

2020

The Impact of COVID-19 on Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage to the Holy City of Karbala

Hadil Faris
Independent Researcher, hadil.faris@yahoo.com

Kevin A. Griffin
Technological University Dublin, kevin.griffin@tudublin.ie

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp>



Part of the [Tourism and Travel Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Faris, Hadil and Griffin, Kevin A. (2020) "The Impact of COVID-19 on Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage to the Holy City of Karbala," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol. 8: Iss. 7, Article 8.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.21427/dkd5-vt63>

Available at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp/vol8/iss7/8>

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons
Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 License](#).

The Impact of COVID-19 on Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage to the Holy City of Karbala

Hadil M. Faris

Independent Researcher

hadil.faris@yahoo.com

Dr. Kevin A. Griffin

Technological University Dublin, Ireland

kevin.griffin@tudublin.ie

Religious tourism and pilgrimage around the world have changed dramatically in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, thousands of sacred places closed their doors; religious leaders appealed to their followers not to perform their spiritual or pilgrimage journeys for their own and others safety. The holy city of Karbala, like any other sacred place is affected by the pandemic; every year, the holy city of Karbala witnesses the convergence of millions of pilgrims, being among the most important pilgrims for Shia Muslims. Of particular importance for these pilgrims is Ashura, which marks the day that Hussain bin Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, was killed in the Battle of Karbala and subsequently, Arbaeen (Arba'een), or the forty days of mourning, that follow.

The religious tourism sector in Iraq has been witnessing a continuous decline since demonstrations against the government began last October 2019, but the spread of Coronavirus in the world has had a severe impact on the tourism industry in Iraq and in Karbala in particular. The country closed its borders with Iran and other neighbouring countries, and prevented gatherings, including religious events, to avoid the outbreak of the coronavirus. Under the direction of the Iraqi Ministry of Health, religious cities have stopped receiving tourists and pilgrims from inside and outside the country. Karbala has experienced a significant decline in the number of visitors for the past number of months, a decline never witnessed before. The tourism industry is seriously impacted as a result; hotels, restaurants & local shops are suffering the most.

Key Words: religious tourism, pilgrimage, Shia Muslims, Karbala, Iraq, Ashura, Corona, pandemic, COVID 19

Introduction

Every year, millions of Shia visitors from different parts of the world go to Karbala to participate in the Ashura rituals; the main annual event in the Shia Muslim world; visitors are devoted to commemorating the early Shia leader Imam Hussain and his death in the Battle of Karbala. This crucial event in the history of Islam took place on 10 Muharram (the first month in the Islamic Hijri calendar) in the year AH 61 (AD 680 in the Gregorian calendar) (Fibiger, 2010:29)

The term Ashura, derives from the Arabic word for 10th. Shia Muslims around the world consider Ashura as a time for reflection and worship; weddings and other joyous events are not held at this time because this is a time of mourning, not celebration (Norton, 2005:143-4). Ashura itself is a time for analysis, interpreting historically and

dramatically the battle and its outcomes that occurred at Karbala over 1,300 years ago. For two weeks at the beginning of each Islamic year, speeches by religious leaders, poetry recitals, flagellation rituals, weeping mourners, and many discussions about all of these activities demonstrate the importance that is attributed to Ashura in the modern world (Fibiger, 2010:30)

During the season of Ashura, in the sacred city of Karbala the residents all wear black, people can find sorrow and sadness in all aspects of life in the city during this month. Every place there has its own story to tell. The people of the city are proud that this is the place where a great battle took place, where brave people fought against injustice and cruelty, giving their lives for the sake of Islam. Thus, the most dramatic scenes of Ashura are witnessed in Karbala, where millions of Shia gather in symbolic marches for the injustice that occurred to Hussain and

Shia Muslims Gather Around Hussain Mosque in Karbala after making the Pilgrimage on foot during Arba'een



