Child Punishment and Maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Causes and Consequences. A Field Study in Erbil City

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Child Punishment and Maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Causes and Consequences. *A Field Study in Erbil City*

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Abstract

Child punishment and maltreatment have become a global concern affecting both rich and poor countries. Child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdish families is a major social, religious and cultural issue that needs to be addressed. However, the topic receives little public recognition and is poorly understood. This research attempts to address gaps in knowledge relating to the topic of child punishment and maltreatment and to make recommendations for policy and practice.

Child punishment and maltreatment are multi faceted and complex phenomena, comprising a range of concerns about the treatment of children both within and outside the family. As an under-reported and under-recognised issue in Kurdish society, this study focuses specifically on the nature and extent of punishment of children by parents in Kurdish households. Gender related issues are also considered, particularly early and forced child marriage as well as so-called 'honour killings'. The main objective of this research is to shed fresh light on child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdish families in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, particularly in its capital, Erbil City.

The research used a mixed methods approach based on a survey of 320 parents of children aged between one and 18 years old, as well as semi-structured interviews with 19 professionals employed in various child welfare services such as Save the Children and Helpline 116, as well as academics in the Psychology, Social Work and Sociology Departments at Salahaddin University.

Over 90% of the participating parents (mothers fractionally more than fathers) used forms of physical and emotional punishment that could constitute child maltreatment. Children of all ages were exposed to punishments constituting maltreatment, but younger children experienced less maltreatment than older children. The majority of the interview respondents believed that religion and gender are major contributory factors influencing expressions of severe child punishment and maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region. 66.9% of parents surveyed were not aware that severe forms of punishments they used amounted to child maltreatment, rather they considered them to be socially acceptable and part of normal parental disciplinary measures. Professional respondents were of the view that there is a lack of legislation in the Kurdistan Region concerning the protection of children from forms of severe punishment, as well as a lack of support for social workers engaging in attempts to intervene in the lives of abused children.

The study calls for increased attention by the Kurdistan Regional Government, NGOs, Kurdish households and society to work together to raise public awareness and address abusive forms of child punishment. This includes government action to establish legal provisions to underpin more effective child protection practice.

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Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
ID	Iraqi Dinar
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRSO	Kurdistan Region Statistics Office
KSC	Kurdistan Save The Children
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

List of contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

> Childhood should be carefree, playing in the sun; not living a nightmare in the darkness of the soul (Pelzer, 1995,p.98)

1.1 Introduction

The abuse of children is connected with historical conceptions and prospects (Reed, 2004) and may have existed in families and societies since the beginning of civilization (Barnett, Miller-Perrin and Perrin, 2010). In fact, only in modern times has global society recognised its existence and has argued that child maltreatment is a serious social, health and economic problem in both Western and Eastern countries (Myers, 2002; Gilbert *et al.*, 2009). Many organisations have now been created locally, nationally and internationally, in order to try to prevent children abuse, violence and neglect (NSPCC, 2012a; HM Government, 2015). Despite this growing global awareness, child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has been largely a hidden social issue. Without a conceptual framework, research in this area has been patchy and fragmented (National Research Council, 1993). In the past, Kurdish child care services were only concerned with orphans and street children; the treatment of children within families was considered purely a family affair.

Children have been subject to abuse by their parents or caregivers since early times (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (U.S.), 2016). For many centuries, laws were incapable of protecting children's rights against abuse and violence. During the late 1800s, children in the United Kingdom were treated as part of their father's estate while women were considered as the property of their husbands (Maillard, 2012). Awareness concerning child protection was stimulated in the UK in 1837 by Dickens in his novel *Oliver Twist* which pointed the finger at England's substandard laws (Lepore, 2016) which focused on placing orphan children into hospices without protecting their rights (Myers, 2008). In the 1870s, as well as the issue of child protection in Western countries, child labour, particularly in an industrial environment, became more of a public issue (NSPCC, 2011).

In 1874, the unsavoury life conditions of an eight-year old American orphan named Mary Ellen Wilson, who suffered daily from whippings and beatings at her foster home, came to the public's attention (Wolfe, 1999; Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005). Since at that time there were no organisations or courts to protect children against abuse, the orphan's ordeal was

handled by the lawyers from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). These lawyers argued that there should be laws against child maltreatment that should be separate from laws on animal abuse. Mary Ellen Wilson's case was presented to the court, and the foster mother was sentenced to one-year of imprisonment due to assault and battery. The case created sufficient public sentiment that it led to the formation of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC) in December 1874 (Markel, 2009; Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005). Mary Ellen presented herself in the court and stated:

> "Mamma has been in the habit of whipping and beating me almost every day … She used to whip me with a twisted whip - a rawhide….I have now on my head two black-and-blue marks which were made by Mamma with the whip, and a cut on the left side of my forehead which was made by a pair of scissors in Mamma's hand; she struck me with the scissors and cut me. ... I never dared speak to anybody, because if I did I would get whipped" (cited in Markel, 2009, p.1).

In other western countries such as the United Kingdom, the protection of children had been considered as an invasion of privacy into families (Fogarty, 2008). However in 1883, a banker from Liverpool, Thomas Agnew, established the first child protection service in the country, the Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (BBC 2002; NSPCC 2012b). The institution changed its name to British National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty in Children in 1889 and in the same year, the 'Children's Charter' was passed as a child protection law in the country. This Act enabled the court and society to intervene for the first time to protect children from the cruelty of abusive parents or caregivers (CFCA-Resource Sheet, 2017; UK Parliament, 1889; Keating, 1979).

In the Middle East too, child maltreatment is not a recent issue. Throughout history, abuse and even murder of children were common, as were poverty, domestic violence and discrimination against women. The Qur'an, Islam's Holy Book, clearly states that the killing of children is forbidden and considered a mortal sin. As Sahih's International Interpretation of the Quran states:

"And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin" (Quran Verse (17:31)- English Translation, Cited in: (Chapter(17), sūrat l-Isrā (The Night Journey), the Quranic Arabic Corpus, (n.d), http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=17&verse=31).

However, even today, in some Islamic regions, maltreatment of children and physical punishment such as beating continue. Moreover, there are some Islamic scriptures which appear to contradict the teachings in the Qur'an. The Hadith, the recorded speeches of Muhammad (Prophet of Islam) states:

"Ask your children to start offering prayers at the age of six years. If they do not listen to your repeated warnings, you may beat them to become regular at offering prayers when they are seven years old" (Mustadrak al-wasail,v2,p.625) Cited in (Chapter 74: Physical Punishment/Principles of Upbringing Children (Anon n.d.), Al-Islam.org: Available: https://www.al-islam.org/principles-upbringing-children-ayatullah-ibrahim-amini/chapter-74-physical-punishment).

Moreover, there are continuing debates about the status of women in Islam that link to relevant issues such as clothing and polygamous marriages. Other verses in the Qur'an speak about female submission to men in general and to husbands in particular (Ali, 2003). One important verse occurs in the fourth chapter of Surat - al - Nisa (Women)::

> **"**Men are the protectors of and maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means. Therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands) and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard. As to those women on whose part you see ill – conduct, admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their beds and (last) beat them (lightly, if it is useful). But if they return to obedience, seek not against them (means of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great" (Qur'an An – Nisa 4:34) cited in Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Quran: Surah An-Nisa' (The Women), Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan 2016, available at: http://noblequran.com/translation/).

Even though some Islamic verses (concerning 'child discipline') appear to justify beating children and women, I argue that such punishments should still be considered maltreatment. Such verses have indeed allowed or even encouraged some believers in Muslim countries to inflict physical punishments on children and women for disobedience.

After World War II, in Europe some governments became more interested in children's welfare since families and communities were experiencingpoverty and therefore were unable to provide for the needs of children. Commonly referred to as incest, perversion or 'moral danger',

child sexual abuse was associated with poverty during the post-war years, but received less attention that physical abuse. Prostitution was not regarded as a priority social problem. Moreover, Western society generally focused on combating the spread of venereal disease which was blamed on sexually active young women due to their 'lack of hygiene'. The existence of child sexual abuse was widely acknowledged only in the 1980s (Delap, 2015).

A new study on child maltreatment – 'The Battered Child Syndrome' (Kempe *et al*., 1962) exposed the reality, understanding and identification of child maltreatment and offered proprosals for ways of reporting suspected abuse. By 1967, all US States had begun to respond to the problem and created child protection legislation allowing individuals to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to government agencies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). In 1974, the American Congress accepted the *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment (CAPTA)* Act to protect children against maltreatment. The law was re-authorised many times in 1978, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, and 2003; and was subsequently amended in 2010 (United States, Office of the Federal Register, 2010).

In the United States, awareness of psychological child maltreatment and neglect developed during the 1970s. In 1977, emotional abuse was categorised separately from other forms of child maltreatment by US legislators, followed in the 1980s by the United Kingdom (Iwaniec, 1995). In 1983, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) in the UK created 60 child protection groups. In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) required the 194 ratifying governments to meet children's basic needs in respecting the right to survival and development, to protection against violence, abuse and neglect, to proper education, family responsibility for proper caring and the right to expression (Save the Children, 2015).

In 2000 two optional protocols were added to the UNCRC to protect children under the age of 18 from forcible recruitment into the armed forces and to prohibit child prostitution, child pornography and child trafficking into slavery. These two protocols have now been ratified by more than 120 states. Moreover, in 2011, a third optional protocol created a communications procedure to enable abused children to submit complaints reagarding violations of their rights directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (WHO, 2016).

In Iraqi Kurdistan, and indeed throughout Iraq, child protection has been a longstanding social concern, and a series of laws have been established. For example, the Iraqi Juvenile Law (1972), the Welfare Act (1982) and Article 3 No. 76 of the Welfare Act (1983)aimed to protect

children against violence and maltreatment (Sabri, no date). Moreover, in 2006, the Iraqi constitution reviewed and changed Article 126 of the 1982 Welfare Act concerning child protection against maltreatment from abusive parents. In 2007, the Iraqi Parliament passed Law No.23 and formally adopted the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child designed to safeguard children against exploitation, trafficking, prostitution and pornography, as well as recruitment into the armed forces (Parliament-Iraq, 2007). In 2011, the Kurdistan Parliament passed another law, 'Act No.8: The Act of Combating Domestic Violence Law' that focuses not only on child protection but also on domestic violence against women (Kurdistan Parliament, 2011).

The obvious question (to be explored throughout this thesis) then arises: to what extent have all these laws been implemented?

1.2 Definitions of Concepts

This research explores child punishment and maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Previous studies of child maltreatment (Korbin, 2002; Ferrari, 2002; Raman and Hodes, 2012) have highlighted the significance of cultural beliefs and practices in influencing parenting processes and parent – child relationships, although Elliott and Urquiza (2006: 805) argue that 'the field of child maltreatment continues to flounder when it comes to understanding cultural differences'. Children's upbringing and discipline, as the basic foundations for socialisation and cultural transmission (Khoury-Kassabri, 2010) are ingrained in specific cultural contexts and vary between cultures (Kuczynski, 2003). According to Korbin (1980), identifying and defining abuse and neglect across cultural boundaries requires understanding of the cultural influences at play. She argued that:

> "Three levels must be distinguished at which the cultural context comes into play in defining child abuse and neglect. The first encompasses childrearing practices that may be viewed as acceptable by one group but as unacceptable or even abusive and neglectful by another. The second level involves idiosyncratic departure from culturally acceptable standards. And the third level involves societal abuse and neglect of children." (Korbin, 1980 p.1)

Since there is lack of clarity about different concepts of discipline, punishment and maltreatment in a society similar to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, I start by defining key terms.

1.2.1 Child discipline

Children throughout the world experience various types of parental discipline. Discipline means to teach knowledge and skills (Ghate et.al, 1998). However, definitions of discipline in children upbringing vary and are often equated with control and punishment. There is a great deal of controversy and wide disagreement about approaches to disciplining children, which can leave parents confused about effective ways to set limits and self – control in their children (Nieman and Shea, 2004 p.1). UNICEF (2010.p xv) suggests that: 'Child discipline is an integral part of child rearing in all cultures. It teaches children self-control and acceptable behavior'.Discipline also promotes new skills such as managing behaviour, solving problems and dealing with uncomfortable scenarios. It teaches children to learn from their mistakes and to deal appropriately with emotions such as anger and disappointment. Positive reinforcement, such as praise and reward, encourages good manners and provides children with clear incentives to follow rules. Moreover, discipline fosters positive parent – child relationships which reduces attention – seeking behaviours further motivating children to develop confidence in managing their behaviour (Morin, 2019). Although discipline may promote some feelings of guilt, it does not involve shaming, which can be damaging for a child's self-esteem.

UNICEF (2010, p. xv) acknowledges that:

> although the need for child discipline is broadly recognized, there is considerable debate regarding violent physical and psychological disciplinary practices. Research has found that these have negative impacts on children's mental and social development. Violent discipline is also a violation of a child's right to protection from all forms of violence while in the care of their parents or other caregivers, as set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Studies that examine parental use of corporal punishments refer simultaneously to discipline and physical abuse. This implies that physical maltreatment may occur in the context of what parents perceive to be everyday disciplinary practices (Glaser, 2011).

1.2.2 Child punishment

Over 25 years ago Straus and Donnelly (1993, p.420) explained that, “There is no standard usage of the concept of physical punishment and corporal punishment.” They defined corporal punishment as, “The use of physical force with intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purposes of correction or control of the child’s behaviour.” Recently Morin (2019), in offering advice to parents, has argued that, “Punishment is about controlling a child rather than teaching the child how to control himself. Most of the time, punishment changes the way a child thinks about him/herself.”

Four common types of punishment are: i) physical: slapping, spanking, switching, paddling or belting; ii) verbal: shaming, ridiculing, swearing or saying cruel words such as “I don’t love you.”; iii) withholding rewards: setting a condition before getting a reward, eg. “You are not allowed to watch TV unless you finish your homework”; iv) penalties: eg “You broke the window, so you will pay for it with your allowance.” (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 2009). While physical and verbal punishments are considered ineffective in teaching discipline to children, and may be a source of trauma, withholding rewards and penalties can be effective disciplinary methods though this depends on how they are used by parents.

Corporal punishment is, in itself, multi–dimensional and its impact is linked to frequency, severity and the context in which it is used by parents (Lansford et.al 2014). Some parents do not consider corporal punishment as harmful or abusive to children, for example, a gentle slap on hand when a toddler reaches for a hot stove. However, there is continuing debate about the always a wide debate about the discernment of this spectrum (Whipple and Richey, 1997; Fontes, 2006).

The line between corporal punishment and physical maltreatment depends on the severity of physical and/or emotional damage to children as a consequence of the punishment. In many societies parents can face criminal charges for physical assault depending on the frequency and severity of the injuries inflicted, determined by the cultural norms for discipline (Straus and Donnelly, 2001). There is a notable absence of evidence to support the effective use of corporal punishment in reducing misbehaviour among children. Rather, corporal punishment has been shown to be related to variety of negative consequences including aggression, delinquency and mental health problems (Davis, 1996; Lansford et.al 2014).

1.2.3 Child maltreatment

There is no single definition of child maltreatment, as the understanding globally of what constitutes abuse varies with the child's age, culture and context. However, the experience of significant harm and suffering appears to be at the core of most definitions (Asmussen, 2010; Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005). The World Health Organisation defines child maltreatment as:

> All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect of a child of less than 18 years of age and resulting in actual or potential harm to a child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (WHO, 2002a, pp.60-61).

Child maltreatment exists in homes, schools, organisations and communities in which a child interacts (WHO, 2002a; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016;). It is considered a global problem with serious lifelong consequences for children, families and societies (WHO, 2016; Westby, 2007; Ajilian Abbasi *et al.,* 2015; Norman *et al.*, 2012; Beitchman *et al.,* 1992; Mullen *et al..*,1996). In spite of recent national surveys in several low and middle-income countries, there is still however a lack of information in many countries regarding this issue (WHO, 2016).

In recent decades, various stakeholders such as national and state legislative bodies, agency officials and researchers have developed definitions of maltreatment for different purposes, and these may vary across groups and within them (Faller 2003; Wolfe 1999). Legal definitions may describe different forms of child maltreatment for reporting and criminal prosecution purposes and those definitions can vary from state to state. This variation also applies to agency guidelines, as they handle and process reports, conduct investigations and provide appropriate interventions. In addition, researchers employ varying approaches to define and measure maltreatment, as well as child neglect, making it difficult to compare findings across studies. Despite those differences, there are some commonalities across definitions (Goldman *et al.*, 2003).

Some scholars believe that to fullyunderstand maltreatment requires the classification and definition of different types of maltreatment as well as a single classification in relation to neglect. Maltreatment is commonly categorised into subtypes of physical, emotional, sexual, as well as neglect, although, as Pritchard (2004, p. 11) argues: different types of maltreatment

overlap, interact or occur in sequence for the individual child. Some writers attempt to explain child abuse in terms of historical and contemporary perspectives on the conceptualization of maltreatment, believing that in each period of history there have been entirely different definitions and interpretations (Binggeli, Hart and Brassard, 2001). Therefore, one definition in one period could be different from that in another time. In other words, the definition of the term child maltreatment some 40 years ago is different from that of today and therefore may no longer be applicable (Koralek, 1992).

In developed countries, the notion of child maltreatment and how it is viewed is different compared with some developing or third-world countries due to basic differences in family circumstances, parents' perspectives towards maltreatment and neglect as well as social, educational, economic and cultural contexts (Taylor and Daniel, 2005). Any global responses to child maltreatment issues must consider the different beliefs and parenting arrangements that reflect cultural diversity around the world. Culture is society's common fund of beliefs and behaviours and its concepts of how people should conduct themselves (WHO, 2002b). Included in these concepts are ideas that acts of omission or commission might constitute abuse and neglect (Gilbert *et al.*, 2009). In other words, culture helps to define the acceptable principles of bringing up children and taking care of them (Norman *et al.*, 2012).

Different societies have different norms about acceptable parenting practices (WHO, 2002b) and ways of addressing child maltreatment are developed based on a general understanding of the nature, extent, and consequences of maltreatment across the society. Efforts to address child maltreatment should be based on clear definitions and accurate estimates of its prevalence nationally and locally (English, 1998). In addition, the conditions in any society determine the prevalence of specific forms of child maltreatment which may not be found in other countries. However, in terms of a social definition, child maltreatment is based on a society's current social perspectives. How a society defines the nature of maltreatment varies and what is considered acceptable treatment in one society may not be acceptable in another (Korbin, 1980; Coulton *et al*., 1995; Korbin, 2002; Nadan, Spilsbury and Korbin, 2015)). Every society has its own perspectives in defining child maltreatment. And different forms of child discipline in different cultural and community contexts form part of children's education and upbringing though they may not be acceptable in other cultures or communities (Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005).

Despite these limitations in defining the word 'maltreatment' there are several commonly accepted and theoretically supported definitions. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, child maltreatment is defined as: "Any act or series of acts of commission (child abuse) or omission (child neglect) by a parent or other caregivers that result in harm, or threat of harm to a child" (Leeb, 2008). The UK Government discusses child maltreatment in the following way:

"Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly, by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them; or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children" (NSPCC 2009, p.1).

In summary, maltreatment is a complex and somewhat paradoxical concept which makes it difficult to define under an overall fixed definition. It is important to determine first the different types of maltreatment and then clarify what could be the exact concept of child maltreatment as the term encompasses all forms of abuse, including sexual, physical, emotional and neglect.

Child maltreatment in Kurdish families has historical, cultural and socio-economic roots in a society in which many children have been physically and psychologically maltreated. Yet within Iraqi Kurdistan there is still no precise definition of the concept of maltreatment. This presents significant definitional problems for anyone attempting to research the phenomenon in the Kurdish context. Asking parents about *child maltreatment* would be ineffective as a research strategy as the term itself is not understood. Therefore, a different approach was taken in this study in order to investigate the nature and extent of parental behaviours, such as methods of physical punishment, which could be seen to be abusive under broadly accepted international definitions of the term.

In order to provide a broad framework to research child maltreatment in Iraqi Kurdistan, the definition provided by World Health Organisation has been adopted in this study:

> All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect of a child of less than 18 years of age and resulting in actual or potential harm to a child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (WHO, 2002a, pp.60-61).

Table 1 provides further definitions of types of abuse and common physical and behavioural signs of child abuse and neglect.

This study focuses on physical and psychological/emotional child punishment and maltreatment in families in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. This decision reflects the challenges of investigating a highly sensitive topic in a strongly patriarchal society in which family affairs remain firmly in the private domain. This privacy has acquired prime importance to the family unit as a space recognized as underpinning socio-cultural structures, and forming a self-sustaining institution ensuring ideological and cultural stability across society (Alizadeh, 2012). It also reflects the status of this research as a first step in generating empirical evidence about the nature of child punishment and maltreatment within the family in Erbil City, Iraqi Kurdistan, and underlines the need to proceed with care in order to maximize the validity of the findings.

Table 1 Common physical and behavioural signs of child abuse and neglect

Adapted from Young-Marquardt and National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants, UNC-CH, 2004; Cited in (Oku, 2006, p.3)

Type of Abuse	Type of Abuse	Behavioural Signs
Physical Abuse From CFOC[1], Appendix K, Glossary p.481 Wesley, Dennis, and Tyndall (1997)	• Bruises and marks on the face, neck, back, buttocks, arms, thighs, ankles, abdomen, genitals or back of legs • Burns or injuries in the shape of the object that caused the injury such as: bite marks, hand prints, cigarette burns, belt buckle markings or burns from scalding liquids • Unexplained or several broken bones, especially a broken rib, severe skull fracture or other major head injury	• Explanation for a physical injury that is not consistent with the injury or the child's developmental age • Avoidance of adult contact •behavioural extremes—passive or aggressive • Inappropriate or advanced maturity • Empty or frozen stare; Fear when other children cry; Seeking affection from all adults (does not favour parents or other close relatives); Wearing clothes that cover the body and is not appropriate for the weather
Neglect From Neglect Appendix K, Glossary p.481 Wesley, Dennis, and Tyndall (1997)	• Inappropriate clothes • Poor hygiene • Consistent hunger • Medical needs that are not addressed • Repeated cases of head lice • Parent or caregiver who is impaired because of substance abuse, or physical or mental illness	• Tiredness or lack of energy • Whispering speech • Empty facial expressions • Frequent absences or lateness • Begging for or hoarding food • Reporting by child that no caretaker is at home • Lack of adult supervision for long periods of time
Emotional Abuse Emotional Abuse CFOC Appendix K, Glossary p.481 Wesley, Dennis, and Tyndall (1997)	• Delayed physical, emotional or intellectual development • Habits such as rocking, or sucking on fingers, that are not developmentally appropriate, given the child's age	• Withdrawal • Lack of energy • Decreased social contact • Fear of parent/caregiver •behavioural extremes—passive or aggressive; Empty facial expressions • General fear

[1] ***Caring for Our Children***

Sexual Abuse From CFOC, Appendix K, Glossary p.481 Wesley, Dennis, and Tyndall (1997)Smith (2000)	• Pain, itching, bruises, swelling or bleeding around the genital area • Stained or bloody underwear • Difficulty in sitting or walking • A sexually transmitted disease (STD)	• Reporting by child of sexual abuse by parent or adult • Frequent touching/fondling of genitals or masturbation • Inappropriate sexual expression with trusted adults • "Clinginess" fear of separation; Excessive bathing; Acting out the abuse using dolls, drawings or friends • Neglected appearance • Avoidance of certain staff, relatives or friends • Lack of involvement with peers

1.3 Researcher's Position

This section is designed to provide the reader with an understanding of my personal and professional experiences and motives for undertaking this study of child punishment and maltreatment in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

I was born in a rural area of Iraqi Kurdistan where I spent the early part of my childhood. Our village came under attack by Saddam Hussein's forces as the longstanding campaign against the Kurdish population intensified following the Iran Iraq war. Despite repeated aerial bombing attacks during which we hid under furniture inside our home, my family was one of the last to leave the village in 1986. The village was finally destroyed by explosive devices and mines set in the surrounding land. We moved to Erbil City and when I was nine years old my father suffered a stroke. Unable to work, I took over his role as a school cleaner to guarantee the family income. With only one year's break in my schooling, I undertook a range of income generating activities, selling food and household items on the streets of Erbil during the rest of my childhood, engaging in what is commonly described as 'child labour', to support the family. Successful in my schooling I gained a place to study for a degree in sociology. This was my second choice, but supported by an inspirational teacher who continually provided me with suggestions for reading, I developed a love for the subject and began to reframe childhood experiences as broader social phenomena.

Growing up with my parents and siblings in a village community, I was aware of gender-based power relations, between husbands and wives and in different expectations of girls and boys. Boys were given priority over girls for schooling, and choice of marriage partners for girls was often determined by parents, particularly fathers. I was also familiar with family practices of discipline in which physical punishment of women and children by husbands and fathers was not unusual.

After graduating I spent a period of one year as a social researcher with Kurdish Life Aid (KLA) supported by the UK Department for International Development. This post gave me experience of health awareness programmes in hygiene and sanitation across 92 villages and Child to Child programmes (Webb, 1998). This was followed by experience of using Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques, spending three months in a juvenile centre funded by Save the Children Fund (SCF) UK where children were supported to express their concerns through story telling or drawing. I then took up a post as field operations officer with the Kurdish Organization for Mine Awareness (KMA) where I was responsible for coordinating twelve teams concerned with mine awareness and community safety. Continuing to work part time I completed a Masters degree in the role of international NGOs and government institutions in supporting disabled children, especially those injured and disabled by mines. This included a period of three months at Canterbury Christchurch University in the UK where I completed modules on social work with disabled people and older people. Research for my dissertation: "The Role of Government Institutions and NGOs in Taking Care of Physically Disabled People" (Taha, 2006) revealed common experiences of physical and emotional abuse of disabled children by their parents and caregivers. Following completion of my Masters degree in 2006 I became a lecturer in the sociology department at Salahaddin University with responsibility for teaching 'social problems', 'industrial sociology' and 'rural society'. Two years later, with support from Ersta Sköndal University in Sweden, I was centrally involved in the establishment of the social work department at Salahaddin University, the first in Kurdistan. These experiences heightened my awareness of the blurred lines between child punishment and maltreatment within families, and prepared me to undertake the empirical research that forms the basis of this thesis.

The overall purpose of the thesis is to extend awareness of child maltreatment as a social problem in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and to prepare the ground for further studies, in an attempt to provide evidence to support efforts to address the problem of child maltreatment. With no formal systems for recording instances of maltreatment and abuse I argue that it is

only by developing an evidence base that knowledge and understanding of child maltreatment can be used to address the problem, supporting efforts to raise awareness of the harmful consequences of some forms of punishment, and to improve the wellbeing of children who experience maltreatment.

Specifically, there is a lack of academic studies in the sociology, social work and psychology departments at Salahaddin University in Erbil concerning the prevalence of child maltreatment in Kurdish society, and there is little discussion of child maltreatment in Kurdish society. Consequently little attention has been given to how to address this problem. For these reasons I submitted a proposal "Child Maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region" to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Kurdistan Regional Government - Iraq (KRG) to grant me a scholarship to do my PhD research at the University of Durham, United Kingdom. This research is intended to benefit my society, raising awareness among the academic community of the existence of child maltreatment in the KRG.

Despite the lack of any systematic evidence base, child maltreatment has been a subject of growing concern in the KRG in recent years with the media playing an important role in spreading awareness of child maltreatment. My personal experience as a social worker led me to believe that all children may potentially be exposed to abuse and neglect in their homes and communities, which increased my motivation to undertake this research.

An increasing number of local and international NGOs, associations and institutions in the Kurdistan Region are committed to promoting and protecting the rights of children against maltreatment, domestic violence and neglect. Organisations such as UNICEF, Save the Children and Help Line 116 provide support to abused children. These organisations have developed statistics on domestic violence and child abuse cases through surveys (Kurdistan Save the Children, 2007), providing evidence that Kurdish children are exposed to child maltreatment. But despite the existence of such organisations, and programmes to provide protection for children's rights, efforts to address child maltreatment have had limited effectiveness. My argument is that lack of support from the government and the cultural norms in society have played an important role in the failure to address child maltreatment with any seriousness. Iraqi Kurdistan is a strongly patriarchal society (Joly and Bakawan, 2016) in which violence against women (Hague, Gill and Begikhani, 2013) has been the subject of recent research and social action leading to legislation - Act No.8: the Act of Combating Domestic Violence in the Kurdistan Region-Iraq (The Kurdistan Parliament, 2011) to address domestic

violence. By contrast, questions of violence against children have been slow to gain political attention as questions of human rights. Women's rights and children's rights have been treated separately with children's rights being considered largely under the banner of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, recent research (Namy et al, 2017) has drawn attention to the links between violence against women and violence against children with patriarchy identified as a cross cutting risk.

Lack of acknowledgement of child maltreatment as a growing problem in Kurdish society is tied to the cultural value placed on child discipline in raising children to be good citizens and the failure to link harmful forms of discipline and punishment with maltreatment even where methods of discipline and punishment result in physical injury or death.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to determine Kurdish society's perspectives and understandings of child maltreatment issues in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. This involves a survey of 320 parents in diverse districts of Erbil City and semi-structured interviews with academics, social workers and experts in childcare, to aid analysis of the subject matter. It also includes the nature, relevant factors and consequences of child maltreatment in the Region. The study aims to:

1. Provide valid and reliable evidence of the existence of child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

2. Highlight the struggles and the needs of children in the Region.

3. Identify different types of physical and psychological punishment and maltreatment of children used by parents and/or caregivers.

4. Investigate the causes of physical and psychological punishment and maltreatment used by parents and/or caregivers towards children.

5. Identify factors such as age, gender, educational attainment of parents and/or caregivers as well as the economic stability of families that are associated with child punishment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

6. Explain the consequences of punishment and child maltreatment.

1.5 Research Questions

Child maltreatment is a broad topic that, as discussed above, is still not universally defined or recognised. One area of consensus is the phrase: “it’s the negative impact on children” (Cicchetti and Carlson, 1989). This research addresses important questions regarding child maltreatment, dealing with the hidden reasons behind punishment and maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as well as the underlying factors, causes and consequences that contribute to the wider subject matter. It also focuses on understanding parents’ long-held beliefs and aims, in the long run, to be able to raise parental awareness of the causes and consequences of maltreatment. This research is supported by the knowledge of academic staff, social workers and experts in child welfare based on their professional experience. Drawing on all these considerations this research study addresses the following questions:

1. What is child maltreatment based on Kurdish society’s perspectives?

2. What are the common forms of physical and psychological maltreatment that parents use towards children?

3. What are the factors that contribute to child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region?

4. Can punishment be considered as a form of maltreatment rather than disciplinary, deterrent, action of parents towards children?

5. What are the negative consequences of maltreatment and how much does affect children?

6. What are possible solutions to stop child maltreatment in Kurdistan Region?

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis consists of nine chapters. Following this introductory chapter::

Chapter Two provides ***An Overview of the Kurdistan Region – Iraq***. It contains general data such as demographics, the geography and historical background of Erbil City and the Region. In addition, it provides information about the social structure, political and economic status of the Kurdistan Region.

Chapter Three focuses on ***Understanding Child Punishment and Child Maltreatment Globally*.** This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature on the following issues: the prevalence of child maltreatment and different forms of maltreatment, factors

associated with child punishment and maltreatment and the consequences of child punishment and maltreatment.

In chapter Four, ***Methodology and Methods***, the focus is on gathering and analysing data using a mixed methods approach including a survey of families in Erbil and interviews with welfare professionals and academics in relevant fields. This chapter is divided into subsections encompassing the methods which were used, the design of the study, data collection tools, sampling design, interviews, data analysis, as well as ethical issues and challenges encountered in the use of the methods employed.

Chapter Five ***Findings from interviews with child welfare professionals and academics*** elaborates the analysis of the semi-structured interviews with 19 professionals with expertise in childcare including twelve academic staff from the Departments of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work at Salahaddin University, two social workers from Kurdistan Save Children (NGO) and five social workers from government institutions such as the Directorate of Social Affairs and Labour in Erbil City, Child Help Line 116, Boys and Girls Child Care Sector and the Directorate of Social Affairs. This chapter presents information about child maltreatment based on academic and social welfare professionals' perspectives.

Chapter Six presents the ***findings from interviews with -child welfare professionals and academics*** based on the analysis of semi-structured interviews with 19 professionals in childcare. The researcher discusses his understanding based on the academic perspectives detailed in these interviews.

Chapter Seven presents ***findings from the survey on child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdish families.*** It is divided into six sections that provide information including basic demographics about the research samples, types of physical punishment and abuse, data on other forms of punishments, explanations for gender-related punishments, consequences of different forms of maltreatment and parents' perspectives on child abuse and neglect.

Chapter Eight presents a ***discussion of findings from the survey on child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdish families***. This involves the researcher's interpretations of the findings from the interviews with academics and child welfare professionals, and survey of families.

The final chapter, ***Conclusion and recommendations,*** draws the thesis to a conclusion and makes recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

Chapter Two: Kurdistan Region – Iraq Overview

2.1 Introduction

Kurdistan, sometimes referred to as the *Homeland* or *Land of the Kurds* is a roughly defined geo-cultural region where the Kurdish people form a prominent majority of the population and whose culture, language, as well as national identity, have historically been based. Geographically, it is a mountainous area where the borders of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey meet. And because of its location, Kurdistan became part of the Persian (now Iran) and Ottoman (now Turkey) empires.

In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of the Kurdistan region, its socio-economic, political and educational contexts, as well as family issues that may help an understanding of its cultural background which is relevant to the study of child maltreatment cases among Kurdish families. The chapter is divided into six further sections. A general history and geographical overview of Kurdistan gives the demographic and territorial details as well as the historical background of the nation. The Kurdistan region-Iraq section gives some detailed background concerning Northern Iraqi sovereignty, separated as it is from the other states within Iraq. An overview of Erbil provides information about the capital of the Kurdistan region. The remaining sections provide background information on: the population of Kurdistan region of Iraq; educational status; economic and political crisis, and social structure in Kurdistan region.

2.2 General History and Geographical Overview of Kurdistan

Kurdistan is situated in the Middle East and encompasses territories in North-western Iran, Northern Iraq, North-eastern Syria, South-eastern Turkey and South-western Armenia (Kreyenbroek & Sperl (eds), 2005; Gunter, 2009; Bengio, 2003; BBC, 2016; Caryl, 2015; Mella, 2005; Yildiz, 2007; Dahlman, 2002). The partition of Kurdistan dates back to the aftermath of World War I (Bruinessen, 1992; Maglaughlin and Meho, 2001; Kaya, 2012; Fuller, 1993). The nation is known for its mountainous geography, with an average height of 2,400 meters rising to 3,300 meters in some places. Some notable mountains include Judi and Zagros in Kurdistan North (Turkey); and Halgurd, Handren and Hamrin in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Mount Ararat is believed by scientists to be the mountain where Noah's Ark landed after the Great Flood (Ghafor, 2005; KRG, 2016; Mella, 2005; Gunter, 2011). It is also

mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 8:4) which defines the famous mountain as the Ark's resting place, situated to the north of Mount Judi (*Mount Cudi*, in Kurdish) and near the Armenian border with Turkey. However, the Holy Qur'an states that Noah's Ark had its final destination at Mount Judi (Sura 11:44), contrary to the statement of the Bible and scientists' belief (Gunter, 2011:76).

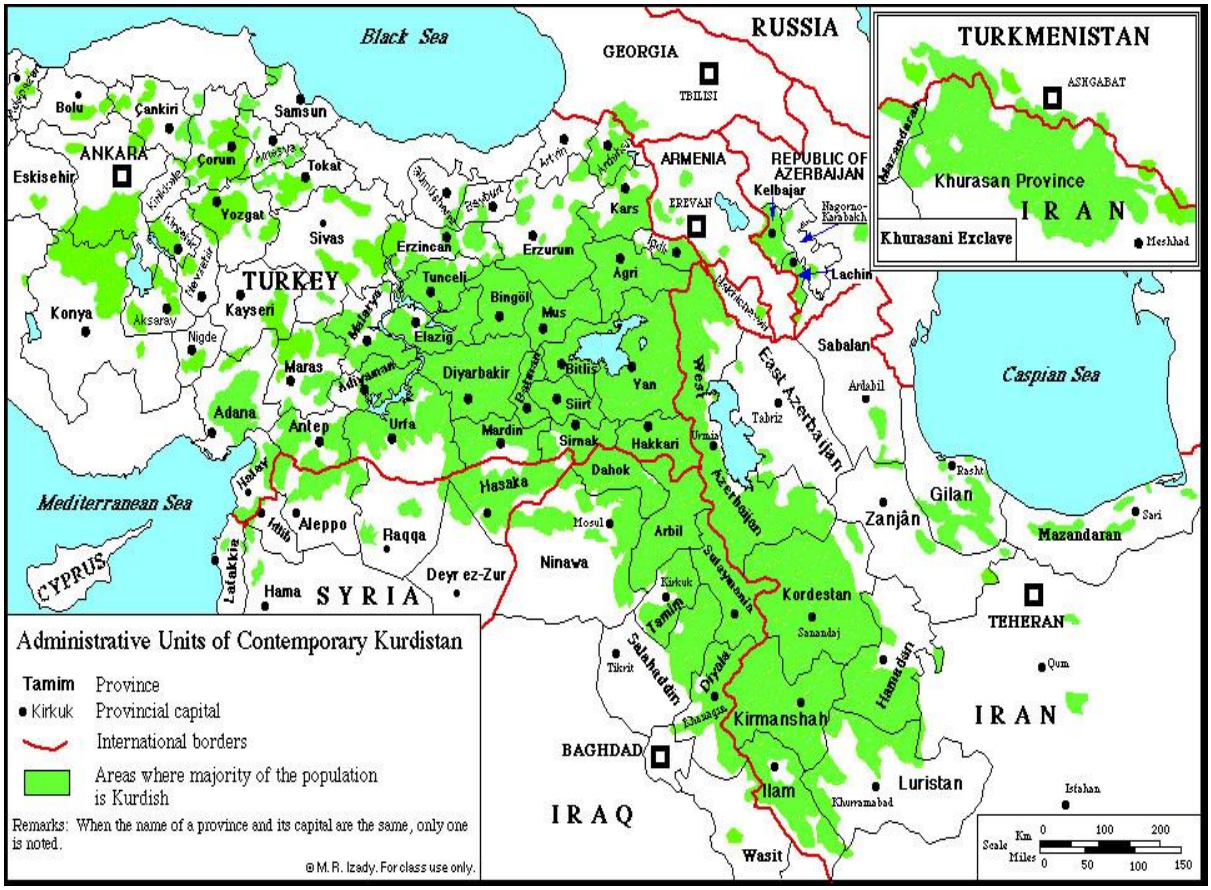
Kurdish people believe that the mountains are their strength and support against enemies as well as being a centre for farming and living. Indeed, a famous Kurdish proverb explains "*the Kurds no have friends but the mountains*" (Gunter, 2004:197). The mountains also provide protection against enemies and have been a source of revolution as well as of national renaissance for Kurdish leaders throughout history. Because of Kurdistan's mountainous design, its enemies have experienced great challenges to stay and reach or control its people (Skutnabb-Kangas & Fernandes, 2008; Stansfield, 2004; Dahlman, 2002; Daniloich, 2014).

The Kurds are one of the oldest nations in the Middle East (Maglaughlin and Meho, 2001; Fuller, 1993). Historically, they occupied the mountainous region at the southern part of Lake Van and Lake Urmia, now collectively known as Kurdistan. Scholars believe that the ancestors of the Kurds are a mixture of native settlers and Indo-European immigrants who have resided in the Region for more than 3,000 years, thus making the Kurdish culture and language different from Arab and Turkish (Maglaughlin and Meho, 2001; BBC, 2016; Stansfield, 2009; Yildiz, 2007; Gunter, 2004; McDowall, 2004; Fuller, 1993).

The Battle of Chaldiran of 1514 was a significant turning point in Kurdish history since the nation was divided by two influential empires at that time: Persian (Iran) and Ottoman (Turkey) - for the first time. Meanwhile, the Sharafnameh of 1597 was the earliest historical record of Kurdistan (Maglaughlin and Meho, 2001; McDowall, 2004; (HRW, 1993; General Assembly Council, 2012; Gunter, 2003; Yildiz, 2004; Stansfield, 2004; Yildiz, 2007; BBC, 2007; Kelly, 2008; Ahmed, 2016; Dahlman, 2002:4; McDowall, 2004; Kaya, 2012). The 20th century marked the nation's increasing desire for independence as anticipated in the Treaty of Sèvres (1920). Between 1920 and 1923, Britain and France divided Kurdistan between Turkey, Iraq and Syria. (Maglaughlin and Meho, 2001; MacDonald & O'Leary, 2007; Caryl, 2015; Eskander, 2000). Partial liberation was achieved by the Kurdistan Uyezd (Red Kurdistan) for three years (1923-1926) and again, since 1991, as the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. However, in some parts of Kurdistan such as in Kurdistan North (Turkey), there has been an ongoing armed

conflict between Kurdish rebel groups and Turkish Armed Forces since 1979. Violence and unrest continues in various parts of Kurdistan (BBC, 2016; Fuller, 1993).

Figure 2. 1 Map of Kurdistan



Source: Izady, M.M.R.(n.d), Map of Kurdistan. The Kurdish Institute of Paris [online]. Available at: http://www.institutkurde.org/images/cartes_and_maps/administrative.jpg [Accessed December 6, 2016].

2.3 Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Officially termed as the **Kurdistan Region** (*Herêmî Kurdistan* in Kurdish) by the Iraqi constitution and located in the north of Iraq, Kurdistan constitutes the country's only autonomous region (Judah, 2002; KRG 2016). It is also frequently referred to as Southern Kurdistan by Kurds, who generally consider it as one of the four parts of Greater Kurdistan, which includes parts of southeastern Turkey (Northern Kurdistan), northern Syria (Western Kurdistan) and northwestern Iran (Eastern Kurdistan). (Bengio, 2003; Olson,1994). The full name of the government is the *Kurdistan Regional Government*, commonly known as KRG and during the Baath Party administration the region was called the *Kurdish Autonomous Region* (MERIP, 1974)**.**

Kurdistan-Iraq is an autonomous region which covers 40,643 square kilometers with three major governorates – Erbil, Slemani and Duhok (Europe Kurdistan, 2014; KRG, 2016) – not including the areas outside Kurdistan which are referred to as "disputed areas". The disputed territories comprise a mixture: a majority of Kurds and minorities of other ethnic groups such as Arab, Turkish and Assyrian (Natali, 2010). The southern territory in Kurdistan-Iraq was regained after the US-led infiltration in 2003 (Bartu, 2010).

Language is important because it serves as the foundation of national identity, especially in Kurdistan-Iraq, for most of its people speak Kurdish. This language belongs to the Iranian language group and originated in the Indo-European family of languages. *Sorani* and *Kirmanji* are the two main Kurdish dialects. The *Kirmanji* dialect was well-known up until the end of the two World Wars, but in the 1960s, *Sorani* became the favoured language among Iraqi and Iranian Kurdish people (Yildiz, 2007). Nowadays, most Kurds are bilingual – speaking both Kurdish and dialects of their states' central languages. Since the political adjustments (greater autonomy) in the 1990s, Kurdish became the major language used in the regional administration and education system.

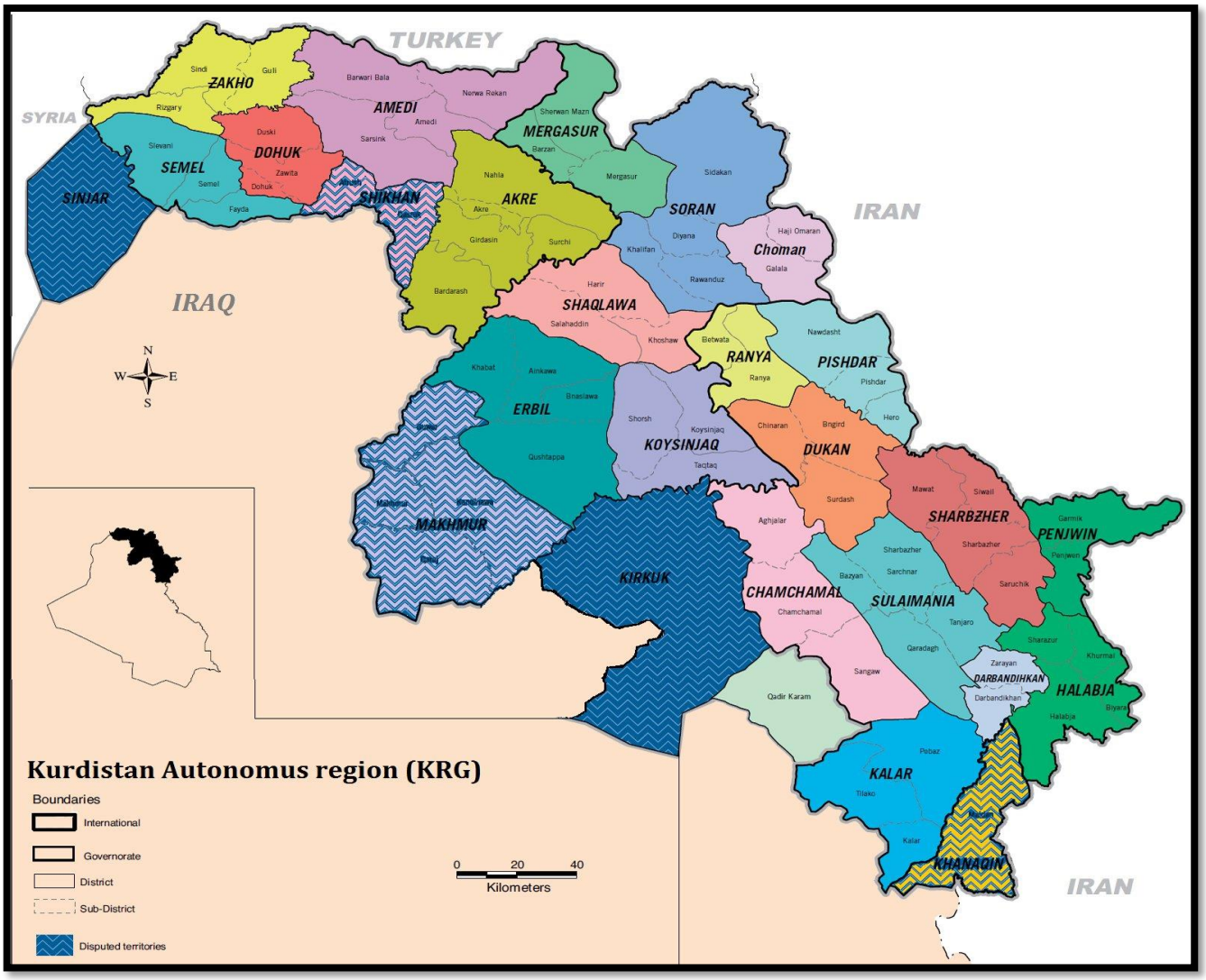
The Kurdish sense of nationalism was stimulated after World War I with the abolition of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Sevres proposed a division of the Ottoman Empire and its territories, which included an autonomous homeland for the Kurds. However, this treaty was ultimately rejected (Brunner, 2016; Natali, 2004; Natali 2002:182-184). Turkey gained its independence in 1923, and the Treaty of Lausanne was signed which superseded the Treaty of Sèvres. Under this agreement, Turkey had no obligation to grant Kurdish independence and thus Kurdistan was divided into three territories under Iraq, Turkey and Syria (Romano and Gurses, 2014; Gunter, 2011; Dahlman, 2002; Judah, 2002; Elis, 2004).

The Western allies, particularly the United Kingdom who had been fighting the Turks at that time, promised to support the Kurdish plea for independence but this promise was subsequently broken (Natali, 2004; Elis, 2004). One of President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points (Number 12) declared that the non-Turkish minorities of the Ottoman Empire should be granted the right to "autonomous development" (Gunter, 2004:199; Olson 1994). Revolutions in Kurdistan-Iraq against British rule failed. In 1970, there was an agreement between Kurdish leaders and the Iraqi Government concerning giving autonomy to the Kurds, as well as education and cultural rights. The situation remained stable for four years although no rights and autonomy were actually given to the Kurds. However, in 1974, the agreement broke down,

and the violence re-started. During that time of chaos, most of the Kurds migrated to Iran (HRW, 1993; Bruinessen, 1994; Wanche, 2002; Dahlman, 2002; MacDonald & O'Leary, 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas & Fernandes, 2008; Yildiz, 2007; and MERIP 1974: 26-27).

Two decades after 1974, conflict broke out between the Kurds and Saddam Hussein's administration, leading to killings, genocidal operations known as *Anfal* and the bio-chemical assaults in Halabja (March 16, 1998) which killed approximately 5,000 innocent victims, mostly women and children, with 7,000 more people severely injured (HRW, 1993; General Assembly Council, 2012; Gunter, 2003; Yildiz, 2004; Stansfield, 2004; Yildiz, 2007; BBC, 2007; Kelly, 2008; Ahmed, 2016; Gunter, 2011; Fuller, 1993; Arraf, 2012; Great Britain, 2002; US Department of State, 2003). In 1991, after the First Gulf War, Iraqi Kurdistan rose up against Saddam Hussein, encouraged by the United States. The UN coalition forces did not assist the Kurds, but eventually established a "No-fly Zone" in the north for their protection (Stansfield, 2003; Yildiz, 2007; MacDonald and O'Leary, 2007; Gunter, 2004; Hirst, 2006). This enabled an election to be held on May 19, 1992 that established the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) by the Kurdistan National Assembly. This was the first known democratically elected legislature in Iraq as well as in Kurdistan (Bruinessen, 1994; Stansfield, 2003; Gunter, 2003; MacDonald and O'Leary, 2007; Yildiz, 2007; Gunter, 2004).

Figure 2.2 Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Map



Source: Wallpaper UP (2016). Kurdistan Autonomous region (KRG). Available at: http://www.wallpaperup.com/678885/KURDISTAN_kurd_kurds_kurdish_map_maps_poster.html [Accessed December 6, 2016].

2.4 Overview of Erbil

Erbil, also spelt as "Arbil or Irbil' (Gunter, 2011) and most commonly known as Hewlêr in Kurdish, is the capital of Erbil Governorate and Iraqi Kurdistan. It is located approximately 350 kilometers (220 miles) north of Baghdad, with Turkey to its north and Iran to its east (Hawler, 2012a). Four major concentric streets thread the city together with the Citadel at their centre (Leviclancy, 2016; KRG, 2014), which determines the skyline of the city. Erbil is also considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns in the world (Glanz, 2005; Lutes,

2013). Urban life in Erbil can be dated back to at least 6000 BC. Its name was cited in some historical writings in 3000 BC and was regarded as a Sumerian property (Glanz, 2005; University-Erbil, 2016). During the Middle Ages, Erbil became a major trading centre on the route between Baghdad and Mosul, a role it still plays today with important road links to the outside world (University-Erbil, 2016).

The name Erbil was cited in Sumerian sacred writings in 3000 BC as *Urbilum*, *Urbelium* or *Urbillum* (Glanz, 2005; McDowall, 2004), *Modern (Arbil or Erbil or Irbil)* (Hamblin, 2006), in which it appears to originate from **Arbillum** in the language of the people who inhabited the area. The Assyrians used the name "***Arba Ilo***" meaning The Four Gods; and in the epoch of the Iranian Empires, Erbil remained as it was – "***Arba Ilo***". However, the Greeks wrote it in different forms such as *Arbella*, *Arbelas* and *Arbilis*. Erbil witnessed one of the historic battles - The Battle of Arbella or Gaugamela - between Alexander the Great and Achaemenid King Darius in the 4th Century BC. In the books written by Arab and other historians, the name mentioned was in the form of ***Erbl*** or ***Erbil***. However, the Kurds named their capital as ***Hewlêr*** (University-Erbil, 2016; Hawler, 2012b; Hamblin, 2006).

Erbil has an ethnically diverse population with approximately 1.5 million people as of 2009; the fourth largest city in Iraq after Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. The biggest ethnic group is the Kurds, with smaller numbers of Arabs, Assyrians, Turkmen, Armenians, Yezidi, Shabaks and Mandeans. It is equally religiously diverse: believers of Sunni Islam, Shia Islam, Christianity, Sufism, Yezidism, Shabakism and Mandeanism extend in and around the city (Europe Kurdistan, 2014; Hawler, 2012c; Erbil Governorate 2016; Gunter 2011:215; Maglaughlin and Meho, 2001).

