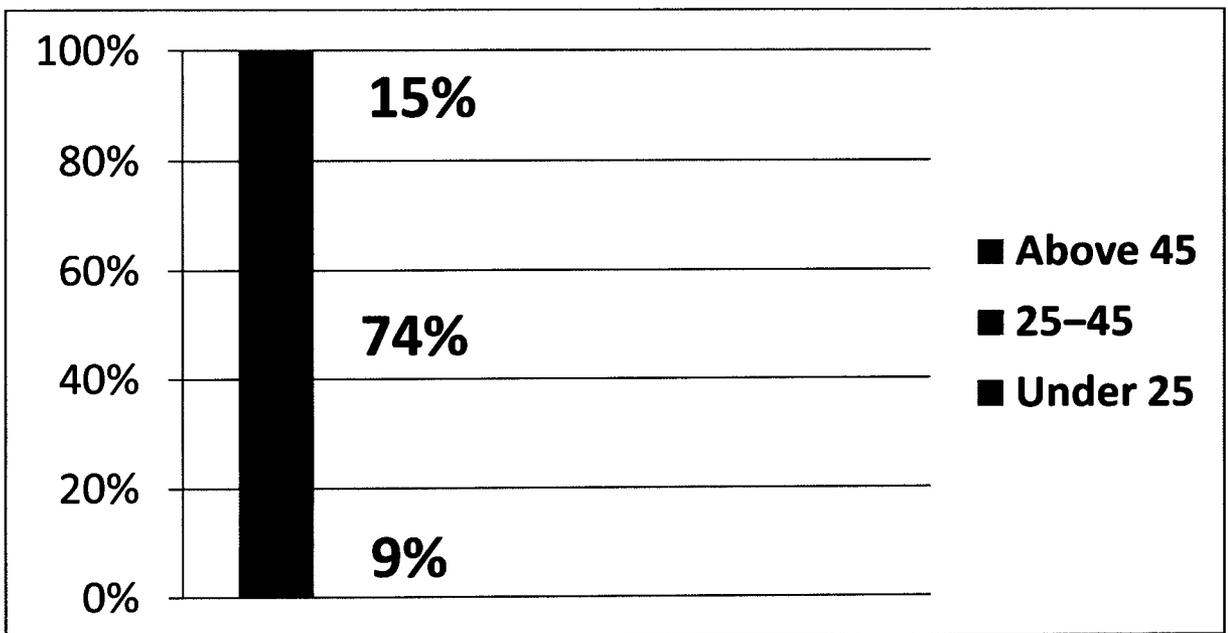
Figure 2: Age of the Participants
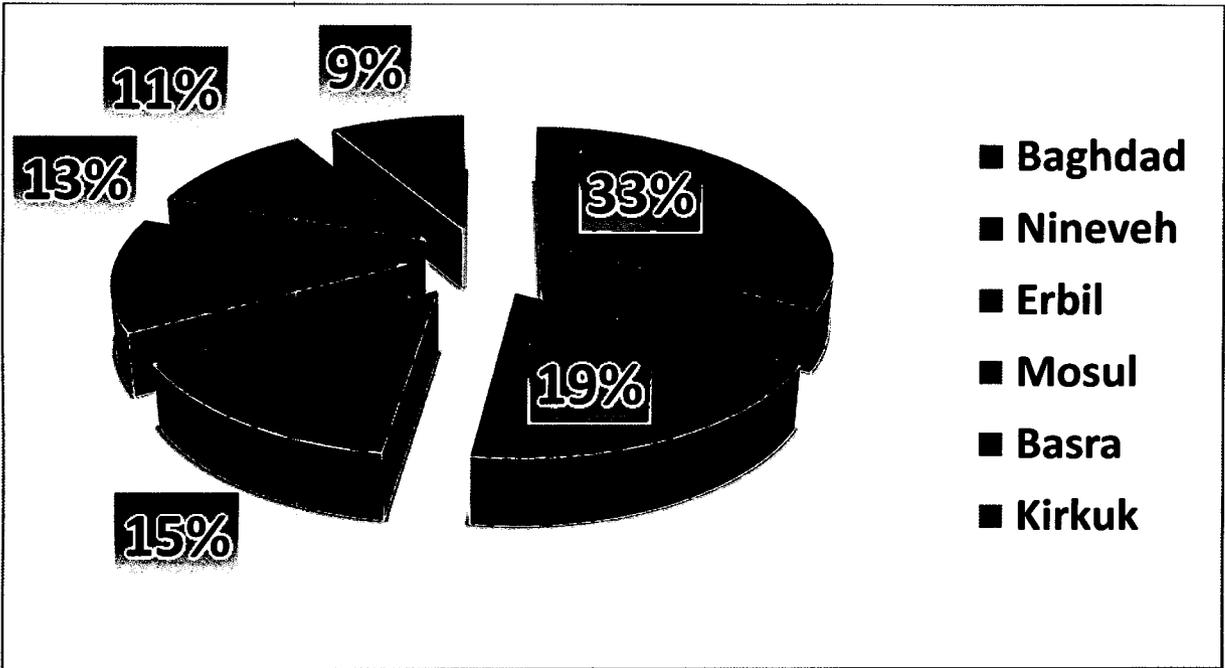
Figure 3: City of Origin in Iraq
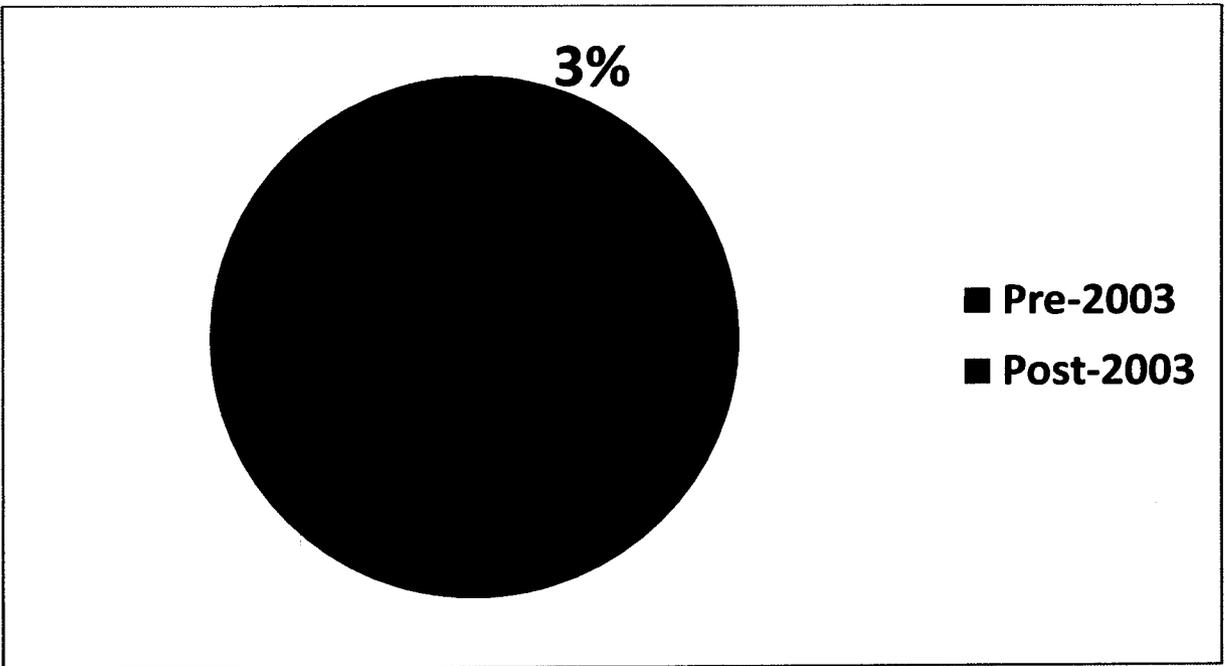
Figure 4: Arrival to Lebanon

