

**Investigating the impact of ethnicity  
on citizens' reflecting urban problems  
of urban deteriorated areas in Iran:  
the case of Takab city**

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## Abstract

Even though Iran is one of the most diverse countries in terms of ethnicity, and numerous articles in urban studies have emphasised the key role of citizens' views in urban issues, the connection between these two has remained less investigated in this country. This study tried to answer two important questions. Firstly, whether citizens' ethnicity impacts their view on reflecting urban problems; and, secondly, if so, whether ethnicity could act as a predicting factor in this regard. For this, 150 Azeri and Kurd residents of urban deteriorated areas in Takab city were interviewed by questionnaires. To analyse the outcomes of the questionnaires, different statistical tests including rank-biserial, Pearson chi-square, and Ordinal Logistic Regression (OLR) were employed. The results revealed that ethnicity does have a significant impact on the level of citizens' reflecting urban problems. More importantly, the OLR model outcomes suggested that the Kurd ethnic group showed less level of complaining about urban problems. After investigating the underlying reasons for this outcome, it appeared that Kurds tend to "acquiesce" after many years of being discriminated against as a minority ethnic group. Consequently, these results further underlined how influential factor ethnicity is in citizens' conception of their neighbourhood.

**Keywords:** citizens' ethnicity, ethnic discrimination, level of urban problems reflection, Azeri and Kurd ethnic groups, urban deteriorated areas

## 1. Introduction

Citizens' perspectives have a pivotal role in determining problems of urban facilities, services and conditions, especially when it comes to the urban problems in urban deteriorated areas (UDAs) – (Najd Ataei Sarkarabad et al., 2021). Alex Y. H. Loa and C. Y. Jim (2012) believed that the citizens' conceptions and expectations should be solicited and factored into the planning of urban public spaces. They stated a simple reason for this is that the citizens' appreciation and taking care of urban facilities and services emanate from their pragmatic needs, which they could properly distinguish rather than anyone else. Therefore before urban planners and authorities could come together to plan for a neighbourhood, they need to identify urban shortcomings from residents' views, and residents' ethnicity has always been

a central influential feature of this identification (Howell 2015). This especially applies to Iran that is the second country in the Middle East and North Africa in terms of ethnic diversity (Hosseini, Erfani, 2014). However, the relationship between urban planning and ethnicity is not simply a story about the inclusion or exclusion of statically defined demographic groups; rather, it is about respecting the influence of their viewpoint concerning the neighbourhood and the city they live in (Howell 2015).

Finding out about citizens' viewpoints toward urban facilities, services and conditions has been important not only for scholars but also for urban administrators (Ryzin 2004). Thus, much research has been conducted by urban administrators to evaluate the level of citizens' satisfaction toward urban services (James 2007). However, these evaluations are not only having general managerial purposes (James 2007), but also misleading due to two reasons: first, the technical method of the survey that may cause to not reflect actual service performance, and, second, lack of knowledge of statistical science to correctly analyse the outcomes (Stipak 1979). So to address the theoretical questions and to have a more accurate analysis the scientific approach toward the issue seems inevitable.

Consequently, several scientific studies have shown the importance of this subject and have suggested indicators for its evaluation. For instance, Ocean Howell (2015) encapsulated the residents' reflections and expressions of urban problems as "desirability", and highlighted its significant importance. He mentioned that the "desirability" of a neighbourhood could be determined by weighing several attributes including land use accessibility, age and condition of structures, urban roads and transportation conditions, ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics of the population, among other considerations. Likewise, Sebastian Zenker, Sibylle Petersen and Andreas Aholt (2009) illustrated four distinct dimensions that could affect citizens' urban problem reflection and their satisfaction level toward a city. The four dimensions in their study were urbanity and diversity, nature and recreation, job chances, and cost-efficiency. As they concluded, among these four dimensions, "urbanity and diversity" has the strongest impact on citizens' satisfaction and their level of problem reflection. In their article, "urbanity and diversity" is described as the services offered to the citizens by the city and the openness and tolerance of a city for dealing

with multiple cultures and ethnic groups. As a result, the cities and the neighbourhoods where can offer these two qualities could enjoy a high level of their citizens' satisfaction.