Erbil has a somewhat 'erratic' climate, between the Mediterranean and desert and with a low humidity rate (Hawler, 2012a). The climate is characterised by warm to hot summers and pleasantly mild winters. Summers are extremely dry, and temperatures may rise to 50 degrees Celsius, whereas winters are fairly wet. In winter, daytime temperatures are pleasantly mild while at nighttime, temperatures may be as low as subzero (Ghafor, 2005; US Air Force Combat Climatology Centre, cited in KRG, 2016).

In 2014, Erbil was officially chosen to be the capital of tourism in the Middle East by the Arab Council of Tourism (Morris 2013; Neurink 2013). The number of tourists visiting Erbil is increasing year by year and it is believed it will help to strengthen Kurdistan's economy. The city became well-known for different tourist locations such as *The Citadel*, which was declared

a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2014 (UNESCO, 2016a; UNESCO, 2016b). Other tourist spots are *Qaysari Market*, famous for its huge, elevated walls with various roof skylights for ventilation, *Erbil Civilization Museum* that features ancient history and relics from old civilizations to advanced ages, *Choli Minaret*, considered one of the most famous landmarks of Erbil, and the *Sami Abdulrahman Park* which is known as the largest park in the city (Hawler, 2016; KRG, 2014; Hawler, 2012b; Al-Rawi, 2015).

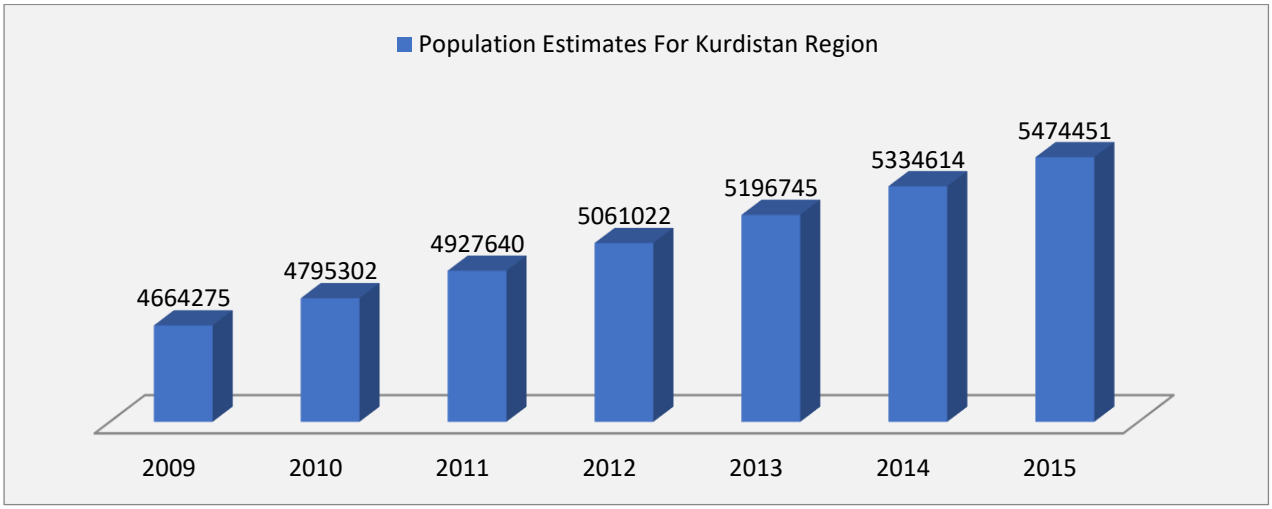
The Governorate of Erbil has an approximate land area of 15,074 km^2, located in northern Iraq, with an estimated population of 1.5 million people as of 2013 (Hawler, 2012a; Europe Kurdistan, 2014; Al-Rawi,2015; IAU 2010). The majority of the city's population are Kurds, with small proportions of Assyrians, Arabs and Turkmen (Europe Kurdistan, 2014). The city compromises districts and sub-districts, as shown in Table 2.1 below:

Table 2. 1 Districts and sub-districts of Erbil City

Districts	Sub-Districts
Choman	Galalh, Haji Omran, Similan and Qasre
Rawandz	District Centre and Warte
Soran	District Centre, Diyana, Khalifan and Sidakan
Koya	Taq - Taq, Shoresh, Ashti Sktan, Segrdkan
Hawler Centre	Ainkawa, Bahrka and Shamamk
Xabat	Darashakran, Rizgari and Kwrgosk
Dashti Hawler	Darto, Qushtaph and Kasnazan
Shaqlawa	Hiran, Salahaddin, Balisan, Basirma and Hareer
Maxmwr	Qaraj, Gouer and Debaga
Mergasor	Shirwan, Mazen, Barzan, Perrin, Mazne and Gorato

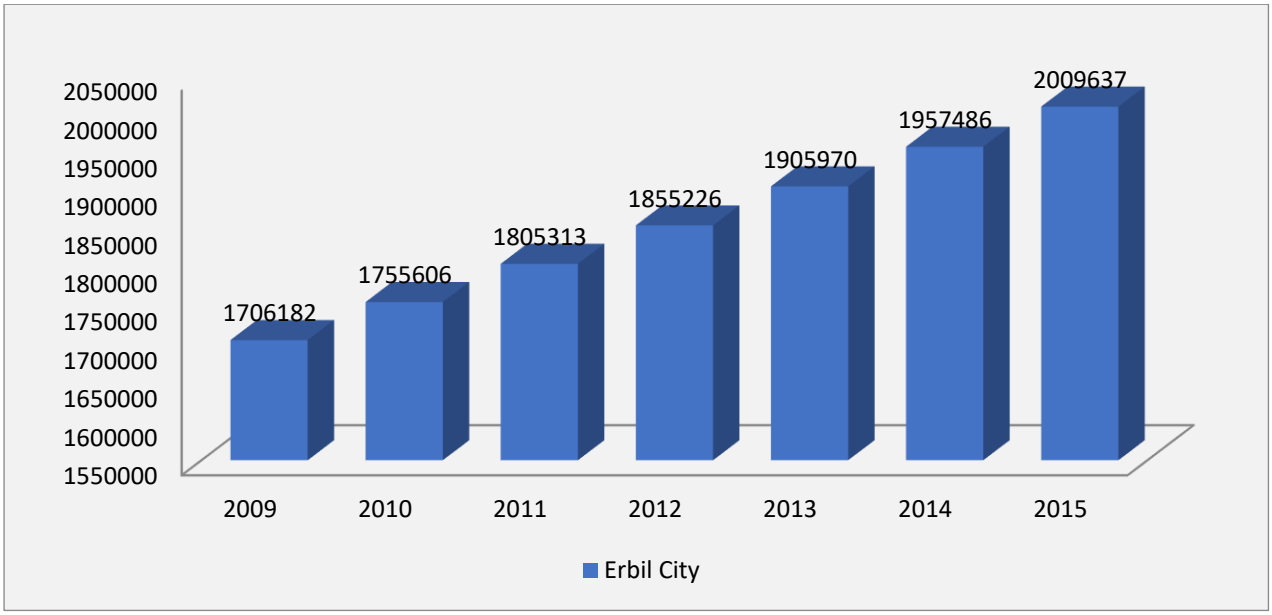
*Source: KRSO 2014a.

Figure 2.3 Estimated population of Erbil, Slemani and Duhok Governorates 2009 - 2015



*Source: (KRSO, 2014b), Kurdistan Region Statistics Office: Ministry of Planning / Kurdistan Regional Government.

Figure 2.4 Estimated population of Erbil Governorate 2009 – 2015



*Source: (KRSO, 2014b). Kurdistan Region Statistics Office: Ministry of Planning / Kurdistan Regional Government.

Figure 2.3 shows the estimated population for six years (2009-2015), rising from 4,664,275 to 5,474,452 in the three governorates in Kurdistan Region: Erbil, Slemani and Dahuk. Based on the estimated data, the population growth increase was expected to be 810,176 inhabitants. However, because of the on-going war against terrorist groups such as ISIS for more than two years now, the expected population growth may not have been reached and may have declined.

As a result, many people will be moved or be expected to migrate to different cities of Iraq and other nearby countries. Under such circumstances, there are no accurate statistics that show the exact number of population in recent times.

Figure 2.4 shows the estimated population of Erbil City between 2009 and 2015. Based on the data provided above, the number of residents increased over the span of six years as projected. This number will continue to increase because of the refugees being hosted by the city. According to Muzafar Tahir, the Director of the Erbil Census and Data Analysis Office, the population of Erbil is 1.9 million people, with slightly more males than females in the province. He also mentioned that Erbil' grew by 2.9% annually, and based on censuses and data analyses, the population for Iraq and Kurdistan should double every 36 years which means that by 2048 the population is expected to reach 12 million people (Hawler,2012c).

Table 2. 2 Estimated population in Kurdistan Region, male and female 2009 – 2020

Year	Male	Female	Total Estimated Population 2009 – 2020
2009	2,241,102	2,321,164	4,562,266
2010	2,406,909	2,386,383	4,793,292
2011	2,473,373	2,452,256	4,925,629
2012	2,540,360	2,518,650	5,059,010
2013	2,608,523	2,586,209	5,194,732
2014	2,677,764	2,654,836	5,332,600
2015	2,747,992	2,724,444	5,472,436
2016	2,819,123	2,794,947	5,614,070
2017	2,889,916	2,865,127	5,755,043
2018	2,960,219	2,934,833	5,895,052
2019	3,029,889	3,003,925	6,033,814
2020	3,098,801	3,072,282	6,171,083

*Source: (KRSO, 2014b), Kurdistan Region Statistics Office: Ministry of Planning / Kurdistan Regional Government.

The Kurdistan Regional Statistics Organisation made an estimation of population based on gender between 2009 and 2020. As shown in Table 2.2 above, the total estimated population for both genders in 2009 was 4,562,266 inhabitants while in 2020 it is expected to reach 6,171,083 individuals. Annually, the population of the region would grow by approximately 137,165 people.

2.5 Educational Status

The education system in Kurdistan Region is administered by two ministries, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR), each with particular responsibilities. The Ministry of Education makes all short or long term policy decisions concerning educational stages up to university level. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is responsible for university level education and includes the Foundation of Technical Institutes in the liberated Kurdistan area (KDP, n.d.).

The educational ladder consists of two years pre-school education for the four to five-year-old age group (not compulsory), six years compulsory primary education for the six to eleven-year-old age group, six years in secondary education (two cycles of three years each), and higher education of 2-6 years. Moreover, there are also fields for Vocational Secondary Education such as industrial, commercial, arts and agricultural schools consisting of the same three years duration. Higher Education is 2-6 years study covering the age group 18-23 years. This education stage covers Technical Institutes of two calendar years leading to a Technical Diploma or Bachelor of Arts and Sciences (KDP, n.d.).

Financing education is the responsibility of the Kurdish Administration and the education system is entirely funded from Central Administration Funds. The latter finances education of all types and at all levels annually. With the education sector expanding dramatically and as the population continues to push for further growth, in 2013 a 16% budget was allotted to address this growing need and employed 24% of the Region's work force (IIG-Invest in Group, n.d.).

Despite the demographic challenges to the Region's schools, Iraqi Kurdistan has one of the highest primary school completion rates (65%) in all of Iraq, as well as a proportionately high rate of 95.9% for net primary school enrollment, 4.5% higher than for the rest of Iraq. Similarly, the Region averages 88.8% net student enrollment in secondary education with literacy rates of 92.3% for males and 81.6% for females at the same age level 15-24. The total population of primary and secondary students in Kurdistan Region increased from 843,000 in 2003 to 1.7 million in 2012 (IIG-Invest in Group, n.d.).

As of 2013, there were approximately 115,000 students enrolled in the 13 public and 11 private universities of the Kurdistan Region. The majority of students enrolled in public universities which tend to be much larger than private universities and do not charge tuition fees. The

Region's public universities faced previous challenges such as operating on a fixed budget while accommodating a vast number of students, added to which they were under a centralised and bureaucratic system. Some reforms are currently being implemented such as democratising and decentralising the university system, and allowing more independence, thus providing the university administrators and faculties more autonomy for development. The reforms also include creating electronic and streamlined admission procedures to improve the student enrollment process as well as increasing the professional evaluation of faculty (IIG-Invest in Group, n.d.).

There are several public universities in the Kurdistan Region, the three main universities being Salahaddin University in Erbil, University of Sulaimani and University of Duhok (Gunter, 2011). They offer courses in various subjects leading to specialised Diplomas, Bachelors, Masters Degrees and Doctorates. Two newly established universities offer curriculums exclusively in English: The University of Kurdistan in Hewlêr and the American University of Iraq-Sulaimania. The University of Kurdistan-Hawler started its first academic year in September 2006 while the American University of Iraq-Sulaimania offers an intensive English programme for those students preparing to study for a Bachelor in Business Administration (KRG, 2010). There are more recently established universities such as the University of Koya in 2004, Soran University in 2009 and Zakho University in 2010, while the Universities of Ranya and Halabja were both established in 2011 (KRG, 2010).

There is also a growing number of licensed private universities in Kurdistan (KRG, 2010). The Iraqi public university system relies primarily on the college entrance exams to define not only to which universities a student can be admitted, but which applicable focus of study he/she should follow. There are some universities, particularly the private ones, that break the norm of the Region's public university system. One of these is The American University of Iraq-Sulaimania which provides an American style of education that encourages students to take a broad general education course load before declaring a major. A Lebanese independent education sector – SABIS – has opened three international private schools in Erbil and Slemani and recently has also established SABIS University in Erbil (KRG, 2010). Other private universities are Jihan University and Ishik Universities (KRG, 2010).

Historically, social and economic circumstances created gender differences among children concerning school attendance. Aside from political issues, and taking Iraq as an example, women were not allowed to attend school during the Ottoman period (Alderbndy, n.d.).

However, in 1926, the first exclusive school for girls was established – the Al Zahrah – led by a Kurdish teacher named Fatma Mohdiuddin (Kamal Mazhar, 1987).

Table 2. 3 Total number of schools, students and teachers by gender in Erbil Governorate 1981 – 1990

Year	School	Male Students	Female Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers
1981	1,029	85,193	54,948	3,434	2,687
1982	1,045	87,832	57,364	3,664	3,178
1983	1,010	86,547	54,881	3,321	3,602
1984	993	88,524	54,058	3,913	3,794
1985	995	92,262	55,998	3,807	4,050
1986	661	88,713	54,771	3,342	4,500
1987	658	92,193	57,689	3,456	5,228
1988	566	90,291	56,393	3,274	5,177
1989	567	97,805	68,473	3,121	5,518
1990	614	115,155	69,654	3,202	6,257

**Source: (Ministry of Education, 2013). Summary Statistical Information (Schools, Students and Teachers) in Kurdistan Region 1980 – 2012. Ministry of Education, Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq*

Based on Table 2.3, it is significant that the number of schools decreased between 1981 (1,029) and 1988 (566), due to the seven-year war between Iran and Iraq (1980-1988) (Koolaee, 2014), as well as a result of Saddam Hussein's regime that destroyed villages and infrastructure in the region. However, even during the war, some children were still able to attend school – as seen in the data. The number of schools increased at the end of the decade, possibly because of migration to safer areas. Comparing gender numbers, there are still more male than female students, which can be explained by the Kurdish social norm that prioritises sons' over daughters' education. Social expectations of forced or early marriages and household work for girls were other reasons for lower rates of schooling, as well as the fact that some parents only allowed their daughters to study until the end of primary school.

Table 2. 4 Total number of schools, students and teachers by gender in Erbil Governorate 1991 – 2000

Year	School	Male students	Female students	Male teachers	Female teachers
1991	681	124,862	76,809	3,366	6,811
1992	589	114,237	75,796	3,371	6,120
1993	618	117,830	74,771	4,021	6,243
1994	678	133,869	87,325	4,573	6,634
1995	648	118,752	82,571	5,619	6,948
1996	668	111,866	79,333	3,967	6,353
1997	796	118,001	84,811	4,905	7,117
1998	855	129,864	94,168	5,543	7,989
1999	932	141,887	102,963	5,775	8,801
2000	1,503	156,950	113,420	5,962	9,118

**Source: (Ministry of Education, 2013). Summary Statistical Information (Schools, Students and Teachers) in Kurdistan Region 1980-2012. Ministry of Education, Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq*

Table 2.4 above shows only a small increase of numbers for all the fields, from 1991 to 1994. The sanctions imposed on Iraq from 1990 to 2003 could be the main explanation for this since there was a near-total financial and trade embargo that affected the economic stability of the nation (The Security Council, 2007; Natali, 2010). Moreover, the Kurdish Civil War (1994-1998) also led to decreased numbers in the education system during that time. Hundreds of Kurdish people went missing because of the internal conflicts that raged throughout the Kurdistan region during that time (Abdulrahman, 2012). Given such circumstances, most Kurdish families could not afford to send their children to school, and sons in particular had to work to help support their families. However, in 1997 there was a visible increase in numbers due to the implementation of the *Food for Oil Programme* (1995-2003), when Iraq was given permission to trade oil in replacement for food, medicine and other humanitarian needs for Iraqis and Kurds (The Security Council, 2007). Given the limited resources available, it helped some Kurds to have at least a decent standard of living during those years. Noticeably, the number of female teachers exceeded that of male teachers during this decade. Salaries in the education sector at that time were remarkably low, which is why most male teachers left their profession and chose other jobs, while female teachers stayed because of fewer job opportunities for them.

Table 2. 5 Total number of schools, students and teachers by gender in Erbil Governorate 2001 – 2012

Year	School	Male students	Female students	Male teachers	Female teachers
2001	1,119	165,962	123,222	6,041	9,154
2002	1,213	159,117	121,560	6,528	9,851
2003	1,297	178,396	141,858	7,000	10,412
2004	1,420	199,764	153,937	7,759	11,255
2005	1,541	208,675	161,839	8,557	12,017
2006	1,576	217,493	172,920	9,026	13,028
2007	1,845	235,653	193,246	10,088	15,301
2008	1,964	247,994	206,006	11,461	16,951
2009	1,942	246,796	210,131	11,265	16,050
2010	2,003	267,247	221,911	12,547	17,790
2011	2,096	275,934	233,966	12,753	18,419
2012	2,161	279,662	242,828	13,374	19,100

**Source: (Ministry of Education, 2013). Summary Statistical Information (Schools, Students and Teachers) in Kurdistan Region 1980 – 2012. Ministry of Education, Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq*

Based on the data provided above, all the numbers are increasing because of the start of a modicum of political, economic and social stability in Iraq as well as in the Kurdistan Region. Salaries also increased in the education system after Saddam Hussein's regime fell in 2003, thus increasing the number of teachers. Also, the Ministry of Education in the Region provided an opportunity for Kurds who left school in the 1990s, due to economic problems, to complete their studies. As for the numbers, male students still exceed female students and this can, even today, be associated with Kurdish gender-based social norms. However, the number of female teachers still exceeds that of male teachers even though the latter's number increased significantly.

In 2014, when terrorist attacks broke out, the political situation in the Kurdistan Region deteriorated, certainly compared to the previous decade of the 2000s. Terrorist groups such as ISIS created instability, forcing some Kurdish families to make their children abandon their studies due to the financial and security crisis. About 30,000 students out of 1.7 million left their studies at both primary and secondary levels in 2015 (Kurdi, 2016). According to an interview with a ten-year old girl named *Mariam* and two of her sisters, they were forced to leave school because of poverty (A.M, 2016).

2.6 Economic and Political Crisis

The economy of the Kurdistan Region is dominated by the oil industry, agriculture and tourism. Because of its relative security and peace, with more economically liberal market-oriented policies, the Kurdistan Region has a more advanced economic system compared to the other parts of Iraq. Investment opportunities span every sector, including oil and gas, electricity, agricultural and the service industries (*Kurdistan's Economy*, n. d.).

The region has been semi-autonomous since the 1990 Gulf War. After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the United Nations placed the country under economic sanctions, enforcing Resolution 661 (UN, 1990), where Iraq was not allowed to trade oil (UN, 2003; US Department of State, 2003). Because of this, most Iraqi people living in the southern area of the country and Kurdish families residing in the Kurdistan Region struggled financially and could not afford to meet the essential needs of their children. According to the UN, around 576,000 Iraqi children may have died following the end of the First Gulf War because of the economic sanctions imposed by the Security Council. Furthermore, populations were also at risk of malnutrition at that time (Crossette, 1995). Because of this, the *Food for Oil Programme* was established in 1995 under Resolution 986, providing Iraq with another chance to trade oil to finance the purchase of humanitarian goods. The programme was also intended to address the argument that the ordinary citizens, including Kurdish people residing in the Region, were inordinately affected by the international economic sanctions.

According to one study, "*Hunger and Poverty in Iraq, 1991*" by Jean Drèze and Haris Gazdar (1992), there was a sharp decline in living standards related to the collapse in economic activity as a result of war and economic sanctions. That study also examined the impact of economic sanctions, war and internal conflicts on the well-being of the civilian population of Iraq during and after the first Gulf War in 1990. Starvation, a financial crisis and malnutrition are some of the effects of the war which deprived every civilian of their rights. During that time most Iraqi families were incapable of providing any suitable care for their children, since food prices were too high and hospitals could not provide adequate healthcare due to insufficient medicine (Drèze and Gazdar, 1992).

Another study also published as an article (in Arabic), "*The Effects of Violence and Abuse on Children: Personality and Future*" by Sawsan Shaker Chalabi (2004), refers to the negative effects of war, children being the innocent victims affected by war and political issues in Iraq.

As a result of this instability, children were vulnerable to abuse, violence and neglect (Chalabi, 2004). Several consequences of war affecting children are listed below:

1. Increased mortality rates for children under five years old due to malnutrition and lack of proper healthcare: approximately 25 child deaths per thousand live births from 1990, rising to 137 children deaths per thousand live births in 2000.

2. Increased malnutrition cases among children and a high incidence of anaemia due to food shortages and protein deficiency.

3. Lack of health care, vaccines and vitamins as well as proper sanitation, which made children vulnerable to diseases such as cholera, typhoid, pneumonia and other epidemics.

4. Use of bio-chemical weapons that exposed people, especially children, to a toxic environment, leading to high numbers of malformed new-borns, and diseases such as cancer.

5. Most children were unable to attend school because of security and financial issues. The majority of them – usually boys – needed to work to help their families financially. This type of abuse (poverty) often then leads to another (child labour).

6. War affects children psychologically. Having feelings of fear, threat and anxiety can be classified as emotional abuse. Family disintegration due to war, divorce or migration can also affect the wellbeing of children.

Before Saddam Hussein's regime ended, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) received about 13% of the revenues from the UN's *Food for Oil* programme. During the US infiltration in 2003, the programme disbursed approximately US $8.3 billion to the KRG. The nation's relative food security allowed considerably more revenues to be sent to development projects in comparison to the rest of Iraq. Approximately US $4 billion of the KRG's Oil for Food funds remained at the end of the programme in 2003 (Natali, 2007). The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate ranged between 6% and 10% from 1992 to 2003.

However, after Saddam Hussein's removal from power and with continuous conflicts raging throughout the nation, only three identified provinces under the KRG's control were declared *secured* by the US military. Nevertheless, the KRG still managed to sign foreign investment contracts, given its relative security and stability compared with other parts of Iraq. Imports absorbed 85% of approximately US $5 billion of the annual export trade in the nation. The majority of imported products are consumed within the Kurdistan Region and are not exported

again as value added goods. The largest trading partner is Turkey and the second largest Iran. The stability of the Kurdistan region has allowed it to achieve a higher level of development than other regions in Iraq and since 2003 the region has attracted around 20,000 workers from other parts of Iraq (Barkey & Laipson, 2005).

The Kurdistan region experienced an economic crisis in 2015. Oil revenues had been decreasing considerably since 2014 because of lower oil prices, internal conflicts and terrorist attacks, despite an increase in total production (Butler, 2015). Seventeen per cent of the central government's budget was allocated for distribution to Kurdistan Region, yet no funds were disbursed from February 2014 (Al-Dahabi, 2014). A US-mediated agreement signed in 2014 would have solved the conflict between the oil ministries of the KRG and the Government of Iraq (GOI), but it was never implemented due to claims of underpayment. Most of Erbil's independent oil deals were traded for less than the market price because of its poor quality (Zaman, 2016). Based on some estimates, the Kurdish government's deficit reached US $18 billion by January 2016 (Aljazeera, 2015). Because of that, the majority of government workers including teachers, soldiers and other employees were underpaid for three months as of October 2015 (Aljazeera, 2015). This led to large-scale riots breaking out across the Region with several fatalities.

Iraq has been struggling with an increase in poverty rates for many years (Sakr, 2014). A government survey conducted in 2009 revealed that about 20-25% of Iraq's estimated population lives below the poverty line. The Iraqi Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation conducted the survey and stated that poverty is concentrated in the rural areas more than the urban areas, in all provinces. The survey defines poverty as living on less than 76,896 IQD (Iraqi Dinars) or about $66 per month ($2.2 per day) (IRIN, 2009). Moreover, in 2014, statistics released by the World Bank showed that 28% of Iraqi families live below the poverty line i.e. out of the estimated 34.7 million of Iraq's population, more than 9.5 million individuals are experiencing poverty. In the event that the country faced any kind of crisis, this rate could increase to 70%. This is currently happening due to the spike of violent acts and the tense political situation (UNDP, 2015). In 2015 the unemployment rate was 11% nationally (7% male and 13% female); the government providing 40% of jobs while the remainder are located in the private sector (UNDP, 2015).

In 2016, the Central Statistical Organisation, Iraq (CSO, 2016), released a statistical summary report that provided some indicators concerning developing policies throughout the country,

including the Kurdistan region. The report also showed the poverty line from 2012 until 2014 as shown in Table 2.6:

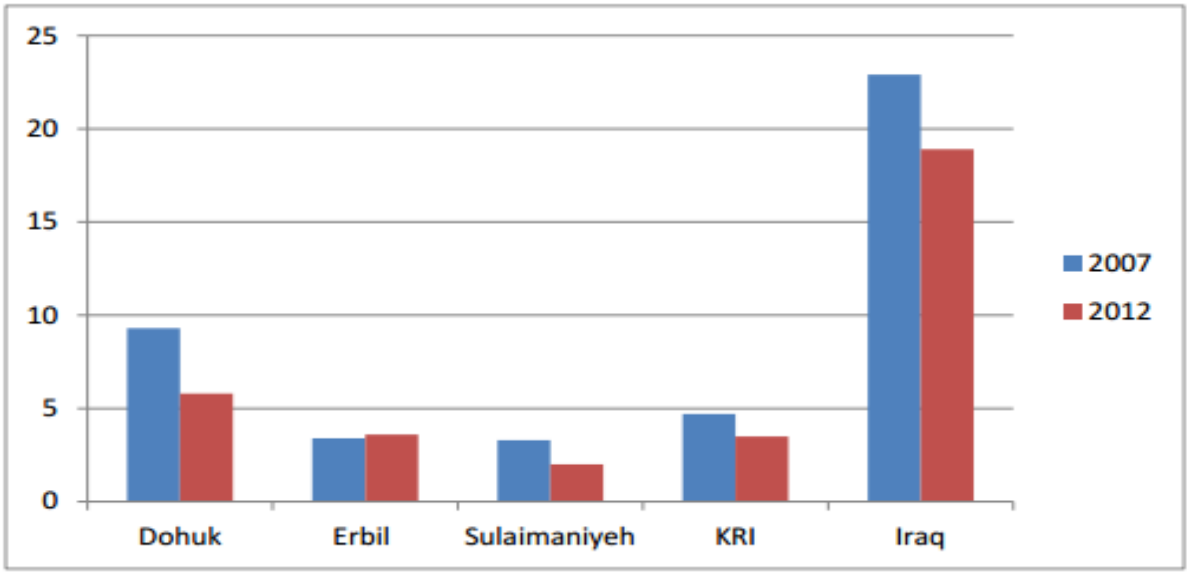
Table 2. 6 Poverty in the Kurdistan Region 2012 – 2014

Year	Poverty Percentage	Poverty Gap	Poverty Severity
2012	3.5	0.6	0.2
2014: without crisis	3.5	0.6	0.2
2014: crisis experience	12.5	3.7	1.7

**Source: Statistical Summary (2016): Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Organisation, cosit.gov.iq.*

Based on the data provided above, the crisis, linked to political issues and terrorist attacks, affected the economic stability of the Kurdistan Region with a 9% increase in the poverty percentage, 3.12% in the poverty gap and 1.5% in poverty severity. Due to this instability reflected in the poverty line, the quality of living for the Kurdish people was also downgraded. Moreover, in 2013 the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office released a Socio-Economic Monitoring System Report which covered the economic stability of the Region. The results were based on a government survey where the poverty line was based on the cost of basic food and non-food needs. The figure shown below provides the poverty rates for Iraq and Kurdistan Governorates:

Figure 2.5 Poverty rates for Kurdistan Region and Iraq (below national poverty line 2007 – 2012)

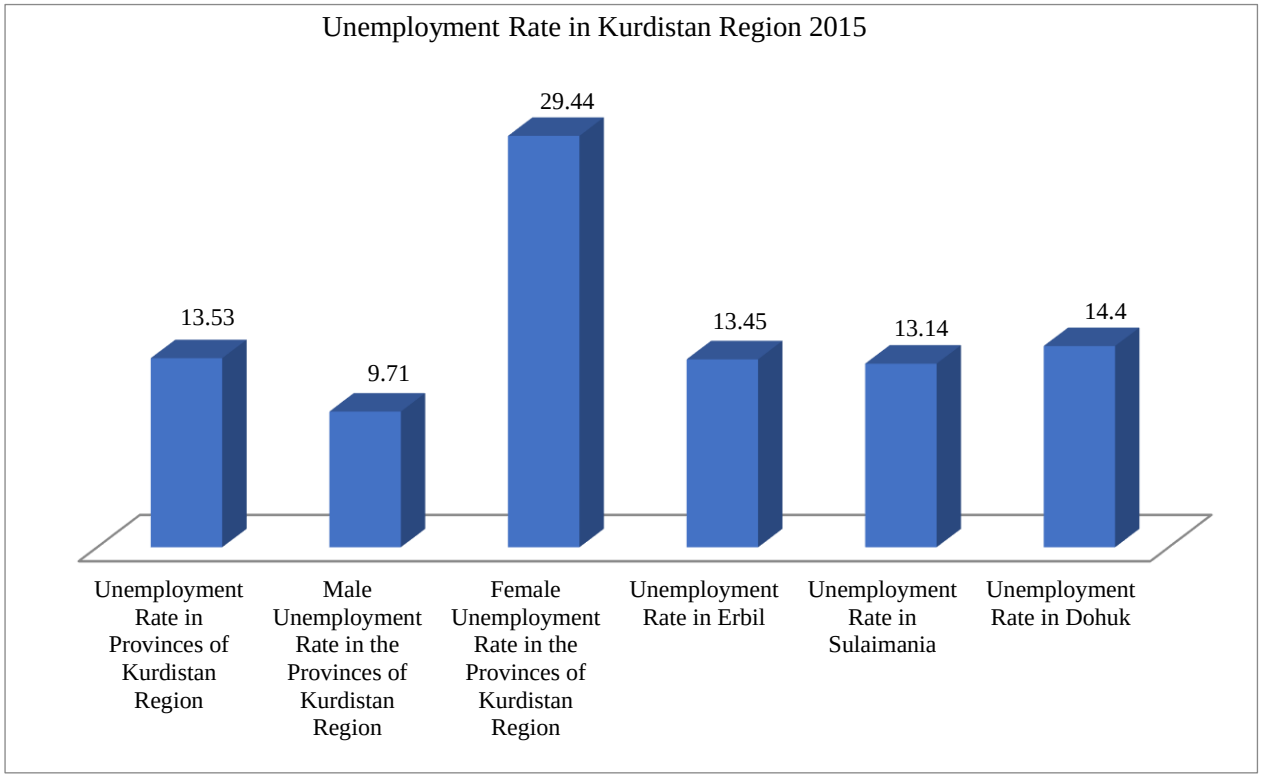


**Sources: Socio – Economic Monitoring System Report 2013: Kurdistan Region Statistics Office,* www.krso.net

The report states that the percentage of the population in the region living below the poverty line was 3.5%, while for the rest of Iraq it was 18.9%. Within the Kurdistan region, poverty rates vary considerably between Governorates: 2% in Sulaimania, 6% in Duhok and 6.3% in Erbil (KRG & UNDP, 2012).

The decline in oil prices from $78 in 2009 to $24 in 2016 is one of the reasons for the increase in unemployment and poverty rates in Kurdistan Region, combined with political instability and refugee issues. As of September 2016, the unemployment rate hit 14%, with women and youth the hardest hit. The unemployment rate in Kurdistan region in 2015 was estimated at 20-25% with 700,000 people losing their jobs in the private sector. From 2013, it was estimated to be 7% and 10% by the end of 2014 (Abdulrazaq, 2015). Furthermore, the population increased by 30% due to the flow of displaced people and refugees who have entered the region following the war in Iraq and Syria (EKurd, 2016a). Low oil prices have sharply reduced oil revenues, which decreased by $35 billion in 2015 compared to 2014. In 2016, due to persistent low oil export prices, the fiscal deficit was estimated at 12% of GDP (World Bank, 2016).

Figure 2.6 Unemployment rate in Kurdistan Region 2015



**Source: Indicators: Kurdistan Region Statistics Office 2015, www.krso.net*

Figure 2.6 shows the highest unemployment rate belonging to the female category in the region's provinces. Dohuk occupied the highest position, while the unemployment rate in Erbil city is close to that in the the provinces of Sulamania and Dohuk. The KRG reduced low-level salaries between 15-25%, and by 75% for those on higher salaries, to reduce the amount of monthly wages to 875 billion IQD ($800 million), salaries being shouldered by the government (Al-Omran, 2016). As a result of this economic recession in the Region, education institutions have been paralyzed in the cities of Sulaimania, Halabja, Koya, Garmyan and Raparen since October 2016. The increasing rate of poverty and unemployment has reduced families' ability to sustain their children's needs - financial, education, social and healthcare and is linked to increasing rates of child labour, maltreatment, domestic violence and other crimes in society.

2.7 Social Structure in the Kurdistan Region

"Due to its size, the variety of its natural habitats and the range of economies, and as a consequence of the fact that historical events have affected its regions in quite different ways, Kurdistan has given rise to a wide range of forms of social and political organization." (Bruinessen, 1992, p.50). Rural areas of the Kurdistan region have been tied to segmented social structures unsupportive of change (Natali, 2010), consisting of lineages with a preference for endogamy (Barth, 1954; Saarinen, n.d.). Endogamous family ties and close relationships between family, work and territory have formed the basis of an informal bazaar economy, whereby the major livelihood was agrarian-based subsistence farming that focused on domestic markets (Natali, 2010).

According to Bruinessen (1992) in his book, "*Agha, Shaikh and State*", the Kurdish community adheres to customs and tribal traditions kept by all members of the community and family, including private and public individuals. Failure to follow such customs and traditions would mean departing from the tribal system or bringing shame to the family. Moreover, any individual who brings shame to a family's name and reputation, as well as kinship and clan society, must be punished (Bruinessen, 1992). Another book, "*The Kurds*", defines the Kurdish social structure as conservative, based on its tribal system. However, although some factors such as globalisation and innovation have affected some changes in beliefs in Kurdish society and culture, many old traditions still persist (Bois, 1966).

The family is the first and primary unit in creating community in socializing children and is considered the primary factor in children's personality development, where the parents are responsible for teaching social values, cultural beliefs and traditions as well as religious concepts. Traditional family values are important to Kurdish people, and relationships between family members are close. Families are usually large, and Kurds only live alone in exceptional situations. Connections with relatives who live far away remain strong and they usually keep in touch by phone or computer (Saarinen, n.d.).

A typical Kurdish household consists of the nuclear family; a husband, wife and unmarried children (Bruinessen, 1992; Bois, 1966). Occasionally, elderly surviving relatives stay with the family in case of hardship or necessity (Donovan, 1990). Also, a son usually stays at his father's house during the first years of marriage, which gives rise to a hybrid situation. The newly-wed couple is not, as a rule, as fully integrated with the parent household as a second wife with her children would be. Although some activities are separated, in many cases such division does not occur, and domestic rules are usually performed by all women in the household. Apart from these exceptions, the Kurdish household consists of the nuclear family with occasionally one or a few close relatives. Cohabitation by extended families is relatively rare among the Kurds, although there seems to be some regional variations in the frequency with which they occur. During the economic crisis from 1990 to 2000, cases of extended families living in one big house were common (Drèze and Gazdar, 1992).

Traditionally, pre-marital sex is forbidden in Kurdish society, and couples do not live together before marriage. The mutual love of a married couple is important (Saarinen, n.d.), but in the family hierarchy, the man is the head of a family. Moreover, many Kurdish marriages are still arranged and complex, being determined by tribal traditions. Marriage is one of the most important events for establishing alliances and creating social hierarchies within and between tribes. Historically, tribal endogamy – the obligation to marry within the tribe – is followed and marriage arrangements may be completed even before the children are born (Jrank, n.d.).

Traditionally, Kurdish society prefers inter-relative marriages which promotes endogamy. According to Kurdish tradition, a man has the right to marry his paternal uncle's daughter. Any arrangement contrary to this rule must be negotiated between the two brothers (Encyclopedia, 2003). Therefore, most Kurds prefer the form of marriage with patrilateral cousins. This type of arrangement is known as Cousin Marriage (*Amoza* in Kurdish). There are other types of relative marriages such as *Khaloza* – a marriage arrangement between a sister's daughters or

sons and brother's daughters or sons – and *Purrza* - an agreement between sisters' or brothers' daughters or sons and aunts' daughters or sons (Bois, 1966).

Arranged marriages in the Kurdistan region are a type of direct exchange known as *Zhin Ba Zhin* in Kurdish. Such a form of marriage is made when a father demands a wife in return, after offering his daughter to a man from another family. The most common type was the sister exchange (Bois, 1966), although nowadays, few such cases occur. The process of having direct wife and sister exchanges limits the fee of the bride-price in a marriage. However, relative marriages are widely practised in the Kurdistan region since society favours endogamy and close family ties. This kind of marriage, of course, has a greater risk of producing genetic health problems because of married couples' closer than usual consanguinity. The preference for relative marriages is one of the reasons why young men and even more young women choose to run away from their households. In urban areas, some young girls negotiate to marry a young man they choose by threatening their parents with the possibility of eloping. Running away from home can bring shame to their families' name since it is believed that the girl's honour has already been stained and she is no longer considered a virgin and cannot return to her family (Bois, 1966).

Most Kurdish marriages are monogamous, however, Islam allows polygamous marriages where a man can marry as many as four wives at one time providing that he fulfils his obligations as prescribed in Islam. The infertility issue is one factor why men enter into polygamous marriages. Although statistically rare, polygamous marriages are still practised by Kurdish men who have a high economic and political status or claim to have such a status. A patriarchal ideology justifies these marriages by emphasizing the Islamic prescription which asserts that social harmony will develop between wives who share household chores and child care. In reality, polygamous marriages complicate social relations between the members of extended households.

Polygamy was very common in the past, as in other Muslim countries, and with political considerations in view, chiefs used to marry several wives and had numerous children. In Kurdistan, polygamy was very common especially in rural society between villagers in the past because of economic factors and social status: if a man has numerous wives it could mean a high social status as well as a sign of wealth. During the 1990s, this practice decreased in numbers due to the financial crisis resulting from economic sanctions. After 2000, the number of polygamous marriages started to rise again due to some measure of political, economic and

social stability. However, women's organisations, NGOs and Human Rights Watch have all attempted to eliminate this practice. In 2008, an amended law – Act No.15 of 2008: The Act to Amend the Amended Law (188) of the Year 1959 – was established to protect women's or first wives' from polygamous marriages and states that, "Marrying more than one woman is not allowed unless authorised by the judge". The authorization depends on meeting the conditions stated below:

* The first wife has to agree before the court on her husband's marrying a second wife.

* If the wife has a medically proven, chronic incurable disease that prevents having sexual intercourse, or if she is infertile, this must be proven by a specialised medical committee's report.

* The man should be financially stable, able to support a second wife, and formal documentation must be presented to prove this claim.

* The husband has to submit written documentation to the court before signing the marriage contract, in which he vows to deal with both wives fairly and equally regarding sexual intercourse and other marriage relations materially and morally.

* The wife indicates to the court that her husband can take a second wife.

According to this amendment, any man who marries a second wife contrary to this law will be sentenced to imprisonment between six months and a year, plus a fine of 10 million Iraqi Dinars. In 2011, another regulation was passed – Act No.8: Combating Domestic Violence in Kurdistan Region-Iraq, which protects women against domestic violence as well as abuse in marriage. Article II of the said law prohibits several acts related to marriage such as:

* Forced Marriages

* Exchange Marriage (*Al-Shighar*) and Marriage of Minors

* Marriage in Exchange for Ransom (Blood Money)

* Forced Divorce

* Cutting-Off Kinship Relationships and Disowning Family Members

* Husband Forcing Wife to Engage in Prostitution

* Forcing Family Members to Quit their Jobs

Under this law and in case of any violation, the offender shall be imprisoned for no more than 48 hours or pay a fine of no less than 300,000 Iraqi Dinars (The Kurdistan Parliament 2011).

Even though these laws exist to protect women from polygamous marriages of their husbands, this practice continues to exist in the Kurdistan region. There are cases where wives are threatened by their husbands with divorce if they do not agree to a polygamous marriage. Aside from that, parents from both sides (husband and wife) do not easily accept a divorced woman, or treat her similar to a widow, but force her to accept her husband's second marriage. Also, if the husband's second marriage cannot be approved in the courts inside the Kurdistan Region, the arrangement can be settled in Arab cities inside Iraq. The Kurdistan Region is still part of Iraq and so it abides by Iraqi law, which means that the husband can still be legally married to his second wife. If a first wife files a legal suit against her rich husband due to his second marriage without her permission, it is easy for him to pay a fine of 10 million ID. This is the reason why some wealthy men and politicians enter into such polygamous marriages. Nowadays, this practice is rather rare in the Kurdistan region because of the new legislation, as well as the financial crisis and the growth of education, but it still exists.

Another type of marriage in Kurdistan region is child or early marriage, a formal or informal union of two persons, with at least one of them being under 18 years old. Child marriage can also be classified as forced marriage since a child usually lacks the maturity and level of information necessary to make an informed choice. Children also often accept to get married under pressure, including the threat or actual use of force. This type of marriage is a violation of a child's rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) is considered abusive, limiting a child's opportunity to enjoy childhood, continuing education and opportunities in life (Bengal, Pradesh and Pradesh, 2016).

Children, especially girl children, are exposed to particular health risks associated with early marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, on both physical and psychological grounds. Having such an arrangement early in life threatens children with a high risk of social isolation, and vulnerability to abuse and violence. Children married at a young age must face the responsibilities and struggles of adulthood and as parents. Early marriage is considered a global problem and has negative consequences for children, particularly for girls, who are more susceptible to abuse and domestic violence than boys. Teenage wives are vulnerable to gender-related violence, sexual abuse and domestic violence within the framework of marriage.

Moreover, early pregnancies often leave long-term detrimental consequences to their physical and mental health (UNICEF, 2005; Loaiza and Wong, 2012; WHO, 2013; Mazher, 2015).

In the Kurdistan Region, child marriage is a serious and growing issue that needs direct, effective and uncompromising intervention in the form of preventive legislation and protective measures. In parallel, sustained efforts to raise public awareness and continuous advocacy against early marriages remain a must in order to change abusive and outdated social practices. Without such changes, child marriage is bound to continue within a society, even with the adoption of laws that should prevent it (Mazher, 2015). According to some reports, most girls subjected to early marriage range from 13-15 years old, but there have been cases of some girls younger than 10 years old. It is said that during conflict situations child marriage often emerges as a negative coping behaviour, and there is a misconception that a girl marrying at an early age leads to her social and physical security. This may only increase the levels of child marriages (EKurd, 2016b).

Article 5 of Act No.15 of 2008: The Act to Amend the Amended Law (188) of Year 1959 – Personal Status Law in Iraq Kurdistan Region states that:

> If a sixteen year-old asks to be married, the judge can authorize the marriage if the eligibility and physical ability of the person in question was proven to him, after obtaining the approval of their legal guardian. If the guardian abstains from responding, the judge calls upon them to state their agreement during a defined period. Thus, if the guardian does not object or if they submit an objection that is unworthy of consideration, the judge shall allow the marriage (Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly, 2008).

This particular article of the amended law clearly states that a person can legally marry at sixteen if the legal guardian approves it. An additional ruling has been added in connection with this decree as stated below:

“A mother shall be considered as a legal guardian if the father is deceased, missing or the mother has brought her up and lives with her” (Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly 2008).

2.8 Summary

As far as I know, this study is the first evidence-based research about child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region. In order to understand the concept of child maltreatment in Kurdistan, the reader must have an overview of the nation's socio-economic situation, political stability, cultural background, education and domestic issues. Despite the ongoing development of education systems, and the existence of schools and universities in the region, there is still a limited amount of relevant, informative literature and a lack of awareness about child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdistan. Continuous economic crises and political sanctions create tensions within the nation, leading to a greater risk of domestic violence against women, young girls and children. Such problems encourage the reproduction of poor parenting skills within Kurdish families, and poverty hinders parents from providing basic needs for their children such as nutrition, shelter, health and education.

Chapter Three: Understanding Child Punishment and Child Maltreatment Globally

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the distinction between child punishment and child maltreatment based on the existing literature and recent research. The main purpose of the chapter is to provide basic information and better understanding of the complex relationship between child punishment and child maltreatment. Section 3.2 highlights the prevalence of child maltreatment in Western and Middle Eastern countries, while section 3.3 employs a review of the literature to examine child punishment and maltreatment in relation to multi-faceted cultural, religious, social, financial and political factors, and in terms of the consequences of maltreatment. This chapter also describes tools to protect children against severe punishment and maltreatment amounting to abuse, and to minimise the negative consequences of different forms of physical and emotional maltreatment and abuse.

3.2 The Prevalence of Child Maltreatment in Western and Middle Eastern Countries

Child maltreatment is common in all societies and can have devastating impacts from childhood to adulthood (Pritchard 2004). Exposure to abuse or neglect may threaten the physical and/or mental health of children, leading to risky behaviours and other symptoms of trauma. UNICEF argues that child protection programmes are needed to provide effective solutions to child abuse in every society, and that such prevention programmes can have a positive impact on a nation's economic development, reducing the societal costs of dealing with the long-term effects of child maltreatment (UNICEF, 2013).

The research literature reviewed in this chapter demonstrates that attention to different types of child maltreatment such as physical, sexual, emotional and neglect has increased notably over recent decades.. And regardless of culture and location, child maltreatment and neglect are present in every nation in the world (Pritchard, 2004).

Child abuse may be defined differently from one country to another. For such reasons, comparisons between nations must be handled with caution since there are different

terminologies and methods of studies used in reports. Prevalence and incidence research measures the occurrence of child abuse. *Prevalence* refers to the ratio of the designated population experiencing abuse during a specific time, while *Incidence* specifies the numbers of current cases happening in a defined society over a year (Creighton, 2004).

There have been several prevalence studies of child maltreatment in the United Kingdom in recent years. Around 7% of British children experienced physical maltreatment, about 6% were neglected, 8% were exposed to sexual exploitation and 6% encountered psychological abuse (Pritchard 2004). According to the UK Police, based on their annual report (2012-2013), there were 18,887 cases of reported child sexual offences and 6,754 children encountered physical abuse (CEOP, 2014). A report published by UNICEF in 2003 presented a league table of child maltreatment leading to child deaths in rich nations (Adamson *et al*., 2003) Of 3,500 cases of such deaths Germany and Great Britain reported two per week, France three, Japan four, and the United States about 27. Globally, in 2002, approximately 3.4 million of the world's children below 15 years of age died of malnutrition, mostly Asians and Africans (WHO, 2002a).

In the United States alone, an annual estimate of 3.6 million referrals were brought to child protection agencies involving a total of 6.6 million children (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). According to a 2012 report, among child victims, 78% were neglected, 18% suffered physical maltreatment, 9% were sexually exploited and 11% experienced other forms of abuse, including emotional, neglect and parents' drug and alcohol dependency (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). Because of this, the United States has one of the worst records among Western nations where every ten seconds a report on child abuse is made (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014).

A U.S. report entitled *Child Maltreatment 2014* provided by the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Systems (NCANDS) shows the statistics and comparison of data from 2010 to 2014. Referrals increased by 7.4% from 3,023,000 (2010) to 3,248,000 (2014) (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services 2014). The report also indicated that approximately 702,000 children suffered from abuse and neglect nationwide, representing 9.4 of every 1,000 children in the population. 24.4 of every 1,000 children in the population from birth to one year old were most likely to experience maltreatment. Girls were more likely to experience abuse than boys: 50.6% compared to 48.9%. Moreover, an estimated 1,580 children died due to maltreatment; a rate of 2.13 deaths per 100,000 children in the population.

Child maltreatment issues in Middle Eastern countries often go unnoticed due to a lack of social awareness, poverty and ignorance. Moreover, factors such as religion and cultural background play a major role since some families try to conceal incidents of abuse (IRIN, 2006). A report entitled *Prevalence of Child Abuse in Saudi Arabia: a Review of the Literature* (Mogaddam *et al.*, 2015) shows the statistics of child maltreatment over a span of fifteen years (2000 – 2015). From 2000 to 2008, the prevalence of physical abuse and neglect against children was higher than other forms of maltreatment. However, in 2014, emotional abuse came to the fore, especially involving teenagers. The report also claimed that physical abuse and neglect were the most prevalent types of child maltreatment over the last 15 years, and the identification of psychological abuse began late in comparison with other forms of maltreatment in the country (Mogaddam *et al.*, 2015). Another study, *Child Maltreatment Prevention Readiness Assessment Country Report: Saudi Arabia* (Almuneef *et al.*, 2012), focused on the abuse and neglect of children, claiming that from 1990 to 2000, there were only 11 reports of child maltreatment that had been written for the purpose of medical case research studies. In 2011, the National Family Safety Registry released its first annual report which revealed 292 confirmed cases of child maltreatment. The statistics showed that boys were more vulnerable to abuse than girls: 52.4% compared to 47.6%. Different forms of abuse were also categorised, with physical abuse (60%), followed by sexual exploitation (15.4%) and neglect 41.3% (Mogaddam *et al.*, 2015).

In some other Arab countries child maltreatment has become a social concern. According to UNICEF, in Jordan there were 661 reported child abuse incidents in 2002 which notably increased in 2004 to 1,423 cases (Rushdi, n.d.). A survey also conducted by UNICEF in 2007 revealed that more than half of Jordanian children were exposed to corporal punishment or aggressive behaviour by parents or teachers. The statistics showed that physical and psychological maltreatment cases comprised 50% of the total cases, sexual assault 45% and neglect 5%. Moreover, about 6,416 referrals of abuse and violence against women and children were accepted by the Family Protection Department in 2009, 565 of which were handled by the court (Rushdi, n.d.). Another Jordanian study (Sweis, 2012) concluded that boys experience more physical maltreatment than girls with boys aged below 12 years old subjected to physcial abuse, whereas girls aged above 13 years old were particularly vulnerable to sexual assault. Even though there was a child protection law passed in 2008, child maltreatment continued to be widespread and the number of reported incidents rising. Underlying factors such as economic problems and poverty, lack of social awareness and knowledge, poor laws and

cultural norms contributed to the increasing incidents of child maltreatment in Jordan (Sweis, 2012).

Children of Iraq have long been exposed to abuse and severe violations of their human rights. Decades of war, international sanctions, foreign occupations and terrorism have made Iraq one of the most dangerous countries in the Middle East. Thus, children's standard of living, security and protection have been compromised. Statistics suggest that about 3.5 million children are living in poverty and 1.5 million suffer from malnutrition, part of the legacy of the war led by the United States in 2003 (Kentane, 2012). Mental health issues have also become a major concern since the traumatic effects of war affect the emotional wellbeing of children. Education and a secure environment were two of the children's rights that were widely neglected during the years of war; other grave violations such as forced labour were widespread, and Iraqi children faced trafficking and abuse daily (Humanium, 2013). Terrorism does not spare children when violence spreads. Numerous attacks targeted schools and hospitals where children were most likely to be present (Mamouri, 2013). And children are also used by some terrorist groups such as Islamic State in Iraq and ISIS in Syria to create a new generation of believers in order to diffuse their violent ideology. The United Nations reported in April 2016 that 362 recruited children were fighting under ISIS in Syria (Dorell, 2016).