Figure 5: Marital Status

■ 0–9 years

■ 10–18 years

■ 19–over
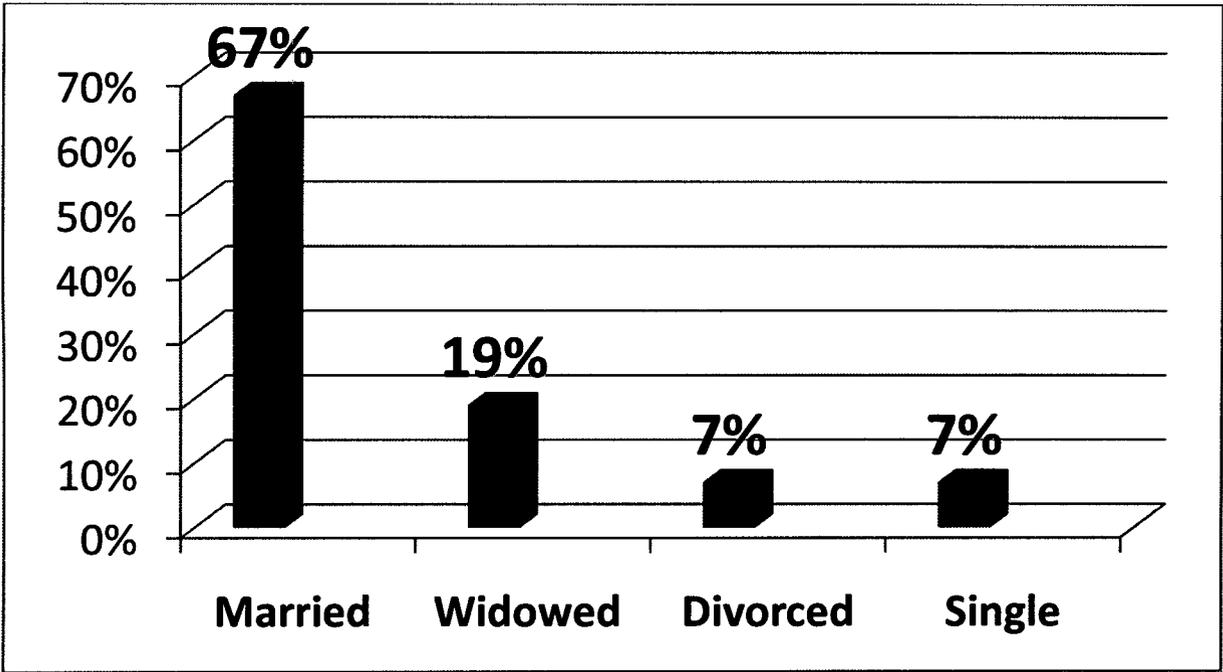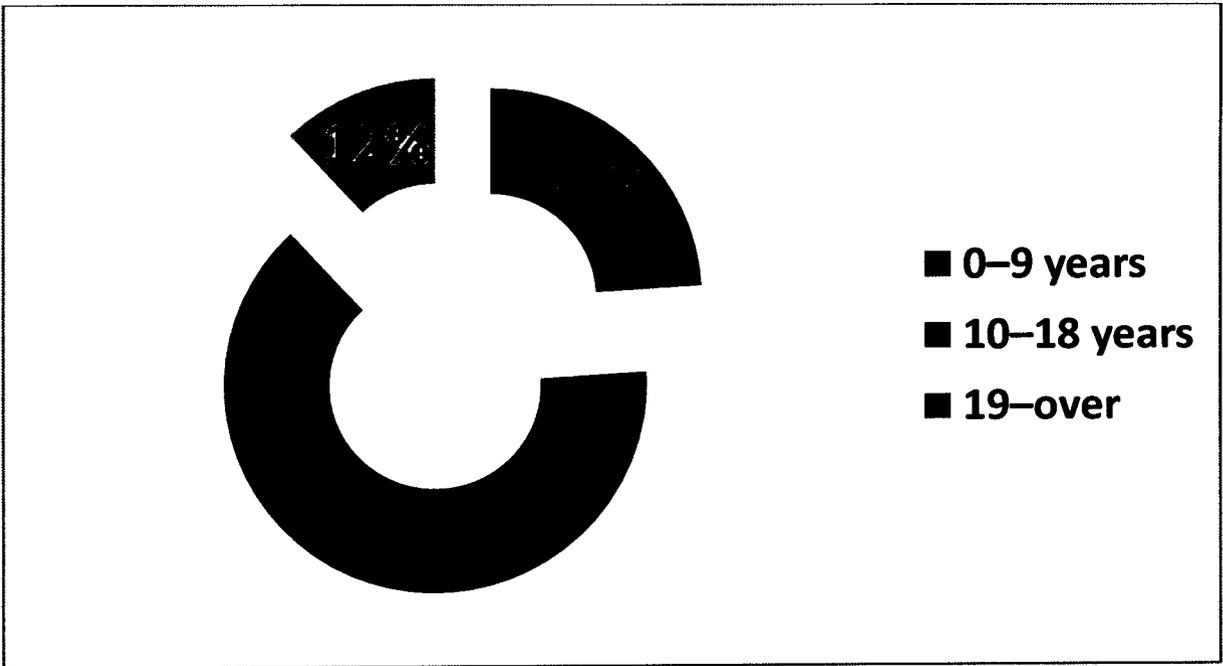
Figure 6: Age of the Participants' Children
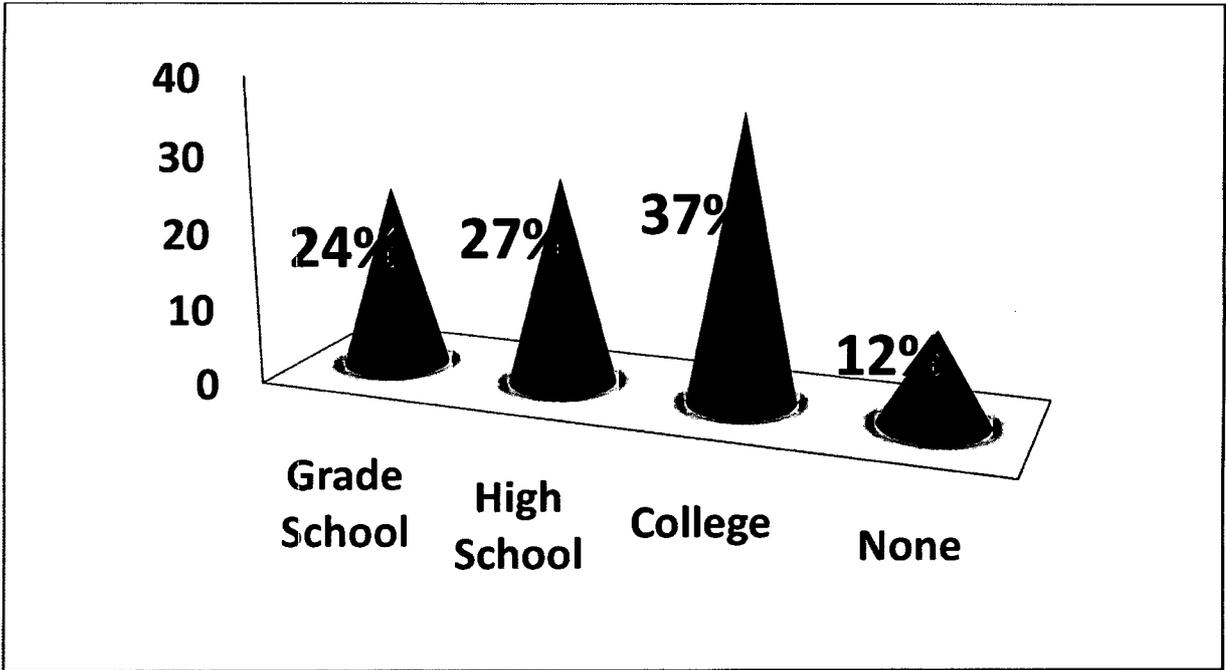
Figure 7: Educational Background
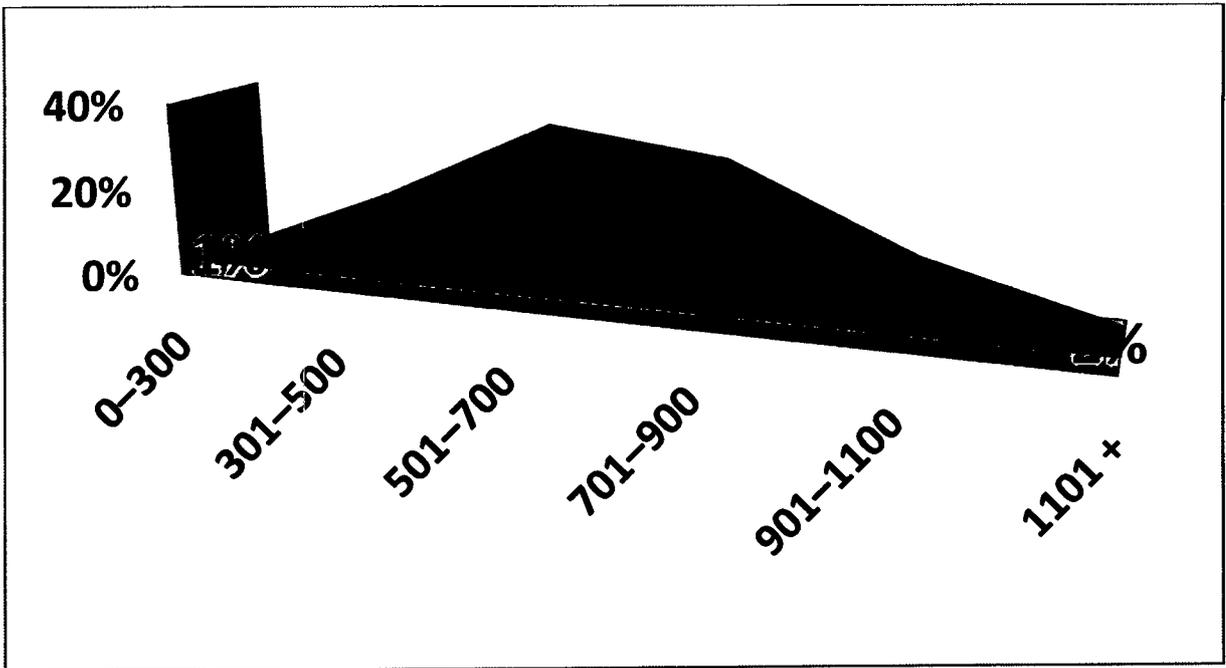
Figure 8: Monthly Income (US dollars)
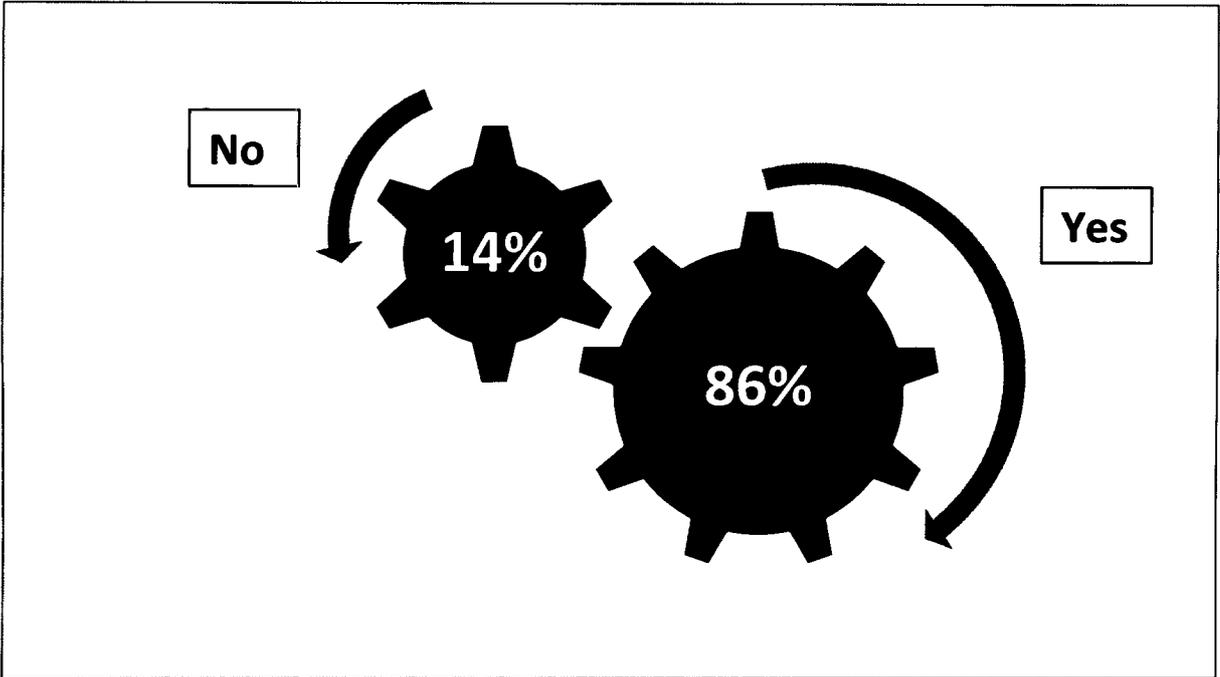
Figure 9: Victims or Witnesses of Violence
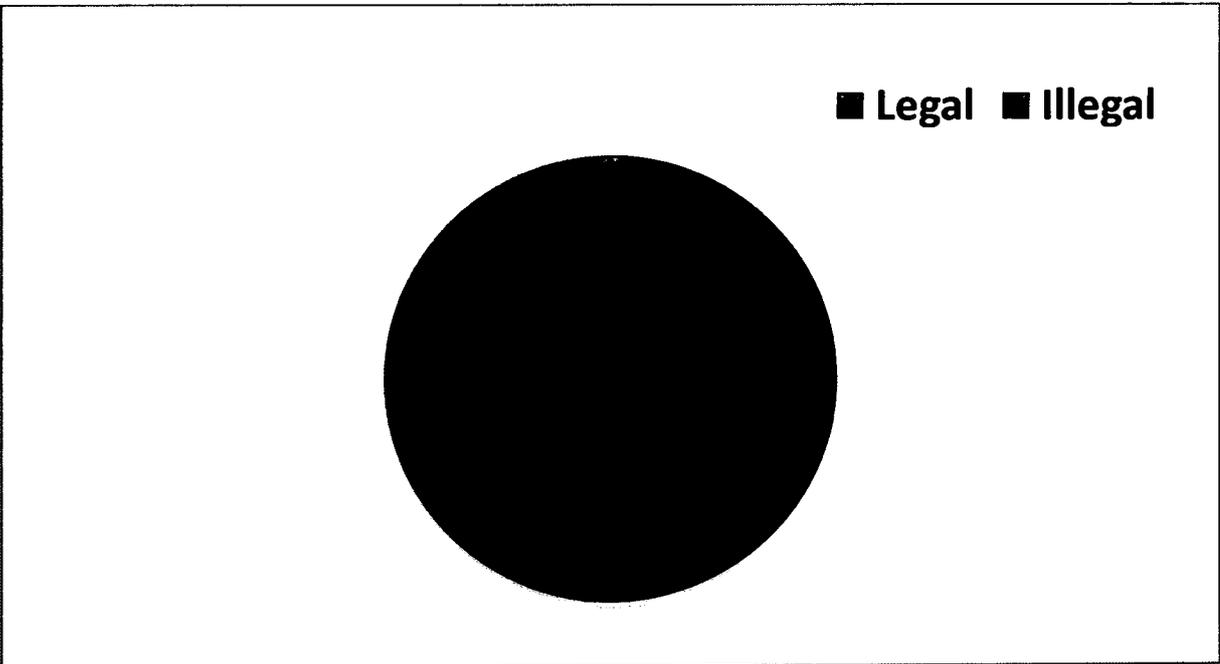
Figure 10: Entry to Lebanon