Moreover, studies illustrated that citizens' expectations and their perceived quality of urban facilities, services and conditions have a significant and independent influence on their level of satisfaction (Roch, Poister, 2006). That is, the wider the gap between citizens' expectations and perception of urban facilities, services and conditions, the less level of satisfaction. As Rob Weymouth and Janette Hartz-Karp (2019) suggested, one potential solution to close the gap between citizens' expectations and satisfaction is to invoke their participation in urban governing. Moreover, they saw this solution as effective in stimulating trust, a vital component of citizens' confidence in public authorities. More importantly, Jarl K. Kampen, Steven van de Walle and Geert Bouckaert (2006) has shown the breaking down of trust happens easier than its building up. Therefore, they believed that the impact of citizens' negative experiences with urban authorities needs a lot of effort to be compensated and rebuilt the broken trust.

Maciej Kowalewski (2019) discussed the concept of the urban residents' "propensity to complain" and describe it as expressing dissatisfaction with an urban service. However, he stated that not all citizens equally reflect and complain about urban problems. Some scholars investigated this variation. For instance, Peer Smets and Marion den Uyl (2008) stated there is an evident difference in the cultural and ethnic appreciation toward urban environments like urban green spaces. Similarly, Ray Hutchison (1987) pointed out that differences in citizens' perception of urban facilities and services, e.g. urban parks and recreation centres, may be a consequence of distinctive ethnic subcultures, the social class positions of a particular group, or a more complex interplay between the two.

The findings of some studies suggested that the marginalised social groups have distinct identities, based on ethnicity, language and religion, and these demand a form of difference-specific citizenship that respects their interests and needs regarding public space (Li 2014). Also, some scholars argue that, because of the unequal provision of urban facilities, segregation of housing markets and unequal distri-

bution of incomes, minority ethnic groups are expected to have value orientations and social activities which differ systematically from those of the dominant society (Hutchison 1987; Heynen et al., 2006). However, some believed residential segregation is along class lines rather than racial and ethnic ones (Smets, den Uyl, 2008).

According to Florina Maria Bente (2014), the satisfaction level of citizens is influenced by their ethnicity. Either community-level or individual characteristics reasons can be attributed to this (van Ryzin et al., 2004).

At the community level, four reasons have been proposed to explain this correlation. Gregg G. van Ryzin, Douglas Muzzio and Stephen Immerwahr (2004) argued that one reason for the ethnic gap in the level of community for reflecting urban problems are disparities in socio-economic status (SES), (e.g. income, level of education and suchlike), among ethnic groups, particularly in urban areas. They believed disparities in SES could influence satisfaction with urban services in several ways. They also stated that the ethnic differences in reflecting urban problems may depict underlying SES differences among ethnic groups in the city. Citizens with lower SESs reflect the level of urban problems less severe because of a tendency to "acquiesce"; that is, they stated "there is no problem" regardless of the survey questions (Ross, Mirowsky, 1984). This group of citizens, as Catherine E. Ross and John Mirowsky (1984) explained, are reluctant to be seen as too critical of their living environment and government performance, thus it is more likely to give "socially desirable" answers. The other reason, apart from SES status, is that many cross-cultural studies have found some consistent ethnic differences in survey response; for instance, they found out that minority ethnic groups tend to choose the extremes scales of Likert more often than majority ethnic group and tend to show acquiescence by giving "socially desirable" answers (Bachman, O'Malley, 1983; Hui, Triandis, 1989; Marin et al., 1992). The next reason is that the different neighbourhoods and the ethnic groups living in them may enjoy different levels of urban facilities, services and conditions (van Ryzin et al., 2004). This simply is because of the discriminated attitude of urban administrators in providing urban facilities and services concerning neighbourhoods' SES (van Ryzin et al., 2004). The final reason at the community level is that the ethnic

minorities reported less confidence and trust in government than the majority ethnic group (Hero, Tolbert, 2004).