According to UNICEF (2016), about 3.6 million children, a ratio of one in five Iraqi children are vulnerable to abuse and violence, physical injury, sexual assault, kidnapping and death. Since 2014, the organisation has confirmed 838 child deaths and 794 physical injuries in Iraq, but the actual number of fatalities could be much higher than reported. There were also reported incidents of abduction of children in the same year, verified cases reaching approximately 1,496, an average of 50 children per month. Such abductions were connected with sexual abuse against girls who were subjected to sexual slavery and rape. Meanwhile, boys are also susceptible to abuse, forced to enrol as combatants or even as suicide bombers, with 124 reported cases of such incidents in Iraq. Moreover, the emotional effects of war and violence towards children are seriously detrimental to their health. In the Kurdistan Region about 76% of abused children have shown behavioural changes. Unusual crying, sadness, screaming, aggression, disassociation and nightmares are some of the responses of abused children. Moreover, due to violence and financial problems, families have been forced to send their children to work (child labour) and into early marriages. The UNICEF report claimed that approximately 975,000 girls in Iraq below 15 years old were involved in child marriages, while child labour reports reached 575,000 cases (UNICEF, 2016).

A training course about child maltreatment, *Moral Training: Family Violence against Children* (Al-Maie, 2009), describes Kurdish parents' perspectives about the punishment of children. The training guidelines refer to parents' 'love for their children' as the reason behind acts of punishments and discipline, designed with the intention of preventing their children from misbehaving and teaching them how to become good citizens as they grow up. The course also addresses parents' lack of awareness about abuse and punishment. In a 2013 news article, *Child Protection Laws on Table in Iraqi Kurdistan*, Siran Silah, Head of the Union of 18 NGOs for Children in the Kurdistan Region, refers to the violation of children's rights in their own homes through corporal or verbal abuse, a view widely considered by parents as an invasion of family privacy and responsibility for their children (Zebari, 2013).

Table 3. 1 Communication with Child Help Line 116 (2011 – 2015)

Year	Number of Referrals	Number of Children Transferred to Child Care	Number of Parents who Asked for Advice from Child Help Line
2011	745	4	0
2012	1469	11	71
2013	737	10	86
2014	1970	20	124
2015	9698	8	56
2016	6711	23	62
Total	21330	76	399

**Source: Majeed, (2017), Annual Statistics of Communication with Child Help Line 116, August 2011 to December 2016: Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.*

Table 3.1 above shows the annual number of phone calls received by Child Help Line 116 from August 2011 to December 2016 in Kurdistan Region-Iraq. These referrals were received from children, relatives or concerned citizens reporting suspected child maltreatment. Based on the data, the total number of phone calls received was 21,330 over a period of six years, with 76 children being transferred to alternative child care and 399 parents seeking advice from the institution. The table also shows that reports of suspected child abuse have been increasing since 2014 underpinning evidence of child maltreatment in the region.

The Child Help Line 116 conducted another survey involving 631 children in Erbil City that focused on issues affecting their daily lives (Majeed, 2017). One prominent issue was school problems: referred to by 55.46% of respondents. The children complained about inadequate facilities such as a lack of classrooms, electricity and poor sanitation. The teachers' 'poor teaching skills' were criticised and the use of punishments as a disciplinary measure was

highlighted. However, love relationships at school were mentioned by 10% of the children surveyed, enabled by mixed gender classrooms. 8.24% of children mentioned family problems in the survey, most referring to the emotional impact of parental divorce as well as the abuse by step-mothers or other relatives, and neglect by their own parents. Other concerns brought up included anxiety and depression (8.23%) and peer problems (7.60%).

Child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region is a gendered issue in a patriarchal society where women enjoy lower status than men. However, compared to other parts of Iraq, Kurdish women experience less discrimination although there is still a need for improvement. Although Kurdistan-Iraq's laws recognise honour killing as similar to murder, the number of such killings has continued to increase. According to a statistical analysis released by the Kurdish government in 2013, 236 women suffered from physical injuries as a result of honour punishments, including 113 from self-immolation. According to a UNICEF survey in 2011, 43% of women aged between 15 to 49 years of age underwent female genital mutilation (FGM), while the Association for Crisis Assistance and Solidarity Development Cooperation found that in 2010, more than 70% of FGM cases happened in the governorates of Sulaimania and Erbil (Kaya, 2016).

The practice of honour punishments and killings is still one of the nation's challenges. Kurdish society's view regarding retaliation for acts that challenge strict moral codes is mixed - a greyish moral and social issue. Moreover, deaths related to honour killings are rarely reported; some doctors recording suicide for fear of revenge from the victims' families (Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2015). One instance in 2007 caught the attention of the international media - the murder of a 17-year-old named *Du'a Khalil Aswad* who was stoned to death in front of her family and relatives after being caught running away with her boyfriend (Clarke 2007; Warvin 2012). In 2012, another incident involved 15-year-old girl, Nigar Rahim, who was raped and impregnated. After staying six months at a government shelter, she was returned to her family after signing documents concerning her safety, but was later murdered by her own brother 'in order to protect the family's name' (NRT.T.V, 2013; EKurd Daily, 2012). Another honour killing in 2015 involved a father murdering his 21 year old daughter named *Snur*. The girl took refuge at a local women's shelter in Sulaimania after having issues with her family. Her own father shot her dead at a park several months later (Editorial Staff, EKurd Daily, 2015). Even though there are existing laws for women and children's protection, these are clearly ineffective in a social context in which women hold such low status.

According to an annual report by the Directorate of Follow-Up on Violence Against Women in Hawler (also known as Erbil City), the number of cases of maltreatment and domestic violence against women and children has increased over the past twelve years. Since 1997, with about 2,604 reported cases of suicide as a result of domestic violence and 2,095 incidents of teenage girls and women being buried alive. Table 3.2 below shows the different forms of violence and maltreatment against women and teenage girls between 2010 and 2015 in the three Governorates (Erbil, Silmani and Dohuk) of the Kurdistan Region:

Table 3. 2 Different forms of maltreatment and violence against women and teenage girls in the Governorates of Erbil, Silmani and Dahuk (2010 – 2015)

Year	Physical maltreatment/ torture	Sexual Assaults	Honour Killings	Self - Immolation	Suicide	Reported Complaints
2010	1068	134	49	441	56	2485
2011	990	109	43	360	44	2538
2012	990	109	43	360	44	2538
2013	0	100	29	215	21	2924
2014	97	144	35	197	47	6673
2015	37	40	16	75	20	2003
Total	3182	636	215	1648	232	19161

**Source: Annual Report from the Directorate of Follow-Up Against Women in Hawler (2015).*

Based on the information above, the most common type of maltreatment and violence against women and teenage gitrls is physical maltreatment or torture with 3,182 reported incidents. The numbers in the table do not illustrate the entire situation of child maltreatment and domestic violence in the Region, but does provide clear evidence of maltreatment, based on actual and recorded incidents. A higher number of cases undoubtedly exists because of unreported incidents.

Although Iraqi children comprise the largest group among Iraq's population, children's issues have received the least attention in terms of research and social policy responses. Aside from physical and emotional maltreatment from abusive parents, continuing war means that children's rights continue to be violated. Displacement, malnutrition and threats to preventive health and education services are some of the important concerns that need immediate action from the government, international community, NGOs and other institutions to protect children. UNICEF (2011) indicates that about 4.7 million Iraqi children - one in every three, needs humanitarian aid. Ten percent of children are thought to have fled their homes due to conflict since 2014 and displaced children are vulnerable to conflict-related violence such as

murder, child labour, forced recruitment, kidnapping, sexual assaults and child trafficking. Malnutrition is another major concern with one in four children displying stunted growth due to food deprivation and a lack of proper healthcare (UNICEF, 2011).

The media play an important role in revealing the existence of child maltreatment in society, since there is a lack of academic studies and accurate statistics in the region. Several cases of abuse and domestic violence have been featured in local and international news and in social media. One particular child maltreatment case exposed on the local channel NRT – TV was the story of three siblings punished by their step-mother for almost twelve years. The step-mother punished them habitually, which caused physical defects and emotional trauma. Arrest warrants and a lawsuit were filed against the father and the abusive stepmother, while the siblings underwent cosmetic surgery (Mohmoud, 2016).

Another maltreatment case featured on the local Slemani News Network when a three-year old child was found in an abandoned house with both her hands and feet wrapped with clothes and adhesive tape. One of her legs was broken and her body had bruises and visible injuries. According to the report, the child was left alone in an empty house for ten days, in order to kill her through starvation, while her entire body was surrounded by cement blocks to prevent her from moving around. The police arrested her father, grandfather and aunt since they were the child's caregivers, her parents having previously divorced (Ibrahim, 2017).

Another case of maltreatment was recently featured on a local network, Rudaw News, involving a six-year old boy. According to the police, the child was found frostbitten outside his home with noticeable marks of abuse, including head injury and bruises. The report mentioned that the father used a hot spoon and a knife on the child, causing infected wounds on the back and abdomen. Later, the mother ran away after being beaten up as she attempted to protect her child from her husband. The police later on arrested the father (Hassan, 2017). Incidents of child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region are often hidden, but through the influence of local and international media, their existence in the society is beginning to be seen.

This section has demonstrated emerging recognition of child maltreatment in Kurdistan raising a critical need for awareness to protect children's rights against abuse and violence.

3.3 Cultural Dimensions of Child Punishment and Maltreatment

This section will discuss evidence and argument connecting child discipline, punishment and maltreatment to multi-faceted factors such as cultural and religious contexts, economic status and political stability. The main goal of the section is to provide a better understanding of the correlation between child maltreatment and the above-mentioned factors.

3.3.1 Culture, child punishment and maltreatment

There is a worldwide perception that child maltreatment and the use of punishment in every society is usually influenced by social, financial and individual factors (Devaney and Spratt, 2009). There have been studies for more than 20 years focusing on the correlation between culture and child maltreatment (Korbin, 2002). Child health experts believe that the connection and consequences of such traditions and cultures affect the recognition and understanding of child punishment, maltreatment and neglect, which is both difficult and challenging (Raman and Hodes, 2012).

The physical punishment of children has become a global debate. In some (mostly developing) societies, physical punishment of children is common and deemed socically acceptable, whilst in others it is not. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all harsh and humiliating forms of punishments against children are prohibited and should be eradicated (United Nations General Assembly, 2008). However, corporal punishment persists in both the industrialized and less developed countries, where parents use it as a form of discipline. Common physical punishments, including hitting, kicking and punching, are culturally acceptable in many countries (WHO, 2000; Straus and Kantor, 1994).

As defined by E.B Tylor in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871):

> Culture or Civilization, taken in its widest ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (cited in Eriksen, 2017: p. 26).

Culture can also be defined as different social values transferred from one generation to another (Hackett and Hackett, 1993). The systematic study of child disciplinary behaviour in a multi-cultural context started with Margaret Mead's research in South Pacific societies in the late 1920s. She was the first to highlight the interaction of culture and caregiving and how it affects children's developmental stages. Her studies triggered a great deal of research on good

parenting skills, focused on child discipline, based primarily on studies conducted in industrialized countries. However, there is a lack of cross-cultural research making it difficult to use such understanding about caregiving and good parenting skills to influence change in cultural norms and behaviours (UNICEF, 2010) informed by variations in perceptions about child maltreatment and neglect depending on cultural beliefs, the role and privacy of the family in determining treatment of children (Taylor, 1997).

It is crucial to understand the role of culture in child maltreatment and neglect. A study by Korbin stated that, "Child rearing in a multicultural society is not easy and there are no global standards for bringing children up, or for child abuse and neglect" (Korbin, 1980, p4). Her study also suggested that in order to address child maltreatment it would be helpful to know its definition within a cross-cultural context. Moreover, Korbin has argued that, "An understanding of the insider's viewpoints has been central to anthropology's efforts to organize and explain the diversity of human behaviour that has been documented cross-culturally" (Korbin, 1983: p.4). This means that in order to have a full understanding of a society, we must study its culture closely and learn its habits, attitudes and perspectives towards social and domestic values of life.

An increasing number of countries have acknowledged the existence of specific forms of child punishment as a form of child maltreatment and have introduced laws and strategies to eliminate and reduce its occurrence. Even in these countries such as the UK, there remain parents who use levels of physical punishment that clearly exceed the threshold for constituting child abuse (Gershoff, 2002). Abusive parents use punishments and force against their children to control and instil discipline (Holzer and Lamont, 2010). However, according to Section 58 of the Children Act 2004 in the United Kingdom, parents and/or caregivers are allowed to *smack* their children given that it is *reasonable punishment*; while amendments to section 58 limit the use of the defence of reasonable punishment, so that it can no longer be used as justification by people charged with physical abuse and cruelty. Therefore, any injury inflicted on children and considered serious enough to issue a warrant of assault cannot be considered as a result of reasonable punishment (DCSF, 2007). Moreover, the UK government has ruled out further consultation, following a parental survey about their reactions and attitudes towards smacking children (DCSF, 2007). The survey's results are shown below:

1. Incidents of smacking are estimated to have decreased in recent years, as a form of disciplinary action.

2. Whilst many parents claimed they do not smack their children, the majority of them agreed that smacking should not be banned outright. However, many organisations suggest and support the introduction of legislation to ban smacking.

3. The police have the authority to deal with the cases as they consider appropriate. Factors should be taken into account such as the public interest, availability of the evidence and the best interests of the child, as well as the legal position including Section 58.

4. There appears to be a lack of awareness across different audiences as to the scope, application and extent of the law (DCSF, 2007). This can only mean that children are exposed to a risk of harsh discipline whenever their parents think that corporal punishment is appropriate to discipline their children.

Another study (Bunting, Webb and Healy, 2010) showed that UK parents are cautious about using physical punishment as a means of discipline and they do not agree that hurting their children physically would promote correct behaviour. However, they are more disposed to smack their children whenever they are stressed or angry. For example, a survey of 1000 parents in Northern Ireland found that the majority of parents had a negative attitude towards physical punishment, but most of them still smacked their children.

In most states of Australia, physical punishment remains legal, provided that it is carried out for the purpose of correction, control or discipline and is considered *reasonable*, taking into account the age of the child, the child's capacity for reasoning, whether the child is able to comprehend correction or discipline, the method of punishment and the possible harm it could cause the child (Holzer and Lamont, 2010).

A study by Hackett and Hackett (1993) compared the treatment of immigrant Gujarati Indian boys with that of native English children. The immigrant children were expected to show their customary behaviour at home, in the community and elsewhere. Yet it is unlikely that their behaviour would remain uncontaminated by the influence of their English peers and such 'English' behaviour might create tension and conflict with their parents as behaviour regarded as healthy self-assertion in Britain was perceived as wrong from a Gujarati perspective. The research also mentioned the difference in the way children handled disputes. The Gujarati children were encouraged to report such instances to their teachers and parents, rather than fight back and stand up for themselves as the English children tended to do (Hackett and Hackett, 1993).

Another study, “A Comparison of Child Rearing Practices among Chinese, Immigrant Chinese and Caucasian-American Parents” (Lin and Fu, 1990), investigated the relationship of culture and migration in the rearing and maltreatment of children. The study involved the parents of 138 children enrolled at a kindergarten in the United States of America. The research was based on different explanatory variables used to define children’s upbringing: parental control, encouragement of independence, expression of affection and emphasis on achievement. The results showed that Chinese American and Chinese immigrants had higher rates of parental control, encouraged more independence and emphasised achievement, compared to Caucasian-American parents. This research suggested that Chinese immigrants were adaptable to the changing conditions of life and social structures of the United States, while maintaining their customary patterns of socialisation (Lin and Fu, 1990).

In a survey of 34 countries examining parental use of severe punishment as a form of discipline, data showed that a variety of harsh punishments were extremely common in most countries, where, overall, 76% of children experienced some aggressive forms of physical punishment and emotional abuse. The lowest rate was in Bosnia Herzegovina (38%) while the highest rate was in Yemen (95%). This variation in the use of severe physical punishment and emotional abuse is similar to the levels found in other nations, including industrialized countries (UNICEF, 2010).

Child maltreatment as a result of parents’ use of physical punishment exists in every nation, no matter how it is defined, classified or measured. One study analysed child abuse instances in 28 developing and transitional countries, where the results were based on multiple indicator cluster surveys (Akmatov, 2011). The data demonstrated that 28% of African children were exposed to moderate to severe physical punishment and emotional abuse, while 90% of Syrian parents believe that children should be punished physically if they misbehaved. However, only 10% of respondents from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan - two Asian countries - agreed that punishment is required in order to teach discipline to children, while only 9% of children from developing countries are exposed to physical punishment and emotional abuse. The results also showed that male children are at a higher risk of exposure to abuse and that most of the children experiencing maltreatment are from poor families. Moreover, the study also suggested that awareness programmes about child maltreatment would be a great help in the reduction of its occurrence.

Child upbringing and disciplinary approaches can differ in different cities within the same countries. In 2000, Lai, Zhang and Wang and conducted a study of 89 mothers in Beijing and 45 mothers in Hong Kong to analyse child rearing in Chinese families. The findings showed that mothers in Hong Kong were stricter and more controlling than the mothers in Beijing, despite the two groups following the same authoritative style of child upbringing and discipline. Moreover, the results showed that the mothers in Hong Kong were less inclined to show affection towards their children while the mothers in Beijing put greater emphasis on their children's achievements compared to their Hong Kong counterparts. The study suggested that Chinese parental disciplinary styles vary across the different regions of China. The variety may also be due of different geo-political locations within the same cultural background a factor that may have been ignored in previous cross-cultural studies (Lai, Zhang and Wang, 2000).

Domestic violence, particularly spousal abuse, is also highly correlated with child maltreatment. In rural India, 500 mothers underwent face-to-face interviews as part of a cross-sectional population-based survey (Hunter *et al.*, 2000). The research focused on disciplinary action due to misbehaviour and spousal violence. Other factors were also considered such as socio-demographic characteristics, neighbour support, residential stability and the alcoholism of husbands. The results showed that half of the respondents used harsh verbal abuse, while 42% practised severe physical punishment on their children. The findings also noted that mothers using physical punishment were themselves subjected to spousal violence. The research suggested the promotion of child maltreatment awareness programmes to educate parents, especially in rural areas (Hunter *et al.*, 2000).

These studies demonstrate a lack of standardization in the field of child discipline, upbringing and the awareness of punishment and child abuse across different societies. There are variations in the use of child discipline across different societies, where some approaches may be deemed appropriate while others are not.

3.3.2 Religion, punishment and child maltreatment

Sometimes it is very difficult to differentiate culture and religion, since in most countries both are interlinked, especially when religion forms part of a social tradition. For example, in the Kurdistan Region, culture and religion are closely connected since its people are practising

religion as a social rule in organising the family, child upbringing and discipline. Many children subject to physical or emotional maltreatment are perceived to have disobeyed their parents and their 'religion'. This issue has been referred to briefly in Chapter Two, and findings from this study, about how Kurdish parents treat their children within the religious context, will be discussed in Chapters 7-9.

Although there are numerous benefits that can come from religion and spirituality, very few studies have examined religious views after exposure to child maltreatment and abuse. One study (Waldron, Scarpa and Kim-Spoon, 2018) recruited 718 women (mean age 19.53 years) from a large public university where the participants completed questionnaires related to child maltreatment and neglect, interpersonal problems, religiosity and self-esteem. The findings showed that all forms of maltreatment were associated with negative perspectives of God, combined with more interpersonal difficulties. The perspective of God as a punishing figure plays its part in childhood psychological maltreatment and low adult self-esteem, along with several other interpersonal problems (Waldron, Scarpa and Kim-Spoon, 2018).

Religion offers guidance and specific instructions for good moral behaviour and the promotion of human welfare. However, religious beliefs can also appear to support, instigate and justify child maltreatment across societies. Children are exposed to abuse and neglect in seen and unseen ways in religious households, schools and monasteries, in places of worship and in the midst of religious conflicts. They also experience maltreatment on the basis of religious norms and policies. Moreover, children's needs are usually the lowest priority, not only in national budgets and political decisions, but also in the finances of religious communities and other complex politics of religious hierarchies. At the same time, religion is also considered a powerful and positive force in children's upbringing and protection. Religious individuals and organisations build schools, hospitals and social service agencies as well as writing or supporting child welfare and protection legislation. Some religious communities provide for children's needs and even coordinate with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children and other related organisations to address child abuse, sexual exploitation, child marriage and child labour (Bunge, 2014).

Several studies refer to religious differences in children's upbringing, parental principles, family life and paternal contribution (Alwin, 1986). Understandings of *child rearing* are extensive and literature discussing the topic considers different factors such as value orientations, parenting skills and styles and specific kinds of parenting practices such as the

use of physical punishment. One important concept to consider when discussing the impact of religion in child rearing is *parental values* (Felson and Train, 2010). Some religious parents put a great deal of faith in corporal punishment to achieve their parenting objectives. Lenski's (1961) study discussed the differences between Detroit catholics and protestants regarding how religion affects child rearing. He found that Detroit catholics were more traditional than protestants in their orientation to their children, the catholics emphasising obedience to authority rather than personal autonomy or self-direction. Moreover, catholics were reportedly more susceptible to practising corporal punishment on their children compared to protestants (Alwin, 1986). Emotional punishment such as shouting at children is usually regarded as part of an authoritarian parenting style, which was occasionally prevalent among conservative protestants. Ellison and Bradshaw (2009) refer to other studies showing protestant parents providing higher levels of good parenting skills and styles reflecting advice from conservative protestant child-rearing manuals, which differ from abusive parenting styles that emphasise the use of mild to moderate corporal punishment.

In Islam, parents have the responsibility to educate their children in good moral values and to guide them towards the recognition of, and obedience to, Allah (Ayatullah, 1980). The family serves as the *interpreters of religious ideology* for children as part of their religious cognitive development (Heller, 1986, p.32, cited in Boyatzis, 2005: p.129) and, consequently, children's beliefs are often strongly similar to their parents' (Boyatzis, 2005: p.129). Therefore, children born in any culture are likely to follow their parents' religion. It is an integral part of the socialisation process and culture, to teach and practise the same religion.

However, many parents and educators teach their children about the punishment of Allah in order to induce fear, so they do not misbehave. Punishments were also mentioned in the Qur'an, as quoted in Hadith of the Holy Prophet:

"Ask your children to start offering prayers at the age of six. If they do not listen to your repeated warnings, you may beat them to become regular at offering prayers when they are seven years old." (Ayatullah, 1980, p.169).

There are also some passages mentioned in the Qur'an concerning beating as a form of punishment:

One person came to the presence of the Prophet of Islam and said that an orphaned child was under his care. He wanted to know if he can beat the child to correct him. The Prophet replied:

In a situation where you can beat your son, you may beat the orphan in a similar situation in his best interests (Ayatullah, 1980, p.169).

Children must be guided and observed when they are praying by themselves for the first time (Kassamali, 1998). Fasting is also an important part of Islam, where children must learn to conform at an early age. This was also mentioned in a Hadith by Imam (Ja'far as-Sadiq):

"We enjoin our children to fast when they are seven years old, whatever part of the fast they are able to keep. So when it is mid-day or further (into the day) and thirst overcomes them, they break the fast; so that they become accustomed to fasting and can endure it." (Kassamali, 1998: p.14).

While the negative effects of religion in encouraging punishment of children have been considered, religion may also have a positive role to consider. Kassamali (1998) argues that religion also includes education about death and life hereafter and though such concepts might be confusing for younger children, it is advisable that parents discuss these topics from time to time, specifically as children grow older. A death in the family or community offers evidence that all humans are mortal, and each of us is destined to go the same way. It is best to be honest with the children.

In conclusion, some forms of physical punishment including maltreatment and emotional abuse, have been justified in terms of following 'religious practice'. Religion is interlinked with culture and is influential in promoting domestic and social values, especially children's upbringing.

3.3.3 Economic factors

Many studies cite evidence linking child maltreatment and neglect with poverty as well as the consequences of maltreatment and neglect for children (Ayatullah, 1980; Powell, 1994; Fadiman, 1997; Fergusson and Lynskey, 1997; WHO, 2006; Clarke, 2007; Devaney and Spratt, 2009; Gilbert *et al.*, 2009; UNHCR, 2011; Dettlaff and Johnson, 2011; Barr, 2012; Lindo, Schaller and Hansen, 2013; Steinberg, Catalano and Dooley, 2016). But there are also reports indicating relatively high numbers of incidents of child maltreatment, neglect and punishment in high income countries (Ferrara *et al*., 2015). Overall, the prevalence of child maltreatment is a generally acknowledged phenomenon that includes nearly 150 million individuals

internationally, and is present in both industrialized and developing nations (Svevo-Cianci, Hart and Rubinson, 2010). However, laws to protect children from abuse, violence and neglect are relatively effective in rich countries that are able to provide good social services compared to developing nations (Svevo-Cianci, Hart and Rubinson, 2010). In industrialized countries, the annual prevalence of physical abuse ranges from 4% to 6%, and approximately 10% of children experience emotional abuse or neglect (Gilbert *et al*., 2009).

Taylor (1997) pointed to the role of financial assistance in supporting families where there were concerns of child abuse and neglect. In the United States, a study of individuals under temporary financial aid programmes revealed that each additional $100 earned monthly decreased the risk of reported child abuse in that month by 2.2%. Meanwhile, leaving the aid programme involuntarily was associated with an incremental risk for child maltreatment (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2013). A number of authors point to the association between poor health low socio-economic status such as unemployment, poor mental health and a dysfunctional family, with a greater likelihood of committing violent abuse (Straus and Kantor, 1994; Boyatzis, 2005; Gilbert *et al.*, 2009). Families subjected to poverty with fewer resources are most likely to reside in disadvantaged communities where children will be exposed to violence, abuse and crime in general (Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2013; Bywaters *et al.*, 2016).

Several studies have shown that families with larger numbers of children living in poverty are mostly deprived of their rights (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2013; Bywaters *et al.*, 2016). According to a survey report by UNICEF in 2010, households in 35 low and middle income nations had a greater tendency for violent disciplinary practices by parents (Banks, 2010). Studies in both rich and poor countries have recognised a series of domestic related risk factors in the use of violence in child rearing practices. Children born to parents with low levels of education, financial problems and residing in overcrowded communities are more likely to experience severe physical punishment and abuse (UNICEF, 2010). Another study of child abuse in 28 developing and transitional countries showed that all forms of maltreatment are complex and associated with low incomes (Akmatov, 2011).

In conclusion, economic considerations greatly influence the prevalence of child maltreatment. Several studies have shown that poverty contributes to child maltreatment and affects nearly 150 million individuals worldwide. Financial instability, a lack of resources, oversized

households, low education and unemployment all contribute to child maltreatment, particularly in developing countries.

3.4. Risk Factors for Child Maltreatment

There are several issues which contribute to child maltreatment as discussed above, however there are some specific factors that increase the potential of children's exposure to maltreatment and neglect related to parents' background, the environment and children's own characteristics. A better understanding of these risk factors can assist professionals working with families and children to identify maltreatment and high-risk instances in order to intervene appropriately.

3.4.1 Parents' characteristics

Much recent research is interested in the different characteristics of potential abusers and the identification of empirical risk factors for different forms of child maltreatment (Ammerman *et al.*, 1999; Milner and Chilamukurti, 1991). One study found that 80% or more of child maltreatment cases were perpetrated by parents or caregivers, whereas sexual abuse was most likely attributed to relatives or acquaintances (Gilbert *et al.*, 2009). Another study in the United States showed that about 62% of child abuse offenders were parents, 50% were foster parents while 37.5% were relatives and caregivers (Clark, Clark and Adamec, 2007). According to the study's findings, in 18 US states, more than half of male child abuse offenders were biological fathers (51%) and about 20% were men who filled another parental role such as a stepfather, an adoptive father or the mother's boyfriend (Clark, Clark and Adamec, 2007).

A large cohort study in the UK (Sidebotham and Heron, 2006) found that young parents with a low educational attainment, psychiatric history or with childhood abuse history were most likely to commit maltreatment leading to their children being entered onto a protection register. Lack of parenting skills and inability to handle children's behaviour are also considered parental risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect (Sandler, 1981). Another related study stated that childhood abuse experiences are correlated with later maltreating behaviours as adults (Felitti *et al.*, 2019; DiLillo *et al.*, 2006; WHO. Regional Office for Europe, 2013; Saied-Tessier, 2014). Inter-generational theory suggests that parents who experienced childhood maltreatment are more likely to abuse their children (Wiehe 1998; Bartlett 2012). The study of inter-generational transmission addresses the relationship of childhood abuse and the potential of becoming abusive parents with risks for abuse and neglect towards their

children (Haapasalo and Aaltonen 1999). Such a belief that maltreatment is transferrable across generations was one of the earliest and mostly acknowledged theories of child maltreatment. Moreover, a third of child abuse cases are associated with maternal histories of abuse (Haapasalo and Aaltonen 1999).

Numerous studies have examined maternal characteristics as a risk factor for child maltreatment, including early motherhood, substance abuse and mental health problems. Early motherhood has been documented and associated with physical and psychological health risks for young mothers, birth complications and poverty (WHO, 2016), while age, educational attainment and financial variation assessments are needed in order to determine differences between abusive and non-abusive mothers (Bert, Guner and Lanzi, 2009). Research has also discussed the higher tendency for teenage mothers to participate in aggressive acts towards their children (Whitman *et al*., 2001; Bartlett, 2012).

Stress, depression, poor self-esteem, emotional dilemmas, substance abuse and mental health issues have also been linked as parental risk factors for child maltreatment (Felitti *et al*., 2019). An Australian study found that economic instability, poor parental mental health issues, alcoholism and drug addiction increased the potential for child maltreatment (Clark, Clark and Adamec, 2007). Living in a household where parents have mental health issues does not necessarily mean that children will experience maltreatment and neglect, provided that the parents receive the right assistance at the right time (Hogg, 2013). According to UK national household surveys, more than 2 million children are living with parents who have common mental disorders (Manning *et al.*, 2009). Susceptibility to mental health issues are the consequence of stressful or bad life experiences such as unemployment, poverty, disability, physical sickness, childhood abuse or relationship breakdown (Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate, 2011). However, parental mental ill health is often a feature in cases of child maltreatment and neglect, an investigation of 175 serious case review reports (2011-2014) showing that 53% featured parental mental disorders (Sidebotham *et al.*, 2016).

Substance abuse is also widely acknowledged as a risk factor for child abuse and child welfare involvement. Children living with alcoholic or drug addicted parents are more likely to be abused compared to other children (Solis *et al.*, 2012; Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2000). Substance addiction affects parents' ability to function effectively in a parental role and puts their children in danger, while living in a household with one or both parents addicted to a substance usually leads to a chaotic environment for children (Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate,

2011). Moreover, parents with substance abuse problems may be more likely to have impulsive and aggressive behaviour, putting children at great risk of physical abuse (Chaplin and Sinha, 2013). Drug addiction and alcoholism not only put children at a high risk of child maltreatment and neglect, but also affect marriage and promotes domestic violence such as spousal abuse (Gruber and Taylor, 2006).

Perpetrators of child abuse are not necessarily biologically related to child victims. Non-birth parents who assume parental roles in households such as foster parents, step parents, or parents' partners are also identified as potential abusers (Stevens and Stevens, 1984; Cawson *et al.*, 2000) and children living in non-traditional domestic structures without birth parents present may be at greater risk of abuse. For example, Schnitzer and Ewigman (2008) found that children living with unrelated adults in Missouri, USA, were at greater risk of inflicted injury, or even death, compared to children living in a traditional family structure. Children living in households with non-birth parents were nearly 50% more likely to suffer injury or death, while 83.9% of perpetrators were unrelated household members (Schnitzer and Ewigman, 2008).

In conclusion, studies have identified a range of different parental risk factors associated with child maltreatment, including mental illness, substance addiction, household composition and early parental age. Such existing research is very helpful in understanding and defining parental risk factors and serves as guidance in this current study of child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region.

3.4.2 Children's characteristics

As has been identified above, there are several factors that greatly contribute to the risks of child maltreatment such as mixtures of individual, relational, environmental and societal influences. While children are not held liable for the harm that they are subjected to by adults in their lives, they do possess certain attributes that may make them more or less vulnerable to abuse and neglect (Fortson *et al.*, 2016). Characteristics incuding age, gender and health are some of the major issues that can lead to increased vulnerability to particular forms of maltreatment and neglect (Child Welfare Information Gateway (U.S.), 2013).

Younger children are more exposed to physical maltreatment and even death compared to older children. The major cause of child deaths due to physical maltreatment is head injuries, followed by abdominal injuries and suffocation (WHO, 2006). In the USA in 2014, for children

below 3 years, the child maltreatment rate was 14.8 per thousand, children aged 4-7 (10.6 per thousand), 8-11 years old (7.9 per thousand), 12-15 year old (6.9 per thousand), and children aged 16-17 (4.6 per thousand) (Child Trends Databank, 2016).

Gender influences the forms of maltreatment that children are likely to experience. In the United States, one study found that girls were more prone to becoming victims of sexual maltreatment, while boys were more vulnerable to physical maltreatment (Gelles and Perlman, 2012). Aside from sexual exploitation such as forced prostitution, girls are more susceptible to infanticide and malnutrition compared to boys worldwide (Kawewe and Dibie, 1999; WHO, 2006). In Australia, a report showed that females under 15 years old are the most common victims of childhood sexual assaults (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004). Meanwhile, in 2014 UNICEF claimed that one in every 10 girls was exposed to sexual abuse worldwide and approximately 1 billion children aged 6 – 10 years old subjected to physical maltreated (The Telegraph, 2014).

Children born with disabilities are also particularly prone to child abuse and neglect (Miller and Brown, 2014). Their additiona needs may be experienced as burdensome by their parents and caregivers (Oh and Lee, 2009). Their exposure to maltreatment is three times higher than their peers without disabilities (Jones *et al.*, 2012) and they are more likely to be severely injured and maltreated (Sedlak *et al.*, 2010). Meanwhile, a study in Texas, USA determined the relationship of risks for maltreatment among children aged 2 years old with or without disabilities at birth. The results showed that children born with disabilities were significantly more likely to be abused and neglected compared to non-disabled children (Van Horne *et al.*, 2015). According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, approximately 11% of abused children in 2009 were disabled and at twice the risk of being abused physically and sexually, compared to children without birth disabilities (Robinson *et al*., 2012).

Children who have been abused and/or neglected are also most likely to experience further maltreatment (Finkelhor, 1994) due to unresolved harm that requires further child welfare intervention (Fuller, 1993). Moreover, children who have been abused previously may experience multiple forms of maltreatment (Irenyi *et al.*, 2006). The recurrence of maltreatment has different and significant negative consequences for abused children such as mental health issues, socio-emotional problems, physical and cognitive development delays (Carnochan, Rizik-Baer and Austin, 2013).

The potential relationship between cognitive deficiency and childhood behavioural problems putting children at greater danger for physical maltreatment has largely been unnoticed (Cui and Liu, 2016). Young children who misbehave are significantly more susceptible to physical abuse and violence compared to other children. Children with behavioural problems may also become victims of abusive disciplinary action on the part of adults (Karakuş, 2012). One study suggested that children with special needs such as autism or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may increase parents' and caregivers' stress and depression, and physical abuse may occur when parents cannot cope with their children's behaviour (Calandra *et al.*, 2016).

3.4.3 Community characteristics

Certain factors connected to communities and larger society are also associated with child maltreatment (Coulton *et al*., 1995). In this way, the inter-relationship between family risk factors and risk factors in the communities in which they live are also relevant to an understanding of child maltreatment. Poverty (Gordis, 2002), oversized households and domestic violence are environmental risk factors that may contribute to child maltreatment. In this way, rates of child maltreatment may correlate with other indicators of the disintegration of community social cohesion and organisation. Children living in neighbourhoods identified with poverty, overcrowded households and overpopulated communities are at greater risk of child abuse and neglect (Coulton *et al*., 1995; Cichetti and Lynch, 1993).

Poverty has long since been associated with child maltreatment, particularly neglect (Bywaters *et al.*, 2016) and has been acknowledged as the greatest threat for a child's welfare and the best indicator for maltreatment (Clark, Clark and Adamec, 2007). Families living in poverty face difficulties in providing basic necessities for their children – a factor that relates to other forms of abuse such as child labour and exploitation as discussed earlier. In one study, low-income families receiving under $15,000 annually were 22 times more likely to maltreat their children compared to families with a high income (Children's Defense Fund, 2005).

The connection between poverty and maltreatment features regularly in studies about child abuse and neglect. However, child maltreatment is mostly viewed outside its social context, by passing a better understanding of the consequences of poor living conditions in an overpopulated environment, as physical evidence relates poverty to abuse and neglect (Bartlett,

2012). The living conditions of children in a disadvantaged and overpopulated community, together with low socio-economic status and other related influences, put children at danger of being victims of violence, crime, social deviance and other forms of abuse (U.S.Department of Health and Human Services, 2003; Messing, 2011). Moreover, the lack of social cohesion in deprived neighbourhoods makes parents' abusive behavior less visible. An example from China shows that migrant children living in poor neighbourhoods are more likely to be abused and neglected (Gao, Atkinson-Sheppard and Liu, 2017).

Children living in oversized households, associated with poverty, may be prone to neglect if parents are incapable of providing basic necessities for their children. A study in the United States found that large family size contributed to greater chances of child neglect and that unplanned conception had an indirect relation to neglect through its consequences for family size (Brown and De Cao, 2017). Several studies have suggestred that an oversized family can lead to severe parental role stress, authoritarian parenting, neglect and a high tendency towards physical punishment (Zuravin, 1987; Powell, 1994). A study undertaken in Maryland, USA, showed that children living with a family with two unplanned births were 2.8 times more susceptible to abuse and neglect compared to other children whose families had no unplanned conceptions, while children from families with three unplanned births were 4.6 times as vulnerable to maltreatment (Zuravin, 1987).

Domestic violence is a complex global issue which affects both adults and children (Guhman, 2014). Studies have suggested that in 30% to 60% of households where spousal and domestic abuse occur, child maltreatment also exists. Children living in disturbing and violent households become witness of parental violence, victims of physical maltreatment or neglect by parents who are more concerned with surviving their own abuse. Though children might not experience direct physical abuse due to domestic violence, emotional trauma may be a long term consequence of witnessing parental violence (Kimball, 2016). Some studies showed that boys who have witnessed domestic violence are twice as likely to become abusive spouses and maltreat children later in life. There is also a correlation between child maltreatment and social deviance in later life where abused children are nine times more likely to become associated with criminal activities (Crowley, Mikulich, Ehlers, Hall, & Whitmore, 2003; Wiebush, Freitag, & Baird, 2001, cited in Gold, Sullivan and Lewis, 2011, p3). Moreover, some children who witness or became victims of domestic violence show aggression and violent behaviour (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2008).

In conclusion, domestic and social structures are crucial for children's development and welfare. Living in a safe and nurturing environment with caring parents can help children to grow in positive ways, despite the presence of negative circumstances and issues in society.

3.5 Consequences of Child Maltreatment

Many studies have discussed the physical consequences of child maltreatment such as severe injury and even death. Some studies have suggested that child death rates due to physical maltreatment and neglect are increasing (Felitti *et al.*, 2019; Lansford *et al.*, 2002; Devaney and Spratt, 2009; Barr, 2012; Norman *et al.*, 2012; Conti *et al.*, 2017). A majority of researchers, physicians and experts in child welfare believe that child deaths due to abuse and neglect are mostly unrecorded (Radford *et al.*, 2011). Exposure to maltreatment can have major long-term effects on children's physical development and wellbeing into adulthood (Lazenbatt, 2010). Physical abuse may leave scars, severe fractures, language impairment and brain damage, that may lead to a lifetime's physical and cognitive disability (WHO, 2002c, 2007; Bowlus *et al.*, 2003; Leeb *et al.*; 2011; Norman *et al.*, 2012; Bywaters *et al.*, 2016; Dixon and Perkins, 2017). Conway (1998) in a study investigating shaken baby syndrome writes:

> Shaking an infant may result in bruising, bleeding and swelling in the brain. The physical consequences of shaken baby syndrome can range from vomiting or irritability to more severe effects such as concussions, respiratory distress, seizures and even death (Conway 1998, cited in Lazenbatt, 2010, p. 5).

Child maltreatment and severe forms of physical punishment can also affect children's emotional state into adulthood and may lead to depression, suicidal tendencies, alcoholism, drug abuse and domestic violence including spousal assault and child abuse (Straus and Kantor, 1994). Moreover, a majority of researchers believe that the consequences of child abuse may lead to stress and other related health problems in the short and/or long term (Belsky and Vondra, 1989; Straus and Kantor, 1994; Gershoff, 2002; Lansford *et al.*, 2002; Perkins and Jones, 2004; Clarke, 2007; Dettlaff and Johnson, 2011; Barr, 2012; Conti *et al.*, 2017).

Exposure to severe physical abuse, emotional maltreatment and neglect may produce long-term effects of low self-esteem and poor self-worth (Briere and Runtz, 1990; Wiehe, 1998; Mann *et al.*, 2004; Howe, 2005; Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005; Clarke, 2007; WHO, 2007;

Karakuş, 2012). For example, a study of 583 students out of 915 secondary schools in total in Konya City, Turkey found a significant negative correlation between all forms of child abuse and neglect and low self-esteem (Karakuş, 2012). Other studies identify links between persistent neglect and serious educational failure (Korbin, 1980; Belsky and Vondra, 1989; Cicchetti and Carlson, 1989; Howe, 2005; Clarke, 2007; WHO, 2007; Norman *et al.*, 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, 2013; Dixon and Perkins, 2017).

The effects of child maltreatment can also lead to a lifetime of emotional trauma, sometimes producing behavioural and interpersonal problems throughout childhood and into adulthood (Hackett and Hackett, 1993; Cicchetti and Carlson, 1989; Howe, 2005; WHO, 2007; Banks, 2010; Norman *et al.*, 2012; Conti *et al.*, 2017; Kandel *et al.*, 2017). Children who experience domestic violence may show aggression, and interpersonal behavioural problems with other children, and delinquency (Straus and Kantor, 1994). Several studies have also found that abused children have a greater potential for substance abuse (Habetha *et al.*, 2012), alcoholism and tobacco addiction (Spratt *et al.*, 2009; US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013) throughout their lifetime. Aside from low self-esteem and emotional trauma that can lead to aggression, abused children may also develop and manifest anti-social traits as they reach adulthood. Parental neglect may lead to problems with borderline personality disorder, attachment issues or the modelling of inappropriate forms of aggression (Perry, 2012). The results of child abuse can lead to an increased propensity towards anti-social behaviour, aggression and delinquency (Hart and Brassard, 1991; Kolko, 1992; Gershoff, 2002; Cicchetti and Carlson, 1989; Dixon and Perkins, 2017).

Physical abuse and severe physical punishment are also associated with a wide range of sleep disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), bed wetting and fear of adults (Powell, 1994; De Bellis and Thomas, 2003; Howe, 2005; Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005; WHO, 2007; Gilbert *et al.*, 2009; UNHCR, 2011; Dixon and Perkins, 2017), eating disorders, self-inflicted injuries (Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005; WHO, 2007; Gilbert *et al.*, 2009; Norman *et al.*, 2012) and related mental health problems (Straus and Kantor, 1994; Mullen *et al.*, 1996; Howe, 2005; Barr, 2012; Norman *et al.*, 2012). Emotional trauma may lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (Lazenbatt, 2010), a disabling chronic mental illness that affects 30% to 50% of sexually abused children who meet the full criteria for PTSD diagnosis (Darves-Bornoz *et al.*, 1998). Abused children may show potential for further victimization (Clarke, 2007; WHO, 2007; Radford *et al.*, 2011) or perpetration (Belsky, 1993; Dixon and Perkins,

2017). Children abused in families may be susceptible to further, and different forms of, abuse from other perpetrators in communities, schools and organisations, and have been described as *poly-victims* (Finkelhor *et al.*, 2005). Finkelhor *et al.* (2009) argue that:

> Children are arguably the most criminally victimized people in society. They suffer high rates of all the same crimes that adults do, plus a load of offences specific to their status as children, such as child maltreatment. They are beaten by family members, bullied and attacked by schoolmates and peers, abused and raped by dating partners and targeted by sex offenders in both physical and virtual realms. Childhood is indeed a gauntlet (Finkelhor *et al*., 2009, p. 3).

It is also important to consider the economic cost of child maltreatment including the direct support costs for children who experience abuse, as well as the social costs of the catalogue of possible impact issues described above. Steinberg, Catalano and Dooley (2016), for example, calculate the costs of child maltreatment in Canada as follows:

Sector	**$**	**Sector**	**$**
Judicial	616,685,247.00	Health	222,570,517.00
Social Services	1,178,062,222.00	Employment	11,299,601.38.00
Education	23,882,994.00	Personal	2,365,107,683.00

Meanwhile, Prevent Child Abuse America estimated the cost of child maltreatment in the USA in 2001 as follows:

> The total direct and indirect costs of child abuse and neglect were $94 billion. Direct costs included hospitalization, mental health costs, chronic health problems, funds incurred by the welfare system, law enforcement and costs of the judicial system. Indirect costs included special education, mental health and healthcare - not directly resulting from abuse or neglect, juvenile delinquency, lost work productivity and adult criminalities (Gelles and Perlman, 2012)

Another study (Fang *et al.*, 2012), provides probable lifetime costs for an average victim of a non-fatal child abuse incident:

> The estimated average lifetime expenses per victim of a non-fatal child maltreatment case are $210,012.00 in 2010 which includes $32,648 in childhood healthcare costs, $10,530.00 in adult medical costs, $7,728.00 in child welfare costs, $144,360.00 in productivity losses, $6,747.00 in criminal justice costs and $7,999.00 in special education costs. The estimated average lifetime cost per death is $1,272,900.00 including $14,100.00 in medical costs and $1,258,800.00 in productivity losses. The total lifetime economic burden resulting from new cases of fatal and non-fatal child abuse in USA last 2008 is approximately $124 billion. In sensitivity analysis, the total burden is estimated to be as large as $585 billion (Fang *et al.*, 2012 p.1).

In Europe, the situation is quite similar to the USA: the average economic and social costs for child abuse and neglect were estimated by the European Commission as approximately 4% of the European countries' gross domestic product (Ferrara *et al.*, 2015). Saied-Tessier reported the gross annual cost of child sexual exploitation in the United Kingdom in 2014 as £3.2 billion which included criminal justice system costs (around £149 million), services for children (£124 million), child depression (£1.6 million), child suicide and self-harm (£1.9 million), adult and physical healthcare (£178 million), and loss of productivity (around £2.7 million) (Saied-Tessier, 2014). Meanwhile in Germany, the estimate for child abuse costs especially in relation to trauma recovery services is approximately EUR 363.58 per person in the whole population. In East Asia and the Pacific region, the estimated costs for child maltreatment and rehabilitation is approximately $209 billion annually (Whiting, 2015). Current studies suggest that the reported costs for medical treatments, social rehabilitation programmes, judiciary costs and long term support plans for victims of child abuse and neglect lead to an increase in public expenditure, which should be preventable (Ferrara *et al.*, 2015).

In conclusion, child maltreatment affects not only the physical and emotional wellbeing of children as they grow into adulthood. The social costs of abuse are enormous; public expenditure is increased and all societies and governments around the world have a moral and financial responsibility to reduce incidents of abuse and neglect for the good of all their citizens.

3.6 Child Maltreatment: Theoretical Frameworks

Theories are important since they describe the complications of our lives (Newberger, 1983). Several theoretical models have been used to guide research studies of child abuse and neglect. These range from models focusing on individual characteristics of adults, and of adults and children in abusive relationships, to the role of social factors associated with abuse. In the context of this study which aims to shed light on patterns of punishment and maltreatment, particular attention is paid to *Ecological Theory* that includes consideration of wider socio-cultural influences on the use of punishment and maltreatment (Belsky, 1993), and *Social Learning Theory* (Bandura, 1971, 1977) that aids understanding of how punishing behaviours are learned, reinforced and normalized. The current study adopted these two theories to explore parents' methods of disciplining and punishing children and their relationship to child abuse and neglect in Kurdish families. The ecological model is considered particularly useful in this context because it allows for an examination of child abuse at the levels of the individual, family, community and society, while social learning theory can help to cast light on how individuals may learn to be violent or demonstrate problematic behaviour as a consequence of the forms of discipline or punishment used by their parents and in wider society.

3.6.1 Ecological theory and child maltreatment

Garbarino (1977) Belsky and Vondra (1989) and Belsky (1980, 1993) have presented an ecological model to explain the diverse factors associated with child abuse and neglect. This model suggests that violence and abuse are: *multiply determined by forces at work in the individual (ontogenic development), the family (the microsystem), the community (the exosystem), and the culture (the macrosystem) in which the individual and the family are embedded* (Belsky, 1980: 320). For example, parents who lack coping skills and who are dealing with social stress are likely to have difficulties in responding calmly to their children's hyperactivity. The potential risk for maltreatment and violence occurs when children's and parents' capacities are limited. Examples include children's physical disabilities, cognitive or emotional impairments, and parental personality problems such as immaturity, aggression or impulsivity. Without proper assistance from organisations and institutions in the community to support distressed families, the higher the potential for abuse (Clark, Clark and Adamec, 2007).

Meanwhile, Cicchetti and Rizley (1981) created a model of child abuse and neglect in an attempt to fully understand the reasons behind maltreatment and its consequences. The study's

approach and inferential techniques recognise the intricacy and diversity of child maltreatment. Empirical analysis of child abuse must be observed using sophisticated concepts of development, psychopathology, personality, domestic and social systems theory (Cicchetti and Rizley, 1981). Such a model provides a better understanding of the transactional methods to understand the environmental process, parental characteristics and child attributes as risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect (Cicchetti and Lynch, 1993).

In general, ecological theory suggests that child maltreatment is the result of social and environmental stress such as life conditions, including unemployment, financial problems, domestic and community violence - all considered risk factors within this theoretical framework. This perspective emphasizes the ecological structures of families that may lead to stressful situations affecting parents' capabilities to nurture their children (Newberger, 1983). Therefore, to fully understand child maltreatment and its consequences, it is better to acknowledge first its risk factors.

3.6.2 Social learning theory and child maltreatment

Bandura (1971, 1977) argues that people acquire behaviour through observation, imitation and modelling. Social learning theory proposes that children who experience maltreatment from abusive parents or caregivers will learn to become offensive, abusive and violent by modelling the learnt behaviour and applying it continuously until adulthood. Such a pattern of violence is usually referred to as the *Cycle of Violence* (Dodge, Bates and Peitit, 1990; WHO, 2007). The cycle of violence suggests that a historical background of childhood abuse may have long-term impacts during a lifetime (Samuels, 1986; Wu *et al.*, 2004; Dixon, Hamilton-Giachritsis and Browne, 2005; Barnett, Miller-Perrin and Perrin, 2010; Bartlett, 2012). Abbasi and Aslinia (2010), exploring the relevance of social learning theory for understanding family violence and trauma, draw on Bandura's work on the development of social learning theory in understanding aggressive behaviour. Key elements of social learning theory in this sense (understanding the transmission of aggressive behaviour) include: i) how aggressive patterns are formed, ii) what provokes people to behave aggressively, and iii) what sustains aggressive behaviour (Abbasi and Aslinia, 2010, p.19). They go on to describe how (aggressive) behaviours can develop through vicarious learning, in other words, through witnessing rather than necessarily participating in the (aggressive) behaviours.

The current study argues that children acquire their behaviour from their parents, family members, other relatives and social attributes transferred from generation to generation.

3.6.3 The wider context - patriarchy

Both ecological theory and social learning theory draw on socio-cultural, including religious, factors that inform beliefs, values and practices of child rearing including accepted notions of child discipline. In the context of the current study this requires explicit attention to the deeply patriarchal nature of Kurdish society in which power is strongly rooted in, and exercised by, adult men and sons within families. Under these circumstances women, in conforming to cultural norms, may also be observed to uphold and reinforce the culturally normative use of male power and authority. In a 2018 interview for the Culture Project: Art, Feminism and Gender (http://cultureproject.org.uk) Nabaz Samad explains how the tribal, patriarchal, nature of Kurdish culture, dominated by religion, influences politics, education, thought, literature, art, and language (Hassanpour, 2001) and, in doing so, reproduces patriarchy. More generally, Sultana (2010) articulates the wider meaning of patriarchy as the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general.

3.6.4 The wider context: global rights of women and children

The persistence of cultural beliefs and values that uphold patriarchy is challenged by, and held in tension with contemporary global politics and governance strategies, that attempt to address inequalities based on gender and age by introducing universal codes of conduct and rights relating to women (Ariany, 2013) and to children.