■ Applied   ■ Have Not Applied
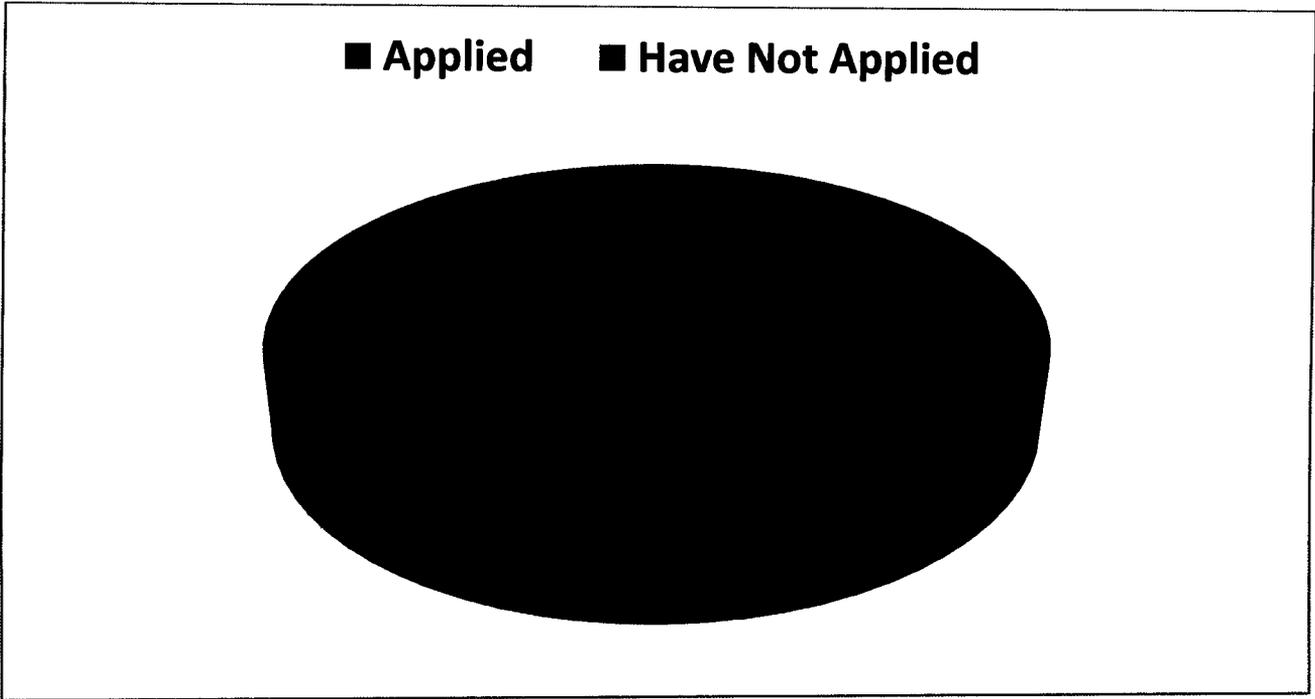
Figure 11: Application for Refugee Status

■ Personally

■ Through a Mediator
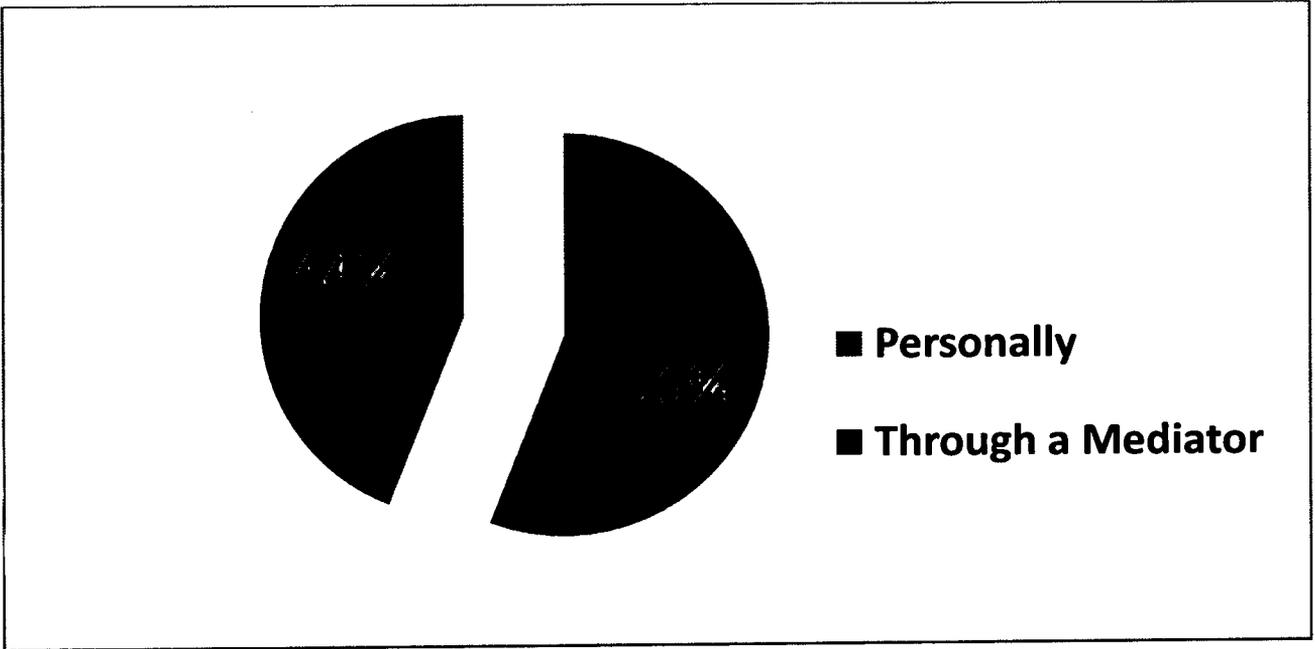
Figure 12: How did the participants apply for the refugee status?