Along with community-level reasons, personal characteristics emanated from individuals' ethnic group membership could explain the correlation between the citizens' level of urban problem reflection and their ethnicity. Fredrik Barth (1969) discussed that personal characteristics could emanate from the person's ethnic identity. Moreover, as Deniz Akgul (2012) mentioned, "personal characteristics" is one of the influential factors on the citizens' level of demands and expectations. Besides, the essential reason for the difference in reflecting urban problems between minority and majority ethnic groups may spring from ethnic discrimination. Discrimination against minority ethnicity has different features, from lack of opportunities to maintain their own heritage language and identity (Thapa, Adamson, 2018), to disparity in housing, employment, education and other socio-economic conditions and qualities (Chae et al., 2011). Ethnicity boundaries which were set between minority and majority, who possess the central government power, caused the minority ethnicity to be perceived as too alien or politically unreliable for incorporation or amalgamation (Wimmer 2008), like Kurds to their central states. These boundaries follow from the isolation which implies: ethnic and cultural differences, social segregation and language barriers, and even enmity. This has the potential of seriously limiting an individual's rights and quality of life (Ullah, Chatteraj, 2018). Discrimination over time can give rise to cumulative disadvantage and this, in turn, can lead to long-term exclusion (Dolinski 1996). This exclusion shows its negative impact in situations where social networking matters, e.g. employment, education, health care and access to urban facilities and services (Dolinski 1996). Hence, it goes without saying that discrimination has very grave consequences both for ethnic minority groups in general and their members in particular (Dolinski 1996). One obvious result of ethnic discrimination is the reduction of personal self-esteem and low self-worth (Dolinski 1996; Verkuyten 2003; Eccleston, Major, 2006; Armenta, Hunt, 2009; Stark et al., 2015). As Russell Eisenman and Terry D. Townsend (1970) found, low self-esteem leads to acquiescence in answering.

Nowadays multi-culturalism and ethnic diversity are increasingly acknowledged in urban settings (Li 2014). Furthermore, many studies on citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards a service revealed that ethnicity is one of the most important predictors if not the only one (Vigoda-Gadot 2006; Bente 2014). However, most of these studies have focused on service satisfaction in other fields (i.e. customer services, police services and banking) rather than urban studies and only a few (van Ryzin et al., 2004; Bente 2014) have investigated this field. As a result, considerable negligence is obvious in the field. Moreover, these urban studies have mainly highlighted a link between minority ethnicity and their conception of urban facilities and services in the West (Zang 2007). Xiaowei Zang (2007) believed that the persistent emphasis of ethnic studies in the West, on the link between minority ethnicity (non-whites) and attitude toward urban issues, is probably because of constant changes in the composition of the ethnic population due to new immigrants from less developed countries. Despite the studies that have been conducted in this regard, M. Kowalewski (2019) believed that the relationship between ethnicity and the citizens' viewpoint toward urban problems still needs to be further studied.

Few studies have been conducted on the relationship between ethnicity and urban issues in Iran, and hardly any have examined how ethnicity affects citizens' perceptions of urban problems in this country.

The research questions of the present article are, firstly, to find out whether there is a significant impact of ethnicity on citizens' reflecting and expressing urban problems, and, secondly, to understand whether the citizens' ethnicity could be a predicting factor for the reflection of urban problems.

To answer these questions, the 150 randomly chosen residents of urban deteriorated areas (UDAs) in Takab city in West Azerbaijan province of Iran were studied as the case study by application of questionnaires. Residents of UDAs were face to face questioned. After a brief introduction of Kurds as the minority ethnic group, by use of rank-biserial correlation, the Pearson chi-square, and subsequently Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis, the hypotheses were tested. The hypotheses were that ethnicity has a significant impact on citizens' reflecting and expressing urban problems and could serve as a predicting factor in this regard.

## **2. Kurds as a minority ethnicity in the north-western Iran**

Iran is a multi-ethnic society that is ranked as the second country in the Middle East and North Africa and the 28th country among 160 nations in the world in terms of ethno-cultural diversity (Hosseini, Erfani, 2014).