A specific example of this tension can be seen in the Iraqi Penal Code 1969 that states: "There is no crime if the act is committed while exercising a legal right. One legal right can be classified as – the punishment of a wife by her husband, the disciplining by parents and teachers of children under their authority within certain limits prescribed by law or by custom." Iraqi Kurdistan's relationship with global measures to promote the rights of women and children has been mediated through its changing relationship with the government of Iraq so that some international initiatives have been adopted as part of the Iraqi government while others have been adopted directly by the Kurdistan Regional Government formed in 1992.

The Iraqi government ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, though with reservations stating that some provisions within the Convention are essentially incompatible with *Shariʿah* (Islamic Law). And it was not until 2011 that the Kurdistan Regional Government enacted legislation, Act No. 8, designed to combat domestic violence in the private sphere, a space that has traditionally been considered as being under the jurisdiction of men. This Act defines domestic violence as, "Any abusive, coercive forceful or threatening act or word, on basis of gender, that brings harm physically sexually and psychologically that negatively affects the rights and freedom of an individual related to family by marriage, law and/or kinship." (Article 1 – Unofficial Translation) and was the first of its kind to discuss domestic violence as a widespread and serious problem within Kurdish society. In Article 2 (Sections 12 and 13) reference is made to the harmful effects of beating family members and children for any reason, using words of humiliation, insults or swearing, treating as inferior, or using psychological pressure, in violating individuals' rights.

The (Iraqi) government ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the 15th of June 1994 initiating a move towards recognizing children's rights to protection from abuse (article 19) despite several years of instability within the country. Marking the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child UNICEF (2019) commented: "By the ratification of the CRC, Iraq committed itself to make sure that every child is protected, educated and able to lead a healthy and fulfilling life." Article 19 of the Convention addresses children's rights to:

> *protection from violence, abuse and neglect through appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures by States parties to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child… Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement (UNICEF, 1989: p7).*

These protective rights are reflected in Article 29 of the Iraqi Constitution (2005) that refers in different ways to children rights to protection:

(1) The family is the foundation of the society; the State shall preserve it and its religious, moral and national values. The State shall guarantee the protection of motherhood, childhood and old age, shall care for children and youth, and shall provide them with the appropriate conditions to develop their talents and abilities.

(2) Children have the right to upbringing, care and education from their parents. Parents have the right to respect and care from their children, especially in terms of need, disability and old age.

(3) Economic exploitation of children in all of its forms shall be prohibited, and the State shall take the necessary measures for their protection.

(4) All forms of violence and abuse in the family, school and society shall be prohibited.

Buiding on these measures, in 2007, the Iraqi Parliament passed Law 23 and formally joined the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), designed to safeguard children against exploitation, trafficking, prostitution and pornography as well as the recruitment into the Armed Forces.

Despite these measures that create a new space for reflection on, and action in response to, the impact of patriarchal cultural norms that have encouraged severe punishment of children, none specifically tackle the use of severe corporal punishment against children.And, moreover, they have poor reach in Kurdish society where the cultural norms that both support and reproduce patriarchy, inside as well outside the family home, continue to demonstrate strong resilience (Hardi, 2013) even in face of education about human rights (Osler and Yahya, 2013).

3.6.5 Summary

In developing an understanding of the prevalence and patterns of child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdish households, ecological and social learning theory have been adopted to explore the attitudes of Kurdish parents towards child punishment and discipline, and to fully understand the cycle of harsh punishment and its relationship to discipline and abuse. I primarily use these two explanatory theories in this study, though I recognise that there are many other models and theoretical perspectives that have been applied by authors as useful to the understanding of child maltreatment, such as social psychological theories (Corby, 2000), attachment theory (Howe *et al.*, 2001; Morton and Browne, 1998; Clarke, 2007; Dixon and Perkins, 2017) and psychoanalytic, cognitive developmental and labeling (Pardeck, 1989;

Belsky, 1993; Morton and Browne, 1998; Leifer, 2002; Howe, 2005; Clark, Clark and Adamec, 2007). The study is also informed by wider environmental influences, in particular the cultural strength of patriarchy and the cultural fragility of respect for women's and children's rights, both of which contribute to an ecological approach and the arguments posed by social learning theory.

3.7 Hypotheses

Based on the information gathered through my review of the international literature, I have been able to formulate a series of hypotheses relating to child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region which I test in the remainder of the thesis. These are as follows:

1. Both parents inflict punishments on their children in the Kurdistan region, but fathers are more likely to do so than mothers.
2. Lack of educational attainment of parents relates to the physical and psychological punishment of children in the Kurdistan Region.
3. There is a correlation between child maltreatment and a family's economic stability or the parents' occupational status in Kurdistan.
4. There is a correlation between punishment and gender since Kurdish girls are more prone to abuse than boys.
5. There is a correlation between age and maltreatment since younger children are less exposed to abuse in the Kurdistan Region.
6. Most Kurdish children experience either or both physical and emotional abuse from their parents.
7. As well as physical punishment, verbal abuse and neglect are common forms of child punishment used by Kurdish parents.
8. There are different reasons why Kurdish parents punish their children regardless of gender.
9. Social norms and traditions, as well as religion, are the main factors why children receive punishment from their parents in the Kurdistan Region.
10. There is a correlation between parents' awareness and the consequences of child maltreatment in Kurdistan.
11. The idea and use of punishment passes from one Kurdish generation to the next.
12. Kurdish parents believe that punishment is not maltreatment.

3.8 Summary

A wide variety of international literature has been reviewed in order to understand the circumstances that lead to child punishment and maltreatment globally. A multi-disciplinary approach was used in reviewing the literature to determine the relationship between child punishment and maltreatment, and multi-faceted cultural, social, religious, financial and political factors. The information from previous studies provides evidence that child maltreatment in different societies has similar causes and consequences. However, socio-cultural norms, reflected in policy development and policy implementation, lead to different views about the privacy that should be afforded to famililes to discipline their children, and the role of the state in protecting children from maltreatment.

In the following chapter I set out the methodological approach, methods of sampling, data collection and data analysis to explore the research questions and to test the hypotheses set out above, and discuss the ethical considerations in conducting this study in a challenging political and socio-cultural context.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the different methodological procedures that contributed to the research design will be discussed. Each research project requires a specific research design and method. Moreover, the identification of the research design and the type of study to be used are crucial since all the methodological procedures must fit the approach. The research design used in the study is determined by the research questions, and the research process involves the development of research questions, data collection, analysis and drawing of conclusions (Kothari, Kumar and Uusitalo, 2011). Careful attention to these procedures is important so that the research questions are examined adequately and the process of data collection is systematically implemented.

The chapter is divided into sections that provide information about the research design and process, as well as the sample, the quantitative and qualitiative data collection methods, data processing and analysis, and the ethical considerations and challenges encountered during the fieldwork.

4.2 Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

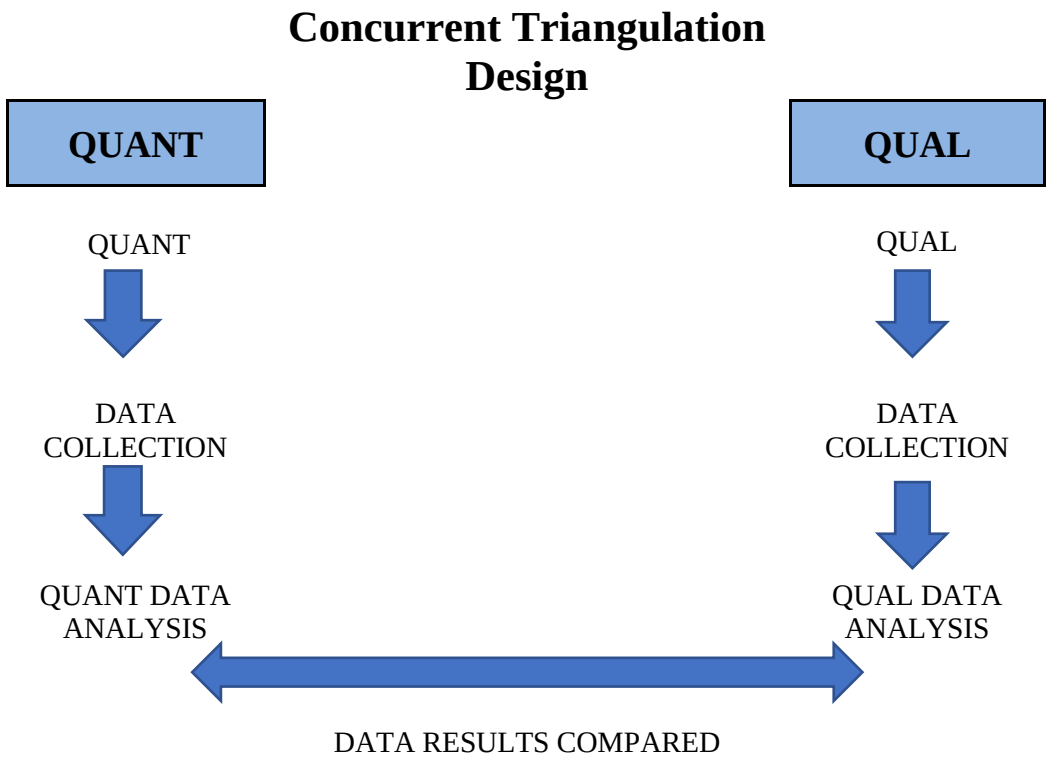
This study is based on a mixed method approach, using a simultaneous design. Bryman (2008,p. 603) defines mixed methods research as *"a simple research shorthand to stand for research that integrates quantitative and qualitative within a single project"*. However Bryman (2007 , p.8) also identifies challenges in 'analysing, interpreting, and writing up research in such a way that the quantitative and qualitative components are mutually illuminating'. Having different methods can lead to an in-depth exploration of different aspects of the research. And the combination of different research tools can contribute to reducing bias that may affect the research results (David & Sutton, 2011; Bryman, 2008; Punch, 1998; Creswell, 2002, 2008).

In this study, a mixed methods approach was used in order to understand child maltreatment in Kurdish families, using both qualitative and quantitative data collected through a quantitative survey of 320 households together with qualitative interviews with 19 childcare 'experts' including academics and practitioners concerned with issues of child welfare. The reason for

using this mixed methods approach was to be able to analyse the beliefs and attitudes of Kurdish families regarding child maltreatment issues, as well as to obtain the different perspectives of expert professionals. Mindful of Bryman's (2007) warnings about the barriers to the effective integration of quantitative and qualitative data, the research used a concurrent triangulation design, as depicted in Figure 4.1 below, whereby both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time with results compared to determine convergence, differences, or some combination (Creswell, 2008) in the data collected.

Quantitative and qualitiative data collection instruments were designed and/or adapted for use in the specific research context in order that questions would make sense to research participants, increasing the trustworthiness, or face validity, of the data. Interpretation of all sources of data were informed by my own knowledge and experience of childhood in an Iraqi Kurdish family setting, my training in sociology and sociological methods, and by exposure to globally diverse approaches to questions of child punishment and maltreatment as described in chapter 1, section 1.3. This brought the necessary 'common sense' associated with face validity to the process of interpreting the findings. Articulating my own frame of reference brings transparency to the study and increases the possibility of 'positive critique' by other researchers (Giddens, 2013).

Figure 4.1 Concurrent triangulation design



**Reference: Adopted from Creswell et al. (2003) Cited in Creswell 2008, p.210.*

Permission was sought and granted to collect data from the following agencies and government departments:

1- Social Work Department, College of Arts at University of Salahaddin

2- Psychology Department, College of Arts at University of Salahaddin

3- Sociology Department, College of Arts at University of Salahaddin

4- Kurdistan Save the Children

5- Child Help Line 116

6- Director of Labour and Social Affairs

7- Child Care: Male Sector

8- Child Care: Female sector

9- Mayor of Erbil and Governance

10-Directorate of Intelligence (Asaish) in Erbil

4.3 Exploratory Discussions

In July 2012, discussions took place with five academic staff from the Departments of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work at Salahaddin University, and five social workers who have expertise in child welfare. The purpose of these discussions was to gain perceptions about child maltreatment in Kurdish families, particularly in Erbil City. Key questions were prepared in order to understand more deeply the factors and consequences of child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region.

A lack of documented research and knowledge concerning child maltreatment in Iraqi Kurdistan made these discussions indispensable. The main goal of the discussions was to attain an overview of the extent and types of child maltreatment, based on the experiences of the ten respondents, in order to design data collection instruments for use in this research study. This was particularly important since, despite the development of a child abuse screening tool for international use, and its adaptation for use in Arabic speaking countries, discussed in section 4.6, there has been no development of the tool that takes into account the linguistic and cultural specificities of the Iraqi Kurdish context.

4.4 Study Population and Sampling: Sample Participants

In creating a survey, the population from which a sample is drawn must be determined carefully and a sampling process developed. A population is a summation of all the organisms of the same group or species living in a particular geographical area. In sociology, it is defined as a collection of humans. As stated by David & Sutton, (2011, p.226) “The population is simply every possible case that could be included in your study.” Sampling involves the sub-division of individuals within a population, to assess the characteristics of the whole population.

In this research, different methods were used to develop samples for the quantitative survey of households, and qualitative semi-structured interviews with child welfare professionals and academics) as described below.

4.5 Quantitative Approach: Household Survey of Parents

According to the latest available census (2007), the population of Erbil City was 1,218,911. The research targeted people aged 22 - 65, thus reducing the number to 764,758 (KRSO, 2013). The projected population was still huge in number, requiring a sampling process to select a sample that would reflect variations in the household composition of Erbil City. With access to any register of residents prohibited, since the government consider this 'vital' information, a simple random sampling procedure was not possible, leading to the adoption of the following approach.

The first stage involved the selection of six neighbourhoods in Erbil City. I know these locations well since I am Kurdish and have been a resident of Erbil since 1986. The neighbourhoods, known as quarters, were selected as they are relatively homogenous, based on each quarter's economic background: poor, middle, rich. I purposively selected these six locations in Erbil City. The second stage was the random selection of four blocks[2] within each of the six neighbourhoods. A random sample represents the entire group or population, and selecting four blocks in an area would provide the data needed for the entire neighbourhood. The third stage used a cluster sampling approach which is "a convenient technique often used when the geographical spread of the population is large, and where time and cost issues are repeated at a number of different levels; from general to more specific groups." (David & Sutton, 2011, p. 231). Cluster sampling "is used in cases when the population form clusters by sharing one or more characteristics but are otherwise as heterogeneous as possible." (Walliman, 2006, p.78). Cluster sampling is used ''when the population is large and spread over a large area. Rather than enumerating the whole population, it is divided into segments, and then several segments are chosen at random. Samples are subsequently obtained from each of these segments using one of the above sampling methods''(Walliman, 2006, p.78). This approach was used to overcome the problem concerning the list of names of the people from the six neighbourhoods in Erbil City.

A total of 320 households from six neighbourhoods were selected to gather the data required from 53 or 54 households in each neighbourhood and from roughly equal numbers of men and women.

[2] A block is a smaller unit of neighbouring households within a quarter. The number of households within each block varies between 50 and 100

4.6 Development of the Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaires offer an objective means of collecting data about people's information, perspectives and behaviour (Boynton and Greenhalgh, 2004). In this research, a questionnaire was designed to capture valid and reliable information from Kurdish mothers and fathers about their beliefs surrounding, and practices of, child discipline and punishment. Due to the particular nature of this study as well as its cultural and religious contexts, there was no existing validated questionnaire that would be entirely suitable to address the research objectives. However, in designing the final questionnaire, close attention was paid to data collection instruments used in studies of child maltreatment in diverse contexts, together with published argument about their strengths and limitations. These included: a Systematic Review of Childhood Maltreatment Assessments in Population – Representative Surveys since 1990 (Hovdestad *et al.*, 2015), the Arabic Version (Hassan et.al, 1999) of the World Studies of Abuse in the Family Environment (WorldSAFE) (Sadowski *et al*., 2004) Culture and Child Maltreatment (Korbin, 2002), The World Report on Children and Violence (Pinheiro, 2006), The development and piloting of the ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool—Parent version (ICAST-P). (Runyan *et al.*, 2009), ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool Children's Version (ICAST – C): Instrument Development and Multinational Pilot Testing (Zolotor *et al.*, 2009), Child Abuse and Neglect in the UK Today (Radford et.al, 2011), and a report on child maltreatment from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Systems (NCANDS) (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services 2014).

While progress in the systematic collection and analysis of information on child abuse and neglect internationally has been aided by the development of children's and parents' versions of the ISPCAN child abuse screening tool, tested in different countries including Arabic speaking Egypt (Runyan *et al*, 2009) there was no directly comparable version for this first academic study of child punishment and maltreatment in Iraqi Kurdistan where Kurdish is the dominant language and Kurdish culture is informed by a unique combination of religious and social norms. Preparation of the survey instrument involved reviewing surveys of child punishments and maltreatment used in Saudi Arabia (Alanazi, 2008, Almuneef et al., 2012), Jordan (Rushdi, n.d.); Sweis, 2012), Egypt (Youssef, Attia and Kamel, 1998), Iran (Mohammadi, Zarafshan and Khaleghi, 2014), and Turkey (Öncü et al., 2013), countries that share some aspects of religious and social traditions and norms. Construction of the survey questionnaire used in this study conducted in Erbil City involved the following stages.

First Stage

Questions were formulated to ensure clarity in collecting information about respondents' gender, age, income, residential location, educational background and size of family; parents' use of punishment within the last five years, types of physical and psychological punishments used, causes for punishments of sons and daughters, understanding of the consequences (physical, social and emotional) of child punishment and beliefs and attitudes to the punishment of children. The questions were piloted, during an exploratory visit to Erbil, with five academics in Social Work, Sociology and Psychology Departments and five Social Welfare practitioners in Erbil City. The survey questions were then revised, in the light of feedback and advice, to introduce additional questions with multi-level optional responses (Likert- type scales) in order to identify parents' broader perceptions and understandings about child punishment. This involved the introduction of a series of statements inviting a response indicating level of agreement: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree (Fakunmoju and Bammeke, 2013). An attempt was also made to keep the questionnaire as clear and simple as possible in order to encourage the highest response rate.

Second Stage

Upon the construction of the questionnaire, an English language version was discussed with my supervisors and subsequently revised to enhance the clarity of the questionnaire, making it easier for respondents to comprehend. The questionnaire was finalised in terms of phrasing and categories of answers, and forms were numbered with detachable cover consent pages. The Durham University Ethics Committee approved the final version of the questionnaire before the field work started in Erbil City.

Third Stage

The final questionnaire was used in preparing two female social workers for their roles in collecting data. Training was held over two days before the field work started and the questionnaire was used in households in the six selected areas of Erbil City between December 2014 and February 2015.

4.7 Qualitative Approach: Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are any form of oral questioning made to obtain information. These are useful in finding detailed information through face-to-face encounters and exploring issues in depth as necessary. The questions may be open or closed, and the style of questioning can be structured/formal, semi-structured or unstructured/informal (Punch, 2005; Dawson, 2002).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to obtain the necessary information, in order to discover academic and professional perspectives on child maltreatment. A semi-structured interview covers a wide variety of questions related to the topic. The questions are usually in a standard frame and additional queries may be added, as necessary in response to the data provided by the interviewee. The interviewer is also expected to listen carefully to each response and also advised to use a recorder with the permission of the participants (David & Sutton, 2011; Bryman, 2012). In the current study, interviews were conducted in Erbil City with practitioners, representatives of child welfare NGOs, and academic staff working in Salahaddin University who were experts in child welfare. Each question was designed, and responses carefully analysed, to address the research questions. Each participant was provided with an information sheet, informing them that all information would be anonymous before consenting to participate.

4.7 Data Collection

As highlighted above, two specific approaches were used during the data collection process: a survey of 320 households which was administered in person and 19 semi-structured interviews conducted with the child welfare professionals and academics. I conducted the 19 interviews myself, while I was assisted in the survey data collection by two female social workers.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 19 experts in child welfare between 17th November and 16th December, 2014. Consent forms and all the interviews documents were translated into Kurdish (see Appendix E, F, G). Interviews, lasting 18 – 45 minutes, were recorded and transcribed to aid analysis.

However, the assistance of two female social workers from Kurdistan Save the Children was needed to complete the survey questionnaire within the 320 households in Erbil City. These social workers had previous experience in field work and data collection. To ensure the accuracy of the data collection process, I led a two-day workshop for the two female social

workers on 17th and 18th December 2014. The training covered ethical issues in research and explained the details of the questionnaires to be used in the survey. The first day of training focused on the questionnaire forms to be used in the field work. Written in Kurdish (see Appendix A,B,C,D), these questionnaires were explained in detail. All queries and any unclear content were addressed, as well as the instructions to be provided to participants. On the second day, we discussed ethical issues, including diversity, neutrality, trust and confidentiality as well as respecting the participants' willingness to participate or withdraw from the research, and also all information about consent forms. The value and importance of ethical codes of research were asserted and emphasised; without commitment to these guidelines, cooperation from the people would be impossible. Additional key points were discussed, including the sampling process and criteria in selecting individuals from each household, as well as the allotted budget for each social worker ($900 payment, plus transportation and lunch).

While conducting the survey in the six neighbourhoods of Erbil City, the two female social workers and I approached all households within the selected blocks. The process of gathering data took place between 27th December 2014 and 12th February 2015. The survey was not undertaken with families with no children, or who preferred not to participate in the research, or where only fathers/men were present, out of concern for the safety of the female social workers.

4.8 Samples

Data were collected through a survey of 320 parents, and semi-structured interviews with 19 professional practitioners and academics concerned with child welfare.

4.8.1 The survey conducted with 320 households

Questionnaires were administered with parents aged 22 years or older, divided roughly equally between men (156) and women (164). The table below shows the six neighbourhoods in Erbil City where the field work took place and the number of participants across the six neighbourhoods.

Table 4.1 Six neighbourhoods in Erbil City

Neighbourhoods	Status	Frequency	Percentage
Setaqan	Poor	53	16.56
Badawa	Poor	53	16.56
Mantikawa	Medium	54	16.88
Kuran	Medium	54	16.88
Azadi	Rich	53	16.56
Havalan	Rich	53	16.56
Total		320	100

4.8.2 Semi-structured interviews with professionals and academics

The 19 experts in child welfare were selected purposively for the semi-structured interviews. These professionals were employees of the Directorate of Social Affairs under the Child Care Unit for Boys and Girls, Child Help Line-116, Kurdistan Save the Children and academic members of the Departments of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work at Salahaddin University. The participants consisted of 14 men and 5 women. One probable reason for the lower number of women than men is the relatively small number of female academics, and an even smaller number who were willing to participate in the research (five women agreed to participate out of fifteen invited female professionals).

There were some challenges that hindered the process and breadth of data collection while conducting the interviews. Scheduling an appointment with the child protection section of UNICEF in Erbil City was a struggle; they were busy at the time of the study. No religious groups were selected to participate in the study because, serving only as advisers at mosques or as teachers at Islamic schools, their knowledge and expertise in child welfare issues beyond religious teachings, is limited. However, the survey did include religious clerics, identified through their form of address as "*Mullah*", "*Sheikh*", "*Sofi*" and "*Saeed*", who participated as parents, and expressed their ideas about child maltreatment anonymously. The table below shows details of the 19 participants in the semi-structured interviews.

Table 4.2 Breakdown of Interviews with 19 Professional and Academic Staff

Organisation	Male	Female	Total
Department of Social Work-Salahaddin University	3	1	4
Department of Psychology-Salahaddin University	3	0	3
Department of Sociology-Salahaddin University	3	2	5
Kurdistan Save the Children	2	0	2
Child Help Line-116	1	1	2
Director of Labour and Social Affairs	1	0	1
Sector of Child Care Unit for Boys	1	0	1
Sector of Child Care Unit for Girls	0	1	1
Total	14	5	19

4.9 Research Ethics

4.9.1 Official permissions

For this study, ethical approval was obtained from the School of Applied Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at Durham University, indicating full understanding of, and compliance with the expected standards of ethical research. The field work thus started in accordance with the ethical standards for academic research in Britain and specifically the University of Durham as such standards are currently considerably higher than those demanded in the organisations within which I was conducting the data collection in Kurdistan.

Official permission from participating organisations was obtained before starting the study. A proposal document containing the detailed information about the ethics of the research was submitted and reviewed by my supervisors, and then presented to the School Research Ethics Committee. After further review, the committee approved the proposal. A formal letter, indicating that I was a student of Durham University, was sent to Salahaddin University together with the survey and interview questionnaire forms. With this, Salahaddin University provided an endorsement letter allowing the research to be conducted. The letter was presented

to participating organisations including Kurdistan Save the Children, the Directorate of Social Affairs, Departments of Social Work, Sociology and Psychology at Salahaddin University as well as to the Mayor, Governor and Security Agency, in order to obtain official permission to conduct the study.

4.9.2 Safety

The Kurdistan Region in Iraq is considered an area of considerable risk and instability, with conflict, unrest and extremist groups at its borders and with a large number of immigrants from nearby Arab countries, particularly Syria. Because of this, safety was of particular importance while conducting the research.

Safety measures had to be carefully planned and observed to avoid any security issues while conducting the study. Each of the six neighbourhoods in Erbil City has security offices. To ensure our safety while doing the field work, these security offices were informed about our presence in those areas. Having contact numbers was also essential, in case of an emergency. Transportation was also another vital safety measure. Having a well-known person to drive from location to location and even going back home was crucial, to avoid any possible danger while commuting. Constant communication was also very important while on the field work: I telephoned the two female social workers every 40 - 60 minutes. During lunch, I met and dined with them at the same restaurant and made sure that they returned to work together. Before each interview, the number of persons present in each household was considered. If the husband was the only member present, the social workers would immediately move to the next family.

4.9.3 Safeguarding data

Before conducting an interview, each respondent was asked to sign a consent form. There was just one type of consent form for survey respondents and interview participants (see Appendices A, C, E). Consent forms were completed by the participants, and stored separately from the data collected in order to guarantee that information shared could not be linked with named individuals. The consent form served as proof that the respondent engaged in the study. Respondents were free not to answer any questions which they might find uncomfortable, and were able to withdraw from taking part in the research at any point.

Safety measures were carefully planned in order to secure the information gathered from the research. Firstly, the consent form was detached from the questionnaire after being signed by

the respondent, in order to ensure anonymity of information. Next, the gathered data were kept in a secure location. Both consent forms and questionnaires were numbered in order. When the field work was finished, all the consent forms and questionnaires were re-attached and kept in a secure locker to which only I had access. After the data collection was complete, all the documented interviews and questionnaires were transferred to a computer with a password, for security purposes. It was made clear to all participants that any data gathered for this research would not be used for any purpose, apart from the the current study.

4.9.4 Respecting each participant's individuality

Researchers must understand and respect the individuality of each participant. Some factors must be considered such as emotional aspects, beliefs, culture and traditions, age, health and other circumstances that would impact on their participation in the research. Establishing trust with participants was also a vital part of this study facilitating cooperation in the sharing of reliable data.

Having been a resident of Erbil City since 1986, I am very familiar with the customs and traditions, as well as the Kurdish norms and religions of various ethnic groups of the community. Moreover, I am aware of the locations of settlers in Erbil and the city's economic and social background. I also gained knowledge through my work experiences with various agencies. I worked as a social worker with different NGOs, including Kurdish Life Aid-UK (2000-2001) and Kurdistan Organisation for Mine Awareness (2001-2006). Being a social worker, I have been in contact with the residents of the three main cities of Kurdistan (Erbil, Sulaimania and Dahuk) and was trained by NGOs in how to deal with people of different backgrounds. I also served as an assistant lecturer at Salahaddin University in the Social Work Department, before starting my PhD in Durham University. With all these credentials and experiences through field work, I have a wide knowledge of Kurdish society, thus making it easier for me to understand people and develop cooperative working relationships.

4.9.5 Safeguarding participants

In 2011, a law in the Kurdistan Region addressed the protection of women against domestic violence, but without addressing children maltreatment issues (The Kurdistan Parliament, 2011). However, this law has not been properly implemented. In Britain, a social worker can provide help for a mother experiencing domestic violence, if she gives her approval, as well as

protecting the child/children i.e., the law covers all, protecting both women and children as well as the social worker's welfare (HM Government, 2015). In Kurdistan, this is not the case.

Some cases of domestic violence against women and children were revealed while conducting the research. There is no law in Kurdistan to guide the responses of social workers in handling such cases. With this, the only help we could offer was to provide a list of NGOs to contact (see Appendix (H) list of NGOs). During the study, some mothers were asked if they wanted help and to be referred to NGOs. However, most of them refused out of fear of their husbands, and of possible divorce. I respected their decision and did not report these cases of domestic violence to the police or women's organisations.

4.9.6 False expectations

One concern that I avoided while doing the research was raising false expectations among survey respondents. Some of the participants thought that the study was part of an NGO outreach programme or from a government agency. The Social Welfare Fund, under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, assists people (poor, disabled, elderly, widows and unemployed) financially. This institution gives funds or payments to people in exchange for any information needed. Because of this, the researchers encountered difficulties in Badawa, Koran and Setqan since people in those areas thought that I came from the Social Welfare Fund, and they asked for money in exchange for answering questions. I had to explain to them the purpose of these interviews, as part of an individual study, and that I could not promise to do anything beyond my research, nor could I provide remuneration for their participation.

4.10 Research Challenges

In all research, challenges occur. In the current study. The fieldwork was the most crucial part since the questionnaires had to be completed in 320 households and interviews conducted with 19 participants.

The political and economic situation in Kurdistan was unstable and insecure. Since February 2014, there had been a budget dispute between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Iraqi government. The allotted budget for the KRG was continuing to be withheld by the Iraqi government. Aside from this, Kurdistan also faces some problems in funding the war against ISIS (the so-called Islamic State) as well as accommodating some 1,800,000 Syrian

refugees. With all of this, the KRG had continuing problems balancing its budget, and some employees remained unpaid, thus creating considerable hardship for them.

During the research, the main concerns of the Kurdish families were about safety from war and their financial needs. I witnessed at firsthand how critical the situation was for some parents, who were unable to provide sufficient food and clothing for their children, or themselves. Moreover, some parents were critical, since they thought that a study about child maltreatment in Kurdistan Region was very untimely because of the war and the financial crisis.

The research also faced some difficulties in obtaining the necessary permissions. A month was needed to obtain a permit from the local government of Erbil: an official letter from Salahaddin University had to be handed to the Erbil Mayor as well as the Governor. The research was expected to start in November 2014, but was unable to do so because the local government had to review the case first. After a month, permission was granted by the Erbil Intelligence (Asyish) but I was not given permission to work in Malayan Quarter and instead went to Havalan.

Another challenge was the lack of familiarity with research among Kurdish people. Some families were unfamiliar with questionnaires, others were afraid to answer the questions and asked why they should do so. Some would ask for me to show them my official identification and that of the research assistants and many required a lengthy explanation about the purpose of the research. Mothers were more willing and cooperative than fathers, for the men tended to say that they were busy at work. Some fathers were suspicious and would not allow their wives to answer the questionnaire. Nevertheless, I was able to convince most fathers by asking them to respond to the survey in places such as coffee shops or other public places near each survey area.

During the study, where cases of abuse were disclosed, it was expected that I and the two female social workers would remain transparent and non-judgmental. We assessed the respondent and asked permission for a further talk or to seek assistance. If the participant showed willing, the case was referred to centres or NGOs providing advice and proper assistance. However, some women refused out of fear of their husbands and divorce. While doing the research, some cases of child marriages were evident and in one case a young woman was about to have an abortion due to her husband's abuse. As mentioned above, in all such cases, we provided information about services which could help and advice about how to get support.

Another challenge, as mentioned above, was that some participants asked for money in exchange for information. These instances happened with mothers in Badawa, Setaqan and Koran. Potential participants explained to us that other NGOs paid them just to answer the questionnaires. The majority of the families in these locations were struggling with low incomes and illiteracy. This for instance influenced our data collection techniques in that it meant that we were required to administer the questionnaires in person through an interview, rather than simply handing out survey forms. This therefore was a very significant challenge in terms of the amount of time required for data collection and the resourcing of the study. In other areas like the Shorsh Quarter where more affluent people live, the study was not able to be carried out due to security issues and so instead we went to Mantikawa.

Finding two appropriately experienced female social workers was also a struggle. Most possible candidates were already working at that time and unable to take on part-time jobs. I needed to contact offices and organisations such as the Directorate of Social Affairs, the Sociologist and Psychologist Association and Save the Children of Kurdistan. Finally, Kurdistan Save the Children helped me to find two research assistants.

While doing the household survey, additional responses from the questionnaires sometimes led to another story that could affect the data collection. Older people tended to wander off the topic of the research. The two social workers and I had to be respectful and patient when handling such instances and provide an explanation for each question. After the interview, the older respondents realised the value of the research and how they would address their children's and grandchildren’s issues.

Transcription and translation of interview data were considered vital for this research. I had to be careful in transcribing and translating the gathered information from the 19 semi-structured interviews, which led to a 90-page document from Kurdish into English. This was a time consuming process taking three months to complete.

4.11 Data analysis

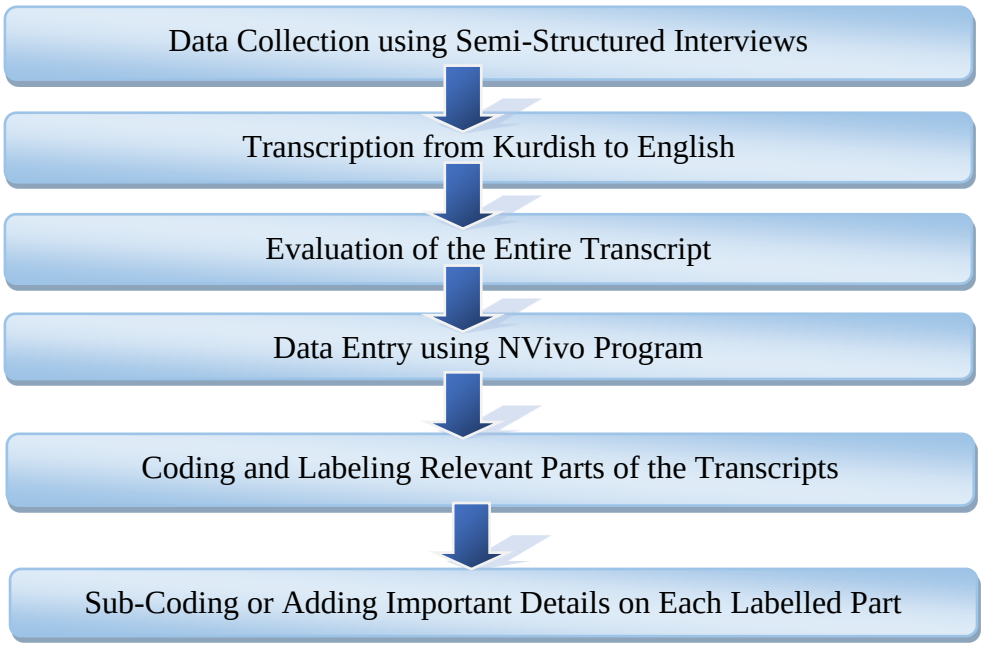
Data analysis is a method of applying statistical and/or logical processes to describe, demonstrate and evaluate data. It has multiple facets encompassing diverse techniques with a variety of names and other domains. Information from various sources must be reviewed and

analysed in order to form findings (Bryman, 2008). Different methods of data analysis were used in this mixed methods research.

The 320 questionnaires were analysed making use of statistical manipulation to produce percentages, figures and correlations, frequency tables, chi-square tests and contingency tables. The Chi-square test is commonly used to compare observed information with expected data gathered according to a specific hypothesis. It also demonstrates the degree of correlation between variables in the population and identifies degrees of statistical significance. The chi-square value calculates the differences between the actual and expected values in the table (Bryman 2008, p.334). Contingency tables are similar to frequency tables, allowing two variables to be analysed simultaneously, establishing the relationship between those two examined variables. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 19) was used for data entry and calculations.

The 19 semi-structured interviews with experts on child welfare were conducted in Kurdish, transcribed into English and the data managed using NVivo (version 10). All participants were assigned an anonymous code. Group A comprises the 12 academic staff from the three departments, labelled as A-1 to A-12; Group B is coded B-1 to B-2 since it represents the two social workers from Kurdistan Save the Children. Codes C1-C5 refer to the remaining five social workers from the above-mentioned government institutions. Figure 4.2 below shows the process flow of the qualitative approach used in this research:

Figure 4.2 Qualitative analysis (semi-structured interviews)



4.12 Summary

This chapter has described the conceptualization of the current research design, including preparatory visits to Erbil, quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and challenges encountered in the conduct of the research.

Chapter Five: Findings from Interviews with Child Welfare Professionals and Academics

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, findings from the 19 semi-structured interviews are presented. The 19 experts on child welfare comprised: 12 academic staff from departments of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work; 2 social workers from Kurdistan Save the Children (NGO) and 5 social workers are from government institutions including the Directorate of Social Affairs and Labour in Erbil, Child Helpline 116 and Boys and Girls Child Care Sectors.

In order to preserve anonymity of the respondents in the presentation of their data, all participants are coded according to their respective groups. Group A is the 12 academic staff, labelled as A-1 to A-12; Group B are coded as B-1 to B-2, representing the two social workers from Kurdistan Save Children. Codes C-1 to C-5 are assigned to Group C, the remaining five social workers from the above-mentioned government institutions.

This chapter is divided into sections that describe the knowledge and perspectives of the 19 Kurdish experts including: their views on how to define child maltreatment (5.2); what they consider to be the most common forms of physical and psychological maltreatment (5.3); their opinions about punishment as a form of maltreatment (5.4); the role of gender (5.5); the circumstances surrounding child maltreatment (5.6); and their views on the physical, emotional and social consequences of child maltreatment (5.7). The views of the 19 experts concerning the understanding of parents about child maltreatment are discussed in section 5.8.

5.2 Defining Child Maltreatment

In the interviews, each participant was asked, “How do you define child maltreatment?” I was particularly interested in whether their answers drew on global understandings and interpretations of the phenomenon and/or the extent to which their answers reflected their Kurdish culture.

5.2.1 The Sociologists at the Sociology Department at Salahaddin University

Three academic staff from the Sociology Department were asked about their understandings of child maltreatment. Their responses were:

"A child is delicate (gentle) - a feeble (weak) person, a blank paper; they need the best treatment from adults, especially their parents. The mother and father may manage their children's behaviour by guiding them wisely and intelligently without experiencing any sort of exploitation or violence. Parents ought to encourage their children to behave correctly. As an example of this, parents may question their children why a certain conduct is good or not, and to guide their children towards good manners. If a child learns and prepares in this manner, along with the parents' patience, allowing for every child to develop, there is a chance for a bright future for the children." (A3).

"Child maltreatment is considered as unacceptable behaviour by parents or society when children are susceptible to several forms of abuse such as verbal, violent, anger beatings and deprivation of basic needs in life. Other forms of maltreatment are the parents' misunderstanding or lack of awareness of their children's feelings, psychological and physical needs" (A4).

"I believe child maltreatment includes all unusual behaviour, tough reactions and verbalization against children by the parents, family and relatives. Parents might possibly express their attention towards the children using swearing, body language and physically hurting the children." (A10).

5.2.2 The Academic Staff at the Social Work Department at Salahaddin University

The academic staff at the Social Work Department (A1, A2, A5 and A7) offered the following understandings of child maltreatment:

"Any intentional act against children which may cause and/or lead to negative physical or psychological impact on them such as physical violence, insulting, neglect etc." (A1).

"Child maltreatment is a broad concept that includes a variety of psychological, verbal or non-verbal, and physical actions that harm the development of children i.e., any action that may undermine a child's sense of self-esteem, self-confidence, physical development etc." –(A2)

"Child abuse is any means of mistreating a child by parents and/or caretakers which includes all types of maltreatment – physical, emotional, neglect and sexual abuse." (A5)

“This can be defined or explained as violent or non-violent acts of treatment towards children by parents or anyone who takes care of them.” (A7).

5.2.3 The Psychologists at the Psychology Department at Salahaddin University

The psychologists and academic staff at the Psychology Department (A6, A8 and A9) described their concept of child maltreatment in the following ways:

“Child maltreatment happens when parents are unable to provide appropriately for their children’s basic needs. Aside from essential needs such as food, clothes and healthcare, children need psychological and educational support as well as moral satisfaction.” (A6)

“Child maltreatment can be defined as abuse and encompasses all behaviour and mistreatment that hurts children physically and emotionally. In general, it means any acts of parents that may impact the children’s abilities, whether emotional and/or physical development.” (A8).

“We can define child maltreatment as a lack of family culture. The function of this family culture is to encourage parents to bring up their children for the community, promoting proper social habits, manners and values. In the socialisation process, the culture will pass from generation to generation, resulting in children inheriting their parents’ beliefs and attitudes to life. This maltreatment is a result of parents’ lack of awareness, understanding and education about child abuse.” (A9).

5.2.4 The Governmental Sectors: Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs, Helpline 116 and Child Care Houses

The social workers in government organisations (C1, C3, C4 and C5) were also asked about their understanding of child maltreatment. Their responses were as follows:

“Child abuse includes physical or psychological violence against children by parents whether it is verbal, such as swearing or teasing children, or corporal like beating etc.” Social Worker at Helpline 116 (C1).

“The definition of child maltreatment differs due to the cultural context, for example as between Sweden and Kurdistan. Despite these differences, there is a general consensus between academics, elite groups and legislators. For the latter group, child maltreatment is defined as any form of neglect, exploitation and abuse towards children by parents.” (C3).

"Child maltreatment is any form of physical or psychological abuse against children. Most of the time, psychological maltreatment is not obvious, however, I believe it has a big impact on children." (C4).

"Child abuse, in my understanding, from my written, evidence-based experience with children and academics, includes all kinds of maltreatment or acts performed by parents or adults towards their children, whether this form of abuse is physical, psychological, neglect or sexual abuse." (C5).

5.2.5 The NGOs: Kurdistan Save the Children (KSC)

Kurdistan Save the Children is a non-profit humanitarian organisation that helps to improve children's well-being. The social worker at KSC (B1) was also asked about the concept of child maltreatment and answered:

"We can define child maltreatment as any physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse practised by parents and/or adults towards children. This includes all kinds of abuse which hurt children whether physical, emotional, neglect and/or sexual, directly or indirectly inflicted by parents. Apparently, for all Kurdish society, culture affects the definition of child maltreatment." Social Worker at Kurdistan Save the Children, KSC (B1).

5.3 Most Common Forms of Physical and Psychological Maltreatment in Kurdish Families

The second section of questions in the semi-structured interview was "***What are the common forms of physical and emotional maltreatment used by parents?***" This section is divided into two parts, discussing both physical and psychological maltreatment and its different forms.

5.3.1 Physical Maltreatment

Participants were of the view that physical maltreatment could comprise any severe physical act by parents and/or caretakers against children resulting in hurt or injury and that, traditionally, this is termed as *punishment* for any misconduct or wrongdoing children may do. Participants felt that most Kurdish parents believe that such acts are righteous and appropriate for the purposes of *disciplining* children, with the aim of preventing them from committing the

same mistakes again, as well as teaching them to obey their parents and to respect other people (A2, A8, and B1).

One respondent (A8) added that beating or hitting children is a social norm and a form of discipline in Kurdistan, "*Why do you not discipline your child?* or "*Why are you not punishing him/her?*" Instances of physical abuse mentioned by other participants (A1, A5, A10, A11 and B1), included burning a child's fingers and hands, neck, bottom and feet by a heated metal spoon, knife or iron, if parents' instructions were not followed.

As there is no data available of incidents of child abuse in Kurdish families, participants based their views on their professional experience. Most of them (A6, A7, A9, A10, A11, A12, B1, B2, C3 and C4) said that the most common types of physical maltreatment would be slapping and spanking, hitting, pinching and squeezing, kicking, beating some parts of the body like the face, hands and back, resulting in bruised skin, and/or having severely injured or broken body parts. One respondent (B2) claimed that child abuse also included the pulling of hair or ears, as well as imprisonment in a dark room.

One of the social workers (C3) stated that, "Slapping children and physically maltreating them are not secret issues in our society: you can see it in our own families, in your family as well as your neighbours', and even in the street, where anyone can hit a child in front of you….I can say that 80% to 85% of the cases at Boys and Girls Child Care Sector were physically abused by their parents." Another participant, one of the academic staff (A9) recalled: "I remember when I was a child and my parents punished me physically, I was in pain and crying. The more I cried because of the pain, the more they continued hitting me, slapping my cheeks and kicking me and telling me to stop crying."

Two respondents (B1 and C4) stated that some parents, when they get upset or angry, intentionally beat their children by tossing objects (TV remote control, sandals, shoes, cleaning devices, pillow) at them, or hitting them with sticks, or washing them with very, very hot water. A few participants referred to other forms of child abuse such as, "starving a child" (A3); "child neglect like lack of health care and proper nutrition" (C2 and C3); child labour and educational neglect, "making the children work like beggars in the streets or by just not letting them attend school." (A3 and B2); sexual abuse was mentioned and one participant (B2) cited a case, "where a father sexually abused his daughter, wounded her physically and then killed her, just to hide his crime."

Lastly, one of the participants (A2) mentioned a particular form of sexual child abuse among girls, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), commonly known as circumcision. This process is done to females at an early age and is still practised in some areas of Kurdistan such as Pshdar, Qaladiza and Dashti Btwen. The respondent considered this as a type of maltreatment because of the pain inflicted on the female children. "In the past, female circumcision was widely practised in Kurdish society and people do not acknowledge this as a form of abuse."(A2)

5.3.2 Psychological maltreatment

Referred to also as emotional or mental abuse and psychological violence, psychological maltreatment can be defined as a pattern of behaviour by parents or caregivers that can seriously interfere with a child's cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development (Hart and Brassard, 1991). It can also include intentionally scaring, humiliating and isolating or ignoring a child. It is very difficult to know how common psychological child maltreatment is, for a wide range of behaviours can be considered abusive, and most forms of psychological maltreatment are deliberately under-reported. In the Kurdistan Region, there is no research data documenting cases of psychological maltreatment, and it remains a widely concealed type of abuse. Despite this challenge, the academic staff and social workers were aware of the issue from their professional experiences in the field.

Most of the respondents agreed that the most common types of psychological maltreatment are verbal assault (swearing, bad mouthing, screaming, insulting and humiliation), disrespecting children's feelings (A1 and C3) and child neglect (A4, A5, A6, A7, A8 and C4). Other participants (A9, A10, B1 and C3) mentioned parents' restrictions or limitations on some children's hobbies or activities such as sports (playing football), watching cartoons or films, using gadgets like I-Pads or gaming consoles, surfing the internet, or hanging out with friends. Two of the participants (A3 and A4) also added that some parents insist that their children do something, like eating (while not hungry) or making them study hard. Participants A10, C2, C3 and C4, explained that verbal assaults, in their experience, included parents screaming in a child's face, swearing and bad mouthing, insulting, name-calling and humiliation. Respondents A7, A8 and B2 quoted: "you are lazy", "you do not know anything", "act like an adult or human"; and name-calling such as "stupid", "bitch", "gay" etc. They referred to unrealistic parental and societal expectations of children: "Why do we call them 'child or children' if we want them to act like an adult already, a man or woman at their age." One of the participants

from Child Helpline 116 stated, "Most children who contacted Help Line 116 are terribly fearful to talk about abuse by their parents." (C1). This respondent also added that in one call an abused child said, "I am always worried, my parents always swearing at us, teasing and criticising us, especially in front of other people." Participant A1 said that insulting and criticism, especially of female children, is also typical of psychological maltreatment.

Acquiring children's respect starts with treating them respectfully and righteously. Participants felt that emotional abuse happens in households especially when parents are unable to recognise their children's feelings and/or beliefs. As respondents A2 stated, "Children are regarded as less important than adults, their desires and opinions are hardly heard and not taken seriously by their parents, seeing these as unnecessary." Participant A2 added that, "In Kurdish culture, if a child and an adult are both speaking simultaneously, the priority will be given to the adult speaker and the child will be neglected; or in the best instance, will be given a chance to speak after the latter has finished."

Participants were also of the view that neglect can constitute an aspect of psychological violence towards children. Failing to provide security for children is one of the elements of child neglect, where parents are unable to provide a secure and healthy environment for their children: Examples of these views include: "When a child feels no psychological assurance in the environment in which he/she lives, it means that there is something wrong with the parents concerning how they should treat their children" (A6) and "Locking a child in a dark room or a closed place, or throwing children out of their home into the street" (A7).

All the instances mentioned above, according to the 19 professionals in child welfare, constitute cases of child abuse. Even though they were clear that child abuse exists, participants felt that Kurdish society largely accepts this abuse as normal and part of the culture with parents believing that such forms of abuse are an acceptable and normal part of how to teach and bring up their children. More broadly, evidence and argument from the participants in this study suggest that physical and psychological types of maltreatment are often intertwined with each other in Kurdish families.

5.4: Maltreatment by Parents

In this section, I address two important questions in the semi-structured interviews: "***How frequently do parents physically or emotionally maltreat their children?***" and:, "***Amongst parents, who are more likely to commit maltreatment, mothers or fathers?***"

Twelve participants responded that both parents frequently maltreat their children either physically or psychologically (A2, A3, A4, A5, A7, A8, A12, B1, B2, C1, C2 and C5), while. A11 claimed that child maltreatment is a part of a *socialisation process* in raising children in Kurdish families. This means that both physical and emotional maltreatment are acceptable social norms and part of each household's life. Interviewees A1 and A5 also added that child maltreatment is part of daily practice, depending on the reaction and levels of understanding of the parents towards the good or bad behaviour of children.

One interviewee (A8) referred to lack of empirical evidence regarding maltreatment by mothers and fathers saying: "Up to now, there is no clear study which specifies whether fathers or mothers are more abusive." However, some of the participants (A1, A3, A5, B1, B2 and C4) claimed that mothers are more susceptible to maltreat their children. These respondents mentioned that children at an early age (before attending school) usually stay at home and are most likely to be maltreated by their mothers but as the children grow up to school age and beyond they are most likely to be maltreated by their fathers. Other respondents (B1 and C1) explained that mothers usually stay at home and are more interactive and have more contact with the children. Interviewees A1, B1, B2, C1, C2 and C3 also added that fathers spend much time at work and are therefore less available to maltreat their children.

Other respondents cited particularly cruel instances of child abuse: one interviewee (C5) described how a widowed mother sold her child's kidney because of her poor economic situation. Some respondents (A3, B2, C2 and C3) believed that step-mothers are more capable of abusing children than birth mothers. In November 2014, a child aged nine was murdered by his step-mother because he refused to take showers. The step-mother tortured the child in the bathroom, hitting his head until he died. The police arrested the woman after the hospital reported the incident. One of the social workers (B2) described the story of a child at the Boys Care Sector where his step-mother convinced his birth father to send him to an institution. Respondent C4 added that this same child tried to commit suicide by eating sands and rocks, and later on was placed in intensive care in order to survive. After subsequent psychiatric help

and with the help of social workers, the child was able to begin to recover, making an arrangement with his birth father to have weekly visits.

Nine participants (A1, A5, A6, A7, B1, B2, C2, C4 and C5) argued that fathers were often influenced by their wives' complaints about their children's behaviour, resulting in physically punishing their children. As stated by respondent C5, "Fathers are usually working and not at home, so they hardly know and understand the behaviour of their children." The belief was that mothers usually threaten the children whenever they misbehave and put pressure on their husbands to discipline their children. Participants B1, B2, C2, C4 and C5 added, that because of this, fathers tend to punish their children without understanding their physical, social and psychological needs.

In Kurdish culture, children must obey their parents most especially their fathers because of the *patriarchal system*, where fathers have more authority than mothers in dealing with the discipline in each household (A4, A8, A9, A10 and C5). Sometimes fathers misuse this *authority*, abusing not just their children, but their wives too. One interviewee (C4) supported the idea that fathers are more capable of hurting their children because of their bad temper after a hard day's work. Respondent A12 also mentioned that some fathers are *authoritarian by nature*, which is why their children are more attached to their mothers, seeing them as loving, caring and understanding, and becoming more emotionally attached to them than to their fathers whose tough language is difficult for children to accept.

Some of the participants (A3, A4, A9 and A10) claimed that another reason for child maltreatment is parents' *ownership* mentality. Some parents think they have total possession of their children, with the right to bring them up as they wish. Two out of 19 respondents said that there is no clear evidence yet in Kurdish society demonstrating which parent, mother or father, is more likely to maltreat their children. But they claimed that, based on their experience, fathers tend to punish boys and mothers are more capable of hurting their female children.

5.5: Gender of Maltreated Children

As mentioned earlier, scant information about child maltreatment can be found in the Kurdistan Region, and gender-specific research data on this topic is particularly scarce.