SFC Larry E. Johns, USA, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons
(https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4f/Kerbela_Hussein_Moschee.jpg)

his family members and followers. The Remembrance of Muharram is not a celebration or a festival. It is a communal reflection of Hussain's martyrdom. The faithful conduct passion plays and funerals as they parade icons of their handsome Arab hero. Ashura sanctifies Hussain's activism in a trance-like fervour that reminds the faithful of the injustice he and they believe they have suffered (Pierr & Abdulrazak, 2007)

These annual gatherings during Ashura have kept the memory of Hussain alive not only in terms of commemorating the anniversary of his battle and subsequent death but also by perpetuating the oral transmission of accounts of the battle, the events leading up to it, and its aftermath (Hussain, 2005)

Karbala

The Holy City of Karbala had been known by different names through different stages of history, like Karbala, Al Ghadiryah, Nenava, Amouraa, Shatie Al Furat, Al Taf etc. (AlKilidar, 2008). It is one of the most historic cities

of Iraq, where the most legendary story of all happened back in 680 AD. The city plays an important role in Islamic history, being one of the most sacred Islamic cities with international importance all over the Islamic world. It draws millions of pilgrims and visitors each year. What makes this city another Ka'aba for Muslims? The answer is very simple, it contains the tomb of Imam Hussain (PUH).

This city is very ancient, it has been known since the Babylonian Age and is also referred to as Karbala al-Muqaddasah – the Sacred City of Karbala. Historically, The name of Karbala comes from 'Kar Babel' or 'Kor Babylon', which refers to a group of Babylonian villages. Others suggest that the name comes from 'Al Karb' and Al Bala' which mean Agony and Scourge - relating to the massacre of Imam Hussain and his family and followers. The modern city of Karbala is located in Iraq, about 80 km (50 miles) south of Baghdad and is the capital of Karbala Governorate (Ahlubayt, 2010)

Importance

The city, best known as the location of the Battle of Karbala (680), is amongst the holiest cities for Shia Muslims after Makkah and Medina; It is home to the Imam Hussain Shrine. In addition, Karbala is famous as the site of the martyrdom of Hussain Ibn Ali (Imam Hussain), and commemorations are held by millions of Shias annually to remember this event. After the construction of the martyrs' tombs, Karbala became the focal point of a very large population, and it is now one of the largest (sacred) cities in Iraq. In addition, Karbala's cemetery is one of the largest in the world because Shia Muslims desire to be laid to rest near the tomb of Hussain (Chelkowski, 2005). They believe that burial in Karbala is a certain means of reaching Paradise. It is, therefore, a city of vast cemeteries. In particular, Shia martyrs have the right to be buried in Karbala (Preston, 2004)

Imam Hussain's tomb (Figure 1), with a gilded dome and three minarets, is the central building in the city and the focus of pilgrimage for Shia Muslims (BBC, 2003). As

Karbala gained this special importance, it turned into one of the pilgrimage stops of Islam, and the faithful began to believe that dying in there means going to heaven, thus turning the place into a 'dead zone' (Yalcinkaya & Dundar, 2011:1039).

Unofficial sources claim that the 2019 Arba'een walk was the largest ever, with some 21 million in attendance between October 4 and 19; of that number, 17 million people were Iraqi citizens, a whopping 40 per cent of the country's population, but also, 75 percent of the country's Shia Muslims (TVPRESS, 2019)

Development

Evidence has shown that visitation by pilgrims and the related economic and demographic factors often create an environment that allows for the development of a shrine site, however small; evolving into a small village and then continue to expand until it becomes a shrine-city (Ambrosio & Pereira, 2007).