UNHCR Officer

Government Official

Family Member

Friend

12%
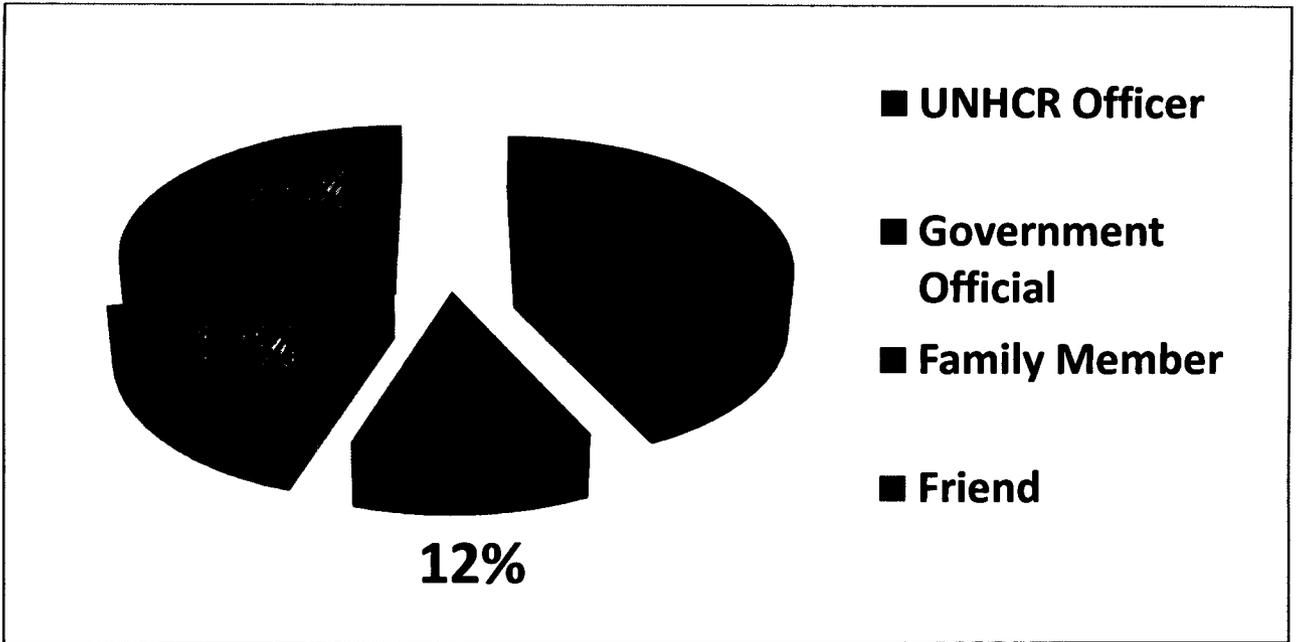
Figure 13: Who is the Mediator?

12%

■ **Yes** ■ **No**
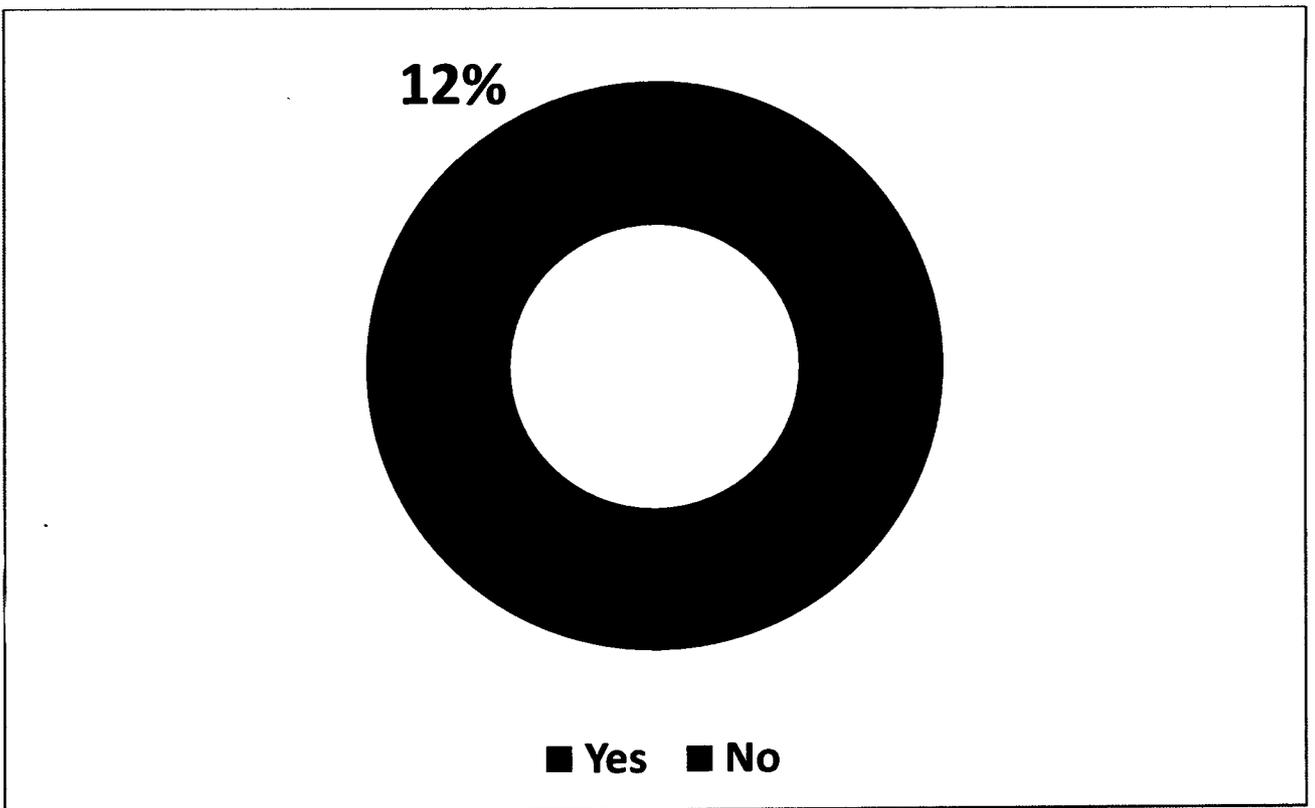
Figure 14: Are Iraqi Official Papers Accredited in Lebanon?
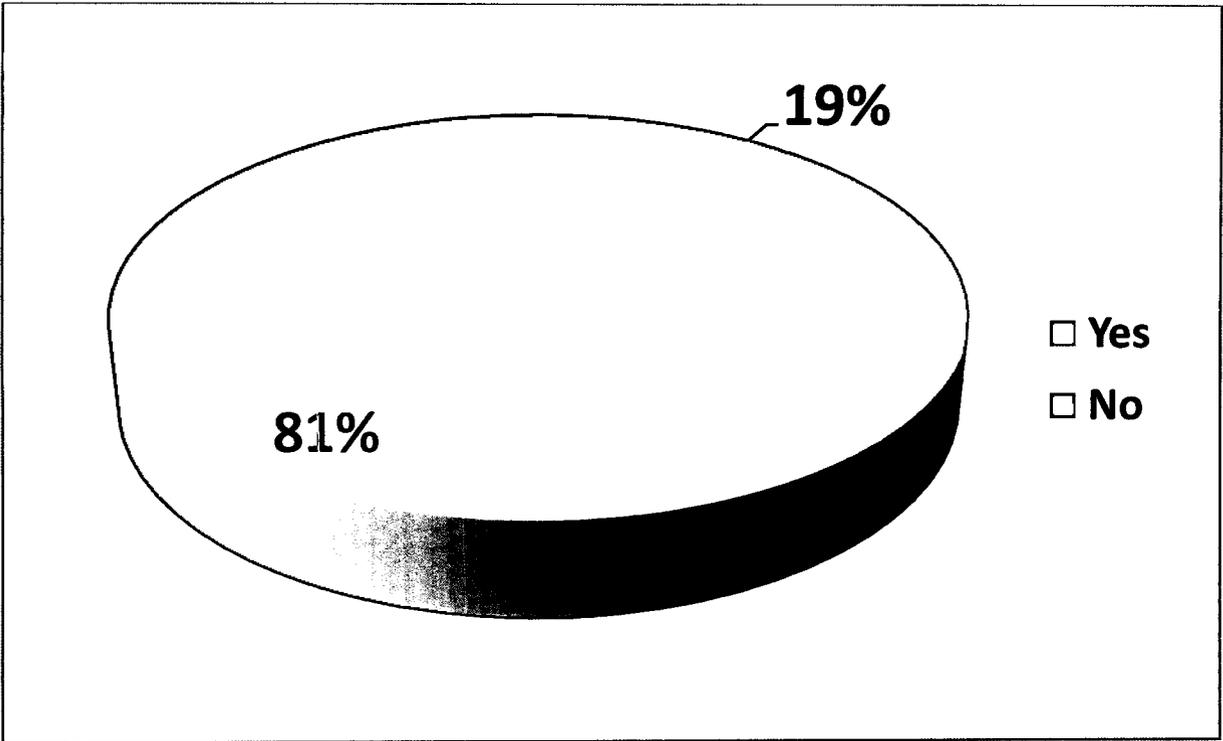
Figure 15: Arrest upon Arrival to Lebanon