The 19 experts on child welfare were asked: "***Who among male or female children are more subject to maltreatment?***", "***What gender-specific maltreatment is usually carried out by parents?***" – and "***Is there any difference between maltreatment of boys or girls?***" These questions were intended to define the significance of the role that gender plays in child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region.

Ten participants (A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, A8, A11, B1, B2 and C1) believed that gender issues play a part in child maltreatment, but this varies with parents' educational level as well as the family's social class, financial status and religion. Two respondents, A8 and A11, explained that parents punish their children regardless of gender in order to discipline them. A8 added, "Some families do not acknowledge the existence of child maltreatment, denying the fact that they are already acting as bad parents and rather see this as part of their responsibility in disciplining their children.*"*

The majority of respondents (A1, A3, A5, A6, A7, A9, A10, A12, B1, B2, C1, C2 and C5) agreed that both genders were vulnerable to child maltreatment, but that male children are more exposed to maltreatment by their parents than girls. They believed that parents punish their male children because of their behaviour in being naughty, not listening or paying attention to their parents, quarrelling with siblings, staying out late with friends or neighbours, or running away from chores at home.

Participants A3, B1, B2 and C4 claimed that female children were also susceptible to maltreatment, but the forms of this abuse were more psychological than for boys, for whom maltreatment is more likely to be physical in nature. A3 and C1 said that girls are more likely to experience psychological humiliation including embarrassment, shaming, insulting, and social punishments such as degradation. Three participants (B1, B2 and C1) felt that some parents, especially mothers, tended to compare their female children with male children, and that girls are more likely to be punished by their parents, as they are unable to run away and escape from home as easily as their brothers.

Interviewees A3, A4, A9, A10, B1 and B2 saw gender as playing a major role in the discrimination and stigmatisation of children by their parents, reflecting the priority given to male children in a strongly patriarchal culture. Respondent A4 added that in Kurdish culture, parents' names are usually acknowledged using the names of their sons. For example, the parents of 'Saman' (name of child) might be addressed as "Saman's mother" or "Saman's father". Also expresseded was the view that some parents' reactions, behaviour and attitudes as well as their functions and approach differ, depending on the gender of their children. As A3 commented, in Kurdish culture, "Girls are weak and boys are symbols of courage, management and power who will protect families and preserve the heritage."

Participants A4, A9, A10, C1 and C4 believed that both religion and society play a crucial role in the way parents bring up their children requiring parents to be stricter with their daughters than their sons. In closed environments, they are taught the notion of shame, to be prim and proper, to gradually learn to distinguish things as girls'/boys' toys or girlish or boyish colours. Young girls have little idea, at first, how to tell the difference between boys and girls, but because of the *patriarchal system*, children are educated by their parents and by society in general to revere boys and men, putting their fathers and brothers on a pedestal: always listening to them, obeying and respecting them.

Respondents A1, A3, A4, A6, A10 and B2 offered examples of the ways in which girls are more subject to psychological than physical maltreatment. One form of this maltreatment is inducing the notion of shame. A11 explained that parents bring their daughters up very carefully to live up to the standards of society, and to avoid doing anything that would later bring disgrace to the family. When a woman does commits malicious acts that are shameful for her family, she might possibly be killed by an older male relative - her father , a brother, or other close male relative. A3 added that daughters engaging in pre-marital sex would lose their jobs and be unacceptable for marriage, as well as hurting the family's reputation. As a result, Kurdish families strive to preserve their daughters' virginity until they get married. As well as bringing 'disgrace' on the family, daughters who indulge in pre-marital sex are likely to lose the chance of ever getting married in the future. C1 stated: "when a girl crosses the *redline (Khati Sur),* it means that her action is socially, culturally and religiously disgraceful and unforgivable." Commonly, daughters who have pre-marital sex are murdered by their own family members, while some families make them marry at an early age to hide their transgressive behaviour and escape shame. It is clear that maltreatment of female children is both common and serious as Kurdish parents put more pressure on their daughters to preserve

dignity, honour and the family's reputation.. Seven participants (A1, A3, A4, A6, A9, A10 and B2) concluded that although emotional abuse leaves invisible marks on children, its consequences are severe.

Some restrictions imposed on daughters were mentioned by participants, such as not allowing girls to go out with friends unless accompanied by family member/s (sisters or brothers), not allowing them to wear makeup or skimpy (tight and/or revealing) clothes, nor to have tattoos. Respondent A8 claimed that in Kurdish culture, daughters are supposed to stay at home and help their mothers with household chores as well as being prim and proper. However, interviewees A2 and A5 observed that parents place more limitations on their daughters when they become adolescents. Censorship is another form of restriction implemented by parents on their daughters. Communication tools such as mobile phones and access to the internet are limited by parents to stop them chatting or contacting boys. Some parents do not allow girls to watch some television programmes, and accessing the internet is only permitted if under the supervision of an older family member.

Participants A3, A4, A11 and C5 explained that most parents are more lenient with their sons, encouraging them to learn how to become responsible husbands and/or fathers. Four respondents (A1, A3, A4 and B2) claimed that some parents do not allow their daughters to pursue their education giving priority to sons who will become the *heads of the family*, while daughters will become the homemakers. Participants A3 and A12 concluded that, "It seems clear that boys in Kurdish society have more rights than girls." This attitude towards education for girls raises questions about the psychological effects on girls later on in their lives, effects that were thought to include feelings such of hatred, jealousy and selfishness. However, two participants (A1 and C3) did not believe that gender plays such an important role in understanding maltreatment when compared to other factors such as age, and levels of misbehaviour, education, the economic situation of the family and place of residence. Despite these exceptions, the overwhelming impression from interviews with child welfare professionals and academics was that female children are susceptible to physical and emotional maltreatment as a result of the gender inequality that characterizes patriarchal cultures, where girls are strongly disciplined to live in accordance with the standards of the society and follow the values, beliefs and traditions of their families from generation to generation.

5.6 Causes of Child Maltreatment

This section examines what is known by the Kurdish child welfare professionals and academics about the causes of child maltreatment, focusing on both internal and external factors. The 19 interviewees were asked "***What are the particular circumstances that may lead parents to maltreat their children?***"

Participants A7 and C2 claimed that children living in a violent or poor environment were more likely to be affected; in households with numerous children, where parents are unable to provide necessities such as proper nutrition, healthcare, and lack of education. A11 linked high family size with a lack of family planning awareness and argued that because of this social environment, children are more prone to maltreatment as their parents are unable to take full responsibility for nurturing them.

A family's financial instability was also mentioned by participants A2, A4, A7, A8, A11, A12, C2 and C5 as a factor that might contribute to child maltreatment. Child labour happens in some households because parents' income is not enough to sustain their families, so children's studies are disrupted and they start working at an early age to help out their parents. Occasionally, due also to financial problems, parents would prioritise their sons' attendance at school. Typical of statements by these respondents was: "Children are victims of their families' economic circumstances and unfortunately, the government is unable to offer any family support."

The impact of political issues in the Kurdistan region on the financial status of families were also mentioned by participants A8, A11, A12, B1, C3 and C5. Recent encounters with terrorist groups such as ISIS and economic sanctions imposed by the Iraqi government in February 2014, were thought by these interviewees to greatly affect the economic stability and security of Kurdistan, and adversely impact upon the financial status of Kurdish families. The economic stability of each household depends on the country's political and security situation. Participants C3 and C5 argued that the harmful and unsafe environment created by political conflict and security issues, affects children and parents alike, shaping parental behavior towards their children that reflects everyday experiences of violence. As the proverb states, "violence begets violence."

Personality disorders, anger management issues and other mental health problems were seen as other factors that can contribute to child abuse and domestic violence. Respondent A12

stated that "If parents grew up in a violent environment, there is a possibility in which they will be abusive with their children someday." Participants A6 and B2 believed that some parents' reactions to the misbehaviour of their children depends also on their mood. If the parents are in a good mood, fewer punishments happen, but if they are in a bad temper, even small mistakes can result in extreme sanctions on their children. The mood of the parents depends on individual and family's circumstances such as illness, stress between parents, financial problems, and tiredness at work. Interviewee A6 also added that parents' change of temper or mood swings can leave children confused and unable to distinguish between right or wrong.

Six respondents explained that teenagers who engage in pre-marital sex or other deviations from social norms were understood to be subjected to maltreatment by parents and/or relatives (A3, A5, A9, B1, C1 and C5). Pre-marital sex, forbidden in Islam as well as in Kurdish culture, was thought to be a frequent catalyst for teenagers being subjected to intentional beating by their parents, older brothers and other relatives (B1 and C5). As Respondent B1 stated, "most families believe that honour and reputation matters - that is why in some instances family and relatives kill their children who commit such malicious acts, or force them into marriage at an early age, to save their honour and social status."

Interviewee C5 cited the publicised case of a 15-year old girl named Duniya, who was brutally murdered by her husband in 2014. He was 30 years older than her and claimed that he paid her parents for the marriage when the girl was 14 years of age. According to the police report, Duniya was severely beaten by her husband during the entire nine months of their marriage due to jealousy. Her husband claimed that she cheated on him and had an extramarital affair with a boy within their local area. The husband ran away and hid for two months after the murder. Duniya's parents were believed to be accomplices to the crime, because of claims about *selling* their daughter for money due to financial problems. After the murder, a mediation process took place between the husband and Duniya's family, who agreed to a financial settlement after the husband paid compensation. However, because many feminist organisations and human rights groups were monitoring the case, Duniya's family refused the unofficial settlement and later on requested that the case go to court. Finally, in November 2014, justice was served and Duniya's husband was arrested for murder and sentenced to nine years' imprisonment.

The generation gap was also considered by some participants (A4, A8, A11, C3 and C4) as a contributing factor in cases of maltreatment. They were of the view that a difference of outlook

or beliefs between different generations, particularly in Kurdish culture, can create misunderstandings within families. They said that many parents do not understand the behaviour of their children because of their lack of knowledge of the younger generation, which creates arguments within families with parents' insisting on the continuation of outdated cultural practices as a way of preserving their legacy.

Participant A3 stated that some parents set high expectations, especially for their sons, who must excel in every activity at school, and must avoid smoking, drinking alcohol and crime. Parents' *high ambitions* place pressure on their children without any understanding of the children's personal goals, or of whether their children are eager to pursue and achieve their parents' high expectations (C4). The suggestion was that when children disagree with such expectations and disobey their parents, they are likely to be physically or emotionally maltreated.

Respondents A1, A2, A5, B1 and B2 referred to links between children's misbehavior and regular punishment. This usually happens when children disobey and violate the rules set by their parents. Examples include staying out late, hanging out with friends without parents' consent, engaging in relationships at an early age, neglecting homework, poor academic performance (failing grades during exams) and stealing others' belongings. Respondent C1 claimed that some parents accuse their children of using online chat applications such as Viber or Facebook Messenger for exchanging messages. Using these mobile applications is a big issue among Kurdish families, and daughters found to be exchanging secret messages with boys are likely to be severely punished by parents, especially by their fathers (A1, A10 and C1).

Interviewees believed that religion also plays its part as one of the factors that may lead to child maltreatment. Participants A4 and A9 believed that over the last three decades, a fundamental Islamic ideology has greatly affected Kurdish society. They explained that after 1991, several Islamic parties developed in the Kurdistan region and created changes that affected family life, interlinking Kurdish and Arabic cultures. These parties convinced some families to adopt and practise a repressive style of religion, leading to behaviours such as preventing females (wives, daughters or sisters) from going out unaccompanied by a male family member, and stressing the values of shame or honour among families, which had not formerly been a fundamental part of Kurdish culture. Nine participants (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A9, B1, C1 and C5) added that in Islam, parents are allowed to punish their children if they disobey their family's or their

religion's rules. Some parents punish their children for not conforming to religious norms such as praying, fasting and wearing the *hijab* (veil) (A4, A9 and A10).

Most participants believed that the situation for Kurdish girls was better 30 years ago, in terms of freedom. Today they are more likely to suffer abuse, higher rates of 'religious' murder and suicide. Previous generations of Kurdish girls were allowed to participate with males, especially in social activities such as dancing and going to parties, or even working together, farming and shepherding (A9). Nowadays, families prevent female members from visiting their friends, neighbours or to associate alone with males. One participant (A9) stated that some families do not follow the traditional religious rules or social customs and do provide freedom for their children, as long as they abide by the law. But such families are in a minority and considered by others as social outcasts. Respondent A9 added that both male and female children are victims of religious and social customs because their critics declare themselves to be devotees of religion, and that punishing children is authorised by the *Word of God*.

Overall, interviewees focused on two basic factors related to religion which they felt led parents to maltreat their children: misunderstanding of the teachings of Islam, and the concept of *absolutism* for social control and solving social problems. Islamic absolutism means that religion does not accept any solution outside the teachings of the Qur'an. As a result, some parents practise punishments as written in the Qur'an, while children at an early age learn and adopt these religious misconceptions and social traditions. Respondent A9 claimed that some parents *threatened* their children using expressions such as: "*you are going to hell.*", if ever they disobey them, and explained. "These parents do not behave rationally or educate their children properly, instead they use such words as the easiest way to control and discipline their children." (A9)

Interference by extended family members such as grandparents in bringing up children in Kurdistan was referred to by one respondent (A11) who explained that extended family members are allowed to punish children, as they have the same authority over, and responsibility for, them. Problems arise when children are confused by different approaches to discipline and punishment by different family members.

Wider forms of child maltreatment, outside the family, have reduced in recent years because of changes in social beliefs and norms. Participant A3 mentioned that fifteen years ago, teachers were allowed to physically hurt their students as a form of discipline. Parents and society had approved this malpractice in order to make their children study more. However, a

law was passed under the Constitution (2005) that, "*all forms of maltreatment and violence in the households, institutions and society shall be forbidden*"; corporal punishment of students is no longer carried out in the Kurdistan Region today. However, it seems that this legal provision has not had the same effect in the private sphere of the family, where the increasing strength of religious influence has encouraged stricter forms of child discipline and punishment.

5.7: Consequences of Child Maltreatment

As discussed in Chapter Three, while the effects of maltreatment are serious, these can vary among children and vary over time. Some maltreated children show resilience, overcoming their experiences of maltreatment and have productive adult lives, but others do not. With this in mind, the 19 experts on child welfare were asked "***What are the consequences of maltreatment affecting children, physically, socially and emotionally?***"

Participants raised a wide range of possible physical consequences from minor injuries to severe brain damage and even death. As mentioned by some participants (A6, A7, A11, A12, B2 and C5) hitting children can cause injury or broken body parts, internal bleeding and some diseases such as urinary reflux, as well as anxiety disorders. However, participatns were clear that all forms of maltreatment are likely to result in emotional problems for children. ranging from constant low self-esteem to intense dissociative disorders. Participant B2 claimed that the psychological impact on children is even greater than the physical, arguing that abused and neglected children are more likely to become self-destructive or aggressive than other children.

Respondent B1 discussed the case of a seven-year-old boy who had a urological disease as a result of physical maltreatment: "His step-mother kept on beating his back, and later on the kid got the disease." The child's stepmother stopped him from attending school and forced him into child labour. The social worker added that this case was reported by the child's neighbours and asked their organisation for assistance and help. After the intervention and financial support from Kurdistan Save the Children, the child was able to study again, and his case was still being monitored by the organisation.

Interviewees were mindful of gender inequality in thinking about the consequences of maltreatment. Some parents do not realise the impact of gender inequality on their children, but children are quite often able to distinguish the difference between how their parents treat

them. In general, Kurdish society has created an image of women as weak, lacking self-esteem and unable to make their own decisions, even if they are educated. Participants considered this to be a result of parents bringing up their daughters based on societal standards, rather than what the women would have preferred themselves (A4, A10, A12, B1 and C5). These respondents said that daughters learn to behave out of fear of their parents, to be shy, respectful and obedient, and to value virginity. They can feel frustrated and/or insecure if their parents threaten them. As respondent A2 stated: "Daughters must comply with the rules and expectations set by their parents as part of their culture and forget the ways of normal life." If female children do not accept these concepts and misbehave, punishments are likely to follow.

Over half the participants (A1, A5, A6, A7, A8, A10, A12, B1, C1, C2 and C5) believed that children's low self-esteem is a consequence of maltreatment by their parents. They said that some parents do not let their children speak their minds or defend themselves because it is disrespectful, while others think that their children's opinions are irrelevant since they are immature. As a result, some children may have little confidence, are unable to do anything without help, have a weak personality and a sense of isolation. Children with low self-esteem are hesitant to act or make decisions by themselves because they are afraid to commit mistakes, while others may have a fear of being reprimanded or humiliated, making them reluctant to take any initiative. These children find it difficult to assess problems or to speak with people and, as a result, prefer seclusion. One social worker (C4) added that isolation is another visible result of abuse. Such children are not comfortable sharing or opening up themselves to others, and have trust issues, particularly with adults. They become shy, timid, pessimistic and lonely.

Abuse and violence were thought to affect children's personalities and subsequent interpersonal behaviour, ranging from poor peer relations to violent behaviour (A1, A3, A4, A8, A9 and C5). Severe punishment and neglect may lead to children's aggressive behaviour towards siblings or other family members and even at school (A1, A3, A12, C3 and C5). Living in a violent environment and witnessing arguments between parents can have a harmful impact on children (C4), often leading to crying before sleep or having nightmares.

Three participants (A1, A3 and C3) expressed their understanding that physical punishment by parents sometimes leads to their children's poor academic performance. These participants believed that aside from achieving low grades, abused children tend to disobey school policies or destroy some of its premises. So while some parents believe that pushing their children to

study and punishing them for any misbehaviour is the best way to bring them up, it may have negative consequences.

Participants A8 and C5 believed that maltreatment can lead to suicide in some cases among children in Kurdistan and that misunderstanding between parents and children may be a major reason for the increasing rate of suicide cases among teenagers since 2000. Some instances of parents forcing their children to study, prohibiting them from spending time with friends, and being unable to meet the needs of their children, were thought to have been influential factors leading some children to commit suicide.

5.8 Parental Understanding of Child Maltreatment

This section discusses interviewees' views about parents' perspectives and awareness of child maltreatment, based on the question: ***"Do parents realise that maltreatment hurts their children and do they regret it?***"

Six participants (A1, A5, A7, A8, B1 and C3) believed that a majority of parents only use physical maltreatment out of love. According to one interviewee (C3), parents usually punish their children as an *act out of love* and explain, "I love my children and that is why I am physically maltreating them*",* but somehow they lack parental skills or they just do not have any alternative apart from maltreatment to correct the misbehaviour of their children. Moreover, respondent A4 claimed that some parents think that by instilling fear into their children by physically punishing them, they will actually gain their children's respect. In other words, some parents are afraid that their children may disobey them and that is why they instil fear into their minds. Also, according to A4, some parents think that they own their children, and are therefore obliged to punish any misbehaviour. In doing so, they hope to ensure that their children will become socially acceptable as they grow up, as well as preventing them from committing any "disgraceful acts". Respondent A4 also added that parents may lack an awareness of the short and/or long consequences of maltreatment on children.

Other interviewees (A1, A11, A12 and B1) claimed that some parents are influenced by stereotypical cultural beliefs that being tough with their children is the proper way to bring them up. Participant A8 claimed that in Kurdish culture, physical punishment is a social norm. The idea of physically hurting children as the best way to discipline them is an old practice

passed from generation to generation. Interviewees A9, A12 and C4 claimed that some parents learn to practise punishments through their parents. As a result children, as they become parents, will do the same with their own children, thinking this is the proper way to educate them. As a result, the use of punishment becomes a cycle and passes from generation to generation.

Just over half of the participants (A1, A2, A3, A5, A8, A12, B2, C1, C2 and C5) claimed that some parents intentionally maltreat their children both physically and psychologically in a very brutal way. Parents' lack of awareness was cited as one of the reasons, but on the other hand, the "sense of possession" towards their children was another factor thought to be important. Abusive parents believe that they possess their children and have the right to choose any approach they wish to bring them up. Thus, these parents instil fear in their children so that they will abide by rules and orders (A1, A2, A3, A8, A12, B2 and C1). Interestingly, participants explained that some parents deny the existence of child maltreatment, believing that discipline and punishment protect their children from engaging in anti-social behaviour and educate them in proper values that need to be learnt, in preparation to become socially acceptable in adult life. Moreover, other forms of maltreatment such as child neglect, verbal abuse and female genital mutilation were not perceived as maltreatment. According to these participants, many parents do not acknowledge maltreatment as an issue, for physical and emotional maltreatment are part of the culture.

Respondents A10 and B1 claimed that family background played an important role in parents' perspectives about maltreatment. Participant A3 stated that, "We can teach our children properly by means of love, training them by repeating good deeds and also by listening to them." For example, if a child was pushed to pray at the age of seven, he/she might reject prayer as he/she grows up. However, if a child knows the purpose of prayer and why people pray, he/she may be convinced to follow religion. It means that parents are responsible for teaching their children appropriately, explaining to them the values of concepts they should learn, as well as listening to what their children say, believe and need, without imposing an order and/or punishing them. To support this idea, respondent C2 added, "Children do not have enough skills and experience in life. Therefore, parents should take these factors into consideration and support their children by explaining things that they do not understand. That is the only appropriate way to treat their children."

5.9 Summary

This chapter has focused on perceptions and understandings of child maltreatment based on the knowledge and experiences of social workers in child welfare organisations and academics in the filed of child welfare. The information gathered was based on semi-structured interviews, which generated a basic understanding of beliefs and understandings of child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdistan. Interviews with professional practitioners revealed severe physical punishment and neglect as the most common forms of maltreatment in Kurdish households. Discussion of gender issues offered evidence of social discrimination between boys and girls in the region, and a general sense of parents' perspectives on child maltreatment was also highlighted in the interviews. The following chapter discusses these findings in more detail in the context of theoretical considerations discussed in chapter 3.

Chapter Six: Discussion of Findings from Interviews with Child Welfare Professionals and Academics

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the key findings presented in the preceding chapter based on semi-structured interviews with 19 professional practitioners and acdemics in the field of child welfare..

6.2 Defining and Conceptualizing Child Maltreatment in the Kurdish Context

Despite their different organisational contexts, there was general agreement from both academics and social workers in Erbil City about the definition of child maltreatment: any type of physical, psychological, neglect and exploitation of children by parents or other people who have the capacity to do so.

Eight participants (A8, A10, A11, B1, B2, C2, C3 and C4) cited versions of this general definition, however, two (B2 and A5) also mentioned that child maltreatment included any form of sexual or social maltreatment. This idea included putting a child into a harmful social environment, such as child labour or being physically harmed by parents, relatives or other people as a form of discipline. Some of the participants said that child maltreatment includes any form of maltreatment: verbal, beating, swearing, insulting, teasing the child, etc. that may have negative physical and psychological impact on the children (A1, A4, A7, C1 and C5). One respondent (A12) believed that being over-protective or being easy with a child, such as allowing them to do something even if it is wrong, may also be thought of as forms of child maltreatment.

Three participants commented that child maltreatment may be an intentional or an unintentional harmful act against a child (A1, B2 and C3). Other respondents (A7 and B2) said that an intentional act means "deliberate hurt that can create possible harm" to children. Other forms of maltreatment may have no direct harmful intent, but can nevertheless be harmful in outcome. One respondent (A2) defined child maltreatment as "any act which undermines a child's sense of self-esteem, self-confidence or any other related physical development."

Overall, the definitions and understandings of child maltreatment raised by the interviewees focused primarily on physical and emotional violence and neglect, with a particular emphasis on how culture, education and awareness can affect concepts of child maltreatment. These definitions and understandings of child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region, particularly in Erbil City, reflect many elements of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition:

> "All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual maltreatment, neglect of children under 18 years of age resulting in actual or potential harm to children's health, survival, development and/or dignity in the context of relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Exposure to intimate partner violence is also sometimes included as a form of child maltreatment (WHO, 2002a, pp.60-61).

While there were slight variations in participants' ideas about child maltreatment it was clear that their knowledge, awareness and understanding of child maltreatment were influenced through international courses and training, seminars and field work. However, it was noticeable that there was an absence of any significant reference to sexual abuse of children by most of the interviewees in their conceptualization of child maltreatment in the Kurdish context. Only two participants in the current study mentioned this form of abuse.

Sexual abuse is a hidden but significant issue in Kurdistan since it involves family honour. The government, courts, police and social workers remain largely silent about the topic. In contrast, in the United Kingdom discussion of sexual maltreatment is quite public and widely discussed in the media. According to the UK Police, in their annual report (2012 - 2013), there were 18,887 cases of reported child sexual offences and 6,754 children known to be subject to physical maltreatment (CEOP, 2014). It is also a reflection on Kurdish society that we have yet to acknowledge the existence of child maltreatment in Kurdistan, and that physical and emotional punishment is a part of daily life, indeed part of the social fabric of child rearing in Kurdistan. In addition, there is no effective legislation in Kurdistan that protects children against violence and maltreatment, since the society considers severe physical punishment to be part of child discipline.

In terms of public awareness, Kurdistan is far behind some other countries. For instance, in the United Kingdom, there are many studies and much documentation about child maltreatment, and there are written laws that protect children against maltreatment and violence. Every child care institution in the UK is aware of child maltreatment and the need to safeguard children from harm. Of course, as anywhere, the system in the UK is far from perfect (Cawson *et al.*,

2000; Walker and Thurston, 2006). However, in Kurdistan there is no clear definition of child maltreatment and neither social workers, academic researchers nor educators have clear guiding principles. The definitions and understandings referred to in chapter 5 by the 19 professionals reflect their own personal understanding and views of the concept, which they learned from attending international conventions and conferences, training sessions and workshops with, international NGOs or national NGOs with funding from international donors. It seems clear that official guidance and clear definitions at a national level are urgently needed to encooourage the recognition of behaviours that are harmful to children.

6.3 Most Common Forms of Physical and Psychological Maltreatment used by Parents in Erbil City

Based on the 19 semi-structured interviews, professionals mentioned different types of severe punishments[3] in Kurdish families: beating, spanking, kicking, pinching ears and skin, pulling of hair, imprisonment in dark rooms/isolation, starvation, burning and circumcision as outlined in chapter 3, section 5.3. Interviewees believed that there is a high probability of parents in Kurdistan behaving violently towards their children and maltreating them in a range of physical and emotional ways..

From the interview findings, it is clear that the general lack of awareness among Kurdish families heightens the risk of child maltreatment in the country. As physical punishment is understood in terms of normative 'child discipline' in Kurdistan and is usually considered to be the correct way of bringing children up, it is highly likely that disciplinary practices that would meet the definitions of child maltreatment discussed above, including the WHO definition, are commonly seen as culturally acceptable practices, rather than abusive and harmful practices.

Participants believed that severe physical punishment is common in Kurdistan – beating and hitting children becomes a social norm and part of the child discipline process (A1, A5, A10, A11 and B1). Parents justify their abusive actions, claiming that by inflicting physical punishment, they stop their children from misbehaving and committing the same mistakes again. As quoted by one respondent, "When the child feels the pain, he/she will remember the

[3] I argue that any severe physical and emotional punishment such as beating, spanking, kicking, pinching, hair pulling, starvation, ear and skin twisting, bruising, burning a child's body with a hot spoon, circumcision, significant scaring and threatening a child constitutes maltreatment.

punishment and what he/she committed was wrong" (A1). Therefore, parents believe that hurting and inflicting pain on their children is the right way to correct their children's misbehaviour. Although abusive parents are theoretically subject to criminal laws, such laws are rarely applied in Kurdistan.

The majority of the 19 experts in child welfare argued that both mothers and fathers are capable of abusing their children (A2, A3, A4, A5, A7, A8, A12, B1, B2, C1, C2 and C5), although they believed that mothers have a higher tendency than fathers to hurt their children because mothers are usually at home and have more contact time with their children than fathers (A1, A3, A5, B1, B2 and C4). Participants also discussed cases where mothers encouraged fathers to physically punish their children. The social workers interviewed said that, from their experiences in practice, children are particularly at risk of harsh punishment by stepparents (A3, B2, C2 and C3). However, overall, about 80% to 85% of the cases coming to the attention of professionals in the Children's Sector were physically maltreated by both birth parents and non-birth parents as well as other care givers (C3).

Participants also highlighted the significance of gender and the extent to which child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region is gendered. Female genital mutilation is one example of a gendered cultural 'tradition' which is still practised and socially accepted in some regions. Shaming is also another form of gender-related emotional maltreatment used by some parents with harsh and restrictive cultural expectations placed on girls in order to maintain the 'honour' of their families.

It is also evident from the interview data that some children in Kurdistan experience multiple forms of maltreatment, often a mixture of physical and emotional abuse. It is particularly difficult to recognise and deal with emotional abuse since it is hidden and leaves no physical marks. Similarly, many children are at risk of neglect, including malnutrition, as a direct consequence of high levels of poverty. Participants were clear that all forms of aggression and maltreatment can be harmful to children's emotional and physical development.

Overall, the findings from experts working in the field in the Kurdish Region suggested that physical maltreatment has long been an integral part of Kurdish culture, education and upbringing of children. While there might have been some improvement in how parents treat their children in recent generations, experience of those working with families is that maltreatment and violence still exist in Kurdish families as deep seated in cultural practices

that form the worldviews of parents' and that there is a risk of further intergenerational transmission of practices and attitudes that are supportive of child maltreatment.

Child maltreatment is an ancient issue, not only in the Kurdistan Region but as a global problem. This study helps not only to document data supporting issues of child maltreatment issue, but also helps to spread awareness that there is indeed maltreatment in the Region, and the population - and the government - could do more to improve the lives of the children.

Summarising the findings of the interviews with professional practitioners and academics relating to the nature of maltreatment, participants believed:

<u>The nature of child maltreatment in the Kurdistan region</u>

1) Punishment is part of Kurdish society and culturally acceptable. Parents think it is the best way to teach children discipline and respect for adults.
2) Some parents consider that they have ownership of their children and can choose how to behave towards them without sanction or interference of the state.
3) Education plays a part in influencing parents' behaviour towards their children. Educated parents have less of a tendency to punish children.
4) Child maltreatment in Kurdistan is highly gendered. Mothers frequently punish their children since they are usually at home and have more contact time with children. However, higher intensity and more severe punishments are usually inflicted by fathers.
5) Kurdistan and other societies in the Middle East are patriarchial, where men, usually the fathers, are the most dominant figure in the family. Some fathers tend to abuse this power, and hurt wives and children, resulting in maltreatment and family violence.
6) War and political instability in Kurdistan and other Middle East countries have affected parents, making them psychologically vulnerable to physically and emotionally hurting their children.
7) External underlying factors such as unemployment, poverty and large families mean that many parents are unable to meet the basic needs of their children.
8) There is a serious lack of effective laws and systems for child protection in Kurdistan. Moreover, there is little if any intervention from the government in response to reports of child maltreatment in the region.

The nature of victimisation

1) Daughters are particularly vulnerable to emotional maltreatment since they have the most contact time with mothers at home. They are also required to observe proper modesty, especially as most Islamic families are conservative, and follow social norms, traditions and customs more closely than sons.
2) Younger children are most likely to be punished by parents, however the nature of punishment changes as the children grow older depending on the level of misbehaviour and circumstances.
3) Parents punish both sons and daughters physically and psychologically when they break house rules and misbehave.
4) Parents may use different forms of punishment, depending on their children's gender. Daughters might experience emotional maltreatment such as swearing, threatening, insulting etc. while sons are more exposed to physical punishment such as beating, slapping and kicking.
5) Kurdish and other Middle East societies follow a patriarchal system where men are dominant in the family. From an early age, daughters experience discrimination within the family since boys are preferred to girls. Some Kurdish parents give special attention to their sons and are more lenient with them compared to daughters, with whom they are stricter.Hence, it seems that daughters pay the price of gender inequality and discrimination.

6.4 Causes of Child Maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region

This section discusses the causes of child maltreatment as well as the types of punishments for boys and girls in the Kurdistan Region, particularly in Erbil City. Chapter 5 (section 5.5) has documented the views of the 19 professionals about the most common factors that contribute to child maltreatment and neglect in Erbil City. These factors included social environment and norms, high birth rate, the political situation in Iraq and Kurdistan, religion, family background and generation gap, financial status of the family and personal and psychological issues. Among a range of potential theoretical frameworks, this research has adopted social learning theory and ecological theory to frame a discussion of the different factors and circumstances associated with the punishment and maltreatment of children in Kurdish families to emerge from the empirical data collection with professionals and parents. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1971) proposes that new behaviours can be acquired by observing and imitating

others (Bandura, 1971) as well as interaction with others, while ecological theory holds that maltreatment and neglect are: *multiply determined by forces at work in the individual (ontogenic development), the family (the microsystem), the community (the exosystem), and the culture (the macrosystem) in which the individual and the family are embedded* (Belsky, 1980: 320). Interviews with professional practitioners and academics revealed a range of: i) political and economic factors as well as ii) social awareness, intergenerational difference and gender-related issues, and iii) culturally normative social and religious expectations and practices that have an impact of child maltreatment. These are summarised in the following subsections.

6.4.1 Political and economic factors.

Participants believed that political and economic factors played a crucial role in domestic violence and child punishment in Kurdistan. Wars almost always lead to a shaky economy, poverty and unemployment. Kurdish families and the region have been facing these problems continuously since 2014 due to a financial crisis and ongoing conflict conflict as described n Chapter 2. The impact of conflict and violence has led some families to abandon their children on the streets, sent them to child care facilities, or prevented them from attending school since they are financially incapable (Majeed, 2017; Kurdi, 2016; A.M., 2016).

6.4.2 Lack of awareness, intergenerational differences and gender-related issues:

Lack of awareness about good parenting practices emerged as a theme in discussions with professionals, especially regarding teenage children. Some parents are unable to understand their children's needs when they reach teenage years, which leads to frequent arguments within the family. Some highly ambitious parents push their unmotivated and unwilling children to achieve more and those parents who push their children to the limit sometimes physically hurt them, leading also to emotional trauma. The generation gap was seen as playing an important factor in child maltreatment in the region, one academic referring to his own experience as a child, when he was threatened by his parents. Aggression experienced during childhood can be passed from generation to generation an idea supported by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971), that argues that behaviours are usually acquired through social interactions and observations with other people. Children adapt to their environment and the family plays an important role in their social and personal development. If children are exposed to a violent environment and abusive parents during the early stages of developmental, it is probable that they will reproduce their parents' behaviours and engage in harmful behaviour when they become parents themselves. Parents were perceived to be more strict with their daughters

particularly about using makeup and wearing skimpy clothes since most Kurdish families are Muslim and conservative. The use of social media is also limited for daughters, for protection and safety.

6.4.3 Social norms and religion

Interview participants confirmed broad understandings of Kurdish families as teaching and training their children from an early age to follow social norms, culture and traditions such as respecting parents and older people. Children must learn discipline at an early age to avoid staining the family's reputation. If they misbehave, parents will punish them, so they do not commit the same mistakes again. Religion, as well as cultural and social norms, plays a key role in child maltreatment in Kurdistan. Most Kurdish parents in the region consider that birth rites, based on the Islamic Sharia (Qu'ran, Hadith as law) legalise the use of force against children. Children from an early age are forced to conform to social norms and religious traditions such as praying, fasting and wearing the *hijab* (veil). If children misbehave and do not follow these norms, they may well be beaten by their parents.

6.5 Physical, Psychological and Social Consequences of Child Maltreatment

Several consequences of child maltreatment greatly affect children's well-being and their entire development process. This section discusses the 19 professionals' responses regarding the physical, psychological and social consequences of child maltreatment in Kurdish families.

6.5.1 Physical consequences

The majority of the responses from the 19 professionals indicated that physical maltreatment leads to visible injuries and scars, impairment and even death as discussed in chapter 5. They argued that severe physical punishment has emotional as well as physical effects on children, both in the short or long-term. This is in line with Malinosky-Rummell and Hansen's (1993) research on the long term consequences of childhood physical maltreatment. This found that physical maltreatment would lead to aggression and violence, a non-violent criminal attitude, substance abuse, self-harm inflicting and suicidal tendencies, emotional and intra-personal problems as well as academic and vocational difficulties.

Respondents referred to their knowledge and understanding of the effects of physical abuse on children, especially those in the child care sector. The professionals discussed cases of child maltreatment within the child care sector that were the result of domestic violence, usually abusive fathers who severely hurt their children They referred to the experiences of maltreated children who displayed symptoms of short term trauma such as nightmares about being beaten and crying before bedtime. The case examples discussed by the professionals also mirror evidence generated from child maltreatment cases reported in the Kurdish mass media outlined in Chapter 3, in which children experienced severe physical maltreatment such as burns, bruises and even death, and from the Child Welfare Information Gateway that stores data on Long Term Physical Abuse on Children, US Children's Bureau (2013). A case example of the long term effects of physical maltreatment was referred to in Chapter 5 where a child who experienced severe beatings from his stepmother because of his bed wetting, later on developed a chronic disease, and his bed wetting becoming uncontrollable even during the daytime.

Such corporal punishments: beatings, kicking, burning and slapping are not considered maltreatment by Kurdish families, but rather a part of teaching discipline to children. The police rarely become involved when there are reports of maltreated children with severe physical injuries, or even a reported child death resulting from family maltreatment or domestic violence. Unless a child is hospitalised due to a severe beating, or admitted for an autopsy to determine the cause of death, the police do not intervene. Part of the explanation for this is that Kurdistan is tribal, where social values and norms prevail over the law. Influential families are often more powerful than the police or the courts. A mediation process sometimes occurs, but the chance of the abuser avoiding prison is high, and the children either stay at child care centres, or go back to their abusive families. This demonstrates the lack of awareness and the weakness of the laws within Kurdistan, which makes it difficult to protect abused children, and to bring perpetrators to justice.

6.5.2 Social and psychological consequences

The 19 child welfare professionals and academics provided extensive views about the social and psychological consequences of harsh child discipline and maltreatment. Interviews conveyed understandings that the psychological consequences of child maltreatment are usually hidden, compared to physical maltreatment that leaves visible marks and scars on children, a factor that made full understanding of the consequences more difficult for parents in Kurdistan. The short and long term effects of psychological maltreatment on children are

not generally considered important in Kurdish society and have rarely been discussed in academic studies. There is very little information in academic studies demonstrating the severity of psychological consequences on children, and the numbers affected, making public discussion difficult. However, the social workers and academics, highlighting some of the cases of maltreated children in their care, who had experienced psychological consequences, explained that emotionally maltreated children are usually aggressive and depressed, have low self- esteem and are traumatised. This supports previous research (Ryan *et al*., 2000; Perlman and Fantuzzo, 2010; Lansford and *et al.*, 2002; Sheppard, 2012; Gilbert *et al*., 2009), who all argue that early physical maltreatment leads to psychological and behavioural problems in teenage years, such as frequent absenteeism from school and mental health issues including aggression, anxiety and depression, isolation and dissociation, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and social problems. The psychological consequences of maltreatment can affect children's academic performance and achievement. Maltreated children show symptoms such as low performance at school and low self-esteem, or commit acts of aggression such as vandalism or breaking campus' rules and premises. Lack of communication between parents and school officials on how to treat children properly can lead to physical and emotional maltreatment, as children are forced to correct their misbehaviour. Based on the experience of the social worker respondents, children failing to attend school are usually beaten by their fathers to attend school.

Parental verbal abuse such as yelling and screaming due to a child's misbehaviour leads to low self-esteem . It makes children unable to accomplish things without help and they develop fear of doing any work. Moreover, they develop anxiety and stress whenever their parents shout or scream at them, making it hard for them to be open with their parents. Abusive parents treat their children as property, as though they have sole authority over them, and this justifies hurting them physically or emotionally. Some parents also isolate their children because they think that their involvement with other children would eventually harm them. Suicide is another result of psychological maltreatment in Kurdistan, as well as in other countries. There are cases where teenagers commit suicide due to misunderstandings with their parents or due to pressure from their environment (A5, C4 and C5). As mentioned in the previous chapter, some teenagers were thought to commit suicide because parents are unable to provide their requests for gadgets (mobile, laptop etc.). Moreover, some daughters commit suicide because of discrimination within the family, whereby sons are more favoured leaving girls feeling neglected by parents (see 5.7).

6.5.3 The costs of maltreatment

Physical punishment and maltreatment lead to extra hospital bills for families and the State. The family must have enough financial support to cover the costs of treatment needed for severe injuries or impairment of maltreated children, while The KRG is expected to provide sufficient financial support for two child care centres, other governmental institutions and NGOs in the country, although there are no available data to support the publication of budget allocations for child care and child protection services.. In contrast, other countries such as the United Kingdom, provide data on their annual budget allocation for child care and protection (Conti *et al.*, 2017). The KRG also has full responsibility, in theory, for abused children who, in the absence of a system of foster care, and when there are no adoptive families available in the region, are accommodated in child care centres until the age of 18. At the time of this study there were 76 boys and 95 registered at the child care services in Erbil city who had been maltreated and transferred to child care centres (Majeed, 2017).

6.6 Professionals' Views on Parental Understanding of Child Maltreatment in Kurdistan

Interview respondents were clear in their views that Kurdish parents tend to punish their children in the belief that punishment forms part of teaching discipline and proper upbringing. Some parents do not realise that severely punishing their children constitutes maltreatment, some claiming that they punish their children out of love. This suggests both that some Kurdish parents lack good parenting skills and treat punishment as an integral aspect of child rearing. Stereotypical cultural beliefs encourage Kurdish parents to exercise strict control over their children. In the absence of understanding or a clear definition of child maltreatment in Kurdish culture, punishment is socially acceptable and, notably, children are often fearful of their fathers.

Child maltreatment has yet to gain public acknowledgement as a problem in the Kurdish social context. It is not part of the public discourse, and lack of awareness of child maltreatment constitutes a very significant challenge to be overcome in addressing this social problem. Interviews revealed multi-dimensional factors including notions of discipline, control and fear of parents, that result in punishment being seen as the best way to teach discipline among children, and which are passed down from generation to generation. The result is that parents who experienced maltreatment in their childhood reproduce similar behaviours with their own

children. Behaviours constituting maltreatment include over protection, particularly of girls, and with motivation linked to the maintenance of family honour, it is hard for parents to perceive their protective behaviours as constituting a form of maltreatment. Most parents believe that punishment is not a form of maltreatment, but rather a corrective measure, necessary to prepare their children for social integration as they become older. The other principal concern related to the cultural belief of many parents that they have rights of ownership over their children and the right to choose and decide for them. One social worker at Save the Children stated, "We visited some families, and we told one father that the way they treated their children is wrong. The parent claimed that they have ownership over their children and punishing them is the best way to discipline them" (A3).

The overwhelming message from interviews with child welfare professionals and academics was that Kurdish cultural, social and religious contexts that inform social values, together with a lack of education and awareness, contribute to the continuation of child maltreatment in the region.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has discussed findings from interviews with child welfare professionals and academics. In particular it has contributed in addressing specific objectives of the study: to identify different types of physical and psychological punishment and maltreatment of children used by parents and/or caregivers and to investigate the causes of physical and psychological punishment and maltreatment used by parents and/or caregivers towards children. These objectives are further pursued in the following chapters that report and analyse the findings from the survey conducted with parents in six locations in Erbil City.

Chapter Seven:Findings from the survey on child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdish families

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data from the survey of parents in Erbil about child maltreatment in Kurdish families based on admininstered questionnaires with 320 participants living in 6 different locations in Erbil City.

The chapter is divided into ten sections that focus data gathered from questionnaires. Section 7.2 presents general information about the research sample. Section 7.3 deals with types of physical punishment. Section 7.4 focuses on information gathered concerning other forms of punishment while sections 7.5 and 7,6 discuss reasons given by parents for punishing their sons aand daughters respectively. Section 7.7 presents parents' thoughts about appropriate punishments while section 7.8 explores their understandings of the physical, psychological and social consequences of different kinds of punishments. Section 7.9 turns to parents' knowledge, views and beliefs about practices of child punishment in Kurdistan.

7.2 The Research Sample

In this section, general information about the research sample is described. For parents, demographic characteristics such as age, gender, educational level, occupational status and family income as well as the residence within the six neighbourhoods (areas of study) are discussed. For the children, age and gender are the focus.

7.2.1 Gender of parents

Table 7.1 below shows the gender of the 320 parent participants: 156 males (48.75%) and 164 females (51.25%). The intention was to select an equal number of mothers and fathers, in order to examine research questions on how gender impacts child punishment issues. The slight difference in numbers of mothers and fathers in the sample arose because mothers were both more willing to participate, and were more often at home compared to fathers who were more likely to be working.

Table7. 1 Gender of parents

Gender of parents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	156	48.75
Female	164	51.25
Total	320	100

7.2.2 Age of parents

The sample was selected purposively to include only parents aged 22 and above, and with children up to the age of eighteen years old. Within these parameters, the study focused on random sampling, resulting in an unequal distribution of participants in each age bracket. The higher proportions came from parents aged 27-31 and 37-41, 66 parents in each of those group, while the lowest number of participants was from the age group 62 and above, as shown below in Table 7.2.

Table7. 2 Age of parents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
22 - 26	33	10.3
27 – 31	66	20.6
32 – 36	58	18.1
37 – 41	66	20.6
42 – 46	43	13.4
47 – 51	23	7.2
52 – 56	12	3.8
57 – 61	11	3.4
62 +	8	2.5
Total	320	100

7.2.3 Educational level of participants

Table 7.3 shows the literacy rate of participants. This is an important consideration since the educational level of parents was identified as a factor influencing punishment and maltreatment of children by the experts interviewed, as discussed in Chapter 6.

The table shows 45.73% of the mothers (75) being illiterate compared with 12.17% of fathers. Furthermore, there is a major decrease in post graduate level education for both genders, only 12 participants (3.74% out of 320) having achieved a postgraduate degree.

Table7. 3 Educational attainment of parents

Educational Level	Gender				Total	
	Male	%*	Female	%*	Frequency	%*
Unable to Read and/or Write	19	12.17	75	45.73	94	29.37
Can Read and/or Write	26	16.66	25	15.24	51	15.93
Primary Certificate	29	18.58	27	16.46	56	17.5
Secondary Certificate	43	27.56	21	12.80	64	20
Diploma Degree	17	10.89	9	5.48	26	8.12
Bachelor's Degree	13	8.33	4	2.43	17	5.31
Master's Degree	4	2.56	1	0.60	5	1.56
Doctorate Degree	5	3.20	2	1.21	7	2.18
Total	156	99.95%*	164	99.95%	320	99.97%*

* *Percentages have been rounded*

7.2.4 Original and current residence

Participants were asked *"Where are you originally from?"* in order to determine whether their original environments or places of residence may have influenced parents' perspectives and beliefs especially concerning child punishment issues. Table 7.4 shows two choices provided on the survey, "From the Village" and "From the City". Just over half (180 of 320) of the parents originated from the city.

Table7. 4 Original residence of the research sample

Original residence	Frequency	Percentage
From the village	140	43.75
From the city	180	56.25
Total	320	100

Families included in the study came from six neighbourhoods across poor, middle class, and rich areas as shown in Table 4.1. Setaqan and Badawa are classed as poor areas, Mantikawa and Kuran as middle-class locations, and Havalan and Azadi are wealthy areas. Table 7.5 shows the distribution of participants across the six locations.

Table7. 5 Current residence

Neighbourhood	Status	Frequency	Percentage
Setaqan	Poor	53	16.56
Badawa	Poor	53	16.56
Mantikawa	Medium	54	16.88
Kuran	Medium	54	16.88
Azadi	Rich	53	16.56
Havalan	Rich	53	16.56
Total		320	100

7.2.5 Occupational status of participants

Occupational status was included to determine its potential relevance for beliefs about child punishment issues among households. As shown in Table 7.6, 45.3% (N=145) of the respondents were 'Home-Makers'. These were full-time parents who usually manage the household concerns. All but one were mothers. This reflects Kurdish culture and society, in which most women stay at home and are responsible for household concerns such as chores and taking care of the children, while men provide for the financial needs of the family.

The second largest occupational category was 'Self-Employed' (N=111, 34.7%), while 'Government employed' ranked third (N=54, 16.9%). The 'Unemployed' group (N=7, 2.2%) and 'Retired' (N=3, 0.9%) constituted very small minorities of parents.

Table7. 6 Occupational status

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Home-makers	145	45.3
Unemployed	7	2.2
Government employed	54	16.9
Self-Employed	111	34.7
Retired	3	0.9
Total	320	100

7.2.6 Family income

The researcher included household income as part of the general information about the research sample, as shown in Table 7.7. The purpose was to determine whether this factor has an impact on child abuse issues. Household income is sensitive information in Kurdish culture, and 76 respondents (23.8%) declined to answer. Perhaps they considered this information as delicate and did not wish others to know; and most women did not know or were afraid to give details of their husbands' income. These 76 respondents fall under the 'Do Not Know' group.

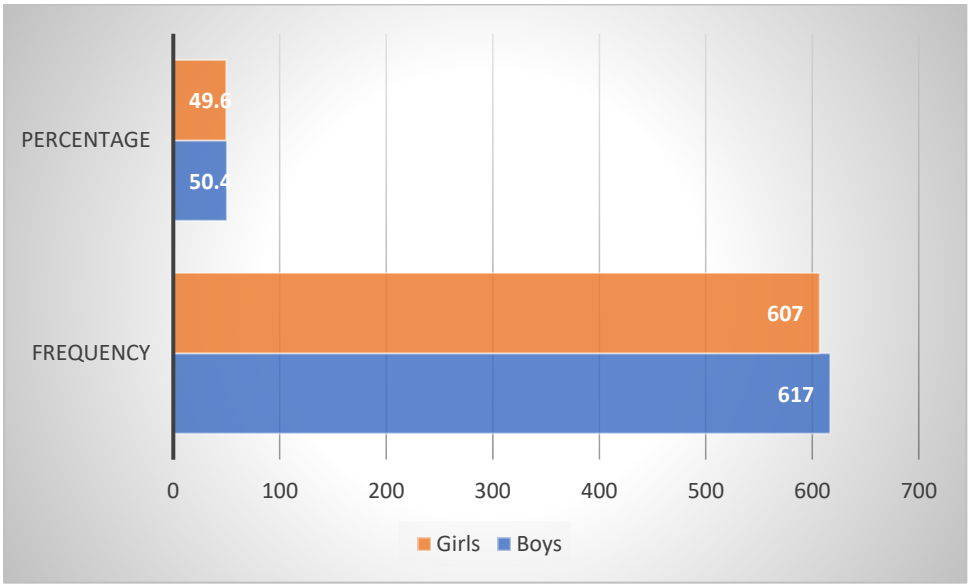
Table7. 7 Family income

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
1000 - 199,000 ID	5	1.6
200,000 - 400,000 ID	31	9.7
401,000 - 600,000 ID	33	10.3
601,000 - 800,000 ID	31	9.7
801,000 - 1,000,000 ID	54	16.9
More than 1,000,000 ID	90	28.1
Not Known or declined to answer	76	23.8
Total	320	100

7.2.7. Demographic characteristics of children

In this sub-section, information about children, provided by their parents, is presented. Parents were asked about the age and gender of all their children**.** Figure 7.1 below shows the distribution of of children covered in this study. The slight majority are boys. The average number of children per household is 4, while the probable number of sons and daughters in each family is 2. The number of children may not be a requirement in determining its correlation with the research questions, but can be helpful in thinking about how gender issues affect the physical and psychological punishment of children.

Figure 7.1 Number of children covered in the study



7.2.8 Age of children

Table 7.8 shows children's ages in six age groups between one and 18 years.

Table7. 8 Children's ages

Age	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 3	139	11.4
4 – 6	200	16.3
7 – 9	197	16.1
10 – 12	244	19.9
13 – 15	221	18.1
16 - 18	223	18.2
Total	1224	100

7.3 Physical Punishment During the Last Five Years

In this section, all survey questions relating to physical punishments by parents of their children in the last five years are addressed. The tables show variables including age, gender, and types of punishment that are related to child maltreatment issues. The four questions are detailed below:

Q1. Have your children experienced any physical punishment from you as parents during the last five years?

The total corresponding number of children was 1224, and 89.4% (1094 children) were reported as having been subject to physical punishment by their parents during the last five years. Based on the parents' responses to the survey, we can say that the majority of children faced physical punishment as a form of discipline. The remaining 130 children (10.6%) were reported as not having experienced any forms of physical punishment.

Table7. 9 Number of children who experienced physical punishment from 320 parents

Parents' response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1094	89.4
No	130	10.6
Total	1224	100

Q2. Which parent has used physical punishment on your children during the last five years?