After the first world war, despite being promised to have their own state, eventually Kurds were mostly divided among Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria (O'Leary 2002). This turned them into an ethnic minority in these countries with their disunity in language, religious behaviour and, especially, tribal structure to their central governments (Harris 1977).

In Iran, the Kurdish population is concentrated in the north-western provinces (with a smaller population in the northeast) bordering on Iraq and Turkey (Tezcür, Asadzade, 2019). They predominantly live in four western border provinces of Iran: Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan. West Azerbaijan is home to another ethnic group, i.e. Azeris. A majority of Kurds in Iran are Sunnis but a sizeable number of the Shiite and Yarsani (also known as Ahl-e Haqq) Kurds also live in Iran (Tezcür, Asadzade, 2019). While Iranian censuses do not collect information about ethnic identity, some scholars estimate that ethnic Kurds make up around 10% of the Iranian population (Tezcür, Asadzade, 2019).

Kurds as a stateless ethnic group are under tight political control while being permitted few or no cultural expression, which further has led to their cultural and ethnic isolation as a minority (Harris 1977). They have been subject to various discriminative and repressive policies ranging from restrictions on the Kurdish language to genocidal massacres, e.g. the Anfal Campaign involving chemical gas attacks against civilians in Iraq in 1987-8 (Tezcür, Asadzade, 2019).

Government discrimination policies in the distribution of public services, the allocation of public resources and the bureaucratic promotion system have undermined Kurd ethnicity as a minority (Tezcür, Asadzade 2019). In such a context, Kurdish people have been treated as a minority group of populations that are socially, economically and politically discriminated against. Moreover, relative to Azeris, Kurdish populations are socio-economically disadvantaged, which have disproportionately less access to government and public job positions, feel greater injustice and



social exclusion and lack social mobility (Hosseini, Erfani, 2014). These discriminations even led to some ethnic conflicts and segregation between Kurdish and Azeri ethnic groups in the province of West Azerbaijan (Sarvar et al., 2014).

### 3. Study area

The West Azerbaijan province is located in the northwest of Iran. In the province, Kurds and Azeris have been living together for many years (Hosseini, Erfani 2014). The population of this province is largely made of two major ethno-religious groups of Shiite Azeris and Sunni Kurds (Hosseini, Erfani 2014).

According to the Statistical Centre of Iran (2016), Takab is a small city in the south of the West Azerbaijan province, where was the sixth populated city in this province with 49,677 people in 2016. Takab, sized 44,043 in 2011, was the ninth city in West Azerbaijan (Taghvaei, Akoochekian, 2014). This shows the cities' population rank growth within five years. This city ranks the eighth in terms of urban services hierarchy (Ziari, Mousavi, 2005)

The city of Takab has two separate cultural groups, the Kurds and the Azeris (Aghdam et al., 2017). Kurds have generally migrated to the city in recent decades. As a result, there is obvious urban segregation in the city, based on the ethnicity, between Kurds and Azeris; However, the segregation in the central part of the city (the study area) is lessened, yet considerable (Aghdam et al., 2017).

A total of 115.2 ha of Takab city have been designated as urban deteriorated areas (UDAs) by the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development of Iran, based on three criteria<sup>1</sup>.

The study area was located in urban deteriorated areas (UDAs) of Takab, situated in the central part of the city (Fig. 1). It is noteworthy that, based on the land-use database, the study area is relatively homogenous in terms of urban facilities, services and conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the resolutions of the Supreme Council of Urban Planning and Architecture of Iran in 2006, UDAs are urban blocks where over 50% of urban plot have met three criteria: 1- less than 200 m<sup>2</sup> area, 2 - unstable buildings with lack of structural system, and 3 - access to the street with a width of less than 6 m (Najd Ataei Sarkarabad et al., 2021: 5).