19%

81%

□ Yes
□ No

69%

3.2

□ **Receive Assistance**   □ **Do Not Receive Assistance**
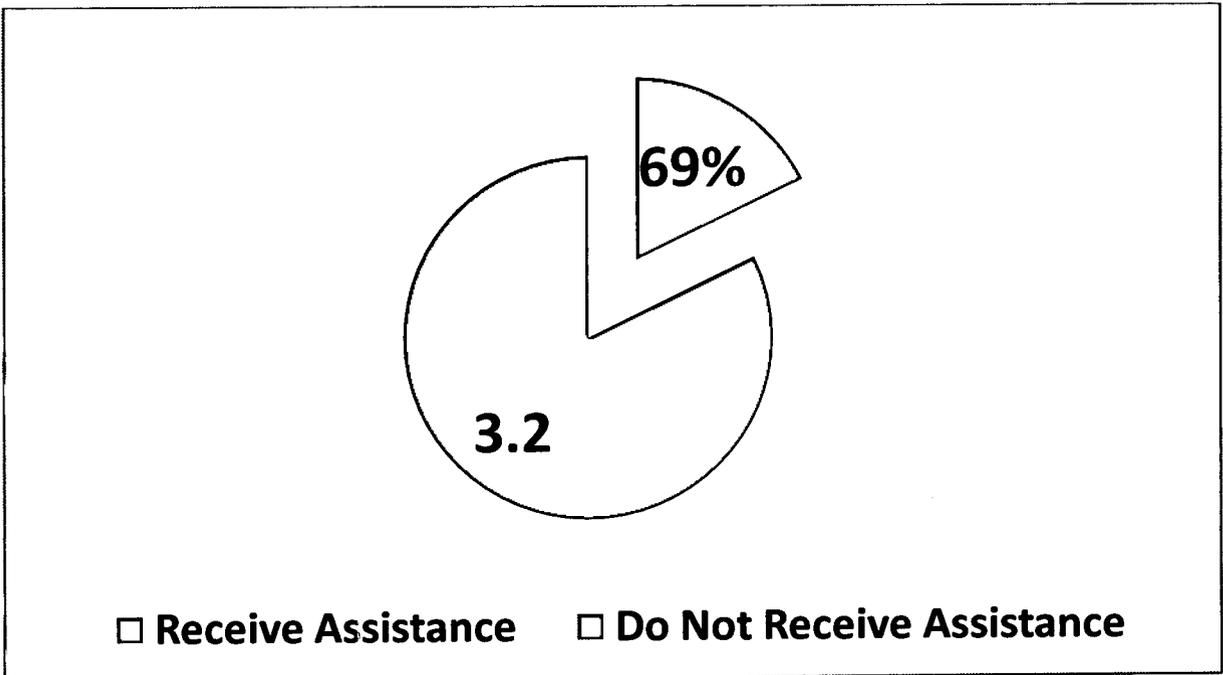
Figure 16: Assistance to Refugees
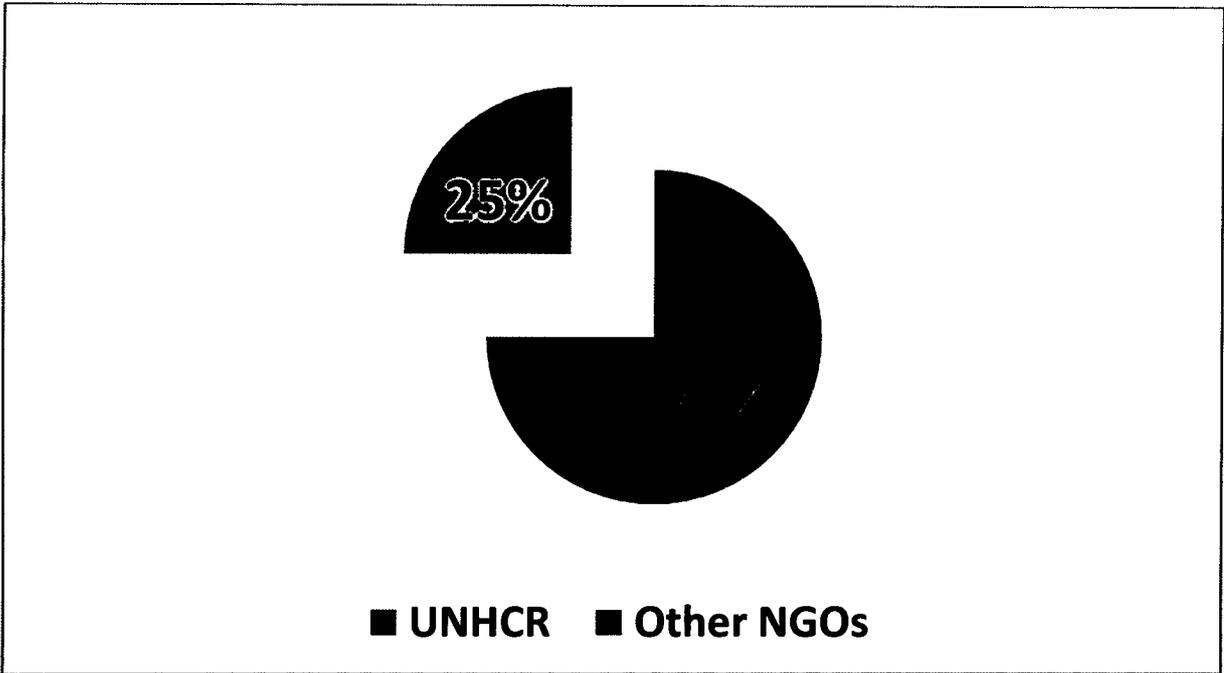
Figure 17: Source of Assistance to refugees
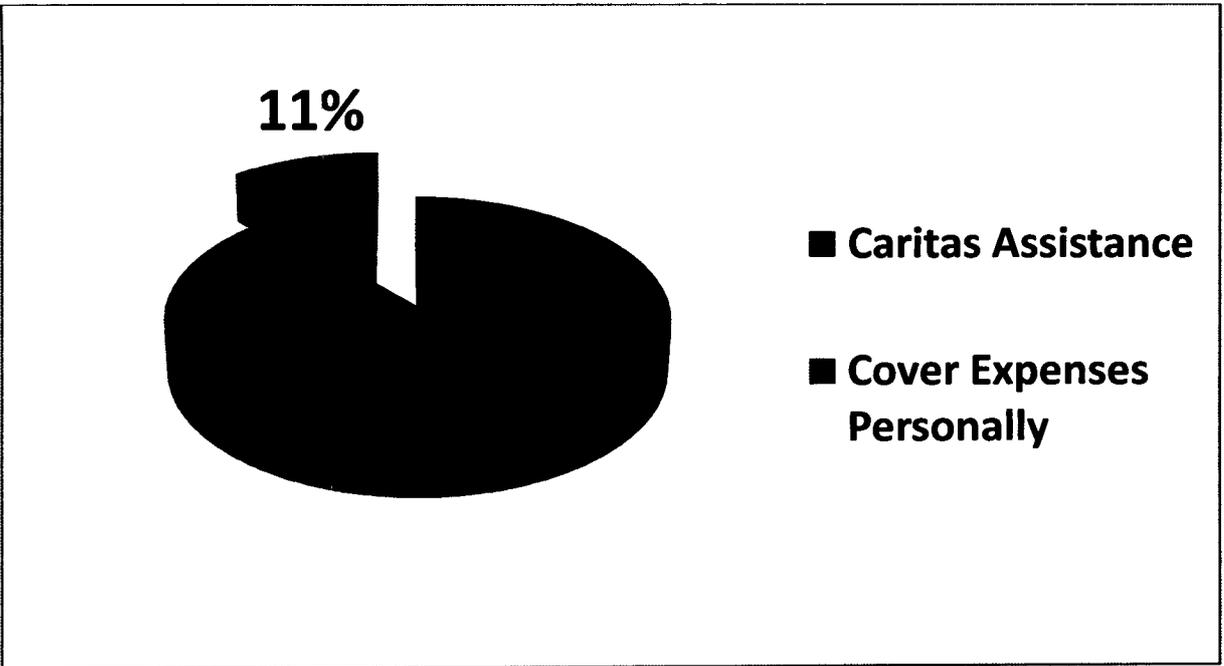
Figure 18: Health Care
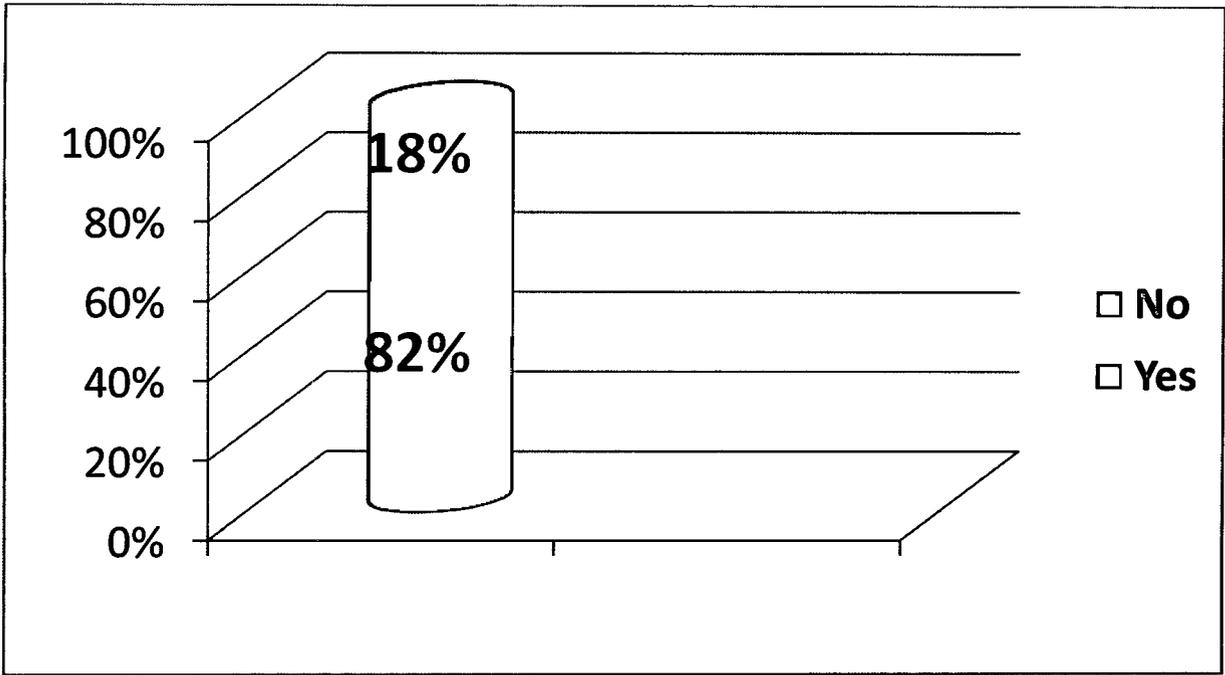