Table7. 10 Parents' gender and use of physical punishment during the last five years

Parent	Yes	No	Total
Father	146 (45.62%)	10 (3.13%)	156 (48.75%)
Mother	150 (46.87%)	14 (4.38%)	164 (51.25%)
Total	296 (92.49%)	24 (7.51%)	**320 (100.0%)**

Table 7.10 shows that the majority of parents of both genders used physical punishment (296 participants, 92.49%) on their children over the last five years. The proportion of mothers and fathers who use physical punishment against their children is almost equal.

Q3. From what age group below do you think your children have been exposed to punishment from you as parents over the last five years?

The researcher used three-year intervals for each age group, as shown in Table 7.11. All age groups were reported by parents as having experienced punishment from their parents. The least punished was the youngest age group (1 – 3) in which 94 of 1094 children (8.59%), had experienced punishment. The incidence of punishment increased up to the age of twelve, with children in the age bracket 10 – 12 most likely (95%) to have experienced punishment. However, as the children reached the 'teenage years', from age 13 – 15 and 16 – 18, the incidence of punishment decreased. Overall, 1094 children (89%) experienced physical and/or psychological punishment from their parents (based on the response of the 320 respondents) during the past five years, while the remaining 130 children (11%) had not.

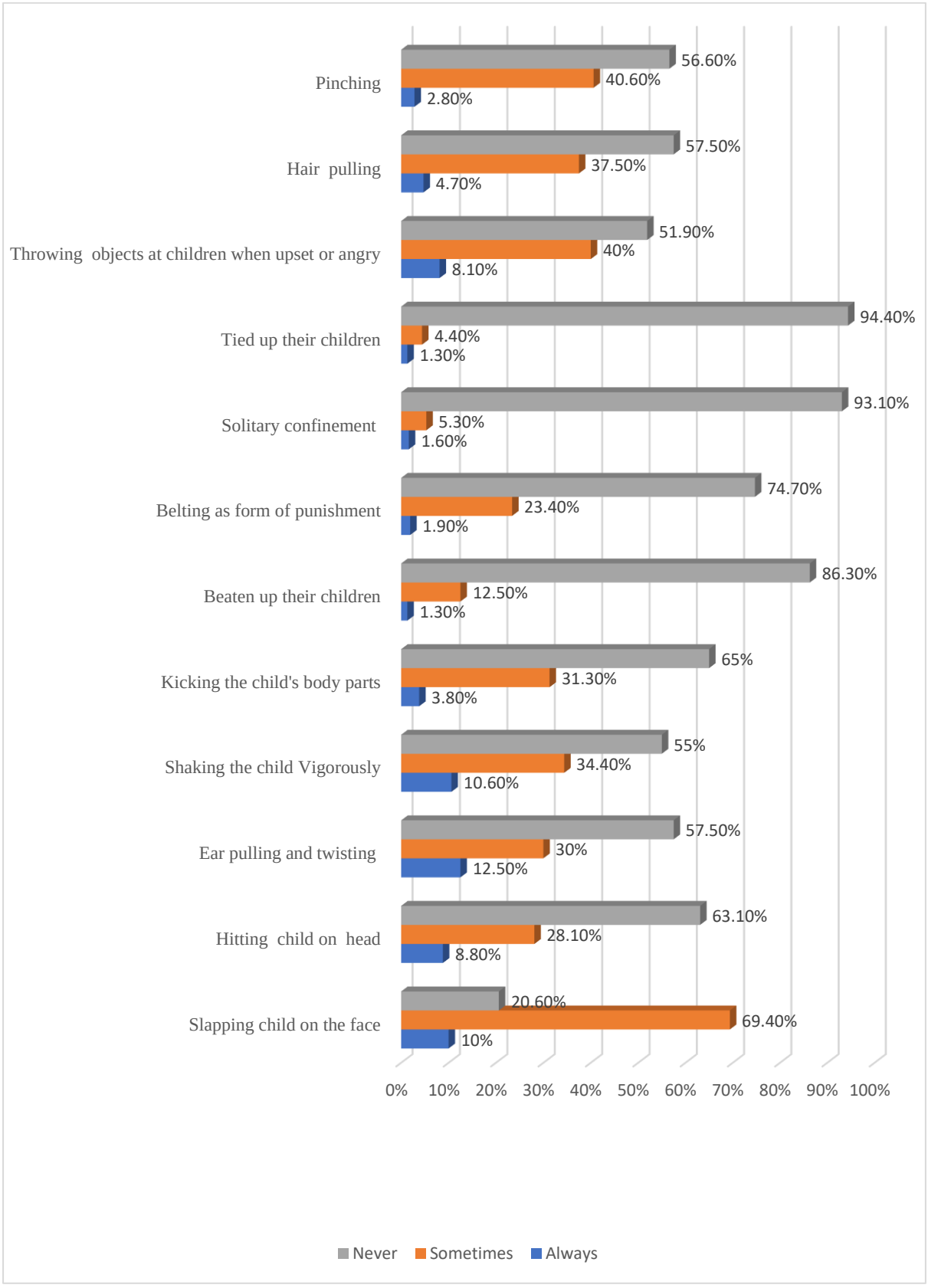
Table7. 11 Children's ages and exposure to punishment by parents during the last five years

Age Group	Yes	%	No	%
1 – 3	94	68%	45	32%
4 – 6	188	94%	12	6%
7 – 9	186	94%	11	6%
10 – 12	232	95%	12	5%
13 – 15	201	91%	20	9%
16 - 18	193	87%	30	13%
Total	1094	89%	130	11%

Q4. As a parent, have you used any of the following types of physical punishment towards your children during the last five years?

In the questionnaire, 320 Kurdish parents were asked about the use and occurrence of different forms of physical punishment on their children during the last five years. The choices provided for each form of punishments were ‘Always’, ‘Sometimes’ and ‘Never’. Figure 7.2 shows parents’ responses to each question.

Figure 7. 2 Parents' reported use of types of physical punishment towards their children during the last five years



As can be seen in Figure 7.2, a majority of the parents (79.40%) used slapping a child's face as a form of punishment. 37% of parents admitted hitting their child on the head as a form of punishment. 45% of the participants said that they shook their children vigorously and, similarly, 35% of parents admitted to kicking their children. Approaching half of parents (45%) had pulled children's hair to discipline them.

In terms of the use of implements to physically punish their children, a quarter of parents said they had used a belt to displine their children and nearly a half of all parents had thrown objects at their children when angry or upset with them.

On the other hand, only 7% of Kurdish parents admitted punishing their children by confining them to a dark room or bathroom as a result of their misbehaviour and only a small minority had tied up their children to teach them how to behave (6%).

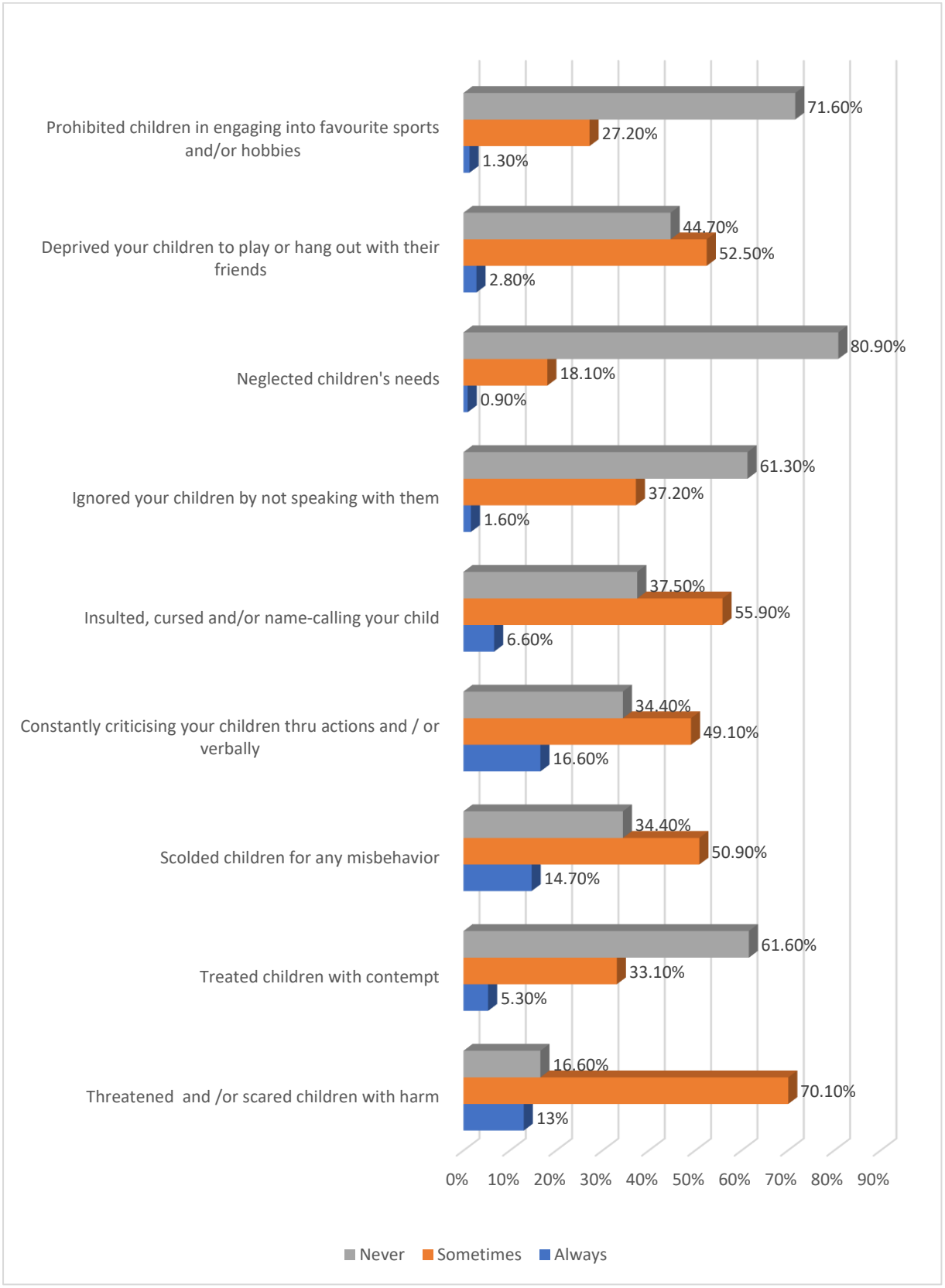
7.4 Other Forms of Punishment

Whilst the above section has focused on types of physical punishment used by parents, other forms of punishment may indicate neglect and emotional abuse and may produce negative long-term effects on children. In the survey questionnaire, parents were asked whether they had used a range of non-physical methods of punishment to deal with their child's misconduct, as shown in Figure 7.3 below.

Of the alternative forms of punishment covered in the survey, threatening children with harm and/or scaring them was the most common and practised by the overwhelming majority (83%) of parents. This was followed by the use of constant criticism (66%), scolding (66%), insulting, cursing or name calling (63%), depriving of opportunities to play or spend time with friends (55%), treating children with contempt (38%), forbidding participation in favourite sports or other pastimes (29%). Neglecting their children's needs was the least likely form of alternative punishment (19%).

The overwhelming majority of the sample of 320 parents admitted using multiple verbal forms of emotional control and punishment to attempt to control their children's misbehaviour. Such approaches run the risk of emotional harm and low self-esteem in the long run. Constant criticism is, for example, a well-established indicator of emotional abuse of children, as is treating children with contempt, calling them inferior and worthless.

Figure7. 3 Other forms of punishment

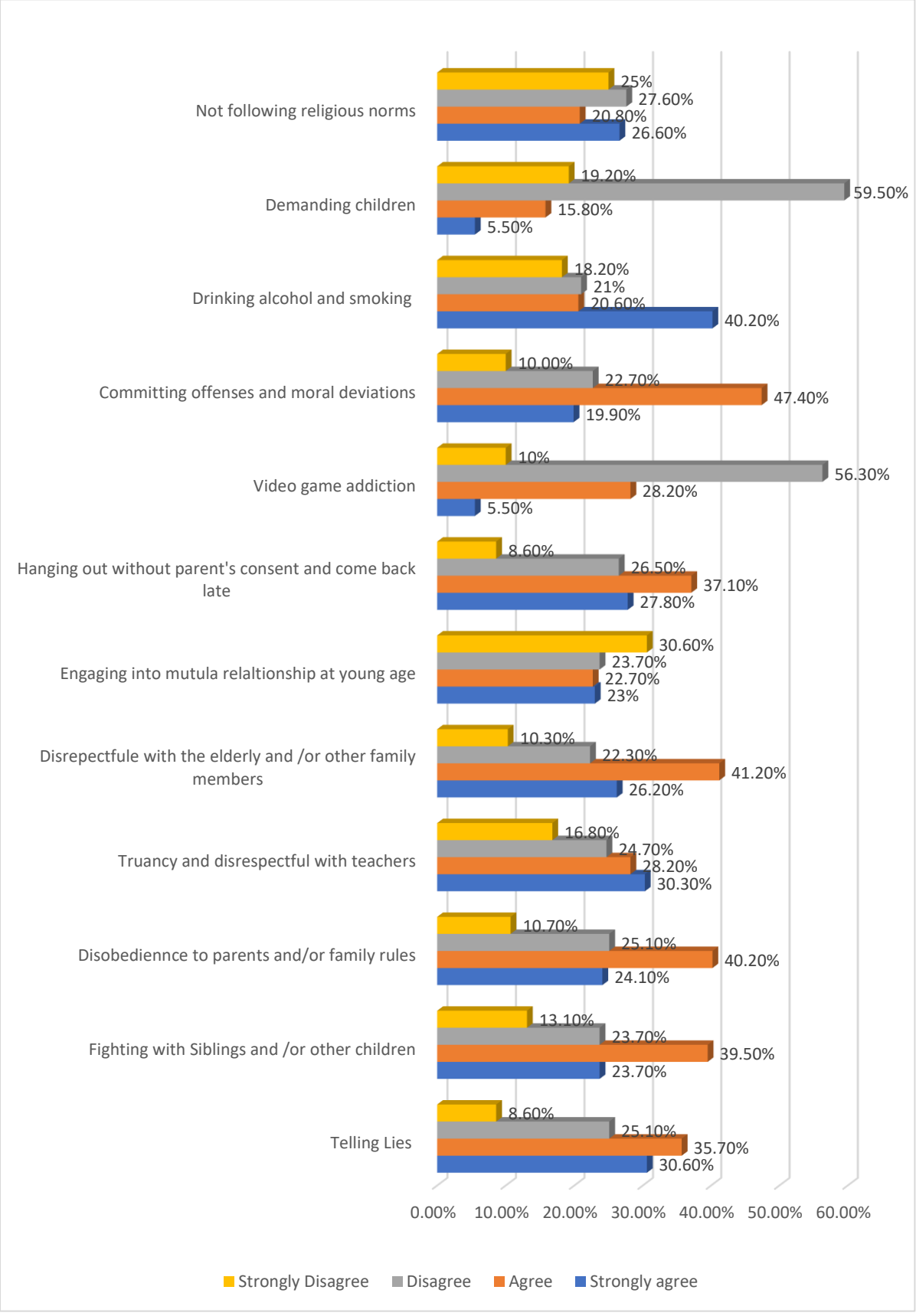


7.5 Reasons Why Parents Punish their Sons

As discussed earlier in the thesis, there are some suggestions that punishment of children in Kurdistan and elsewhere may differ according to the gender of the child. As a result, the survey questionnaire included statements relating to different reasons commonly understood to inform Kurdish parents' punishment of their children, differentiating sons and daughters. Each question had four options to select: *Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree* indicating the respondent's level of agreement for the acceptability of these reasons for punishment. There were 291 useful responses in this section of the questionnaire, 29 parents not being able to answer this section because they did not have sons in their families[4]. Figure 7.4 summarises the responses given by parents about their punishment of sons.

[4] Out of 320 respondents, 29 parents did not have sons in their households. The percentages were calculated by dividing the frequencies in each category with the actual number of applicable respondents and multiplied by 100. For example: (89 respondents/291 actual number of respondents)*100. This is possible with the use of the SPSS programme and applicable to all tables included in this section.

Figure 7. 4 Reasons why parents punish their sons



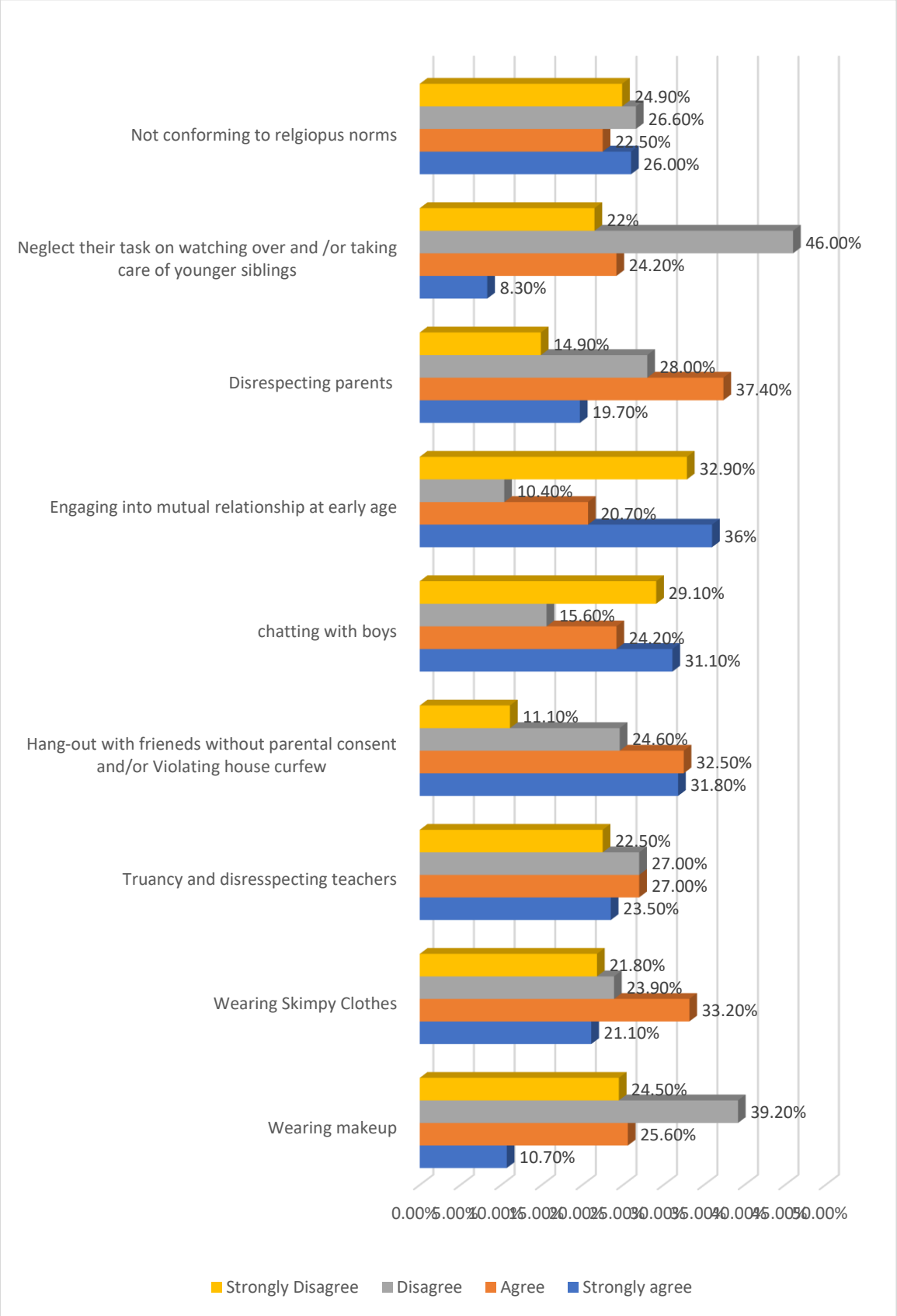
Combining the strongly agree and agree categories, the behaviour most commonly cited as a reason for the punishment of sons was disrespecting elders or family members (67.4%), followed closely by committing offences or moral deviations (67.3%), telling lies (66.3%), hanging out without parents' permission and returning late (64.9%), fighting with siblings (63.2%), drinking alcohol and smoking (60.7%), and truancy and disrespecting teachers (58.5%). Over half the respondents with sons felt it was appropriate to punish their sons on these grounds. Just under a half of respondents agreed that punishment of sons would be appropriate because they did not follow religious norms (47.4%), because they engaged in sexual relations (45.7%), with a third supporting punishment of sons on the basis of addiction to video games (33.7%) and a fifth because of their sons' demanding behaviour (21.3%).

7.6 Reasons Why Parents Punish Their Daughters

This section focuses on parents' punishment of their daughters. There were 289 useful responses in this section corresponding to the number of parents with daughters in their households[5]. Figure 7.5 summarises the data relating to the strength of parents' agreement in relation to punishing their daughters. It should be noted that some of the survey questions in this section were gender specific, drawing on the experiences of the 19 professionals interviewed and findings from the literature review.

[5] Out of 320 respondents, 31 parents did not have daughters in their families. The percentages were calculated by dividing the frequencies in each category based on the actual number of applicable respondents and multiplied by 100. For example: (31 respondents/289 actual number of participants) *100= 10.70. This was possible with the use of the SPSS programme and applicable to all tables included in this section.

Figure 7. 5 Reasons why parents punish their daughters



As there were some differences in questions asked about attitudes towards the punishment of daughters (for example about wearing make-up, failing to care for younger siblings and chatting with boys), direct comparison cannot be made with the responses to all questions relating to the reasons for punishing sons. However, there are some useful points of interest that emerge. Conflating strongly agree and agree responses, the behaviour most likely to be supported as a punishment of daughters was hanging out without parents' consent and ignoring curfews (64.3%). This is remarkably similar to the 64.9% rate of agreement relating to punishment for sons, though this was the fourth most likely motive for punishing sons. Disrespecting parents, bearing similarity to disrespecting elders and family members for sons, attracted the second highest rate of agreement as a motive to punish daughteers (57.1%). In contrast this was the behaviour most likely to be supported as a punishment for sons (67.4%). Engaging in mutual relations at a young age followed closely as a basis for punishment of daughters (56.7% compared with 45.7% for sons). Chatting with boys was also a basis for punishing daughters for over half the parents (55.3%) as was wearing skimpy clothing (54.3%). Truancy and disrespecting teachers also led to punishment of daughters for just over half of parents (50.5%) while not conforming to religious norms was the basis for punishment of daughters for just under half the parents (48.5%, very similar to the 47.4% of parents who felt this was a reason to punish their sons). Daughters wearing make-up was considered punishable by just over a third of parents (36.3%) while neglecting to care for younger siblings was considered punishable by just under a third of parents (32.5%).

7.7 Methods of Discipline and Punishment

This section addresses parents' beliefs about discipline and punishment. The 320 parents were asked, "**What do you think as a parent are the appropriate approaches or methods to discipline children (both boys and girls)?**" in order to understand their views on how to deal appropriately with the misbehaviour of their sons and their daughters. A combination of data is used in this section to identify gender differences regarding punishments used by the parents. Of 320 total respondents, 289 parents of daughters answered the survey, as did 291 parents of

sons.[6] Each statement had four response options: Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Table 7.12 shows levels of agreement and disagreement with the use of different strategies for responding to children's misbehaviour.

Table7. 12 Parental responses to children's misbehaviour

Parent's responses	Sons				Daughters			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Strict Observance by Parents' and other Family Members'	18.90%	43.60%	28.20%	9.30%	19%	43.60%	26%	11.40%
N	55	127	82	27	55	126	75	33
Grounding	3.80%	12.40%	56%	27.80%	6.90%	15.60%	50.20%	27.30%
N	11	36	163	81	20	45	145	79
Cyber Restriction	8.20%	17.20%	46%	28.50%	12.50%	23.90%	38.80%	24.90%
N	24	50	134	83	36	69	112	72
Threatening their Children	12.40%	48.60%	18.90%	19.90%	14.90%	47.10%	18%	20.10%
N	36	142	55	55	43	136	52	55
Banned to Attend School	2.40%	4.50%	47.80%	45.40%	8%	15.20%	37%	39.80%
N	7	13	139	134	23	44	107	115
Child marriage for family's honour	14.80%	12.40%	45.70%	27.10%	13.10%	15.20%	41.50%	30.10%
N	43	36	133	79	38	44	120	87
Advising their children	38.80%	57.40%	1%	2.70%	39.80%	51.90%	3.50%	4.80%
N	113	167	3	8	115	150	10	14
Seek an advice from relatives	20.30%	32%	26.50%	21.30%	18.70%	29.40%	23.90%	28%
N	59	93	77	62	54	85	69	81
Seek help from children's teachers	26.50%	47.80%	10.30%	15.50%	23.90%	45%	11.80%	19.40%
N	77	139	30	45	69	130	34	56
Total	291				289			

N is the number of participants who replied to the question

[6] Of 320 total respondents, there are discrepancies in the number of responses depending on the survey related questions: **289 parents** with families who have **daughters** are applicable to answer (31 individuals missing in the system), and **291 parents** with families who have **sons** (28 individuals missing in the system).

As seen in Table 7.12, the most common punishments or responses to children's misbehaviour was 'advising' suggesting an appeal to children's understanding of their parents' objections to particular behaviours. 96.2% of parents either agreed or strongly agreed with this form of response for their sons' misbehaviour while 91.7% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with this approach to their daughters' misbehaviour. The second most popular response for sons (74.3%) and daughters (78.9%) was to seek help from teachers. This was followed by strict observance of the child (sons 62.5%, daughters 62.6%) and threatening (sons 61%, daughters 62%). Advice from relatives was favoured by 52.3% of parents of boys and 48.1% of parents of girls. Other responses, attracting agreement or strong agreement from less than half the parents were: restricting access to cyber media (sons 25.4%, daughters 36.4%), insistence on child marriage to maintain family honour (27.2% for sons and 28.3% for daughters, banning from school (6.9% for boys and a notably higher 23.2% for daughters), and grounding (16.4% for sons and 22.5% for daughters) the least likely responses.

7.8 Parental Understanding of the Consequences of Child Punishment

The 320 respondents were asked, ***"Are you as a parent, aware of the possible negative effects of punishments on your children affecting their physical, social and emotional wellbeing?"*** This section of the survey was divided into three parts: Physical, Social and Emotional Consequences, each part detailing particular situations, and respondents asked to indicate their awareness or lack of awareness by answering "Yes" or "No". The responses show the level of parents' awareness about the possible negative consequences of different punishments.

7.8.1 Physical consequences

All children misbehave and parents face the challenge of teaching them proper discipline. But child discipline is easily linked with punishment, leading to parental attitudes that physical punishment teaches discipline and corrects and/or prevents bad habits (Krug *et al.*, 2002; Holzer and Lamont, 2010). Table 7.13 shows two distinct consequences of physical punishment and parents' responses indicating their level of awareness of the physical consequences of physical punishment.

A majority of parents (72.5%), indicated that they were not aware that physically hitting their children could result in temporary visible marks on their bodies. Similarly, a surprisingly high

percentage of parents (94.1%) reported being unaware that harsh physical punishment could possibly cause disabilities or even death.

Table 7. 13 Parents' awareness of the consequences of physical punishment

Consequence	N	Aware Frequency		Not aware Frequency	
Visible Physical Injuries	320	88	27.50%	232	72.50%
Disabilities and/or Child Death	320	19	5.90%	301	94.10%

** N is the number of participants*

7.8.2 Social consequences

The consequences of child maltreatment can be devastating and long–term, affecting not only the physical and emotional development of children, but also their social wellbeing (Lazenbatt, 2010; Ross, 1996). Lack of social interaction, poor peer-to-peer relations and distinctly disturbing behaviour are some of the visible social consequences that abused children may show. Inflicting punishment on children that provokes fear and distrust of others, especially adults, may lead children to limit their social interactions. Table 7.14 shows parents' awareness of the social consequences of punishing children.

Table 7. 14 Parents' awareness of the social consequences of punishing children

Social Consequence	N	Aware Frequency	%	Not aware Frequency	%
Isolation	320	141	44.10%	179	55.90%
Hatred towards parents	320	144	45%	176	55.00%
Poor social skills	320	133	41.60%	178	58.40%
Child discipline misconception	320	157	49.10%	163	50.90%
Lying to avoid punishments	320	208	65.00%	112	35.00%
Runaway children	320	128	40%	192	60%
Strict parenting	320	167	52.20%	153	47.80%
Suicidal behaviour	320	44	13.80%	276	86.30%

** N is the number of participants in this research.*

Table 7.14 shows parents' mixed levels of awareness across most of the social consequences of punishment included in the survey questionnaire. The highest level of awareness (65%) related to the likelihood that children will learn to lie in order to avoid punishments. This was followed by awareness of the development of strict parenting (52.5%), the growth of misconceptions among children about the notion of discipline (49.1%), hatred of parents (45%), isolation of the child (44.1%), poor social skills (41.6%), running away (40%), and suicidal behaviour (13.8%).

7.8.3 Psychological consequences

The psychological or emotional effects of abuse are often difficult to detect, and are thus often overlooked (McCormick, 1999). Punishment can attack children's self–identity and self-confidence, so they see themselves as unworthy of love and affection. The emotional consequences of child maltreatment, although often invisible to the eye, and hard to recognise or quantify, can be just as significant as physical wounds(Fergusson and Lynskey, 1997; Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005; Norman *et al.*, 2012). Table 7.15 below shows some instances of psychological consequences of punishing children: low self esteem, anxiety and extreme stress, and aggressive and violentbehaviour, together with parents' awareness of these

potential consequences. There was little difference in levels of awareness between these three potential consequences of punishing children, just over half of parents being aware of all three consequences: low self esteem (54.1%), anxiety/extreme stress (53%) and aggressive and violentbehaviour (51.6%)

Table 7. 15 Parents' awareness of the psychological consequences of punishing children

Psychological consequence	N	Aware Frequency	%	Unaware Frequency	%
Low self-esteem	320	173	54.10%	147	45.90%
Anxiety and extreme stress	320	169	53%	151	47.20%
Aggression and other Violent behaviour	320	165	51.60%	155	48.40%

** The participants' responses showing the parents' awareness of the psychological consequences on children as a result of punishment*

7.9 Parental Beliefs and Perspectives on Punishment and Discipline

The family represents the primary environment in which children develop their well–being. It is also considered the initial context for the process of socialisation, a process that depends on parenting behaviour and discipline in every household. Within the family context children develop their sense of social standards and expectations which help them to learn regulatory skills and responsibilities(Stewart, 1999; Coulton *et al*., 1995). Therefore, in this crucial stage of child development, it is important that parents develop parenting skills that avoid harming children.

Child discipline has long been confused with punishment because of its main purpose: to reduce and/or prevent children from misbehaving. Discipline means making children realise why their actions are inadvisable, as well as explaining why rules exist and what is socially acceptable, whereas punishments are given as sanctions or penalties as a result of misconduct. Discipline teaches children how their bad actions affect other people, while punishment such

as hitting can be considered an immediate response by parents to address their children's misbehaviour (Milner and Chilamukurti, 1991; Hunter *et al.*, 2000; Ateah and Durrant, 2005).

In the survey parents were asked about their perspectives and beliefs concerning methods of child discipline and punishment identified in the preliminary stages of this research. Specifically the 320 respondents were asked, ***"As a parent, how much do you agree or disagree with the following beliefs about child punishment?"*** and invited to: Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree. Table 7.16 shows parents' level of agreement with these common Kurdish perspectives and beliefs.

Table 7. 16 Parents' perspectives and beliefs about discipline and punishment of children

Parental Beliefs	Streongly agree Frequency	percentage	Agree Frequency	percentage	Disagree Frequency	percentage	Strongly disagree Frequency	percentage
Parents often punish the older child more than the younger ones because the younger one is usually their favourite (Favouritism)	39	12.20	88	27.50	130	40.60	63	19.70
Parents learn how to punish children from their own families, and this phenomenon transfers from one generation to the next (Inheritance)	55	17.20	124	38.80	89	27.8	52	16.3
Parents have the right to behave towards their children in whatever way they like; no one should question their decisions (Ownership)	64	20.00	123	38.40	102	31.9	31	9.7
Relatives have the right to discipline the children or to set obligations for them (Extended family members exert influence on child discipline and punishment)	36	11.30	86	26.90	141	44.10	57	17.80
If children are not afraid of their parents, they will not learn how to respect other people in society (Mentality about respect)	36	11.30	86	26.90	141	44.10	57	17.80
Parents are free to punish their children if they don't follow religious and social traditions (Punishment for Not Conforming to Religious and Social Norms)	112	35	156	48.80	29	9.10	23	7.20
Child punishment is not maltreatment because parents always wish the best for their children (Punishment is Not Maltreatment)	89	28	125	39	82	25.60	24	7.50
I have never regretted punishing my children (Being Regretful about Punishment on Children)	64	20	48	15	140	43.80	68	21.30
Despite punishing my children, I still love them (Punishment out of Love Mentality)	94	29.40	192	60	12	3.80	22	6.90
Parents should not punish the child physically, but show disapproval of their misbehaviour in other ways	94	29.4	161	50.3	52	16.3	13	4.1

Combining categories of agree and strongly agree, the most commonly held belief (by 89.4% of parents) was that punishment is a way of demonstrating love for children. The second most commonly held belief related to the importance of punishing failure to conform to religious and social norms, something that 83.8% of parents felt was unacceptable. The third most commonly held belief offered a distinct contrast in that 79.7% of parents agreed with the notion that parenting skills can be reshaped to adopt non-harmful approaches to discipline in order to avoid physical and emotional damage which can be long term. These parents used methods such as rewards systems associated with privileges for good behaviour. However, 67% of parents claimed to believe that punishment does not equate to maltreatment, and 58.4% of parents believed that they held sole responsibility for, and even ownership of, their children and no one outside the family should interfere with how they bring up their children. 56% of parents agreed with the view that they inherited their views, and practices of punishment, from their parents and previous generations. Four further perspectives and beliefs were supported by less than half of parents. The idea that favouritism by parents among siblings, particularly favouring younger siblings, which is understood to be emotionally damaging (Davies and Ward, 2012) gained agreement of only two fifths of parents. Just over a third of parents (38.2%) believed that extended family members should no longer exert strong influence or interfere in private family matters. Similarly 38.2% of parents identified with the principle that children must learn the value of respect towards parents and other people. These rather mixed responses, suggesting some enlightened views about the value of identifying less punishing forms of discipline, were interestingly rounded off by only 35% of parents saying they regretted punishing their children.

7.10 Summary

This chapter has focused on the findings of a survey of 320 parents residing in six diverse neighbourhoods of Erbil City. The aim of this chapter has been to:

- Provide valid and reliable evidence of the existence of child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- Identify the factors leading to physical and psychological punishment and maltreatment used by parents towards children.

- Identify factors such as age, gender, educational attainment of parents as well as the economic stability of families that are associated with child punishment within the family in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- Explain parental understanding of the consequences of punishment and child maltreatment

The survey findings are presented based on parents' responses that indicate their attitudes and beliefs, and their actual behaviours, related to use of physical punislunent in the last five years. The following chapter explores the meaning and implications of these findings, addressing in turn the twelve hypotheses formulated in chapter three.

Chapter Eight: Discussion of Findings from the Survey of Parents' Beliefs and Behaviours Related to Child Punishment and Maltreatment.

8.1 Introduction

Chapter Eight discusses the findings relating to child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdish Families based on the responses of the 320 parents in the survey. This discussion interprets the findings, informed by evidence and argument in the literature, by personal experience of family upbringing within Kurdish culture, and by extensive experience of work in organisations promoting child and family welfare in Kurdistan. This has given me particular insights into i) the patriarchal nature of Kurdish society and the ways in which this influences the treatment of children by adults with different attitudes towards, and expectations of, boys and girls and ii) broader global attitudes to questions of child discipline, punishment and maltreatment, iii) the differences between discipline and punishment, and their effects of on children. In Chapter Three, twelve specific hypotheses were formulated for the purpose of this research study. These hypotheses will be reviewed in this chapter against the findings presented in the previous chapter.

The chapter is divided into sections that discuss the prevalence of physical punishment in Kurdish families, using variables from the general information of the research sample (8.2); analyse the different types of physical punishment (8.3) and other forms of punishment (8.4) used by Kurdish parents. Section 8.5 explores the reasons why parents punish their children, while section 8.6 develops a deeper understanding of the connections between punishment and child discipline. Section 8.7 discusses the consequences of punishment for children, and section 8.8 explores parents' perspectives and beliefs about punishment and discipline in greater depth.

8.2 The Prevalence of Physical Punishment in Kurdish Families

Perspectives on physical punishment differ in the Kurdish cultural context compared to some other societies. Kurdish parents see their use of physical and emotional punishment as a means of child discipline, whereas in many Western societies, the behaviours used by Kurdish parents would be socially unacceptable and could be above the threshold for child protection interventions. Moreover, Kurdish families believe that inflicting punishment on children due

to misbehaviour teaches them proper manners, such as respect for parents, and guides them to follow social norms. Based on the survey of 320 parents it is clear that physical and other forms of punishment are not associated with maltreatment. Rather, these forms of punishment represent correct ways of bringing up children, ways that have been practised from generation to generation. While there are different conceptualisations of punishment, neglect and abuse globally, the World Health Organisation Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention drafted the following definition in 1999:

> "Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power." (WHO, 1999, p.15).

This definition is clearly applicable to some of the behaviours reported by parents in the survey as means of punishing their children.

The first objective of this research was to assess the prevalence of physical punishment of children in the Kurdistan Region, particularly in Erbil City. For that reason, the survey was conducted with 320 Kurdish parents across six neighbourhoods representing economically diverse areas of Erbil City. The findings of the survey reveal a high level of child punishment in Erbil City with parents' responses suggesting that 89.4% of children were subject to physical forms of punishment and 83% of parents referring to non physical forms ofpunishment ranging from constant criticism, used by two thirds of parents, to neglecting children's needs, referred to by almost a fifth of parents. These behaviours, by the standards of international definitions, constitute physical and emotional ill-treatment.

Five specific hypotheses were constructed to develop a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to the prevalence of child punishment within Kurdish families. These hypotheses related to gender, age, and educational background of parents as well as economic and occupational status.

8.2.1 Gender of parents and child punishment

The first hypothesis stated that *both parents inflict punishment on their children, but fathers are more likely to maltreat than mothers*. However, the survey revealed very similar rates with 45.62% of fathers engaging in punishing behaviours, compared to 46.87% of mothers (see Table 7.10). This clearly suggests that both fathers and mothers punish their children as a means of discipline. Kurdish society is highly patriarchal, where fathers 'rule' the household, but the results show that mothers are just as likely as fathers to punish their children. A range of reasons may account for this. Kurdish mothers take undertake the bulk of childcare activities and are responsible for their households when fathers are away from the household while at work.

Perhaps more interesting is that the findings showed that only 3.13% of fathers and 4.38% of mothers claimed that they have not used punishment against their children over the last five years. The fact that a majority of parents (92.49%) punished their children supports the first hypothesis in that that both parents inflict punishment on their children, though does not support the hypothesis that fathers are more likely to maltreat their children than mothers.

The high frequency of punishing children exceeds Alanazi's (2008) findingsthat 83.3% of Saudi Arabian parents punished their children, and are significantly higher than other international studies related to child punishment and maltreatment, ranging from 15% to 70% (WHO, 2006, Cawson *et al*., 2000, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014).

8.2.2 Educational background of parents and child punishment

The second hypothesis was that *the lack of educational attainment of parents relates to the physical and psychological punishment of children in the Kurdistan Region*. Among the 320 respondents, 29.4% considered themselves illiterate and only 16% of the parents could read and write, and (see Table 7.3). The correlation between parents' educational attainment and the use of physical punishment (the lower the level of educational attainment the higher the likelihood of child punishment) in Kurdish households was significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed). The study's findings therefore support the second hypothesis (see Table 8.1). This study therefore supports the findings of previous studies which claim that a low educational level of parents is an important risk factor concerning the level of punishment that children receive (Norman *et al.,* 2012).

It is important to note, however, that there were some cases in the current study where parents educated to Master's Degree or Doctorate level engaged in child punishment. The issue of child punishment in the Kurdistan Region is therefore a complex interplay between cultural and social and educational factors, in a society where culture and traditions almost entirely define the upbringing of children, regardless of the educational attainment of the parents.

Table 8. 1 Correlation between parents' educational background and physical punishment used during the last five years

			educational level	physical punishment during the last five years	Gender
Spearman's rho	current education	Correlation Coefficient	1	0.066	-.382**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.24	0
		N	320	320	320
	physical punishment during the last five years	Correlation Coefficient	0.066	1	-0.072
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.24		0.201
		N	320	320	320
	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	-.382**	-0.072	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.201	
		N	320	320	320

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

8.2.3 Economic status of the family and child punishment

The third hypothesis states: *there is a correlation between child punishment and the family's economic stability or parents' occupational status*. As parents have responsibility for their children's needs, education, health, safety and security, a lack of proper income and financial instability may lead to child maltreatment and neglect, where parents are unable to provide all that their children need.

Based on the survey's findings, financial stability of the family is not a main determinant of child maltreatment. The lowest income was 200,000 ID (Iraqi Dinars, equivalent to 140 USD) and the highest salary ranged from 801,000 – 1,000,000 ID per month (see Table 7.7). More than a half of the respondents were employed, most of these being fathers who are considered as breadwinners of the family, while women are considered as housewives and responsible for the children and entire households (see Table 7.7). A UNDP report claimed that the number of

Iraqi Kurds living below the poverty line was 3.5%, compared to 18.9% in the rest of Iraq. Although poverty is generally low in the Kurdistan Region, there were considerable variations between Governorates: 2% in Sulaimania, 6% in Duhok and 6.3% in Erbil, based on a report by KRG and UNDP in 2012. However, the rate of poverty increased to 20% after 2014 due to political issues and oil price deflation (KRG & UNDP, 2012). Data collection for this study was conducted at the beginning of December 2015, and found persistent variations in the financial status of Kurdish families. The research results do not support the hypothesis that child punishment is linked to economic status there being no correlation between economic status and physical punishment over the last five years (see Table 8.2). The lack of evidence linking economic status and use of child punishment may be linked to the relatively high levels of employment, with more than half the parents in the sample being employed or self-employed (see Table 7.6).

This finding varies from those in previous studies across many countries that show a connection between poverty and child maltreatment (Bowlus *et al.*, 2003; Coulton *et al.*, 2007; Currie and Spatz Widom, 2010; Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005). And it has also been argued that there is a higher risk of abuse in neighbourhoods with high levels of unemployment and poverty and where there is a large population turnover and overcrowded housing (Bowlus *et al.*, 2003). Other research has shown that constant poverty affects children negatively through their parents' behaviour and the availability of community resources (Coulton *et al.*, 2007). Communities with a high level of poverty tend to have a declining physical and social framework and fewer resources and amenities than in wealthier neighbourhoods (Svevo-Cianci, Hart and Rubinson, 2010). In industrialized countries, the annual prevalence of physical maltreatment ranges from 4% to 6% and approximately 10% of children experience emotional maltreatment or neglect (Gilbert *et al*., 2009). Other countries such as Cambodia, Iran, the Philippines and Vietnam have reported poverty being a major contributor to child maltreatment cases and family dysfunction (Coulton *et al.*, 2007, Coulton *et al*., 1995; Asian Development Bank, 2013; Mohammadi, Zarafshan and Khaleghi, 2014).

Table 8. 2 Correlation between economic status of parents and use of physical punishment during the last five years

Chi-Square Tests	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.481[a]	18	0.070
Likelihood Ratio	33.263	18	0.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.250	1	0.617
N of Valid Cases	320		
a. 16 cells (57.1%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16.			

No significant correlation

8.2.4 Punishment and gender of children

The fourth hypothesis was that *there is a correlation between punishment and gender since Kurdish girls are more prone to abuse than boys*. The study's findings showed that 296 Kurdish parents, out of the 320 respondents, admitted the use of punishment against their children (see Figure 7.1), and 85.4% (1,094 of 1,224) children in the surveyed households had been physically punished by one or both parents during the last five years (see Table 7.9). In Kurdish society, daughters experience less freedom than sons, especially during their teenage years. Women and girls are seen as vulnerable, soft, shy and are expected to be obedient to males, especially to their husbands. Daughters, from a young age, are expected to learn proper values from their parents to avoid misbehaviour that would bring shame to their families. Thus, it is thought more likely that girls may experience punishment and be prone to emotional maltreatment. However, the research findings (see Figures 7.1, 7.9) show that sons are more prone to physical punishment from both parents. So, while the study supports the fourth hypothesis that suggests a link between punishment and gender of the child, (Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), the findings reveal a greater likelihood of boys being punished than girls. Moreover, the current research supports other existing studies which suggest that physical punishment and the gender of children are linked (Sweis, 2012, Child Welfare Information Gateway (U.S.), 2013; The Telegraph, 2014).

In contrast, the results of this study differ from those of Wauchope and Straus' (1989) whose American research found that there were no significant main effects of gender of child or gender of parent on rates of chronicity of either physical punishment or physical abuse.

The fifth hypothesis was that *there is a correlation between age and physical punishment since younger children are less exposed to abuse*. Based on the parents' responses, children from younger age groups were indeed less likely to be punished (see Tables 7.11 and 8.3). The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) between parents and age group of children (see Table 8.3). 282 of 339 (83%) children aged 1-6 years had been exposed to physical and psychological punishment by parents during the last five years, while 418 of 441 children (95%) aged 7-12 years had been punished in these ways as had 394 of 444 (89%) children aged between 13-18 were exposed to both physical and psychological punishment. This supports this fifth hypothesis that younger children are less exposed to punishment and abuse..

These findings support those of a Jordanian study reported by Sweis (2012), which revealed that boys aged below 12 years old are subjected to physical punishment and maltreatment, whereas girls aged above 13 years old are vulnerable to sexual assaults (Sweis, 2012). It also supports the findings of an American survey of 8000 men and 8000 women (Thompson, Kingree and Desai, 2004), that found men were more likely than women to have experienced physical punishment and abuse during childhood, and while physical punishment had harmful effects on both boys and girls, these were more detrimental for girls.

Table 8. 3 Male and female parents' use of physical punishment for children of different ages

During the last five years, have you punished your children?			Gender of parent using physical punishment		Total
			Male	Female	
Yes	Children's ages	1 - 3	4	8	12
		4 - 6	12	25	37
		7 - 9	23	23	46
		10 – 12	23	25	48
		13 - 15	17	22	39
		16 - 18	68	46	114
Total			**147**	**149**	**296**
No	Children's ages	1 - 3	2	0	2
		4 - 6	1	1	2
		7 - 9	1	0	1
		10 – 12	1	0	1
		13 - 15	1	0	1
		16 - 18	5	12	17
Total			**11**	**13**	**24**

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

8.3 Different Types of Physical Punishment

The sixth hypothesis was that *most children experience either or both forms of punishment, physical and emotional, from their parents*. According to the information gathered, there is a high risk of child physical punishment in all Kurdish households because parents believe that punishment is equivalent to child discipline (see figure 7.2). In this section, different forms of physical punishment used by parents (slapping, shaking the child vigorously, pinching, ear pulling and twisting, hair pulling, throwing objects, hitting the child on the head, kicking,

belting, beating up and solitary confinement) are ranked accordingly (see Table 8.4). The current study supported the hypothesis above based on the survey results in which the correlation between the gender of parents and types of punishment was significant at 0.01 level and 0.05 (2 - tailed) (see Table 8.5). These findings are comparable with some other studies such as those of Alanazi (2008) on the use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia. However, research in many other countries suggests much lower rates of punishment and child maltreatment compared to the Kurdistan Region. For example, about 7% of British children have been found to experience physical maltreatment (Cawson *et al*., 2000), 37% of children and young people aged 10-20 in urban Egypt who experienced beating, burning or being tied (Youssef, Attia and Kamel, 1998), and 45% of parents in South Korea confirming they had hit, kicked or beaten their children (Hahm and Guterman, 2001). Finally, in Romania nearly half of parents admitted to beating their children regularly (WHO, 2002b).

In contrast to Kurdistan, where physical punishment is not acknowledged as maltreatment, in most Western countries severe physical punishment is considered to be abusive (see Table 1 Common Physical and Behavioural Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect).

Table 8. 4 The ranking of different types of physical child punishment

Types of Physical Punishment	Ranking	Frequency	Percentage of sample (N=320)
Slapping on the face	1	254	79%
Shaking vigorously	2	144	45%
Pinching	3	139	43.40%
Ear pulling and twisting	4	136	42.50%
Hair pulling	5	136	42.50%
Throwing objects at children when upset or angry	6	128	48.10%
Hitting the head	7	118	36.90%
Kicking	8	112	35.10%
Belting	9	81	25.30%
Beating Up	10	44	13.80%
Solitary Confinement	11	23	6.90%
Tied up their children	12	18	5.70%

Table 8. 5 Correlation between gender of parents and different types of physical child punishment

Correlation between Gender of parents and Types of punishment	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	Covariance	N
Gender	1		79.950	0.251	320
Slapping on the face	0.076	0.177	6.575	0.021	320
Hitting on the head	.162**	0.004	16.825	0.053	320
Twisting the ears	.161**	0.004	18.200	0.057	320
Shaking the child strongly	.214**	0.000	23.225	0.073	320
Kicking the child with my feet	0.017	0.757	1.550	0.005	320
Biting the child's body	-0.086	0.123	-5.400	-0.017	320
Whipping with a hosepipe or belt	.124*	0.027	9.588	0.030	320
Confinement of the child in the bathroom	0.035	0.534	1.837	0.006	320
Fastening the child's hands and feet	0.048	0.395	2.275	0.007	320
Solitary confinement of the child in the home	-0.010	0.862	-0.550	-0.002	
Throwing something at my child's face or body when I am angry	-0.007	0.896	-0.750	-0.002	320
Hair pulling	0.015	0.792	1.387	0.004	320
Starving them as a physical punishment	0.078	0.166	5.262	0.016	320
Pinching	-0.013	0.817	-1.150	-0.004	320

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

8.4 Psychological Punishment and Neglect

The seventh hypothesis is that, as well as physical punishment, verbal abuse and neglect are common forms of child punishment used by Kurdish parents. The current research supports this hypothesis based on the information gathered in the survey. There is a significant correlation between the gender of parents and non physical forms of punishment at the 0.01 level and 0.05 (2-tailed) (see Table 8.7). The most common forms of verbal abuse are threatening, scolding, constant criticism, insulting, cursing and/or name-calling, depriving them of the right to play or to hang–out with friends, ignoring them, treating them with contempt, prohibiting them from

engaging in their favourite sports and/or hobbies and neglecting their needs (see Figure 7.3,7.4). A majority of respondents admitted that they use several forms of psychological punishment as shown below (Table 8.7). It demonstrates that many Kurdish children experience diverse forms of punishment, not only physical but also psychological and neglect. The current research findings support the findings of Hunter et al's study (2000) of 500 mothers in rural India, where approximately half of the respondents reported using severe verbal punishment against their children, and Vissing *et al's* (1991) American study, in which 63% of parents used verbal aggression such as swearing and insulting.While most studies involving neglect refer simply to 'neglect', others distinguish between physical and emotional neglect (Erickson and Byron Egeland., 2002; Cicchetti and Carlson, 1989). In this study, neglect has been addressed simply as 'neglecting children's needs' and at 19%, - this form of non physical pusnishment was the least commonly used by Kurdish parents in Erbil City.