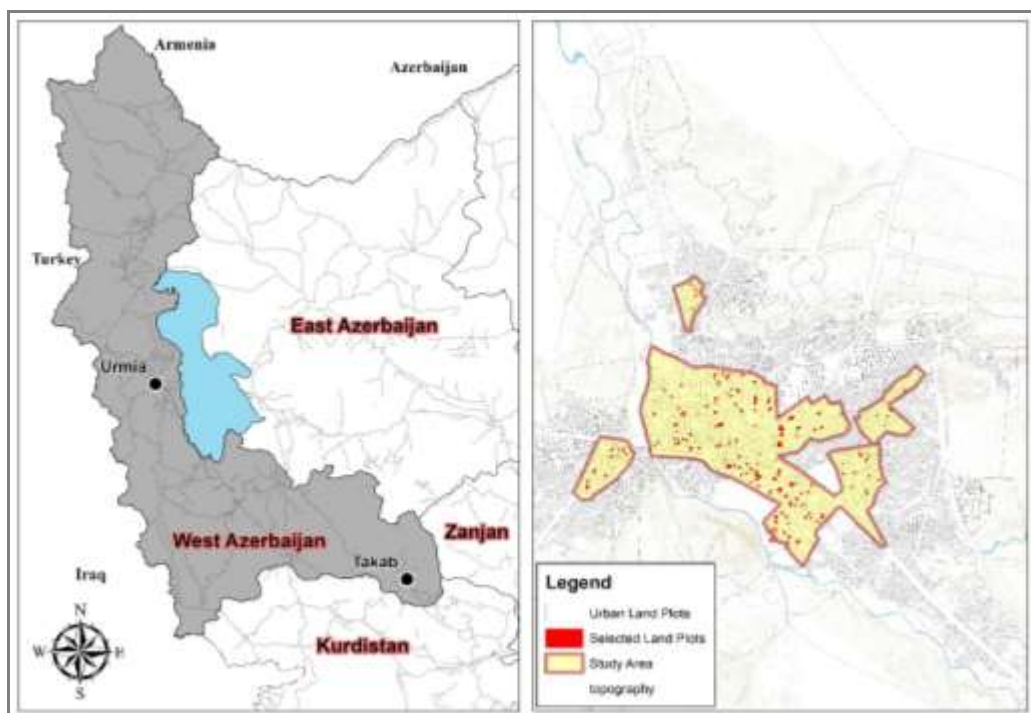


Figure 1. Location of the study area in Takab city and the city in West Azerbaijan.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Takab municipality

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Participants

One hundred and fifty participants were being questioned as a part of the residents of UDAs of the Takab city. These included 76 males and 74 females. Their mean age was 38.3 years ( $SD = 14.32$ ), with ages ranging from 16 to 86. Of the participants, 59 were of Kurdish and 91 of Azeri ethnicities.

### 4.2. Materials

Structured face-to-face interviews by application of questionnaires were conducted to avoid ambiguity in questions. The respondents were interviewed in the Farsi language. The respondents were selected randomly based on their urban land plot locations in the study area while interviewed. To have a random distribution of respondents in the neighbourhoods and to undertake an unbiased analysis, a one-stage area sampling, which is a common form of cluster sampling, was employed. In this sampling, first, areas (urban land plots in the study area) served as the primary sampling units, then the population (total area under investigation) was divided into

mutually exclusive and exhaustive subareas using maps, and, finally, a random sample of subareas (selected urban land plots) were selected. To implement this sampling, Subset Feature Selection (SFS) method was conducted in ArcGIS software. SFS method, which is an Equal Probability of Selection Method (EPSEM) (Kitchin, Thrift, 2009), uses randomised sequential forward feature selection (Tracy et al., 2018) to create 150 random feature subsets (Figure 1). Participants were questioned about 24 urban problems in four categories, as follows:

- (1) urban roads problem, including driving accidents, pedestrian safety, asphalt quality of roads, roads width, roads slope, residential car access;
- (2) urban safety and security, including insecure places, crimes, poverty, joblessness, providing suitable housing, buildings quality;
- (3) lack of urban infrastructures and services, including sewage, surface water disposal, waste-collecting, night lights, electricity, gas;
- (4) lack of accessibility to urban facilities, including schools, local retail stores, parks and playgrounds, cultural centres, banks, clinics.

Accordingly, they reflected their viewpoint on whether they think they have each specific problem in their neighbourhood.