Figure 19: Adaptation to New Environment
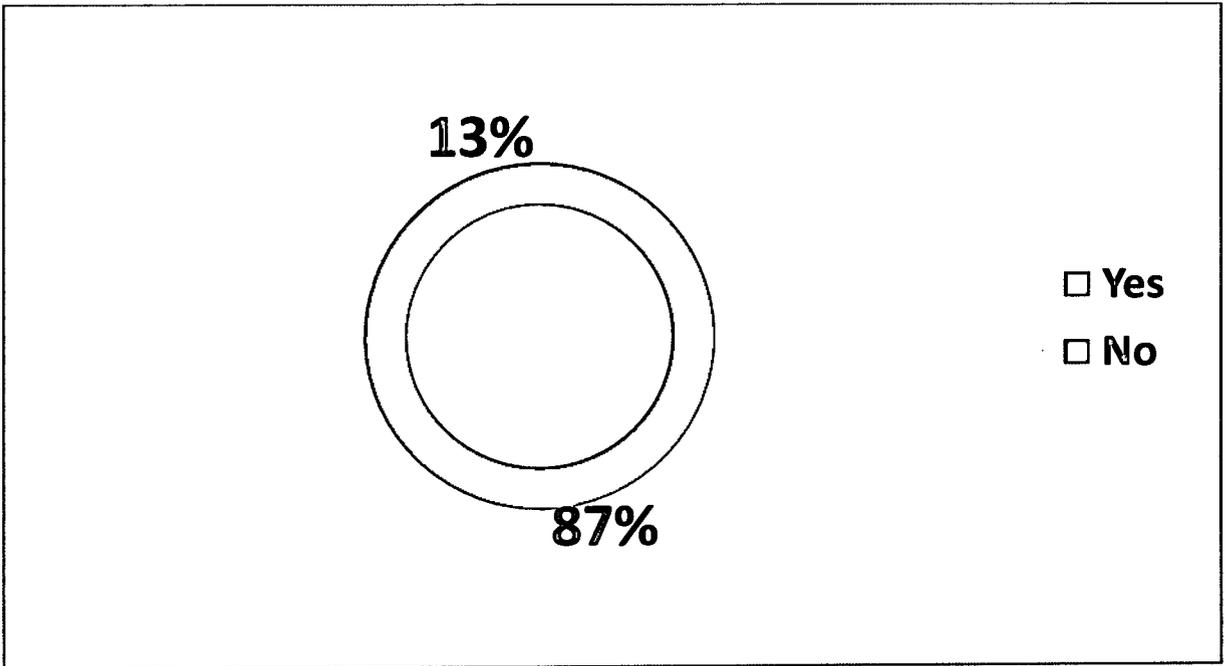
Figure 20: Lebanese Acquaintances and Friends
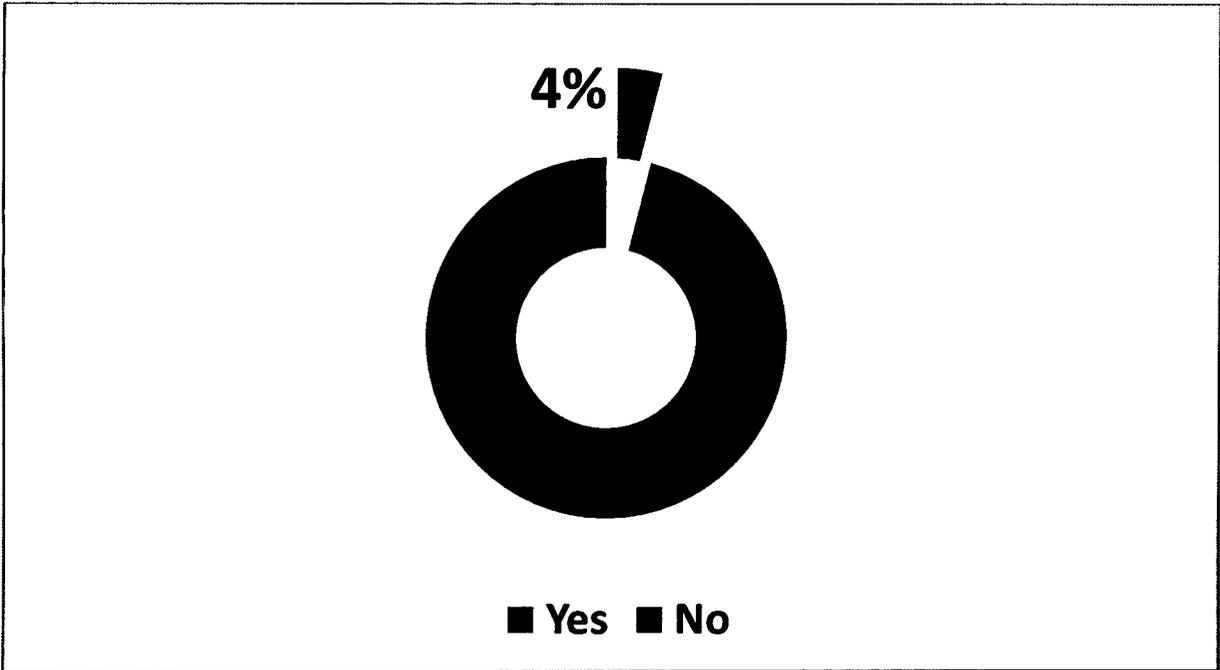
Figure 21: Contact with Other Refugee Communities
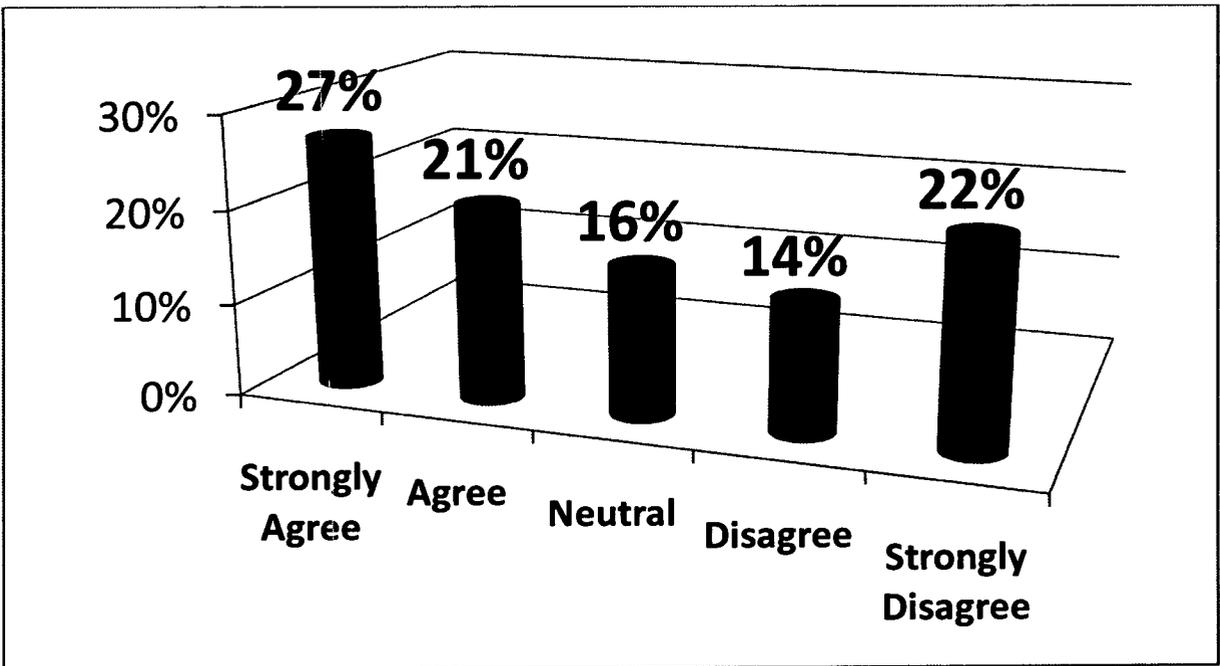
Figure 22: Refugees are Influenced by Host Country's Legal, Social, and Political Contexts