Table 8. 6 The ranking of other forms of punishment

Other forms of punishment - Psychological punishment and Neglect	Ranking	Frequency (N=320)	Percentage of total Sample
Threatened or scared children with harm	1	267	83.40%
Scolded children for misbehaviour	2	210	65.50%
Constant criticism through actions and verbal abuse	3	210	65.70%
Insulted, cursed and/or name-calling	4	200	62.50%
Deprived children to play or hang-out with friends	5	177	55.30%
Ignored children	6	124	38.80%
Treated children with contempt	7	123	38.40%
Prohibited children in engaging in sports or hobbies	8	91	28.50%
Neglected children's needs	9	61	19%

Table 8. 7 Correlation between other forms of punishment and gender of parents

Correlation	Gender	Threatening them with violence	Scaring the child	Being contemptuous of the child	Scolding them	Continuous criticism of the actions and speech of the child	Insulting, cursing and calling them by inappropriate names.	Ignoring the child and not talking to him or her	Discrediting the child	Neglecting your child in health care issues, clothing, providing nutritious food or school materials	Depriving the child of playing with his or her friends	Preventing the child from watching TV	Depriving the child of food	Not allowing the child to pursue his favourite type of sports activities or art, etc.
Pearson Correlation	**1**	**.161****	**0.108**	**.166****	**0.035**	**.161****	**-.146****	**0.037**	**-.175****	**0.041**	**0.061**	**.118***	**0.070**	**-0.017**
Sig. (2-tailed)		**0.004**	**0.054**	**0.003**	**0.538**	**0.004**	**0.009**	**0.506**	**0.002**	**0.460**	**0.278**	**0.035**	**0.215**	**0.762**
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	**79.950**	**16.488**	**9.363**	**15.750**	**3.712**	**17.788**	**-13.737**	**3.113**	**-13.050**	**2.800**	**5.325**	**9.875**	**4.062**	**-1.313**
Covariance	**0.251**	**0.052**	**0.029**	**0.049**	**0.012**	**0.056**	**-0.043**	**0.010**	**-0.041**	**0.009**	**0.017**	**0.031**	**0.013**	**-0.004**
N	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**	**320**

*****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).***

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).***

8.5 Reasons Why Parents Punish their Children

Several theories offer explanations for the use of punishment and maltreatment within families. Ecological Theory, described in Chapter 3, considers a number of factors associated with punishment and maltreatment, including the characteristics of the individual child and his or her family, social norms and traditions, the cultural environment and religion.

The eighth hypothesis of this study was that*there are different reasons why parents punish their children regardless of gender*. Findings from the survey show a significant correlation between the gender of parents and reasons why they punish their sons at 0.01 and 0.05 level (2-tailed) (see Table 8.8).

8.5.1 Social norms and traditions

The study also focused on the reasons why parents punish their children, testing a ninth hypothesis: *social norms and traditions, as well as religion, are the main factors why children receive punishment from their parents in the Kurdistan Region.* Social norms and traditions contribute to the socialisation process of bringing children up in the Kurdistan Region, and have a strong influence on parents' beliefs about the role of punishment in raising their children. Family honour plays an important part in Kurdish households and any misbehaviour that shames the family's name can result in severe physical punishment. This reflects the thesis of the book "*Agha, Shaikh and State*" thatany individual who brings shame to a family's name and reputation, as well as kinship and clan society, must be punished (Bruinessen, 1992). Parents educate their children at a very young age to follow social norms and require their strict compliance regarding avoiding engagement in early relationships, drinking alcohol and smoking for sons, and chatting with boys for daughters. In Kurdish society and culture, early relationships and premarital sex are forbidden, especially for teenagers and young adults. Such activities may lead to severe physical punishment by parents and/or relatives. (see Chapter Three, 3.2, Figure 7.3, 7.4). Saarinen (n.d.) writes that according to Kurdish culture early relationships are forbidden and traditionally Kurdish marriages are arranged (Saarinen,n.d.). Also, Bois (1966) in his book 'The Kurds' underlines that the Kurdish family social structure is conservative and based on a tribal system, which means family members follow the rules strictly and must not bring any shame on the family, in the name of 'Honour' (*sharaf*). Moreover, drinking alcohol and smoking are also prohibited in line with religious rules (Islamic, Yazdi and Kakie) and social customs (see Figure 7.4, 7.5). For daughters, chatting with boys is prohibited since parents believe this will lead to early relationships. Children's misbehaviour may lead to several forms of punishment and even death (see Figure 7.5). There are reported cases of family honour killings (see Chapter Three section 3.2), where daughters have been killed by parents and/or family members after dishonouring the family.

The study findings therefore support the ninth hypothesis with disrespectful acts towards elders strongly associated with punishment. Respecting parents and elders is related to religious beliefs that, according to God, a child must respect his parents to have a place in heaven. As the Holy Qur'an states: "Your Lord has ordered you to worship none except Him and to be good to your parents. If either or both of them attain old age with you, do not say: Fie on you or rebuke them but speak to them with words of respect." (Sura 17: AL – ISRA (ISRA') – Juz 15) – Translation Qarib.

The study findings support those of Akmatov's research, comprising a study of 28 countries, which argues that child maltreatment and physical punishment are related to culture, and the majority of parents readily punish their children to discipline them and to correct their behaviour (Akmatov, 2011). The results also bear some similarity with Stewart's (1999) study, which claimed that a majority of American parents use physical punishment to correct their children's behaviour.

Kurdish parents are strict with their daughters concerning clothes and make-up from an early age. Girls are prohibited from wearing shorts, revealing or tight clothes, immodest behavior that may attract criticism of parents by relatives and neighbours, and public insults by boys in public. The study findings have shown that parents punish their daughters for wearing skimpy clothes (54.3%) and wearing make-up at an early age (36.1%) (see Figure 7.5). This reflects the strong influence of Islam on Kurdish culture that bans females from wearing short clothes and teaches females at an early age to dress in long clothes and use the veil.

8.5.2 Religion

In the survey, the 320 participants were not asked directly about their religion. Questions about religion are very sensitive and can even be considered offensive Although predominantly Muslim, Kurdistan is a multicultural region, which includes Christians, Yazidis, Kakais and Zoroastrians (see Chapter 2, 2.4). So, while .the locations of the fieldwork were almost entirely Muslim areas I cannot conclude that all respondents were Muslim.

Even though a majority of people in the Kurdistan Region follow Islam, with rules for strict compliance, including fasting and praying, this research has shown (Figure 7.4) that most Kurdish parents punish their children not only on the basis of religious discipline but also on the basis of traditional Kurdish values and traditions. In this sense separating religion and social traditions is difficult since they are strongly inter-related. Interestingly, this study has found that Kurdish parents appear to be somewhat open-minded about religion since less than a half of the participants punished their sons (47.4%) and daughters (48.5%) for not conforming to religious norms such as praying and fasting (see Figure 7.4, 7.5). In general, the Kurds are moderate and religiously tolerant (Saarinen, n.d.). Just under a half of respondents punished their sons and daughters for not following religious norms (see Figure 7.4,7.5).

Table 8. 8 Correlation between gender of parents and reasons for punishing their sons

Correlation	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	Covariance	N
Gender	1		79.950	0.251	320
Telling lies	.122*	0.038	16.708	0.058	291
Fighting with his brothers, sisters, or other children	-0.033	0.573	-4.653	-0.016	291
Disobeying parents and family rules	0.029	0.621	3.942	0.014	291
Failing to attend school or not respecting the teachers	.265**	0.000	41.296	0.142	291
Not respecting elderly people, family and relatives	0.104	0.077	14.079	0.049	291
Having a love relationship	.183**	0.002	30.454	0.105	291
Going out without asking permission and coming back late	.212**	0.000	28.605	0.099	291
Watching too much TV	0.085	0.147	8.973	0.031	291
Playing excessive computer games	.203**	0.000	21.230	0.073	291
Having lots of friends and inviting them to the house	.225**	0.000	29.117	0.100	291
Committing offences	-0.051	0.383	-6.567	-0.023	291
Eating out	-0.001	0.984	-0.131	0.000	291
Drinking alcohol and smoking	.172**	0.003	28.570	0.099	291
Being demanding (asking for lots of stuff)	-.163**	0.005	-17.811	-0.061	291
Not conforming to religious norms, for example prayer and fasting	.125*	0.033	20.375	0.070	291

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

8.6 Punishment and Child Discipline in the Kurdish Context

In Kurdish society, punishment is frequently related to child discipline. There is a significant correlation between parents' gender, discipline and child punishment at levels 0.01 and 0.05 (see Table 8.9). Parents usually educate their children in proper manners by using punishment whenever they misbehave. They also claim that it is the right way to bring up their children, since these practices have been inherited from generation to generation (see Table 7.12). Social Learning Theory which was adopted as a second theory to explain child punishment in Kurdistan, claims that people learn through observation, imitation and modelling, and that children who experience maltreatment from abusive parents or caregivers will learn to become offensive, abusive and violent by modelling the learnt behaviour and applying it into adulthood. Such a pattern of violence is usually referred to as the *Cycle of Violence* (Dodge, Bates and Peitit, 1990; WHO, 2007). In this study, parents used different methods in order to keep their children from misbehaving which are discussed below.

8.6.1 Threatening and strict observance

Parents use different methods to address their children's misbehaviour and to discipline them. However, when their misbehaviour becomes too much to handle, parents usually threaten their children with punishment in order to regain control. Threatening and strict observance are among common forms used by parents to control their children's behaviour. Children are usually strictly monitored and all their activities observed by their parents to avoid any misbehaviour, and when caught, they may be punished by family members and/or relatives (see Table 7.12). A majority of parents believe that threatening their children with strong punishment will make them behave and stop repeating their misconduct (see Table 7.12). Such verbal aggression in Kurdish society and some other cultures is the most predominant form of child abuse, but also the most problematic to identify and define (Davis, 1996; Hunter *et al.*, 2000; Alanazi, 2008; Bywaters *et al.*, 2016).

8.6.2 Grounding

Grounding is considered both as disciplinary action and punishment of children usually in their teenage years, when they are not allowed to leave home or bedroom except for essential activities such as meals, church, work, school and doctor's appointments as a result of their misbehaviour. Moreover, children who are *grounded* have the opportunity to learn household

chores, spend more time with the family than friends, and receive constructive feedback from their parents. That, at least, is the parents' hope.

In Kurdish society, sons experience more freedom than daughters and are generally allowed to hang out with friends while girls usually stay at home with their mothers doing household chores and taking care of the siblings. Grounding is most commonly used by parents to punish and discipline their children (Table 7.12), particularly teenagers engaging in early mutual relationships. In such circumstances parents are likely to prohibit their children from attending school and other activities (see Table 8.8 and 8.9). Moreover, in the Kurdish social context, parents insist that children engaging in early mutual relationships and/or premarital sex must marry if the relationship is detected, to save their family's honour. According to the study's findings, 43% of parents believed that this is the best solution to this problem (see Table 7.12). In 2011, data from Iraq's Central Bureau of Statistics revealed that 5% of Iraqi girls were married before the age of 15, and around 22% were married before the age of 18 (UNFPA, 2016). One reason underpinning the practice of early marriage was explained as follows: "Fear of seeing their young daughters engaged in love relations or premarital sex pushes many families to decide that marriage is the best form of protecting their honour from potential damage. To keep a girl unmarried is to keep a barrel of gunpowder at home," say the elderly, thus implying that "early marriage is a way to prevent illicit sexual relations and to preserve a family's honour and reputation'' (UNFPA, 2016, p.3).

8.6.3 House rules

Kurdish parents employ the notion of house rules to encourage children's compliance with expected standards of behaviour. Boys generally have more freedom than girls, and are allowed to hang out with friends, within specific hours that are limited by a curfew. Boys must return home at the specified time to avoid punishment (see Figure 7.4 and 7.5). Parents also implement strict guidelines concerning access to the internet and use of mobile gadgets and social applications for security purposes, especially for daughters. Moreover, in Kurdish culture, women are perceived as, and expected to be, shy and obedient, leading to stricter house rules for daughters and reinforinging the over-protective and conservative image of Kurdish parents. However, some parents use strict enforcement of house rules as a form of punishment, where children are forbidden to use particular amenities because of their misbehaviour.

Discipline differs from physical punishment, the former always carrying a lesson to support children's understanding of the rationale for such rules. Many parents have the misconception that using punishment against children will necessarily teach them discipline and reform their bad habits, while this is not always the case (Grusac *et al*., 2017).

Some parents use physical punishment as an initial solution, while others advise their children and explain the reasons why their actions are inadvisable or unacceptable. Such parents believe that advising them is a better way than physically and/or emotionally hurting them. Just over a half also seek advice from relatives and teachers concerning their children's problems and on how to correct their misbehaviour (see Table 7.12).

The common methods of punishment and discipline used by parents, and mentioned above, are usually based on their beliefs and understanding about how to bring up their children. Society is also significantly influential concerning how parents should bring up their children, for society dictates norms to be followed, so that children behave in a socially acceptable fashion. Less than a half of Kurdish parents in this study were aware of the notion of child maltreatment and less than half sought help from relatives and teachers in dealing with their children's problem behaviours or bad habits (see Table 7.12).

Table 8. 9 Correlation between gender of parents and reasons for punishing their daughters

Correlation	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Gender	1.5125	0.50063	320
Strict observation by the parents, brothers and uncles to make sure the misbehaviour won't be repeated again	2.2976	0.90601	289
Imprison the girl inside the house, and ban her from going out	2.9792	0.84137	289
Not letting her use the phone or internet to communicate with others	2.7612	0.96560	289
Threatening her with strong punishment hoping that she won't repeat the 'misbehaviour.'	2.4325	0.97349	289
Banning her from going to school	3.0865	0.92953	289
Marrying her off, to maintain family honour	2.8858	0.98466	289
Physically punishing her severely like beating, whipping, hitting, etc	3.0900	0.83679	289
Advising her in a quiet way and letting her know that she is wrong	1.7336	0.74648	289
Asking my relatives' advice concerning her	2.6125	1.08429	289
Asking her teachers for help	2.2664	1.03159	289
Dealing with her according to the type of the problem	2.0657	0.99260	289
Strict observation by the parents, brothers and uncles to make sure the misbehaviour won't be repeated again	2.2784	0.87583	291
Imprison the boy inside the house, and ban him from going out	3.0790	0.74088	291
Not letting him use the phone or internet to communicate with others	2.9485	0.88712	291
Threatening him with strong punishment hoping that he won't repeat the 'misbehaviour.'	2.4639	0.94754	291
Banning him from going to school	3.3608	0.68257	291
Marrying him off, to maintain family honour	2.8522	0.98374	291
Physically punishing him severely like beating, whipping, hitting, etc	3.0893	0.79150	291
Advising him in a quiet way and letting him know that he is wrong	1.6770	0.63690	291
Asking my relatives' advice concerning him	2.4880	1.04173	291
Asking his teachers for help	2.1478	0.98374	291
Dealing with him according to the type of problem	1.9931	0.89054	291

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

8.7 The Consequences of Child Punishment

This study clearly reveals that there is lack of awareness about links between child punishment and maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region-Iraq. A majority of parents thought that using punishment as a method of educating and disciplining their children was appropriate and they denied the existence of maltreatment in their households. The tenth hypothesis spoke to this situation: *there is a correlation between parents' awareness and the consequences of child maltreatment*. One question in the survey of 320 parents was designed to explore parental awareness and understanding of *the possible negative effects of punishment on your children that affect their physical, social and emotional well-being.* The negative effects of punishments were categorised in three forms, *physical, social* and *emotional* and are listed below.

8.7.1 Physical consequences

Physical punishment involves inflicting physical pain on children that can lead to temporary or permanent results or even death. Temporary injuries such as body scars, bruises and mild bone fractures are some visible signs of abuse. The study's findings show that 72.5% of parents believed that physical punishment does not have any negative effects on children (see Table 7.13). Moreover, the consequences of physical punishment vary as the severity increases. In particular, young children who are exposed to severe corporal punishment can be blinded, paralysed or even killed (Ciccetti and Carlson, 1989). The survey in Erbil City showed that 94.1% of parents were unaware that severe physical punishment could lead to disablement or even death. In general, the results indicate that the majority of Kurdish parents lack awareness that child physical punishment can lead to visible injuries and disabilities or death.

8.7.2 Social consequences

The negative consequences of punishment and maltreatment can have long-term physical, emotional and social effects on children (Youngblade and Belsky, 1990). A lack of social interaction, poor peer-to-peer relations and disturbing behaviours are some of the visible signs of the social consequences of abuse. Inflicting punishment on children provokes fear that can lead to distrust of people especially adults, making abused children limit their social interactions.

In this study, parents were asked to rank a list of possible consequences of punishing their children. The least commonly known consequence was suicidal behaviour, followed by

running away, isolation, poor social skills, hatred towards parents, child discipline misconceptions about child discipline, strict parenting, and lying to avoid punishment (see Table 8.10). A majority of parents claimed that they were not aware that physical punishment can have social consequences for their children. The parents' lack of awareness about the social consequences of maltreatment contrasts with the empirical evidence from international studies that have repeatedly highlighted a wide range of social consequences of abuse, including, for example, a negative impact on school performance (Korbin, 1980; Belsky and Vondra, 1989; Cicchetti and Carlson, 1989; Howe, 2005; Clarke, 2007; WHO, 2007; Norman *et al.*, 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, 2013; Dixon and Perkins, 2017).

Table 8. 10 Ranking of parents' awareness of social consequences of punishments against children

Parents' Unaware of:	Ranking	Frequency	Percentage
Suicidal behaviour	1	276	86.30%
Runaway children	2	192	60%
Isolation	3	179	55.90%
Poor social skills	4	178	58.40%
Hatred towards parents	5	176	55.00%
Child discipline misconceptions	6	163	50.90%
Strict parenting	7	153	47.80%
Lying to avoid punishments	8	112	35.00%

8.7.3 Psychological Consequences

The psychological consequences of punishments are often silent, invisible, overlooked and can easily be confused with other issues. Verbal and emotional punishment are different from physical punishment in leaving no visible wounds on children and their adverse effects are often long-term (Kairys and Johnson, 2002). The Erbil survey found that just over half (54.10%) of parents were aware that non physical forms of punishment can have negative consequences on a child's self-esteem. Just under a half (45.90%), however, were unaware that such punishment can damage the self-esteem of children (see Table 7.15).

The findings of this study as they relate to parents' awareness of abuse is supported by a range of previous studies (Briere and Runtz, 1990; Wiehe, 1998; Mann *et al.*, 2004; Howe, 2005; Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005; Clarke, 2007; WHO, 2007; Karakuş, 2012) which suggest that children exposed to severe physical punishment, abuse and emotional maltreatment do suffer from low self-esteem and poor self-worth.

Children exposed to a violent environment and maltreatment may exhibit upsetting emotions, frightening memories, fear of constant danger, anxiety and depression. Abused children may experience emotional trauma as a result of stressful events, such as exposure to a hostile environment and living with abusive people. They may feel uncomfortable with people and their surroundings due to anxiety and extreme stress. Inflicting punishment on children regardless of its severity brings intense pressure on them, not only in childhood but into adulthood, resulting in depression and anxiety attacks. Specifically, the Erbil survey findings show that more than half of the respondents (52.8%) believed that punishment could lead to the development of anxiety and depression in their children (see Table 7.15). This complements the findings of a 2009 study by Gilbert *et al*., demonstrating that physical maltreatment at a young age leads to psychological and behavioural problems such as frequent absenteeism at school, mental health issues such as aggression, anxiety and depression, isolation and dissociation, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and social problems.

Aggression is a violent behaviour displaying readiness to attack or confront people. Maltreated children may show this type of behaviour towards other children, including siblings, and may lead to injuries. Children exposed to a harsh environment have the capability to harm others as they grow up. In this way inflicting punishment may have a negative result on children since they will learn that such behaviour is acceptable and that it is appropriate to discipline others. However, this study has found that only just over half (51.6%) of Kurdish parents were aware that discipline and punishment can lead to aggression and other violent behaviour amongst children (see Table 7.15). The study's findings support the previous study of Shields and Cicchetti (1998), which claimed that maltreated children were more likely than non-maltreated children to be aggressive, and that physically punished children were more likely to exhibit aggression.

While this study of parental beliefs and behaviours has revealed different forms of, and reasons for, punishment leading to child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region, it has also revealed a concerning lack of awareness about the consequences of child maltreatment and a lack of

information about ways of educating and supporting parents in the development of more positive parenting skills. They usually resolve their children's misbehaviour through punishment, without thinking that it might have negative long term consequences for their children. Indeed, such is the strength of cultural beliefs in the use of child punishment to encourage or enforce behaviours that will avoid bringing shame on the family, that around half of Kurdish parents believe that punishments do not have negative consequences (physical, social and emotional) on their children.

8.8 Parental Beliefs and Perspectives on Punishment and Discipline

In the survey respondents were asked: "***As a parent, do you believe that using punishments can teach your children discipline?***" in order to determine the parents' beliefs about child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region. The literature suggests several themes linked to parental understanding and reasons why they punish their children.

8.8.1 Favouritism

If parents have a favourite child (or children), it can lead to stress in families if not resolved, and may result in long-term emotional problems for less favoured children, who may experience high levels of stress, depression and aggression as well as reduced self-esteem, self-worth and social responsibility across the lifespan (Libby, 2011; Suitor and Pillemer, 2007). Favouritism can be difficult to avoid and studies have indicated that a majority of parents admit that despite their best efforts to avoid doing so, they have favoured one child over another, at least occasionally. The Erbil survey shows that 39.7% of Kurdish parents have practised favouritism and that younger children are favoured over the eldest (see Table 7.16). Suitor and Pillemer (2007) articulate the long term consequences of the association between birth order and favouritism among siblings:

> "Birth order continues to play an important role in explaining favouritism when families enter late stages of the life course. ..Combining theory and research on birth order and parents' relationships which suggest that the birth order patterns established in the early years may have long-term consequences for intergenerational support and closeness." (Suitor and Pillemer, 2007, pp.32-33).

Libby (2011) further argues that favouritism may lead to an abusive relationship between parents and children.

8.8.2 Inheritance: Ideology Passed from Generation to Generation

A majority of parents adopt their thinking about child discipline from their own parents and experiences of childhood, and pass it on from generation to generation. They also believe that using punishment can be effective without having harmful effects on their children. With 56% of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they learn punishment practices from the previous generation (Table 7.16), the current study supports the eleventh hypothesis: *the idea and use of punishment passes from one generation to the next.*

Most parents' beliefs are inherited – they believed that these practices are still effective and applicable to the current generation. One particular misconception was that punishment is an effective way to educate children about discipline. More than a half of the survey respondents believed that punishing their children would make them obey and follow house rules (see Table 7.16). However, since the whole world is undergoing a process of 'modernisation', and children are also evolving, long held beliefs and practices may become less applicable before. In Kurdish society, a majority of parents are still practising these old habits, believing that punishment can teach children discipline. Existing studies such as that carried out by Mackenbach *et al.* in Holland, (2014,pp.1-9), report that harsh discipline tends to be passed on from generation to generation.

The results also support the findings of a Saudi Arabian study by Alanazi (2008), that where parents had been exposed to physical punishment by their own parents, they were far more likely to physically punish their own children than parents who had not been exposed to physical punishment themselves. Likewise, Haapasalo and Aaltonen, in their Finnish study of the intergenerational nature of maternal child abuse, concluded:

> Our results supported an inter-generational cycle of punishment, maltreatment and violence; mothers who experienced regular physical abuse during childhood assumed that such practices were acceptable, and frequently spanked their children. Such a study of inter-generational transmission addresses the association of childhood abuse and the possibility of becoming abusive parents (Haapasalo and Aaltonen, 1999, p231).

The intergenerational nature of maltreatment is one of the earliest and mostly widely acknowledged characteristics of child maltreatment. Haapasalo and Aaltonen (1999) cite

findings that a third of victims of child abuse are likely to become abusive parents themselves. The results of this study support the relevance of social learning theory (Bandura, 1971) in explaining human behaviour in terms of constant shared interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences (See Chapter 3, 3.6). Social Learning theory explains how abusive behaviour, whether directly experienced or witnessed, can affect children's own behaviour later in life. The theory suggests that whenever children witness cruelty from their parents towards other family members and/or experience abuse themselves, they may adopt the same behaviour. Supporting this theory, Straus *et al*., (1980) argued that children learn to be abusive from witnessing violence

8.8.3 Ownership

It is commonly understood that the main responsibility of parents is to provide for their children's necessities, and to create a safe and secure environment for them to live in. However, some parents consider that they 'own' their children (consider them as property), and claim that family matters should always be kept private. Much child maltreatment remains unreported due to family privacy. In this study, a majority of parents felt that they had sole ownership over their children, and that no one should interfere in their domestic affairs. In Kurdish society, these conceptions still hold sway, helping to explain the high levels of maltreatment and domestic violence (Al-Atrushi et al., 2013) in Kurdish households. Moreover, there are insufficient and ineffective laws to protect children against maltreatment in the Region. Based on the study's findings, a majority (58.4%) of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they 'owned' their children and no-one should question their decisions (see Table 7.16).

8.8.4 Extended family members' roles in child discipline and punishment

In Kurdish society, extended family members or relatives have the same authority and responsibility for children as parents, especially when teaching proper manners and discipline. Many relatives take responsibility bringing up children adopting similar responsibilities as those of the of parents. This family system creates more confusion for children regarding house rules and about the relative authority of parents and relatives. Relatives can, and do, give advice to parents about how to bring children up. According to the survey's findings, 38% of Kurdish parents agreed or strongly agreed that it was appropriate for extended family members to discipline their children – this is socially acceptable in the Kurdish context (see Table 7.16). This belief is in contrast to Western societies, where a majority of parents take full responsibility for their children's upbringing. Previous studies show that Kurdish families have

a close relationship with each other and elderly people stay with younger members of the family. Even a son, when he gets married might stay with his parents (Saarinen, n.d.; Bruinessen, 1992; Bois, 1966; Donovan, 1990). Therefore, extended family members are involved with bringing children up in Kurdistan, and grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins have the freedom to physically and verbally punish the children. Occasionally, if a child has had pre-marital sexual relations, close family members are complicit in the child's death (so called 'honour' killing, see Chapter 3, 3.2).

8.8.5 Mentality about respect

Childhood is the initial developmental stage for children, when they learn about the world, including social interactions. Aside from discipline, respect is another important value which parents must teach their children. In fact, I would argue that the most effective way to teach children the value of respect is by parents themselves modelling respectful behaviour.

In Kurdish society, parents push their children to learn respect and to be obedient to other people too They believe that if children are disrespectful to their parents, they will be the same to others. If children are disrespectful, it will bring shame to their parents and to their family's name. In this study we see that 38% of parents felt that it was appropriate for their children to 'fear' them in order to encourage the desired honourable behaviour (see Table 7.16).

8.8.6 Punishments for not conforming to religious and social norms

Parents were least likely to use punishments against their children for failure to conform to religious norms. Although 52.6% and 51.5% of parents of sons and daughters respectively had explained non conformity to religious norms as a basis for punishing their children (Figures 7.4, 7.5), when asked whether they agreed that parents should be able to punish their children for not following religious and social traditions, 83.8% either agreed or strongly agreed (Table 7.16). There appears to be some dissonance here between the question of specific punishment of sons and daughters for religious infraction and the more general principle that punishment for such reasons is acceptable. This may be linked to the declining influence of fundamental Islamic figures in Kurdistan (Bruinessen, 1991), or to wider processes of globalization and modernization in expectations of children's behaviour. Greater publicity in recent times has shed light on questions of child maltreatment in Kurdistan, including negative public reactions to honour killings, showing increasing levels of intolerance of child maltreatment.

Religious and social norms, customs and values are important to traditional societies such as Kurdistan. Parents are obliged to be responsible for their children's education, to instil proper values and good conduct, so that children become socially acceptable. According to my knowledge, a majority of Kurdish households are conservative and usually comply with religious norms such as fasting and praying. This is why most Kurdish parents make it obligatory for their children to follow religious norms and learn important values such as respect, obedience and discipline, to avoid dishonouring the family's name. SO, while there is some evidence of the growth of more liberal values, it remains common for punishment to follow any behaviour that does not conform to these norms.

8.8.7 Punishment is not maltreatment

Different countries in the world have contrasting beliefs regarding the concept of punishment as maltreatment and as a discipline (Korbin, 1980). Conservative societies such as Kurdistan have a different concept regarding punishment compared to western societies. Physical punishments are usually seen by most Kurdish parents as part of normal education for discipline. A majority (67%) of parents believe it is normal and perfectly acceptable to punish their children whenever they misbehave, and moreover, they do not consider punishment to be maltreatment. (see Table 7.16). In this study, I argue that all forms of severe physical and psychological punishment are maltreatment, and that Kurdish parents maltreat their children in the name of 'discipline' when their children 'cross the line' - in fact, when the child crosses *the parents'* line. In Kurdish society, there is an assumption that 'punished' children will soon forget the pain and scars as they grow up. In other words, physical punishment and child maltreatment are acceptable in Kurdish society, since parents believe that they are part of educating children, part of turning them into good future citizens. I can conclude, therefore, that the study's findings discussed in Chapter Seven fully support the twelfth hypothesis: *parents believe that punishment is not maltreatment*.

8.8.8 "I never regret punishing my children"

This attitude seems closely linked with parents' sense of *ownership* over their children, sole authority over, and responsibility for, them. This leads to the view that it is morally right to physically and/or emotionally punish them if they misbehave. With this kind of thinking these parents usually do not regret their harmful actions towards their children. Based on the study's findings, just over e third (35%) of parents claimed that they did regret punishing their children,

whatever the reasons(see Table 7.16).. Some of these parents explained their lack of regret about punishing their children in terms of their inability to control their own aggressive behaviour.

8.8.9 Punishment "out of love"

While it is commonly assumed that parents want only the best for their children and will make sacrifices for them, abusive parents often claim that inflicting punishment on their children is done out of love and concern (Straus and Donnelly, 2001). In the Erbil study, 89.4% of Kurdish parents strongly agreed that punishing their children was associated with love for them (see Table 7.16), implying that punishment would be beneficial in the long-run This common misconception, used by parents to excuse their punishing behaviour, underlines the importance of informing and educating parents about wider evidence indicating the long term harms associated with child punishment.

8.9 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the study's findings based on the responses from 320 survey questionnaires. It has included my interpretation of the survey findings, such as gender-related causes and consequences of maltreatment as well as parents' beliefs about child maltreatment in the Kurdish social context. The twelve hypotheses formulated in Chapter have been reviewed. Moreover, important related topics were also described in this chapter, including the relevance of Ecological Theory and Social Learning Theory as frameworks within which the findings can be understood.

The findings indicate that a majority of Kurdish parents use physical and psychological punishments, both severe and moderate on their children. Moreover, Kurdish parents denied the existence of child maltreatment within households, and claimed punishments were merely disciplinary actions. The results also suggest that Kurdish parents may lack good parenting skills and need education about the nature of child maltreatment. Culture also plays an important part in all cases of child maltreatment in the region, since it is largely viewed as acceptable in the Kurdish social and religious context. Moreover, administering severe punishment against children is also considered a traditional part of the child-rearing process, which is passed on from generation to generation as the culturally and theologically correct means of teaching children discipline.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion and Recommendation

9.1 Introduction

This chapter, divided into five further sections, i) sets out the empirical conclusions of the study; ii) outlines the use of ecological and social learning theory in a deeply patriarchal setting where the notion of children's rights holds little sway; iii) makes recommendations for policy and practice; iv) identifies the originality and significance of the research, and v) sets out an agenda for further research.

I aim to highlight how it may be possible to increase awareness that child maltreatment exists in the Kurdistan Region, and to support children in Kurdish families who are facing maltreatment such as severe physical and psychological punishment and maltreatment because of cultural and religious factors. These recommendations aim to reduce maltreatment and severe punishments in Kurdistan since there is no existing strategic plan to tackle the issue. The government, non-governmental organisations and the mass media need to take strong and effective action against child punishment and maltreatment in the region. The suggestions in this section are based on the results of this study, and built on previous research related to child maltreatment and punishment in Western and Eastern countries that have strong laws designed to protect children from maltreatment. The main goal is to encourage the Kurdistan Regional Government, Kurdish society and families to strengthen the recent procedures for children protection against maltreatment, and to create an effective strategy to eradicate several forms of child maltreatment in the region.

The recommendations are based on the research findings described in Chapters Five to Eight. Aspects described in these chapters point unambiguously towards the need for early prevention and awareness programmes, an increased role by the government to introduce new legislation, and the need to include other governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Education and Religion. Furthermore, recommendations to expand this research in the future are also suggested.

9.2 Summary of Findings

The aims of this study have been to undertake an empirical study to provide valid and reliable baseline knowledge of child maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, highlighting the struggles and the needs of children in the Region, particularly identifying different types of punishment and maltreatment used by parents, the reasoning and circumstances associated with different forms of punishment and maltreatment of children of different ages and genders.

This study has revealed that child punishment and maltreatment in Erbil City, Kurdistan, is considered to be a relatively minor issue for parents, where harsh psychological and physical punishment is socially, culturally and religiously acceptable. Moreover, as most parents do not recognize even severe forms of discipline and punishment as child maltreatment, it is more difficult and challenging to eliminate, or even decrease, the occurrence of violence and abuse within households. The proposition that new parenting skills are required is challenging for some parents and for the older generation to accept, since they are accustomed to punishment as a way of child rearing, and where such beliefs have been passed down from generation to generation.

Interviews with child welfare practitioners and academics and the survey of parents offered a picture of the use of harsh punishment and maltreatment included physical abuse such as burning, confinement in dark rooms, starvation, forced child marriages, particularly for daughters (*Sharafi Khizan)*, murder by family members in the name of religion and honour (*Parastini Sharaf)*, forced dress codes and forcing children to pray, fast and worship God. Some parents believed that punishment is equivalent to discipline and that such practices are socially and culturally acceptable, with punishments varying depending on age and gender.

Understanding child maltreatment requires an understanding of domestic and social structures in Kurdistan, a deeply patriarchal and religious society. Social norms such as obedience and respect of parents, elders and rulers of the tribe such as the Sheikh (leader), Agha (Master or Lord) and Mullah (Cleric) are very important in Kurdish society. These leaders play an important role in society and are more influential than the law (the official authority) in the region. Parents are expected to teach their children proper discipline and to accept long-held customs and traditions. This process is complicated for children to understand at an early age, and can lead to confusion and disobedience, exposing them to punishment, abuse and sometimes death if they do not follow these social and religious norms. Hence, the idea of

severe punishment as an act of discipline is an old practice in Kurdish society passed from generation to generation, and some parents still believe that it is the best way to educate their children.

With parents understanding their responsibilities to teach their children good manners and discipline, some perceive their obligation as one of controlling their children and their right of ownership of their children. Such parents believe they have the right to choose any method of child-rearing they wish, without considering the negative impact this may have on their children. This easily leads to violence and maltreatment of children, and tackling this issue is made more challenging since the majority of parents do not perceive their practices of discipline and punishment to be abusive. This underlines the general lack of awareness of child maltreatment in Kurdistan.

Poverty and economic instability play a key role in child maltreatment in Kurdistan. The region has faced a series of financial crises due to political problems, unending wars and economic sanctions, leading to poverty and increased illiteracy. However, maltreatment is not confined to the children of illiterate parents with some parents educated to degree level expressing the same beliefs about maltreatment and punishment. Another concern reflecting the region's ongoing financial crisis, though one that is contested as a form of child maltreatment (Catani *et al.*, 2009), is child labour. This growing issue of child maltreatment requires separate research and further investigation.

Many Kurdish children face maltreatment and violence in their everyday lives. Unstable relationships, a lack of parenting skills and awareness about child maltreatment, a lack of child-protection legislation, religious and social norms that dictate child rearing are all factors that put Kurdish children in danger. Most cases of abuse go unreported. The study findings showed that most children aged 1 – 18 years old are exposed to physical punishment from their parents, caretakers and/or step-parents and close relatives. The survey also revealed that while parents may use different forms of punishment, almost all Kurdish parents punish their children physically and/or emotionally, with no understanding of the negative consequences of such treatment.

In particular the survey of 320 parents showed that:

- 92.4% had punished their children severely, physically or psychologically, over the preceding five years;
- family income was not strongly associated with the degree to which children were punished and maltreated;
- children aged 7 - 18 years were routinely exposed to punishment; while younger children were less likely to have been punished physically;
- while educational factors contributed to child punishment and maltreatment within households with illiterate parents more likely to use punishment to discipline their children, parents who had received higher education also engaged in child punishment;
- the most common behaviours leading to physical and verbal punishment of children were disobedience and non-compliance with social and religious norms;
- daughters were more exposed to psychological and emotional punishment, while sons were more likely to be physically punished;
- the most common forms of physical punishment and maltreatment, in rank order from most to least common, were slapping, vigorous shaking, pinching, ear pulling and twisting, hair pulling, throwing objects, hitting children on their heads, kicking, belting, beating up and solitary confinement;
- the most common forms of verbal abuse and psychological punishment, in rank order from most to least common, were threatening, scolding, constant criticism, insulting, cursing and/or name calling, depriving children of the right to hang out with friends, ignoring them, treating them with contempt, prohibiting them from engaging in hobbies or sports, and neglect;
- a majority of parents did not acknowledge the existence of child maltreatment within their households, and considered it as a normal form of discipline and did not see any alternative to punishing their children. Indeed, almost 90% considered that they punished their children out of love with 67% believing this was in the best interests of their children and 35% never regretting having punished their children;
- Over 80% of parents believed that punishing their children for failure to follow religious and social norms was justified, with nearly 60% believing they had the right to treat their children as they liked. However, nearly 80% expressed the view that non physical forms of punishment were more appropriate than physical punishment;

- Just over a third of parents believed that their relatives also had the right to punish their children if they transgressed the norms of expected behaviour and the same proportion of parents believed that children should fear their parents in order to respect others in society.
- Over a half of parents believed they had gained their attitudes towards child discipline and punishment from their parents, as social expectations passed from one generation to the next.

Qualitative interviews with child welfare practitioners and academics demonstrated:

- a common view that Kurdish parents frequently maltreat their children either physically or psychologically.
- The belief by most practitioners that a majority of abusive parents use harsh physical punishment, including burning parts of their bodies (fingers, hands, neck, legs or feet) if their children are disobedient.
- A belief among practitioners that the most common forms of physical maltreatment are slapping and spanking, hitting, pinching and squeezing, kicking and beating, resulting in bruised skin and severely injured or broken body parts, and the most common types of verbal abuse are swearing, bad-mouthing, screaming and insulting, as well as humiliation, neglect and disrespecting children's feelings.
- A majority of practitioners believed that mothers have a greater opportunity to maltreat their children than fathers as they are usually at home with their children.
- Given the patriarchal system, where males are dominant within the household, fathers have higher authority than mothers and are ultimately responsible for maintaining discipline in the family. Some fathers misuse such power, which leads to violence and abuse.
- Gender issues play a key role in discrimination and stigma between children in Kurdish households. A majority of the practitioners believed that gendered expectations of children's behaviour in Kurdish society are influenced by the parents' educational background, family's social class, economic status and religion.
- Most practitioners believed that although both genders are exposed to maltreatment, sons are more susceptible to their father's physical punishment, whereas daughters are more exposed to their mother's verbal abuse.
- A belief that low income and financial status contribute to child maltreatment in Kurdistan.
- A majority of practitioners and academics believed that social deviance such as engaging in pre-marital sex leads parents to severely punish their children, because they have

dishonoured the family's name. These views are consistent with several media reports about daughters being killed by parents or family members due to suspected pre-marital sex.

- Most practitioners and academics believed that child maltreatment has physical effects, ranging from minor injuries and impairments to severe brain damage and even death.
- A majority of the practiioners and academic staff were of the view that some parents intentionally maltreat their children, both physically and emotionally, in a brutal fashion. They felt that parents' lack of awareness about child maltreatment and a sense of ownership over their children leads almost inevitably to maltreatment and violence. While parents attempt to instil fear in their children to gain obedience and respect from them, those interviewed were clear that this was not always effective.

Of great concern arising from these findings is that most maltreated children are unable to defend themselves in the face of a normative culture of child punishment, and the lack of child-protection legislation exposes them to greater risk of harm. While child welfare practitioners, many of whom have been exposed to external influences through training courses or overseas education, are aware of the harms and consequences of child maltreatment, attention to this social problem has not gained priority attention for the government nor as an issue for academic study in Kurdistan. Reports of severe child maltreatment in the media, often based on visual evidence of the severity of physical injuries, are becoming more common, but these has not yet gained sufficient traction to result in a societal shift in thinking that child maltreatment is a priority area for policy and practice development.

9.3 Child Maltreatment Theories and their Limitations

This research study adopted *Ecological Theory* and *Social Learning Theory* as frameworks to understand and interpret the findings from this study of child punishment and maltreatment in Kurdish families in the Kurdistan Region. However, as was noted in chapter 3, (3.6.3 and 3.6.4) these frameworks were applied in the broader context of a longstanding and deeply embedded culture of patriarchy, with relatively new pressures for cultural change through the formal acceptance of discrimination and injustice against women; and formal acceptance of the notion of children's rights. While the former has led to legislation designed to prevent violence against women, there has been no such formalisation of laws to address child maltreatment.

Several researchers, including Garbarino (1977), Belsky and Vondra (1989), Bronfrenbrenner (1979), and Belsky (1993) have proposed an ecological model to explain the complex disposition of child punishment and maltreatment. *Ecological Theory* suggests that punishment and maltreatment are products of social and environmental stresses which affect an individual's behaviour at different levels.

According to Bronfrenbrenner (1979), any social problem is an outcome of several related factors, and punishment and child maltreatment are consequences of the risk factors affecting the balance of the ecological framework (see Chapter 3: 3.6.2). The social ecology model involves concentric circles, relating social influences and interactions between children, parents, family, community and society in general. Any imbalance among the risk factors within this model can provoke disturbance, such as family breakdown, and potentially lead to higher risk of child maltreatment (Swenson and Chaffine 2006; cited in Miller-Perrin and Perrin, 2013 p. 43).

By contrast, *Social Learning Theory* suggests that an abused individual, or one who has witnessed abuse, has greater potential to maltreat children compared to those who have not experienced or witnessed abuse. Albert Bandura (1971, 1977) believed that behaviour is acquired via observation, imitation and modelling. A circle of violence is a repetitive process in which children acquire behavioural habits from their parents and society. Based on the findings of the current study, social learning theory contributes to understanding of child punishment and maltreatment in the Kurdistan Region with a majority of parents reproducing the punishing behaviours used by their own parents as part of the socialisation process in raising their own children. As shown in Table 7.16, 56% of parents in the survey agreed or strongly agreed that the forms of punishment they used to discipline their sons and daughters were learned from their own families. In this way beliefs, values and norms are transferred from one generation to the next and, as studies in other settings (Mullen *et al*., 1996; WHO, 2007; Morton and Browne, 1998) have also identified, parents with abusive childhood histories have a higher potential for maltreating children.

The Limitations of Ecological and Social Learning Theories

While both ecological and social learning theories have been helpful in shedding light on links between social, cultural and religious beliefs and practices that influence child punishment and

maltreatment in the Kurdish context both theories were limited in their explanatory power. In particular

1 - The nature of the social problem of child punishment and maltreatment is too complex to be explained by using either or both of these two theories. Further theoretical input is needed to understand the wider socio-ecological, economic, political, health and behavioural development factors involved.

2 – It is difficult to separate *Ecological Theory* from *Social Learning Theory*, since both concern individual influences within a social framework that affects child development: *Ecological Theory* involves social structure while the *Social Learning Theory* focuses on social interaction.

3 – Both theories are limited in terms of human development and behaviour, while neglecting wider structural factors such as politics and war that undoubtedly influence pressures on families and behaviours of parents towards their children in the Kurdistan Region (see Chapter 2).

4 – *Social Learning Theory* discusses acquired behaviour via observation and imitation, while bypassing other potential resources such as mass media and social media. The key point here is that children can learn violence by watching TV, movies or by accessing social network applications, as well as learning directly from their parents.

5 – *Social Learning Theory* only focuses on behavioural development as a repetitive process, without acknowledging the possibilities of changes in behaviour due to life experiences and a society systematised by the law (Miller-Perrin and Perrin, 2013).

9.4 Recommendations

In this section I make a number of recommendations for policy and practice in response to the findings of this study that the use of severe punishment and maltreatment of children is widespread in Erbil city, and in all probability, in other parts of Kurdistan.

9.4.1 Early prevention and intervention programmes

The study findings show that a majority of parents (92.49%) punish their children, and that all forms of physical and psychological maltreatment, as well as neglect, are widespread.. Although the number of respondents in this study (320 parents and 19 interviews with child welfare practitioners and academcis) is relatively small compared to the entire Kurdistan Region, their experience and knowledge of these issues can reasonably be considered a reflection of Kurdish society and culture. The responsibility to keep children safe and to eradicate child maltreatment is not only a parental duty, but also that of society and the government.

Early prevention and intervention programmes should be proposed for engaged couples that discuss building good family relationships, child care and treatment, as well as the challenges that may be encountered during child rearing. This approach would include psycho-social counselling, education and health care information which would serve as a strong foundation for child protection and the elimination (in the long-term) of domestic violence and maltreatment. The provision of such programmes would help and educate future parents to nurture their children properly, as well as addressing potential household problems in the future.

Possible ways of providing such support include:

1. the provision of healthcare information about pregnancy, protection and care for unborn children.
2. the establishment of a Family Centre (or an equivalent) in Kurdistan. There are no available services at the moment that address domestic issues, or provide counselling sessions for both parents and children. This approach might be modelled on the UK Sure Start programme which provides assistance to parents, starting from pregnancy until the children reach school age.
3. the creation of a network of early prevention teams, composed of professionals such as doctors, psychotherapists, nurses, social workers, lawyers and other related experts. Early

prevention services in each local area would have to work together cooperatively to educate parents in good child-rearing skills. This approach is similar to the UK early help teams.

4. assistance for maltreated children including counselling, and support when reporting the cases to the authorities and referring cases to the court.
5. the implementation of comprehensive legislation and child-protection laws in line with United Nation's Convention, and protocols on children's rights to be protected from abuse and violence.

9.4.2 Family and public awareness programmes

Encouraging parents to engage in awareness programmes (seminars or counselling sessions) about promoting strong family ties, child care and development, and educating them about domestic violence and maltreatment would benefit both parents and children. This would help parents to understand emerging family problems and how to deal with them. It is crucial to remind new parents that all forms of maltreatment, neglect and punishments put their children's healthy development at risk and a lack of attention to their care and supervision is unacceptable. Social workers could intervene in cases of child maltreatment or domestic violence by guiding abused spouses or abusive parents through a mediation process. This procedure would help social workers to review applicable methods in dealing with such cases, particularly by providing safety and protection to the abused parties.

Creating and raising public awareness about child maltreatment is another important factor in the reduction of such instances. In this age of technology, information about child protection can be conveyed through social and mass media - TV and radio programmes, magazines and handbooks, posters, conferences and the internet – and this could help to tackle and substantially reduce child maltreatment. However, TV programmes with violent themes should be limited since they promote negative values among children and family-oriented TV shows should be prioritized. Social media and TV programmes could provide excellent information and education concerning psycho-social issues of child maltreatment problems. One example of a TV programme shown in Kurdistan is the *Sayko TV: Geli Kurdistan by a psychologist, Professor Karim Sharif Qarachatany* which discusses family issues such as parent-children relationships, domestic violence and other related topics. The show has a large audience and followers on social media in Kurdistan and has strong potential to influence practices of child rearing and socalisation.

The task of educating parents to change their attitudes toward raising their children must be taken seriously. Some preventive measures like mentoring programmes, counselling sessions, and TV shows in which parents are informed of the consequences of child maltreatment on both families and society would be very helpful. Ownership and control of the media in Kurdistan is broad, being shared by a range of government and non government stakeholders with 40 local TV channels and 10 international satellites. TV reports and news headlines provide updates on cases concerning abuse against women and children resulting in demonstrations across cities, condemning such crimes and demanding justice for victims (EKurd, 2014).

9.4.3 The role of the Kurdistan Regional Government in the eradication of child maltreatment

The Kurdistan Regional Government is poised to play a central role in contributing to the eradication of child maltreatment in Kurdistan by creating and enforcing child-protection laws. Governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as NGOs must cooperate and collaborate with each other to provide awareness-raising information and design and develop explicit laws that support Kurdish families, children and child-care programmes. In Kurdistan, there is no existing legislation designed specifically to protect children against maltreatment, violence and neglect. Given the lack of legal measures, organisations and institutions are only able to provide limited help to maltreated children. However, with the help of concerned citizens and police, some incidents of child abuse have been documented and reported, where abused children have sought assistance from social workers and organisations. In line with its commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the government must take measures to prevent, and respond in cases of, child maltreatment. This responsibility must be grasped fully, so that parents understand their legal obligations to raise children without hurting them. Fundamentally, children in Kurdistan today are deprived of several rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that deprive them of the opportunity to grow and be nurtured in a safe environment; without fear and constant threat of punishment, both physical and emotional.

Challenges lie both in the development of legislation and strategies to achieve of social change that will require a huge shift in thinking about appropriate treatment of children within the family. Of particular importance here is the INSPIRE model (WHO, 2016) that brings together

seven strategies that have been shown to be effective in reducing violence against children and identifies the sectors considered best placed to implement each strategy.

i) **i**mplementing and enforcing laws to ban violent punishment of children by parents and other caregivers and to criminalize the sexual abuse of children (justice)
ii) addressing **n**orms and values through changing adherence to restrictive and harmful gender and social norms, community mobilization programmes, and the encouragement of bystander interventions; (health, education, social welfare)
iii) **s**afe environments; (interior, planning)
iv) **p**arent and caregiver support to reduce harsh parenting practices and create positive parent-child relationships; (social welfare, health)
v) **i**ncome and economic strengthening; (finance, labour)
vi) **r**esponse and support services, including for reporting violence; (health, justice, social welfare)
vii) **e**ducation and life skills to increase children's access to more effective, gender-equitable education and social-emotional learning and life-skills training, and ensure that schools environments are safe and enabling (education)

Drawing attention to the high prevalence, but largely hidden nature of violence against children, the WHO report discusses maltreatment as one of six main types of interpersonal violence. Including violent punishment, maltreatment is described as involving physical, sexual and psychological/emotional violence, and neglect occurring most commonly in the home. The model distinguishes between individual, relationship, community and social factors associated with a higher risk of children experiencing violence and draws attention to connections between these factors, arguing both that interventions must be designed with an awareness of the connections, and that interventions focusing on the root causes of violence have greater potential to address multiple forms of violence.

Of particular relevance to this study of child punishment and maltreatment in Iraqi Kurdistan, the INSPIRE model is designed to promote the creation of safe, sustainable, nurturing family environments with specialized help and support for families at risk of violence. The model urges attention to address gender inequities in relationships and the home as well as wider institutions, changes in cultural attitudes and practices that support the use of violence and the elimination of cultural, social and economic inequalities that contribute to violence. It provides a sharp reminder of the need to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of legal frameworks that prohibit violence against

children; and to provide quality services for children affected by violence. Finally, the INSPIRE model focuses attention on economic inequalities, calling for equitable access to goods, services and opportunities; and stresses the need for effective coordination of efforts by multiple to prevent and respond to violence against children. The proposed measures contained within each of the seven strategies draw on interventions across the world that have been shown to be effective or promising (based on measures of statistical significance) or prudent (based on qualitative evidence) in reducing or preventing violence against children.

9.4.4 Establishment of psychosocial centre for children who have experienced abuse

Response and support for children who have been abused, is an important element of the INSPIRE model. Government, with the help of organisations and NGOs, should establish and provide centres - currently unavailable in Kurdistan - to offer psychological interventions for children and families affected by abuse. A team of professionals or a committee including social workers, lawyers and doctors specialised in child care should be organised to monitor cases of child maltreatment in Kurdistan. These professionals could assess cases of maltreated children and provide appropriate interventions for them. Moreover, the government should consider the potential role of foster families and adoption policies to be included in the child protection laws, which do not currently exist in Kurdistan. This approach would help in the mediation process between parents and children, where abused children could stay with foster families, rather than in child care centres. The team, in conjunction with the court, should assess the children's safety and welfare and decide whether the abused children should stay with their families, be taken to a child care centre, or found alternative family care.

9.4.5 The role of social workers

Social workers face acute difficulties when handling cases of child maltreatment due to the lack of legislation. Investigation of such cases often stalls since there are not sufficient laws to support investigation, or to protect social workers in their attempts to protect children from abuse and neglect. The police experience similar problems since they lack the authority to handle domestic violence and child maltreatment cases. If brought to their attention, the police usually attempt a mediation process before arresting seriously abusive parents and taking the case to the court. Even then there are instances where the case will be dismissed and the abused children either returned to their families or remain in child care centres. Overall, the role of social workers in child care, social affair institutions and NGOs like Save the Children and

Help Line 116 is very weak and limited. Interviews with practitioners revealed abusive experiences as some social workers have been assaulted by abusive parents and relatives. The system of tribal law in the region is, in practice, more powerful than state law, and social workers are perceived as a threat, interfering with private family issues.

During field work, I encountered cases of domestic violence, and some mothers referred to experiences of abuse. As a researcher, I had made arrangements to make referrals to women's organisations and governmental organisations for help when, and only when participants wished this to happen . However, through fear of divorce or beatings from their husbands, none wanted to take up the offer of support to contact these organisations. The implication here is that the power base of the Kurdistan region requires a shift from tribal power that reproduces patriarchal hierarchies to one where the state has sufficient power to protect all its citizens from violence and abuse irrespective of age or gender. There is also a great need for an increased number of social workers and the development of social work training facilities to provide qualified social workers for the child care sector, family centre services, clinics, schools and courts, where they could play an important role in serving and protecting children from maltreatment and violence.