The review of the relevant contemporary materials from textbooks, journal articles and conference papers was done to extract the indicators regarding urban facilities, services and conditions, which, in turn, was used for collecting the citizens' reflections of urban problems. To sum up, all problems were categorised on a 5-point Likert scale as reflecting the level of urban problems (1 - very low number of problems, 2 - low number of problems, 3 - moderate number of problems, 4 - high number of problems, 5 - very high number of problems).

### **4.3. Analyses**

To organise and clean the dataset, as well as to conduct rank-biserial correlation, Pearson chi-square test, and Ordinal Logistic Regression that appears within the results section, SPSS 26.0 was used.

First, a rank-biserial correlation was used to see whether there is a significant relationship between ethnicity and the reflecting urban problems levels, then the

Pearson chi-square test revealed that whether reflecting urban problems levels are significantly different between Kurds and Azeris, and finally, an ordinal logistic regression (OLR) was conducted to determine whether ethnicity as a factor has a significant impact on the reflecting urban problems levels in the study area.

An ArcMap 10.3 was used to present the maps and do calculations about spatial features and random selection of the target respondents by Subset Feature Selection. This selection method creates a random sequence used to create the subset features from the main feature. The features are selected by generating random values from a uniform [0,1] distribution. So it provides a randomly selected urban land plot out of all UDAs' urban land plots in Takab for the survey from their residents.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Rank-biserial correlation and the Pearson chi-square test

If one variable is nominal and the other is ordinal, then the rank-biserial correlation coefficient can be used to measure association (Khamis 2008). Accordingly, the rank-biserial correlation coefficient between ethnicity and reflecting urban problems levels is significant,  $r_{rb} (N = 150) = .393, p < .001$ . Therefore, there is a moderately strong association between ethnicity and reflecting of urban problems level.

The Pearson chi-square test suggested that the reflecting urban problems levels differ significantly by residents' ethnicity,  $\chi^2 (4, N = 150) = 27.851, p < .001$ .

### 5.2. Ordinal Logistic Regression (OLR)

Ordinal Logistic Regression (OLR) is a type of logistic regression, which is geared to response target variables with an ordinal effect. The OLR is commonly used to test or model the association between the ordinal target variable and some potential predicting variables, with each association estimated in terms of an odds ratio (OR) (Warner 2008).

Within the scope of the study, the dependent variable was ethnicity. Ethnicity is a categorical variable with two categories including category 1: Kurds, and category 2: Azeris.

Ordinal logistic regression analysis showed that there was a significant influence (Harrell 2015) of ethnicity on reflecting urban problems level ( $\chi^2(1) = 24.216$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The model explained 15.5% of variance in reflecting urban problems levels (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ). The results showed that as compared to Azeri ethnic group (category 2), Kurdish ethnic group ( $B = -1.581$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 22.601$ ,  $p < .001$ ), the odds for reflecting urban problems level is .206 times. Accordingly, the results of the OLR analysis was summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Result of Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis

Variables		B [95% C.I.B]	S.E. (B)	Wald	Odd Ratio [95% C.I.Exp(B)]
Threshold	[Level of Urban Problems=1.00]	-2.616 [-3.220, -2.012]	.3082	72.038**	.073 [.040, .134]
	[Level of Urban Problems=2.00]	-1.321 [-1.781, -.860]	.2351	31.572**	.267 [.168, .423]
	[Level of Urban Problems=3.00]	.630 [.218, 1.042]	.2103	8.972*	1.878 [1.243, 2.835]
	[Level of Urban Problems=4.00]	2.492 [1.765, 3.220]	.3714	45.031**	12.091 [5.839, 25.040]
Ethnicity = Kurds (1)		-1.581 [-2.233, -.929]	.3325	22.601**	.206 [.107, .395]
Omnibus $\chi^2(1) = 24.216$ , $p < .001$ , $R^2 = .149$ (Cox & Snell), .158 (Nagelkerke)					
* $p < .01$ , ** $p < .001$					

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

This study addressed two questions: first, whether there is a significant impact of ethnicity on citizens' reflecting and expressing urban problems; and second, whether the citizens' ethnicity could be a predicting factor for the reflection of urban problems. For this, 150 residents of UDAs of the Takab city consist of two Azeri and Kurdish ethnic groups who were questioned about their view on urban shortcomings in their neighbourhoods. The results showed that the Kurdish ethnic group reflected less level of urban problems in a relatively homogenous urban area in comparison to

Azeri ethnicity.