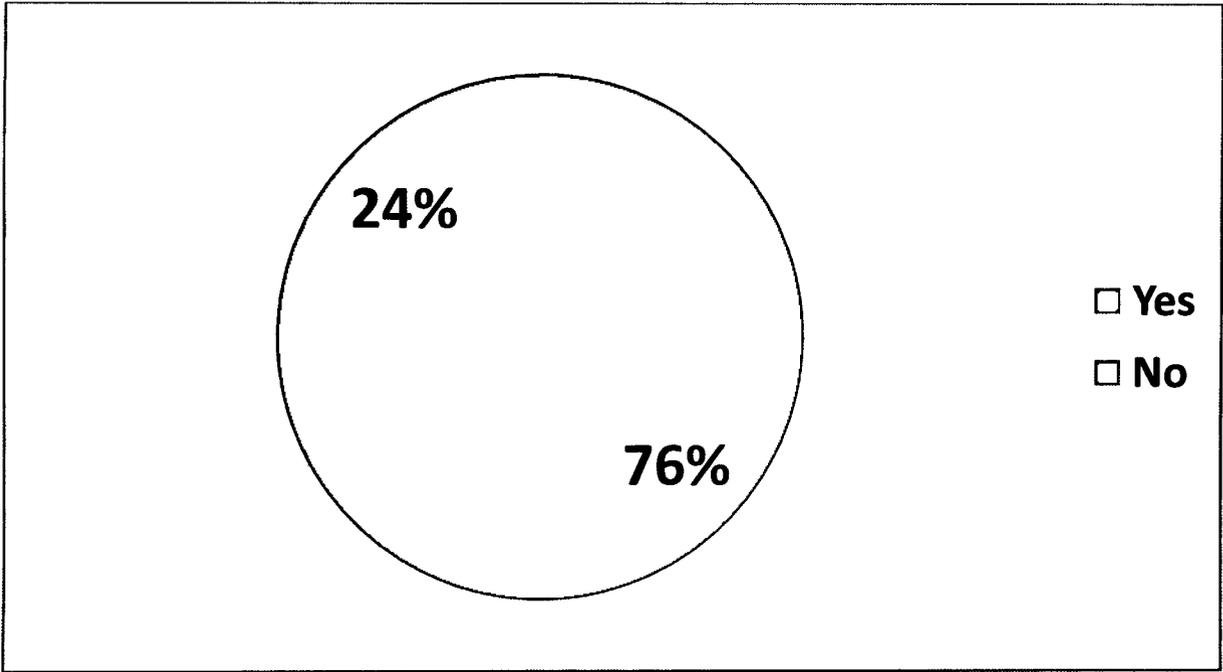
Figure 23: Safe Environment?
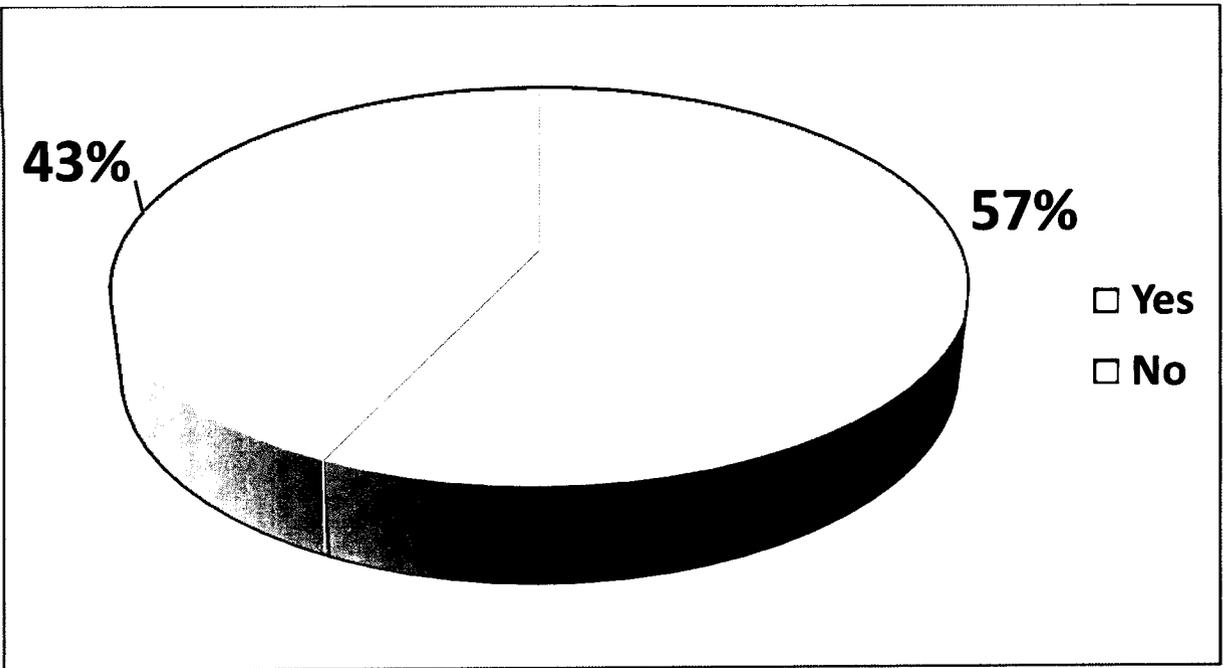
Figure 24: Is Free Movement a Problem?
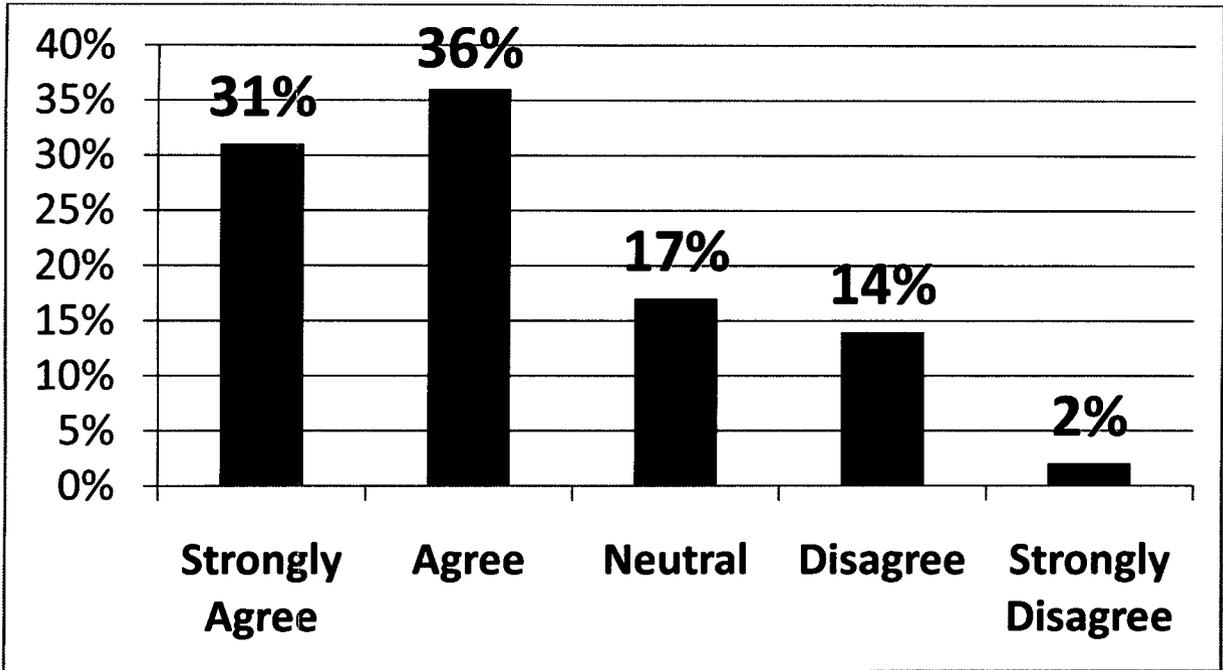
Figure 25: Are Refugees Welcome in Lebanon?
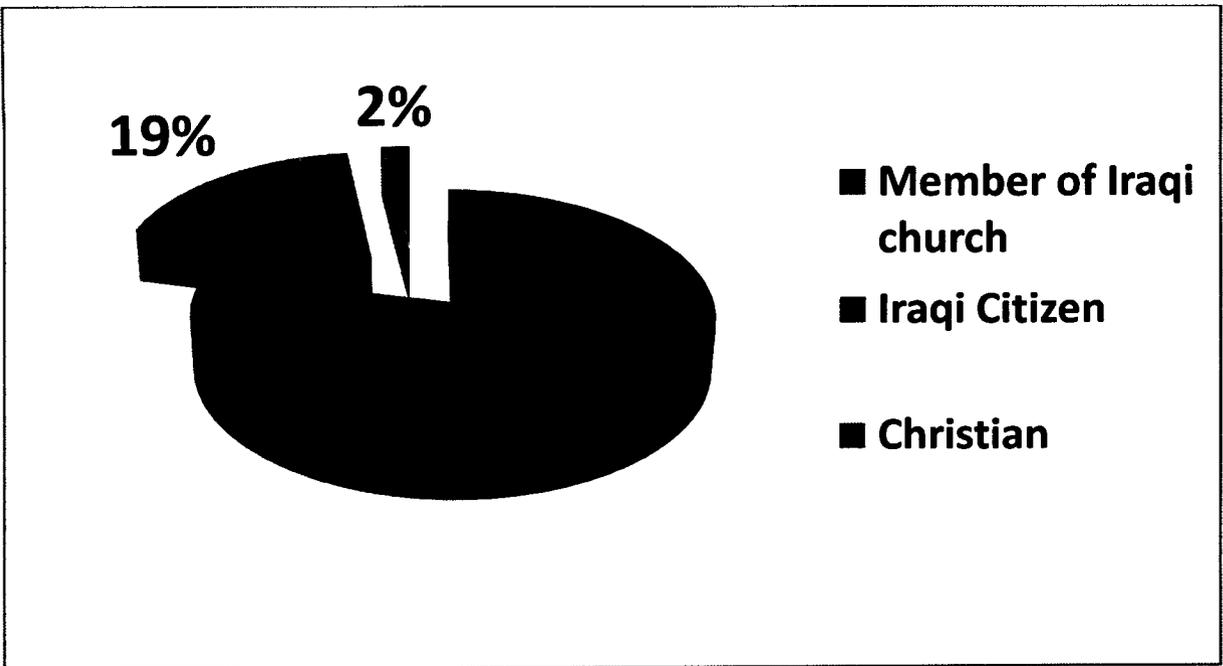
*Figure 26: How do Participants Identify Themselves?*