9.4.6 The role of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

The Ministry of Education, and The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Kurdistan should consider initiating an awareness-raising campaign for children's protection and rights in schools and university campuses. Moreover, schools and universities should provide seminars and training for teachers about children's rights and child protection. Social workers could help by distributing leaflets on campuses and, contributing to teaching. They could also offer individual counselling sessions, and educational seminars for parents as part of raising wider public awareness of the harms of punishing children. They could also coordinate with school principals to deal with child maltreatment issues and to monitor cases when they happen. Moreover, teachers and school principals should be given a mandate to report suspected child maltreatment cases to the authorities. As with abused mothers, teachers are fearful of the consequences of reporting cases of child maltreatment. Social workers do try to mediate with parents, however, this is rarely effective. In spite of social workers' efforts, many suspected cases of child maltreatment remain unreported. Without a legal framework, and without professional training, the role of social workers remains weak.

9.4.7 The Role of the Ministry of Religion

Religious ideology concerning punishment plays an important factor in child maltreatment issues in Kurdistan as outlined in the introduction to this thesis and in chapter 3 (3.3.2) The Ministry of Religion currently bases its understanding of education on the Quranic and prophetic verse, "*Teach your children to pray at the age of seven and when they do not follow,, punish them. After obedience to God and His Messenger (Muhammad), it is most important for every child to be obedient to his/her parents."* Most parents understandably abide by the above religious text and follow these teachings without question, as well as following the clerics' understanding of child discipline. Some of the rules mentioned in the Shariah permit parents to use punishment 'to carry out the orders of religion'. Given the strength of religious conviction in Kurdistan, the Ministry of Religion must play a key part in enabling parents to understand ways of disciplining children that avoid harm and offering a lead in establishing greater clarity about the unacceptability of punishments that do intrinsic harm to children.

A majority of reported child murder cases in Kurdistan are perpetrated by family members or relatives in the name of religion, to protect a family's honour. In Islam, it is forbidden to engage in pre-marital sex or to commit adultery. These activities are punishable by the throwing of stones until death, without regard to the person's age. As mentioned in previous chapters, the murder of teenage daughters suspected of engaging in relationships and pre-marital sex being killed by family members or relatives is not uncommon. Religion, culture and tradition in Kurdistan are closely interlinked, making it difficult to distinguish between them. In my view, it is clear that some cultural practices lead to child maltreatment. The behaviour of conservative clerics who actively encourage conformity with religious teachings, often in a literal sense, constitutes a significant challenge to the formulation and adoption of legislation, policy and practice designed to prevent children from harm.

9.5 Originality and Significance of the Research

Prior to this study, there have been no academic studies about child maltreatment in Kurdistan, despite growing concerns that are beginning to be expressed publicly. Although I aced a number of challenges in conducting this study (see Chapter Four, 4.10), it is unique as the first and only comprehensive attempt to investigate the extent of physical and psychological punishment and maltreatment in Kurdistan which has the potential to benefit the children of Kurdish society and in turn the whole of Kurdish society in the region and beyond. The study

also serves a first step in establishing evidence and argument on which other researchers in Kurdistan can build, developing a critical vision and interest in issues of child maltreatment and child protection.

Employing mixed methods in this study of child maltreatment represent a new approach to the analysis of child maltreatment, the majority of research studies focusing on statistical surveys, conducted retrospectively, mostly with samples of school children. This study conducted in Erbil City demonstrates that with rigorous planning and sensitivity to cultural norms, particularly in adapting existing questionnaires to encourage high response rates by shaping questions to the cultural realities of Kurdish culture, it has been possible to collect data directly from parents at household level, while the semi-structured interviews with child welfare practitioners and academics has provided complementary contextual data shedding new light on the nature, underlying factors, causes and consequences of punishment and maltreatment of children in the Kurdistan Region. One of the strengths of this study was the random population sample. Many studies of child maltreatment in the world have been undertaken using clinical samples. As a researcher, I was able to obtain a non-clinical sample, which is exceptional in this kind of study.

My hope is that the unique evidence presented in this thesis can form an underpinning evidence base from which decision makers and stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental agencies) can move forward to introduce legislation to protect children in the Region. I also hope that the thesis will make a distinctive contribution to Kurdish social science literature, encouraging fellow academics to chart changing attitudes to child maltreatment and child protection and providing further evidence and argument to inform policy and future practice.

9.6 Further Research

While this study represents a significant achievement in setting a base line of evidence to inform understanding of child maltreatment in Erbil City, in the Kurdistan Region, it has some inevitable limitations in reach and in addressing specific aspects of child maltreatment. These limitations are addressed in this section by making recommendations for further research to deepen understanding of the child maltreatment in Kurdistan and beyond. Important areas for attention include:

1. the replication of this study across the two other main regions in Kurdistan-Iraq: Sulaimania and Dahuk.

2. consideration of the experience of maltreated children who are removed from their families to live in child care centres. This is crucial as it will lead to a much better understanding of the physical, emotional and other aspects of victims' lives, and to better restorative treatments.

3. gender-related issues and how they affect child maltreatment in Kurdistan. This would lead to a deeper understanding of parents' treatment of their daughters and their sons.

4. attention to female genital mutilation. Although not a major feature of the survey in this study, female genital mutilation was mentioned by particpants in the qualitative interviews. More studies are needed concerning female genital mutilation as a form of child maltreatment in Kurdistan, where it is still practised within the region. There is a lack of information and understanding about this hidden, sensitive, gender-related form of maltreatment.

5. child sexual abuse as a well-hidden practice in the region. Little is known of its prevalence or its long-term effects on abused children.

6. the differences and similarities within Kurdistan culture regarding the definition of acceptable punishment and child discipline. New research should focus on the patterns of cultural differences of child discipline within the Kurdish social context, which could help to develop practical definitions of child maltreatment, which could have a wider significance for the cultural variations within other countries.

7. child labour that has become a growing concern in the region resulting from rural urban migration due to unending wars in the Middle East. Kurdistan has been and continues to be, significantly affected by such political instability and it seems likely that many families will continue to struggle to meet their needs depending only on the income of fathers. Future studies need to focus on this form of maltreatment in Kurdish families.

8. the involvement of governmental institutions, NGOs and academic departments in collaborative research to further develop policy and practice in this area.

9. neglect as a form of child maltreatment to gain a better understanding of factors associated with neglect and how it can be prevented.

10. Finally, future studies need to assess the long-term impact of child maltreatment on children as they mature into adults.

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Appendices

Appendix (A) Consent form for Parents (Kurdish draft)

دایك وباوکی بەڕێز

من ناوم (حکیم قادر تەها) یە کە کاندیدی دکتۆرام لە سکوڵ زانستە کۆمەڵایەتییەکان لەزانکۆی دۆرهام لە وواڵتی بەریتانیا، بە سەرپەرشتی هەردوو پرۆفیسۆر سایمون هایکت و هیلین چارنلی.هەروەها لەگەڵ هەردوو هاوکارانم لە توێژرانی کۆمەڵایەتی (مامۆستا گوڵاڵە و مامۆستا هاوژین).

ئەو لێکۆڵینەوەیە سەبارەت بە (خراپی مامەڵە کردن لەگەڵ منداڵ لەلایەن خێزانی کوردی لە هەرێمی کوردستانی عێراق – لێکۆڵینەوەیەکی مەیدانییە لەشاری هەولێر، ئەم چاوپێکەوتنە چەند پرسیارێکی گشتی لەخۆوە دەگرێ سەبارەت بە شێوازی مامەڵەی دایکان و باوکان لەگەڵ منداڵەکەیان. زۆر سوپاستان دەکەم ئەگەر بتوانن توانا و شارەزایی و بیروڕای خۆتان وەك دایك وباوك دەربارەی منداڵ و چونیەتی مامەڵەکردن لەگەڵیدا بخەنە روو .

ئەگەر ڕازی بوویت لە سەرئەنجامدانی ئەم لێکۆلینەوەیە :

1- پێشبینی ئەوە دەکەین کەوا وەاڵمی پرسیارەکان بە شێوازیکی ڕاست و دروست بدەیتەوە. لەکاتێکدا هەر پرسیارێکیش ڕوون نەبوو ئەوا ئازادی پرسیار بکەی .
2- ناوت تۆمار ناکرێت و ناسنامەکەشت ئاشکرا ناکرێت، ئەو زانیاریانە کۆدەکرێتەوە تەنها بۆ مەبەستی ئەنجامدانی لێکۆلینەوەیە، بەهیچ شێوەیەکیش ناگوازرێتەوە بۆ کەسێکی تر.
3- سەرەڕای ئەوەی زانیاریەکانت دەبێتە هۆی دەست کەوتنی وەاڵمێکی زۆر بەاڵم دەکرێت وەاڵمی ئەو پرسیارانە نەدیتەوە کە خۆت حەز بەوەاڵمدانەوەیان ناکەیت.

بەشداری کردنت جێگەی ڕێز وسوپاسە

☐ حەزدەکەم بەشدار بم لەم لێکۆلینەوەیە.

واژوو ..... بەروار .....

Appendix (B) Parents' questionnaire (Kurdish Draft)

A- زانیاری تایبەتی:

1- ڕەگەز(جێندەر) نێر ☐ مێ ☐

2- تەمەن

☐ 26-22 ☐ 31-27 ☐ 36-32 ☐ 41-37 ☐ 46-42 ☐ 52- 56

☐ 61-57 ☐ 62 زیاتر

3-ئاستی خوێندەواری دایك وباوك لە کاتی ئێستادا چی یە ؟ ناتوانێت بخوێنێت و بنوسێت ☐ ئەتوانم بنوسم و بخوێنمەوە ☐

بڕوانامەی سەرەتایی ☐ ڕوانامەی ناوەندی و دواناوەندی ☐ بڕوانامەی دبلۆم ☐

بڕوانامەی بکالۆریۆس ☐ بڕوانامەی ماستەر ☐ بڕوانامەی دکتۆرا ☐

4-ئایا لە بنچینەدا (ئەصل) دا خەڵکی کوێن (لەکوێوە هاتون) ؟

گوندنشین ☐ شارنشین ☐

5- ئەومااڵەی تۆ کە ئێستا تیایدا ئەژیت کەوتۆتە چ گەرەکێکی شاری هەولێر؟ تکایە ناوی گەرەکەکە دەستنیشان بکە ؟

سێتاقان ☐ شۆرش ☐ باداوە ☐ ئازادی ☐ کوران ☐ هەڤاڵان ☐

6- جۆری پیشە ی دایك وباوك چی یە ؟

بێکار ☐ دامەزراوم ☐ کاسب – کاری سەربەست ☐ خانەنیشن کراوم ☐

کابانی ماڵ – ژنی ماڵ ☐ شتی تر .....☐

7- ئەگەر لە حالەتێك تۆ وپیاوەکەت \ ژنەکەت هیچ داهاتێکیان نەبوو کێ یارمەتیان ئەدات ؟

ماڵ دایك و باوکم (مالەٌ باوان) ☐ بەڕیوەبەرایەتی چاودێری کۆمەاڵیەتی – چاودێری خیزان ☐

ڕێکخراوی خەیری (ریکخراوی ناحکومی ،خەلکی خێرخواز ☐ خزمانی تر ☐ دراوسییەکان یارمەتیمان ئەدەن ☐

کەسانی تر (دەست نیشان بکە).....☐

8- ئایا داهاتی مانگانەی خیزانەکەتان چەندە ؟ (بە دیناری عێراقی)

کەمتر لە 200,000 هەزار دینار ☐ 400.000-200.000 هەزار دینار ☐ 600.000-401.000 هەزار دینار ☐

800.000-601.000 هەزار دینار ☐ 1000,000-801.000 هەزار دینار ☐ لە ملیونیك زیاتر ☐

نازانم ☐

9-لەناو ئەوخانوەی کەئێوە تیادا دەژین چەند کەس لە گەڵ ئیوە دەژی ؟ .....کەس

10- چەند منداڵت هەیە ؟ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5-6 ☐ 7-8 ☐ 9-10 ☐

11-12 ☐ 13 بەسەرەوە ☐

11-ئایا لەماوەی پێنج (5) ساڵی رابردوو هیچ سزایەکی منداڵکەت داوە ؟

ژمارەی منداڵ	ڕەگەزی منداڵ		تەمەن	سزادانی منداڵ لەماوەی پێنج ساڵی ڕابردوو	
	نێر	مێ		بەڵێ	نەخێر
منداڵی یەکەم					
منداڵی دووەم					
منداڵی سێیەم					
منداڵی چوارەم					
منداڵی پێنجەم					
منداڵی شەشەم					
منداڵی حەوتەم					
منداڵی هەشتەم					
منداڵی نویەم					
منداڵی دەیەم					
منداڵی یانزەهەم					
منداڵی دووانزەهەم					

B / جۆرەکانی خراپی مامەڵەی جەستەیی و ئازاردان :

12-وەك دایك یان باوك ،ئایا هیچ كات ئەو جۆرە سزا جەستەیانەت بەرامبەر بەمندالّەكەت ئەنجامداوە لەماوەی پێنج سالّی رابردوو؟

ژمارە	جۆرەکانی سزای جەستەیی / لاشەیی	هەمووکات	هەندێك جار	هیچ کات
1	زلە / شەقە لێدان لەدەموچاو			
2	شەقە لێدان/ شاپگرتن لەسەر			
3	گوێ ڕاکێشان			
4	ڕاشەقاندنی منداڵەکە بەتوندی			
5	شاپ /شوت لێدانی منداڵکە بەپێ			
6	داخ کردن/سوتاندنی پەنجەی یان هەر بەشێك لەجەستەی منداڵەکە			
7	بەکارهێنانی صۆندە یان قایش بۆ لێدانی منداڵەکە			
8	زیندانی (حەپس) کردنی منداڵەکە لە حەمام			
9	بەستنەوەی دەست وپێی منداڵەکە			
10	حەپس کردنی بەتەنیا لەناو ژورێکی ماڵ			
11	تێگرتنی شتێك لە بۆدەموچاوی منداڵەکە لەوکاتەنەی کەتوڕەم			
12	قژ/ پرچ ڕاکێشان			
13	برسی کردن/ پێنەدانی خواردن بە منداڵەکە وەك سزایەکی جەستەیی			
14	نوقرچ گرتن/ قونجرکە گرتن لەمنداڵەکە			
15	لێدانی مندڵەکە بە پارچە ئاسنەك یان دار / گۆپار			
16	شتی تر			

C/ شێوازی تری سزادان

 13- لەماوەی پێنج ساڵی رابردوو، تا چ رادەیەك ئەو جۆرە رەفتارەت ئەنجام داوە بەرامبەر منداڵەکەت ؟

ژمارە	جۆرەکانی خراپی مامەڵەی دەروونی (سایکۆلوژی)	هەمووکات	هەندێك جار	هیچ کات
1	تهدید کردنی منداڵەکە بەجۆرێکی زۆر تووندوو تیژ			
2	ترساندن و توقاندنی منداڵ			
3	گاڵتە کردن بە منداڵ (گەمە، قەشمری)			
4	لۆمەیی وسەرزەنشت کردنی منداڵ			
5	بەردەوام رەخنە گرتن لە ئاکار و گوفتار(قسە)ی منداڵەکە			
6	ئیهانەکردن، جنێو پێدان و بانگ کردنیان بەناوی نەشیاو و غیر لائق بەمنداڵەکە			
7	ئیهمال کردنی منداڵ وپشت تیکردن و قسەنەکردن لەگەڵی			
8	ناوزراندن و تشویهکردینی سومعەی منداڵەکە			
9	پشتگوێ خستنی منداڵەکە لە چاودێری تەندروستی ،جلوبەرگ ، خواردن پێدان و کەرەستەی قوتابخانە			
10	قەدەغە کردنی منداڵ لەیاری کردن لەگەڵ هاوڕێکانی			
11	قەدەغەکردنی منداڵ لەسەیرکردنی تەلەفزیۆن			
12	پێنەدانی منداڵ لەخواردن و برسی کردنی			
13	ڕێگەنەدان بەمنداڵەکە بەئەنجامدانی حەزەکانی لە جۆرێك لەچالاکی وەرزشی و هونەریەکان ..هتد			
14	شتی تر			

D- هۆکارەکانی سزادانی رۆڵە و منداڵ کور

14-تاچەند لەگەڵ ئەوەدای یان لەگەڵ ئەوەدانی لەگەڵ ئەو هۆکارانە بۆ سزادانی رۆڵەڤ و کورەکەت ؟

ژ	هۆکارەکان	زۆر بەتوندی ڕازیم(لەگەڵ ئەودام)	ڕازیم(لەگەڵیدام)	لەگەڵ ئەودانیم (ڕازی نیم)	بەتوندی لەگەڵ ئەودانیم (بەتوندی ڕازی نیم)
1	درۆ کردن				
2	شەرکردن لەگەڵ براکەی،خوشکەکەی یان منداڵی تر				
3	گوێرایەڵ نەبوونی دایك و باوك و جیێ بەجێ نەکردنی یاساکانی خێزان				
4	نەچوون و ئامادە نەبوون و وزاهێنان لە قوتابخانە و ڕێز نەگرتنی مامۆستایەکان				
5	ڕێز نەگرتنی پیاو و ژنی بەتەمەن و خیزان و خزم وکەس وکار				
6	هەبوونی پەیوەندی خوشەویستی و جنسی				
7	چونە دەرەوە لەماڵ بەبێ پرس کردن بەدایك وباوك و درەنگ گەرانەوە				
8	زۆر سەیرکردنی تەلەفزیۆن				
9	زیادەڕۆیی کردن لە یارییە کۆمپیوتەریەکان				
10	هەبوونی هاوڕێ زۆر و هێنانیان بۆ ماڵ				
11	ئەنجامدانی لاساری و شەرانگیزی				
12	نان خواردن لەدەرەوەی ماڵ				
13	خواردنەوەی مەشروب و جگەرە کێشان				
14	زۆری داواکاری کەلو پەل و پیداویستی زۆر				
15	گوێرایەڵ نەبوون و جێبەجێ نەکردنی ڕێنمایە ئاینییەکان لەوانەش نوێژ و ڕۆژ				
16	شتی تر				

15- تاچەند لەگەڵ ئەوەدای یان لەگەڵ ئەوەدانی لەگەڵ ئەو هۆکارانە بۆ سزادانی کچەکەت ؟

ژ	هۆکارەکان	زۆر بەتوندی ڕازیم(لەگەڵ ئەوەدام)	ڕازیم(لەگەڵیدام)	لەگەڵ ئەوەدانیم (ڕازی نیم)	بەتوندی لەگەڵ ئەوەدانیم (بەتوندی ڕازی نیم)
1	لەسەر مکیاج کردن				
2	لەبەر کردنی شتی کورت، تەسک ،تەنک و جلو بەرگی سەرنج راکیش وبریقەدار				
3	نەچوون و ئامادە نەبوون و وزاهێنان لە قوتابخانە و ڕێز نەگرتنی مامۆستایەکان				
4	چونە دەرەوە لەماڵ بەبێ پرس کردن بەدایك وباوك و درەنگ گەرانەوە				
5	چات و قسەکردن لەگەڵ کوران				
6	هەبوونی پەیوەندی خوشەویستی یان پەیوەندی سێکسی – جنسی				
7	هاوارکردن و ڕێز نەگرتن لە دایك وباوك				
8	زۆر سەیرکردنی تەلەفزیۆن				
9	چاودێری نەکردن و ئاگا لێنەبوون لە برا یان خوشکە بچووکەکەی				
10	گوێرایەڵ نەبوون و جێبەجێ نەکردنی ڕێنمایە ئاینییەکان لەوانەش نوێژ و ڕۆژ و حیجاب پۆشین				
11	شتی تر				

16-بەشێویەکی گشتی بەبیرورای تۆ ئایا چ جۆرێك لەو سزایانە گونجاوە بۆ کچان؟

ژ	جۆری سزا	زۆر بەتوندی ڕازیم(لەگەڵ ئەوەدام)	ڕازیم(لەگەڵیدام)	لەگەڵ ئەوەدانیم (ڕازی نیم)	بەتوندی لەگەڵ ئەوەدانیم (بەتوندی ڕازی نیم)
1	چاودێریەکی توندی کچەکە بکرێت لەلایەن دایك و باوك، براو و مام بۆ ئەوەی ئەو ڕەفتارە خراپە جارێکی تر دوبارە نەبێتەوە.				
2	سجن کردنی کچەکە لەماڵەوە و ڕێگەپێنەدانی بەچوونە دەرەوە لەماڵ				
3	ڕێگە پێنەدانی لەبەکارهێنانی تەلەفۆن، ئەنتەرنیت بۆ پەیوەندی کردنی لەگەڵ کەسانی تر				
4	تەهدیدکردن و ترساندنی کچەکە بەسزای زۆر توند بەهیوای ئەوەی نەتوانی ئەو ڕەفتارە خراپە دوبارە بکاتەوە				
5	دەرهێنانی لەقوتابخانە و ڕێگەپێندانی بەتەواوی کردنی خوێندن				
6	زوو بەشوودانی بۆ پاراستنی شەرفی خێزان				
7	سزادانی جەستەیی کچەکە زۆر بەتوندی وەك شەق تیهەڵدان و بەکارهێنانی دار و زلە لێدان				
8	ئامۆژگاری کردنی بەڕێگایەکی زۆر هێمنانە و وە ئاگادار و بۆی ڕوون دەکەمەوە کەوا ئەوکارەی ئەوکردویەتی هەڵەیە				
9	داوای یارمەتی لە خزمەکانم ئەکەم بۆ باشترین چارەسەر				
10	داوی یارمەتی لەمامۆستایەکانی دەکەم				
11	بەپێ جۆری کێشەکە مامەلەڵ لەگەڵی دەکەم و جۆری سزاکانیش بەپی جۆری ڕەفتارەکەی کە ئەنجامی ئەدات				
12	شتی تر				

17- بەبیرو ڕای تۆ بەشێوەیەکی گشتی ئایا چ جۆرێك لەو سزایانە گونجاوە بۆ کوران؟

ژ	هۆکارەکان	زۆر بەتوندی ڕازیم(لەگەڵ ئەودام)	ڕازیم(لەگەڵیدام)	لەگەڵ ئەودانیم (ڕازی نیم)	بەتوندی لەگەڵ ئەودانیم (بەتوندی ڕازی نیم)
1	چاودێریەکی تونڈی کورەکە بکرێت لەلایەن دایك و باوك، براو و مام بۆ ئەوەی ئەو ڕەفتارە خراپە جارێکی تر دوبارە نەبێتەوە.				
2	سجن کردنی کورەکە لەماڵەوە و ڕێگەپێنەدانی بەچوونە دەرەوە لەماڵ				
3	ڕێگە پێنەدانی لەبەکارهێنانی تەلەفۆن، ئەنتەرنیت بۆ پەیوەندی کردنی لەگەڵ کەسانی تر				
4	تەهدیدکردن و ترساندنی کورەکە بەسزای زۆر توند بەهیوای ئەوەی نەتوانی ئەو ڕەفتارە خراپە دوبارە بکاتەوە				
5	دەرهێنانی لەقوتابخانە و ڕێگەپێندانی بەتەواوی کردنی خوێندن				
6	زوو ژن هێنان بۆ کورەکەم بۆ پاراستنی شەرفی خێزان				
7	سزادانی جەستەیی کورەکە زۆر بەتوندی وەك شەق تیهەڵدان و بەکارهێنانی دار و زلە لێدان				
8	ئاموژگاری کردنی بەڕێگایەکی زۆر هێمنانە و وە ئاگادار و بۆی ڕوون ئەکەمەوە کەوا ئەوکارەی ئەوکردویەتی هەڵەیە				
9	داوای یارمەتی لە خزمەکانم ئەکەم بۆ باشترین چارەسەر				
10	داوی یارمەتی لەماموّستایەکانی دەکەم				
11	بەپێ جۆری کێشەکە مامەلەّ لەگەڵ دەکەم و جۆری سزاکانیش بەپی جۆری ڕەفتارەکەی کە ئەنجامی ئەدات				
12	شتی تر				

E - کاریگەرییە جەستەیی و دەروونی و کۆمەلایەتییەکانی جۆرە جیاوازەکانی سزادان

18-ئەو کاریگەرییە جەستەیی و دەروونی و کۆمەلایەتیانە چین لەسەر منداڵ کە لەوانەیە لە دەرئەنجامی سزادان رووبدات ؟

جۆری کاریگەرییەکان	کاریگەریکەکان	بەڵێ	نەخێر
کاریگەریە فیزیکیەکان	بریندارببوونی بەچاو بینروا لەسەر لاشەی منداڵەکە وەك شین هەڵگران و کوتران، پەڵە، خوین بەربوون لەلووت، شکانی سەر و باسك و پێ		
	کویربوون بەشێوەیەکی کۆتایی		
	شتی تر		
کاریگەرییە کۆمەلایەتیەکان	گوشەگیری و خودورخستنەوە لە هاوڕێکانی		
	رق لێبوونەوەی دایك وباوك		
	کەمی توانای کۆمەلایەتی		
	باشتربوونی رەفتار		
	هیچ گۆڕانکاریەك لەرفتاری رووی نەدوا نە بەباشی و نەبەخراپی هەروەکو خۆی ماوەتەوە		
	منداڵەکە فێری درۆکردن ئەبیت لەترسی سزادان		
	هەوڵی راکردن و هەڵهاتن دەکات لەماڵ		
	بەبێ هیچ جۆرە پرسیارێك گوێ رایەڵی دایك وباوکی دەبێت		
	بەهیچ شێوەیەك گوێرایەڵی نیزامی(فەرمان) دایك وباوك نابیت و لەهەمان کاتیشدا وشەی نەشیاو غیر لائق بەکار دەهێنێت		
	هەوڵدان یاخود ئەنجامدانی خوکوشتن		

	هەوڵی کوشتنی دایك و باوك ئەدات وەك تۆڵەسەندنەوە		
کاریگەریە دەرونیەکان	خۆ بەکەم زانینین		
	دڵەراوکێ و نائارمی یەکی زۆر		
	ئەبێتە کەسێکی توندوتیژ بەرامبەر براو خوشکەکانی و هاوڕێکانی		
	کەسێکی شەرمن و لەهەموو شتێك پاشەکشە دەکات –انسحاب		
	توشی نەخوشی دەروونی وبەردەوام لەحالەتی ترسدایە		
	لە باریکی ناجێگیر و صدمە دەژی		

F- تێروانین و باوەری دایکان وباوکان

19- تۆ وەك دایکێك یان باوکێك تاچەند لەگەڵ ئەو بیرو باورانە کۆکی یان ناکۆکی سەبارەت بە خراپی مامەڵەکردن لەگەڵ منداڵ ؟

ژ	بیروباوەری دایکان وباوکان	زۆر بەتوندی ڕازیم(لەگەڵیدام)	ڕازیم(لەگەڵیدام)	لەگەڵ ئەودانیم	بەتوندی لەگەڵ ئەودانیم
1	زۆربەی کات دایکان وباوکان منداڵە هەرە گەورەکە سزا ئەدات چونکە منداڵە بچووکە هەموو کات لای ئەوان خوشەویستر و نازی زیاترە				
2	باوکان ودایکان بەتایبەت باوك زیاتر تووندترە بەرامبەر کچەکانیان بەبەراورد لەگەڵ کورەکانیان ئەمەش پەیوەندی بە هۆکاری کۆمەڵایەتی و شەرفی خیزانەوە هەیە				
3	دایکان وباوکان فیربووینە چون سزای منداڵەکانیان بدەن لە دایکان وباوانی خۆیان ،ئەمەش بەو مانایای لە جۆری خراپ مامەڵەکردن لەجیلێك بۆجیلێکی تر				
4	دایکان وباوکان حەقی تەواویان هەیە کە چۆن مامەلە وتەسروف بکەن لەگەڵ منداڵەکانیان ، کەسیش بۆی نیە محاسەبەیان بکات				
5	خزمانی نیزك حەقی تەواویان هەیە کە جۆریك لە پەروردە کردنی منداڵەکانیان بکەن وە منداڵەکانیش ناچارن کە گوێرایەڵیان بکەن				

6	ئەگەر منداڵ لەدایك و باوكی خۆی نەترسی ئەوا فێری ئەوە نابیت كەچۆن ڕێز لەكەسانی تر بگرێت لەناو كۆمەڵگا				
7	دایكان و باوكان پێویستە منداڵەكەی سەربەست و ئازاد نەكات وە دەبیت كە منداڵ گۆڕایەلی تەواوی باوك و دایكی بیت لەوەی كەئەوان باوەڕیان پێیە				
8	دایكان و باوكان ئازادن لەوەی كە زۆر لەمنداڵەكانیان بكەن كە چ ئاینیكیان بۆ هەڵبژیرن و پەیرەوەی داب و نەریتە كۆمەڵایەتیەكانی كۆمەڵگا بن .				
9	سزادانی منداڵ هیچ كات خراپی مامەڵە كردن نیە چونكە دایكان وباوك هەموو كات باشترین شت دەخوازن بۆ منداڵەكانیان لەژیان				
10	هیچ كات لەوە پەشیمان نیم كە منداڵەكەم سزا داوە				
11	لەگەڵ ئەوەی من سزای منداڵەكانم ئەدەم بەلام هەر خۆشم دەوێن				
12	دایكان وباوكان نابێت سزای جەستەیی منداڵەكەیان بدەن بەڵام دەبێ ئەوە نیشان بدەن كە ئەو ڕەفتارەی منداڵەكە دروست نیە و بەڕێگای تر منداڵەكە تێبگەینرێت				
13	سەرەرای ئەوەی تاچەند منداڵەكە ڕەفتارێكی خراپ ئەنجام ئەدات بەلام دەبیت دایك وباوك هەموو كاتێك لێبوردەیان هەبیت				
14	منداڵەكان دەبێ هەموو كات بزانن لەبەرامبەر كارێكی نەشیاو سزادان هەیە لەلایەن دایكان وباوكان هەرچەندە جۆری هەڵە وكەموكوری ڕەفتارەكە با بچوك بێت				

18-ئایا هیچ شتێكی تر ماوە پێمان بڵێیت لەسەر شێوازەكانی سزادانی منداڵ لە هەرێمی كوردستان؟.....

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بەشداری كردنت لەو لەو لێكۆڵینەوەیەدا جێگەی ڕێز و سوپاسە

Appendix (C) Consent form : Parents' questionnaire

Dear Parents,

My name is Hakim Qadir Taha and I am a PhD Candidate in School of Applied Social Sciences in Durham University in the UK. This study is under the supervision of Professor Simon Hackett and Helen Charnley. The study is about "child maltreatment in Kurdish families in Kurdistan region - Iraq – A field study in Erbil city. This questionnaire includes some general questions about the way in which parents treat their children. I would be grateful if you would share your experience and your views about how children should be treated.

If you agree to take part in the study:

1- You are expected to answer the questions honestly. If any of the questions do not seem clear to you, feel free to ask me.

2- Your name will not be recorded, and your identity will not be revealed. You can be assured that participation is anonymous. The information collected will only be used for the purposes of this study and will not be passed on to anyone else.

3- Although it will help to have a full set of responses, you may leave any question you do not wish to answer.

I appreciate your participation and support in advance.

☐ I would like to participate in this research

Signature…… Date ……. …..

Appendix (D) Parents' questionnaire

A. Personal information

Please write your personal information

1- Gender Male ☐ Female ☐

2- Age

☐ 22-26 ☐ 32-36 ☐ 42-46 ☐ 52-56 ☐ 62 or More

☐ 27 -31 ☐ 37-41 ☐ 47-51 ☐ 57-61

3- What is your current education level?

- ☐ Unable to read or write
- ☐ I can write and read
- ☐ Primary certificate
- ☐ Secondary certificate
- ☐ Diploma degree
- ☐ Bachelors' degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctorate degree

4- Where are you originally from?

- ☐ From the Village
- ☐ From the City

5- Which neighbourhood is your house currently located in Erbil? Please provide us with the name of the region?

- ☐ Setaqan
- ☐ Dollarawa
- ☐ Badawa
- ☐ Havalan
- ☐ Tahjel
- ☐ Mantikawa
- ☐ Azadi
- ☐ Glkanad

6- Occupational status?

- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Housekeeper
- ☐ Others

7- If neither you nor your husband/wife has an income, who supports your family?

- ☐ Your parents
- ☐ The directorate of social affairs
- ☐ Charity centres (NGOs, people)
- ☐ Other relatives
- ☐ Neighbours
- ☐ Other (specify)

8- How much is your monthly household income? (In Iraqi Dinars)

- ☐ 1000- 199,000 ID
- ☐ 200,000-400,000 ID
- ☐ 401,000-600,000 ID
- ☐ 601,000-800,000 ID
- ☐ 801,000-1,000,000 ID
- ☐ More than 1,000,000 ID
- ☐ Do not know

9- How many people are there in your family or living in your household?

……

10- How many children do you have?

☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5-6 ☐ 7-8 ☐ 9-10 ☐ 11-12 ☐ 13 or More

11. Have you used punishment during the last five years?

The number of children	Child's sex Female Male		Age	During last 5 years have you punished them?	
				Yes	No
1st child					
2nd child					
3rd child					
4th child					
5th child					
6th child					
7th child					
8th child					
9th child					
10th child					
11th child					
12th child					

B. Types of Physical punishment and abuse

12. As a parent, have you ever used any of the following types of physical punishment on your children in the past five years?

No.	Types of corporal punishment	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	Slapping on the face			
2	Hitting on the head			
3	Twisting the ears			
4	Shaking the child strongly			
5	Kicking the child with my feet			
6	Biting the child's body			
7	Whipping with a hosepipe or belt			
8	Confinement of the child in the bathroom			
9	Fastening the child's hands and feet			
10	Solitary confinement of the child in the home			
11	Throwing something at my child's face or body when I am angry			
12	Hair pulling			
13	Starving them as a physical punishment			
14	Pinching			
15	Hitting with pieces of iron or stick			
16	Others			

C. Other forms of Punishment

13. In the past 5 years, how often have you behaved towards your children in the following ways?

No.	Types of physiological maltreatment	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	Threatening them with violence			
2	Scaring the child			
3	Being contemptuous of the child			
4	Scolding them			
5	Continuous criticism of the actions and speech of the child			
6	Insulting, cursing and calling them by inappropriate names.			
7	Ignoring the child and not talking to him or her			
8	Discrediting the child			
9	Neglecting your child in health care issues, clothing, providing nutritious food or school materials			
10	Depriving the child of playing with his or her friends			
11	Preventing the child from watching TV			
12	Depriving the child of food			
13	Not allowing the child to pursue his favourite type of sports activities or art, etc.			
14	Others			

D- Reasons for punishing sons

14- How much do you agree or disagree with the following reasons for punishing your sons?

No.	Reasons	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	Telling lies				
2	Fighting with his brothers, sisters, or other children				
3	Disobeying parents and family rules				
4	Failing to attend school or not respecting the teachers				
5	Not respecting elderly people, family and relatives				
6	Having a love relationship				
7	Going out without taking permission and coming back late				
8	Watching too much TV				
9	Playing excessive computer games				
10	Having lots of friends and inviting them to the house				
11	Committing offences				
12	Eating out				
13	Drinking alcohol and smoking				
14	Being demanding (Asking for lots of stuff)				
15	Not conforming to religious norms, for example prayer, fasting.				
16	Others				

15- How much do you agree or disagree that the following are reasons for punishing your daughters?

No	Reasons	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	For wearing make up				
2	For wearing shorts, tights or flashy clothes				
3	Failing to attend school or not respecting the teachers				
4	For going out without parental permission and coming back late				
5	Chatting with boys				
6	Having a love affair, or sexual relations				
7	Shouting and not respecting parents				
8	Watching too much TV				
9	Not taking care of her younger brothers and sisters				
10	Not conforming to religious norms, for example prayer, fasting, wearing the *hijab*				
11	Others				

16- What do you think, in general, are appropriate punishments for girls?

No.	Types of family punishment for girls	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	Strict observation by the parents, brothers and uncles to make sure the misbehaviour won't be repeated				
2	Imprison the girl inside the house, and ban her from going out				
3	Not letting her use the phone or internet to communicate with others				
4	Threatening her with strong punishment hoping that she won't repeat the 'misbehavior'				
5	Banning her from going to school				
6	Forcing her to marry, to maintain family honour				
7	Physically punishing her severely like beating, whipping, hitting, etc.				
8	Advising her in a quiet way and letting her know that she is wrong				
9	Asking my relatives for advice regarding her				
10	Asking her teachers for help				
11	Dealing with her according to the type of the problem				
12	Others				

17- What do you think, in general, are appropriate punishment for boys?

No.	Types of family punishment for boys	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	Strict observation by the parents, brothers and uncles to make sure the misbehaviour won't be repeated				
2	Imprison the boys inside the house, and ban him from going out				
3	Not letting him use the phone or internet to communicate with others				
4	Threatening him with strong punishment hoping that he won't repeat the 'misbehavior'				
5	Banning him from going to school				
6	Forcing him to marry, to maintain family honour				
7	Physically punishing him severely like beating, whipping, hitting, etc.				
8	Advising him in a quiet way and letting him know that he is wrong				
9	Asking my relatives for advice about him				
10	Asking his teachers for help				
11	Dealing with him according to the type of problem				
12	Others				

E- The physical, psychological and social consequences of different kinds of punishment?

18. What are the possible physical, psychological and social consequences of different kinds of punishment?

	Consequences	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
Physical consequences	Visible injury to the child's body like bruises, scars, nose bleeding, and injury to the head, arms or legs				
	Permanent eye injuries				
	Others				
Social consequences	Isolation from friends				
	Hatred for parents				
	Lack of social skills				
	improved behaviour				
	None: (the child resumes his/her behavour and nothing changes)				
	Child learns to lie through fear of corporal punishment				

	Attempts to run away from home				
	Begin obeying the parental orders without question				
	Doesn't follow parental disciplines and uses improper language				
	Committing or attempting suicide				
	Attempting to kill the parents to take revenge				
Psychological consequences	Low self-esteem				
	Anxiety and extreme stress				
	Aggression against siblings or friends				
	Being reserved and introverted				
	Psychological illnesses and phobias				
	Traumatic disorders				

F. Parents perspectives and beliefs

19. As a parent, how much do you agree or disagree with the following beliefs about Child punishment?

N	Parents Beliefs	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1	Parents often punish the older child more than the younger ones because the younger one is usually their favourite				
2	Parents, especially the father, are stricter towards their daughters rather than their sons and this relates to questions of social and family honour				
3	Parents learn how to punish children from their own families, and this phenomena transfers from one generation to the next				
4	Parents have the right to behave towards their children in whatever way they like; no one should question their decisions				
5	Relatives have the right to discipline the children or to set obligations for them				
6	If children are not afraid of their parents, they will not learn how to respect other people in society				

7	Parents shouldn’t give freedom to their children and children must obey what their parents say and believe				
8	Parents are free to punish their children if they don't follow religious and social traditions				
9	Child punishment is not maltreatment because parents always wish the best for their children				
10	I have never regretted punishing my children				
11	Despite punishing my children, I still love them				
12	Parents should not punish the child physically, but show disapproval of their misbehaviour in other ways				
13	Regardless of how big the mistake is, when the child does something wrong, parents should tolerate it				
14	Children should know that they will be punished by their parents no matter how minor their misbehaviour				

20. Is there anything you would like to say in this research about forms of punishing children in Kurdistan-Iraq?

……
……
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……
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Thank you and I appreciate your participation

Appendix (E) Consent form (Kurdish Draft) for interview with practitioners, policy makers, NGOs and academic staff at University of Salahadin

فۆرمی رازی بوون چاوپێکەوتن لەگەڵ پسپۆران و بریاردەران و داڕێژەرانی سیاسەت ، ڕێکخراوە ناحکومیەکان ،ڕێکخراوی منداڵ پاریزان و ستافی ئەکادیمی لە زانکۆی سەلاحەدین

بەڕێز.....

من ناوم (حکیم قادر تەها) یە کە کاندیدی دکتۆرام لە سکوڵ زانستە کۆمەڵایەتییەکان لەزانکۆی دۆرهام لە وولاتی بەریتانیا، بە سەرپەرشتی هەردوو پرۆفیسۆر سایمون هایکت و هیلین چارنلی.

ئەو لێکۆڵینەوەیە سەبارەت بە (خراپی مامەڵە کردن لەگەڵ منداڵ لەلایەن خێزانی کوردی لە هەرێمی کوردستانی عێراق – لێکۆڵینەوەیەکی مەیدانییە لەشاری هەولێر، ئەم چاوپێکەوتنە چەند پرسیارێکی گشتی لەخۆوە دەگرێ سەبارەت بە شێوازی مامەڵەی دایکان و باوکان لەگەڵ منداڵەکەیان. زۆر سوپاستان دەکەم ئەگەر بتوانن توانا و شارەزایی و بیرورای خۆتان دەربارەی منداڵ و چونیەتی مامەڵەکردن لەگەڵیدا بخەنە ڕوو .

ئەگەر رازی بوویت لە سەرئەنجامدانی ئەم لێکۆلینەوەیە :

4- **پێشبینی ئەوە دەکەین کەوا وەڵامی پرسیارەکان بە شێوازیکی ڕاست و دروست بدەیتەوە. لەکاتێکدا هەر پرسیارێکیش ڕوون نەبوو ئەوا ئازادی پرسیار بکەی .**
5- **ناوت تۆمار ناکرێت و ناسنامەکەشت ئاشکرا ناکرێت، ئەو زانیاریانە کۆدەکرێتەوە تەنها بۆ مەبەستی ئەنجامدانی لێکۆلینەوەیە، بەهیچ شێوەیەکیش ناگوازرێتەوە بۆ کەسێکی تر.**
6- **سەرەڕای ئەوەی زانیاریەکانت دەبێتە هۆی دەست کەوتنی وەڵامێکی زۆر بەڵام دەکرێت وەڵامی ئەو پرسیارانە نەدیتەوە کە خۆت حەز بەوەڵامدانەوەیان ناکەیت.**

بەشداری کردنت جێگەی ڕێز وسوپاسە

☐ **حەزدەکەم بەشدار بم لەم لێکۆلینەوەیە.**

واژوو ..... بەروار .....

Appendix (F) Consent form for an interview with practitioners, policy makers, NGOs and academic staff at the University of Salahaddin

Dear…….

My name is Hakim Qadir Taha and I am a PhD Candidate in the School of Applied Social Sciences in Durham University in the UK. This study is under the supervision of Professor Simon Hackett and Ms. Helen Charnley. The study is about "child maltreatment in Kurdish families in Kurdistan region-Iraq – A field study in Erbil city". This interview includes some general questions about the way in which parents treat their children. I would be grateful if you would share your experience and your views about how children should be treated.

If you agree to take part in the study:

1- You are expected to answer the questions honestly. If any of the questions do not seem clear to you, feel free to ask me.

2- Your name will not be recorded, and your identity will not be revealed. You can be assured that your participation is anonymous. The information collected will only be used for the purposes of this study and will not be passed on to anyone else.

3- Although it will help to have a full set of responses, you may leave out any question you do not wish to answer.

I appreciate your participation and support in advance.

☐ I would like to participate in this research

Signature…… Date ……. …..

Appendix (G) Interview questions with practitioners, policy makers, NGOs, children's organisations, and academic staff at the University for Salahaddin

چاوپێکەوتن لەگەڵ پسپۆران و بریاردەران و داڕێژەرانی سیاسەت ، ڕێکخراوە ناحکومیەکان ،ڕێکخراوی مندڵ پارێزان و ستافی ئەکادیمی لە زانکۆی سەلاحەدین .

- How would you define child maltreatment?
- **چۆن پێناسەی خراپی مامەڵەکردن لەگەڵ منداڵ ئەکەی ؟یان مەبەست چی یە لەخراپی مامەڵەکردنی خێزان لەگەڵ منداڵ؟**

- What are the most common forms of physical maltreatment used by parents in Erbil city?

- **ئایا چ جۆرە خراپ مامەڵەکردنێکی جەستەیی(فیزیکی) زۆر بەکار دەهێنرێت لەلایەن دایکان و باوکان لە شاری هەولێر ؟**

- What are the most common forms of psychological maltreatment used by parents?

- **ئایا چ جۆرە خراپ مامەڵەکردنێکی دەروونی(سایکۆلۆژی) زۆر بەکار دەهێنریت دژی منداڵ لەلایەن دایك و باوك ؟**
- How frequently do you think parents psychologically and/or physically maltreat their children?

- **بەبیرورای تۆ تاچەند (بە بەردەوامی) خراپی مامەڵەی فیزیکی و سایکۆلوژی دژ بە منداڵ ئەنجام دەدرێ؟**
- Who is more likely to maltreat their children, mothers or fathers? Please explain how and why?

- **ئایا کامەیان زیاتر (دایك یان باوك) مامەڵەی خراپ دەکات لەگەڵ منداڵ ؟ ئەمە هۆکارەکەی لەبەرچییە ؟**

- Who do you think is more subject to maltreatment, male or female children?

- **ئایا بەرای تۆ منداڵ کورِ یان کچ زیاتر ڕووبەرووی مامەڵەی خراپ دەبێتەوە؟**

- What role, if any, does gender play in the maltreatment of children?

- **ئایا تا چەند جێندەر(ڕەگەز) ڕۆڵ هەیە لە خراپی مامەڵەی منداڵ ؟**

- In which circumstances do parents maltreat their daughters physically and/or psychologically?

  - **لەچ بارودۆخێك باوکان و دایکان مامەڵەی خراپی جەستەیی و دەروونی لەگەڵ کچەکەیان دەکەن ؟**

- In which circumstances do parents maltreat their sons physically and/or psychologically?

  - **لەچ بارودۆخێك باوکان و دایکان مامەڵەی خراپی فیزیکی و دەروونی لەگەڵ کورەکەیان دەکەن ؟**

- What are the types of punishments that are specified for girls? And does this differ for male children?

  - **ئەو جۆرە سزایانە چی یە کە دەستنیشان کراوە بۆ کچان ؟ ئایە هیچ جیاوازیەك هەیە لەجۆری سزایەکە لەکەڵ منالأنی کور (ئایا کورانیش هەمان سزا رووبەرویان دەبیتەوە یان جۆری سزایەکەیان جیاوازە).**

- What do you think are the physical, psychological, and social consequences of maltreatment on children?

  - **ئایا بەبیرورای تۆ خراپی مامەڵەی منداڵ چ جۆرە دەرهاویشتەیەکی فیزیکی و کۆمەڵایەتی و دەروونی دەبێت لەسەر منداڵ؟**

- What is parents' attitude towards the issue of child maltreatment?

  - **ئایا دایکان و باوکان چۆن دەڕواننە بابەتی خراپ مامەڵە کردن لەگەڵ منداڵ ؟(مەوقیف و تەوجهی دایکان و باوکان سەبارەت بە مەسەلەی خراپ مامەڵە کردن چۆنە؟**

- In your view what can be done to reduce the maltreatment of children in Kurdish families?

  - **بەبیرورای تۆ ، ئایا چی بکری بۆ کەمکردنەوەی خراپی مامەڵەکردنی خیزانی کوردنی لەکەڵ منداڵ؟**

Appendix (H) List of NGO's

لیستی ئەو سەنتەر و ڕێکخراوانەی کە دەتوانین ئامۆژگاری و یارمەتی بدەن بە بەشداربوان کە خۆی داوای بکات

بەڕێوەبەرایەتی تووندوتیژی دژ بەئافرەتان

1- Directorate of following up Violence against Women

Address/Location	Erbil- nrench Consulate
Contact phone	07504860228
Contact person/email	Zhelamio Abdulqadr, zhelamo1973@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Listening and counselling services and follow up of cases of violence against women
Services for	Women and girls of all ages
Cost	Free
Other services	Social and legal awareness

2- Child Helpline Centre

Address/Location	Erbil
Contact phone	116
Contact person/email	Hassan Majeed
Types of services provided	Psycho-social and legal services
Services for	Children from age 3 to 17
Cost	Free
Other services	Removing children from the family to alternative care

3- Psychological Services Organisation

Address/Location	Badawa QR, Near Huda Supermarket
Contact phone	07504611576
Contact person/email	Dalia Dashti Dzady. daliadzay@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, listening and counselling
Services for	All ages for men, women, boys and girls
Cost	No cost
Other services	Social Awareness

4- Kurdistan Union Women (part of PUK-Party)

Address/Location	Kirkuk Street near TOYOTA company
Contact phone	07504468528
Contact person/email	
Types of services provided	Emotional support, listening and counselling
Services for	All ages for men, women, boys and girls
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

5- Ammar Organisation

Address/Location	Ainkawa behind Chawr Chra Hotel
Contact phone	07504194645
Contact person/email	
Types of services provided	Emotional support, listening and counselling
Services for	All ages for men, women, boys and girls
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

6- Chand Organisation for Solving Family Problems

Address/Location	Iskan QR beside Social Workers Association
Contact phone	07504467573
Contact person/email	Samia Othman. samiaothman@gmail.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, listening and counselling
Services for	All ages for men, women, boys and girls
Cost	No cost
Other services	

7-Warvin Institute for Women's Issues

Address/Location	Ankawa near Mar Usif Church
Contact phone	07504510666
Contact person/email	Lanja Ebdulla . lanjaebdulla@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, listening and counselling
Services for	All ages for men, women, boys and girls
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal Services

8- Kurdistan Women's Association

Address/Location	Runaki QR near Barzani High School
Contact phone	07501060657
Contact person/email	Shno-65@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, listening and counselling
Services for	All ages for men, women, boys and girls
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

9- Women's Empowerment Organisation

Address/Location	Ankawa near Ankawa Oil Station
Contact phone	07501349501
Contact person/email	shaharzadd@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, listening and counselling
Services for	All ages for men, women, boys and girls
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

10- PAO- Organisation

Address/Location	Near Sheraton Hotel
Contact phone	07506496896
Contact person/email	Tani-Land@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, listening and counselling
Services for	All ages for men, women, boys and girls
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

11-Human Legal Service and Women Rights Organisation

Address/Location	Near Sheraton Hotel
Contact phone	07506496896
Contact person/email	Tani-Land@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, listening and counselling
Services for	Only women
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

12-AL-Mesalla Organisation

Address/Location	Erbil-University.QT
Contact phone	07504150511
Contact person/email	abdullaxalid@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, Crisis counselling, support groups, ongoing individual counselling/therapy.
Services for	Men and Women
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

13-Investigation and Information of Gender

Address/Location	City centre, Near Sheraton Hotel
Contact phone	075046332261
Contact person/email	Ramziya-zana@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, Crisis counselling, support groups, ongoing individual counselling/therapy.
Services for	Men and women
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

14-Kurdish Women United

Address/Location	Justice Quarter ,Near College of Arts,Erbil
Contact phone	07504908065
Contact person/email	Walat2004@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, Crisis counselling, support groups, ongoing individual counselling/therapy.
Services for	Men and women
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

15-Centre for Victims of Abuse

Address/Location	30 m.st-near Dim Dim Hotel ,Erbil.
Contact phone	07503230995
Contact person/email	Bayan.journalist@gmail.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, Crisis counselling, support groups, ongoing individual counselling/therapy.
Services for	Men and women
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

16- Gashben Centre

Address/Location	Erbil city
Contact phone	07504914806
Contact person/email	
Types of services provided	Emotional support, Crisis counselling, support groups, ongoing individual counselling/therapy.
Services for	Men and women
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

17-Tahel Al-Mara

Address/Location	Ankawa Quarter ,Sumer St. Erbil
Contact phone	07701606626
Contact person/email	Woman.centre@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, Crisis counselling, support groups, ongoing individual counselling/therapy.
Services for	Women, men ,boys and girls
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

18-Womens Rehabilitation Centre

Address/Location	Bakhyare, Erbil
Contact phone	07504484363
Contact person/email	Tanya-ranjdar@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Emotional support, Crisis counselling, support groups, ongoing individual counselling/therapy
Services for	Girls and women 10 years +
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

19- Pare Organisation

Address/Location	Roonaky, Erbil
Contact phone	07504459403
Contact person/email	jkbaban@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Representation in court, mediation, advice/legal counselling.
Services for	Women, men, boys and girls of all ages
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services

20-Women's Legal Network

Address/Location	Ankawa Quarter ,Near American Corselet,Erbil
Contact phone	07504456809
Contact person/email	shirnamedee@yahoo.com
Types of services provided	Representation in court ,Mediation, Advice/Legal counselling
Services for	Women, men, boys and girls of all ages
Cost	No cost
Other services	Legal services