There are two possible explanations for these results. The first possible explanation is that ethnicity plays a pivotal role in predicting residents' views on urban problems and should be considered by urban planners and authorities in their plans and decisions. Another possible explanation is that the Kurdish ethnic group complained 4.85 times less often than Azeris when concerning urban problems. Many research has shown that Kurds have been discriminated against as a minority ethnic group for many years (Harris 1977; Hosseini, Erfani, 2014; Sarvar et al., 2014; Tezcür, Asadzade, 2019). Consequently, the discrimination has affected their socio-economic status negatively and push them to the lower socio-economic classes in comparison to Azeris. According to Robin M. Kowalski (2002), the lower classes neutralise their complaints, when their underprivileged situation is perceived as "natural", "invariable" and affects everybody. Similarly, G. van Ryzin et al. (2004) showed that minority ethnic groups, like Kurds, tend to "acquiesce" and to give "socially desirable" answers; also C. Ross and J. Mirowsky (1984) concluded that minority ethnic groups are reluctant to be seen as too critical of their living environment and government performance. Aside from community-level reasons, low self-esteem caused by discrimination against the members of minority groups like Kurds could lead to the tendency to acquiescence (Eisenman, Townsend, 1970). As a result, it could be concluded that the low level of reflection of urban problems may be related to this chain of prolonged events involving discrimination on the Kurdish ethnicity. As a solution to eliminating discrimination, it is suggested to enhance the involvement of minority ethnicity in the decision-making processes, especially in planning for urban problems. Studies showed that decision-makers strongly favour their own group candidates when deciding with someone from their own group, however, not when deciding with someone from the other group (Daskalova 2018). Co-decision-making behaviour and diversity in decision-making committees might be helpful in reduction of discrimination and increase trust in policymakers and having a more realistic reflection of problems and perceptions of their neighbourhood.

Much of the previous research that focused on the effect of ethnicity on urban issues was conducted in western countries, where their ethnic texture is different

than in Iran. Moreover, in Iran, mainly studies about Kurdish and Azeri ethnic groups are concentrated on the socio-economic field (Harris 1977; Hosseini, Erfani, 2014; Sarvar et al., 2014; Tezcür, Asadzade, 2019) while urban ethnic studies are few and far between; they typically focus on physical segregation (Aghdam et al., 2017) rather than exploring a more complex aspect of ethnicity in urban contexts. This research is one of the first tests of the ethnicity impact on a mixed-ethnic society's reflection of urban problems in Iran.

This could open a new line of research to understand this very issue, and hunting new solutions to tackle the urban problems in developing countries like Iran.

This study had two main limitations. First, more urban services, facilities and problems could be investigated to give a more comprehensive view of the matter. However, given the small number of studies in the field and the character of the study, viz. that many problems are location-oriented and distinct between cities, the 26 items were selected based on the prior research, personal experience and nature of Takab city. Furthermore, ethnicity significantly explained a good variation of urban problems, so it is unlikely this limitation could affect overall results. Second, because of time limitation and because it was a side project for the company, the sample size was relatively low. However, the results were significant despite the low sample size. This showed the great impact of ethnicity on levels of urban problems reflected by citizens.

This research could be extended by examining how the perception of different ethnic groups of citizens towards their neighbourhoods can be altered by urban authorities interacting with them. Also, the effect of implementing some special compensatory programmes, facilities and learning programmes for those ethnic groups which have been excluded in the past, i.e. Kurds, could be studied (Hutchison 1987). Moreover, the "neighbourhood effects" as a solution for urban planners and authorities for improving deprived ethnic groups' condition could be investigated (Smets, den Uyl, 2008). Finally, assessing urban governance in multi-ethnic urban areas by the "just development" approach (Harpham, Kwasi A.B., 1997) could be the next step to extending this study.

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