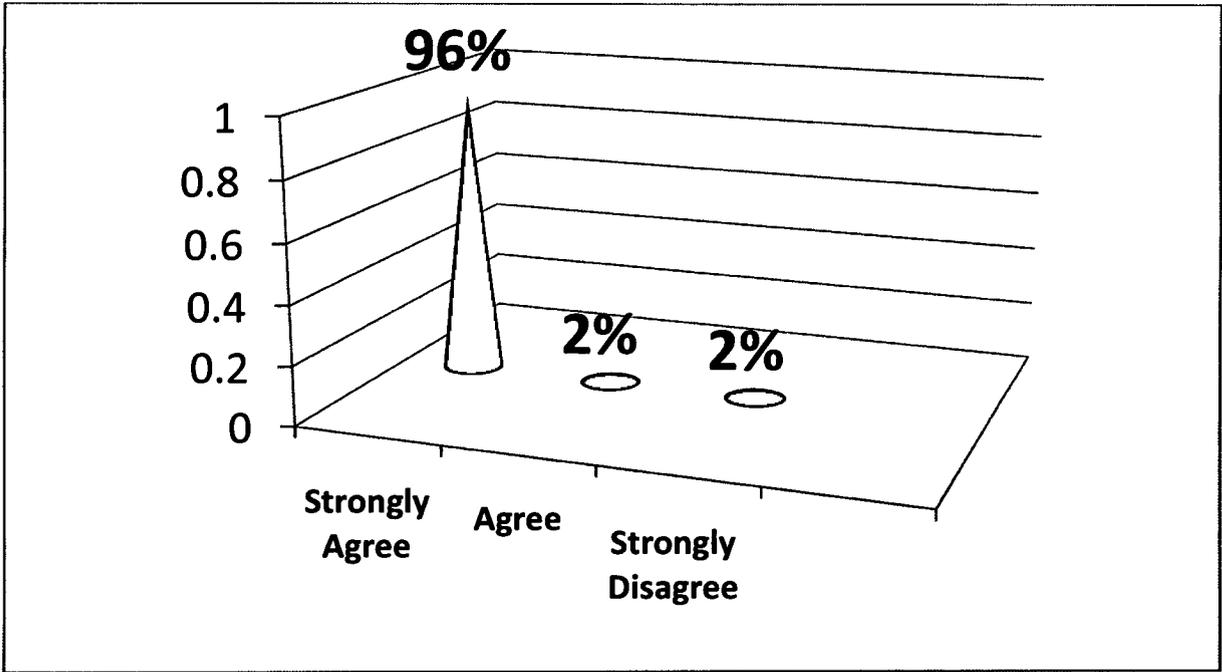
*Figure 27: Refugees Form Communities Based on Religious Affiliation*
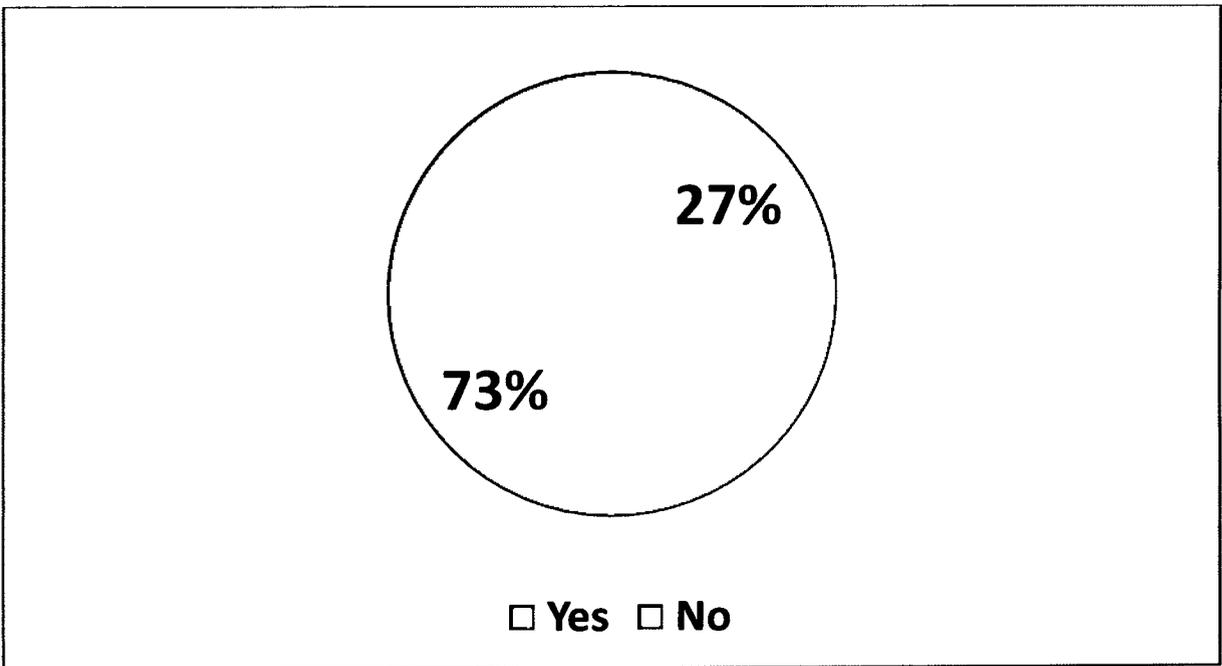
*Figure 28: Do Participants Communicate with Iraqi Refugees from Other Religions?*
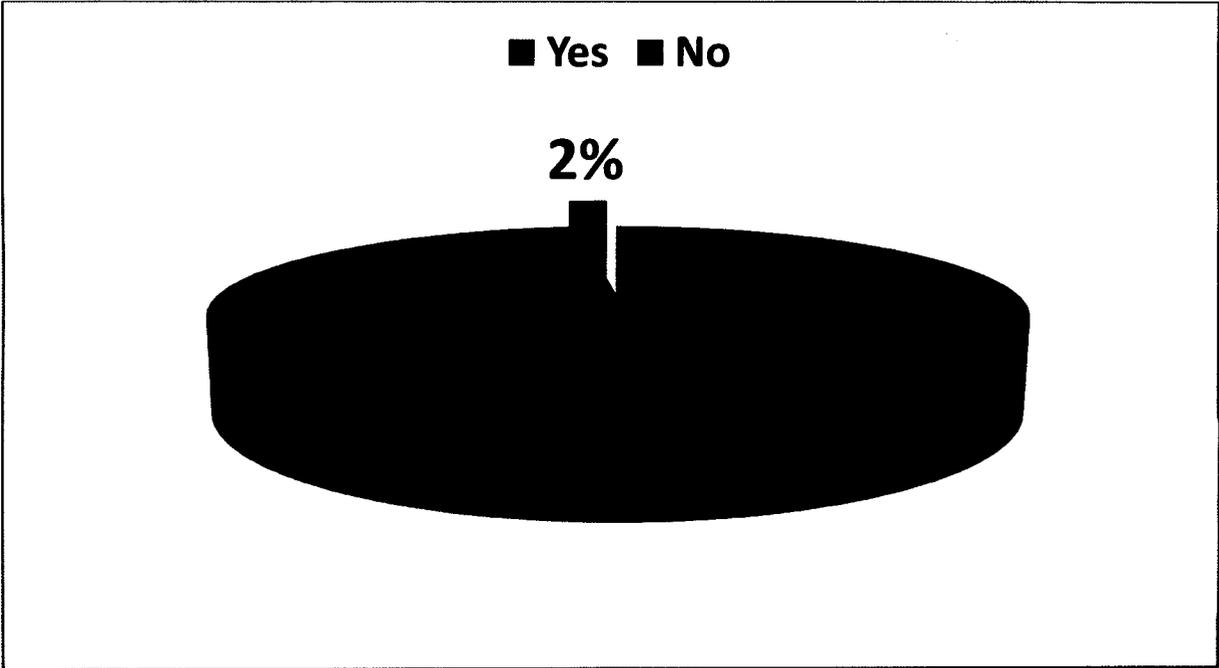
Figure 29: Do Participants Go to Lebanese Churches?