Crowds in Karbala for Arbaeen, 2016 (from Arbaeen WALK facebook page)



<https://www.facebook.com/1895272484029278/photos/ arbaeen-walk-starts-from-the-holy-city-of-najaf-ashraf-and-leads-till-karbala-th/1895383420684851/>

Among the many factors that lead to development are the wide array of products and services that develop around a shrine to cater to the visiting pilgrims, including food service, lodging, transportation, souvenirs, and even loitering beggars hoping to capitalise on the piety of visiting pilgrims. Naturally, as the number of visitors grows, the economy around the shrine likewise expands, and the rituals associated with visiting the shrine also develop and evolve. The increased economic activity around the shrine and the expansion of the shrine-city as a whole also lead to an inevitable expansion of the shrine itself. The shrine site increases in grandeur and acquires annexes, possibly including a school, a library, guesthouses for visitors, and sometimes even a hospital (Hussain, 2005)

Celebrating Ashura

The origins of the Ashura rituals are not confirmed. Afary (2003) notes that most scholars believe that Muharram rituals have pre-Islamic origins, citing the work of William Beeman who suggests the rituals are similar to the rituals surrounding the death of Dionysus in ancient Greek, or Osiris in ancient Egypt. Afary argues that these rituals are similar to ones in Christianity and Judaism where self-flagellation is practiced to purify the body.

During Ashura, some people observe modest candlelight vigils or say prayers inside the holy sanctuaries. Others offer tributes to Hussain that include self-flagellation designed to allow the faithful to empathise with their martyr (Pierr & Abdulrazak, 2007, p. 61); flags and water are included in visual displays. Coloured flags represent tribes or have a religious significance: black for grief and allegiance to Hussain; red for the injustice done to Hussain, the injury committed against the Prophet's family, and the decadence of Yazid; green to tie the worshippers to the 12 venerated imams. Finally, water is the symbol of life in the deserts of the Middle East. When the Umayyads deprived Hussain of water, they sentenced him to death. Today, Shia Muslims cover water pots in black cloth and inscribe them with mottos to memorialise Hussain's thirst, while bystanders construct roadside eateries to feed hungry pilgrims at rest stops (Pierr & Abdulrazak, 2007)

During the Shia, ritual processions the most common practice of self-flagellation is the rhythmic beating of

one's chest with a balled fist (ma'tam). Some faithful however flailing themselves with chains, metal whips, swords, or intentionally nick the skin on their forehead to induce bleeding (ritual practices that are collectively referred to locally as tatbir). Opinions vary widely among Shia as to what is the 'right way' to remember Hussain's sacrifice, and some Shia prefer quiet contemplation and prayer to public performance (Norton, 2005)

On the 9th and 10th days of Muharram, many men, boys, and even infants, as well as a smaller number of young women, embrace the suffering of Imam Hussain by shedding their blood in memory of his martyrdom (Norton, 2005). The ritual is not obligatory, but many believe it expresses their grief and helps them to re-enact the pain suffered by Hussain and his relatives (Cheetam, 2008)

Generally speaking, these rituals go back to the particular Shia culture, the habits, and rituals which individuals were raised with. As young people, they are influenced by the Hussaini rituals which parents follow during the month of Muharram. When people witness these rituals - wearing black clothes, holding black flags etc - upon reaching adulthood, the person continues to perform these rituals which become an essential element and commitment of their lives.

Millions of visitors flock to the province of Karbala to visit the shrine of Hussain in the Holy City of Karbala during the month of Muharram. During the festival of Ashura, during the first ten days of the month, Shias recall the suffering of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, and his 72 followers. Most of those ten days are taken up with prayer and lamentations at public gatherings. At the end of the main ceremony, the cleric shouts 'ma'tam Hussain', at which point the gathered Shias often turn the spirit of commemoration into a physical act.

Barefoot weeping mourners march in the streets and provinces. This includes men, women and children wearing black mourning clothes, chanting slogans lament on the martyrdom of Imam Hussain and his fellow family members. The marchers are usually accompanied by drummers and reciters with microphones shouting <Ya Hussain>

Karbala 2019



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/29/Tuwairij_run_1.jpg

The Key Rituals

Shia visitors from all over the world undertake these deeply symbolic visits to the tombs of Imam Hussain and key figures of the battle. This is one of Ashura's important rituals, along with prayers inside the holy sanctuaries. Shia devotees remember and participate in the events of Karbala and the martyrdom of Hussain in different ways. The following sections outline some of the key rituals performed by different groups of Shia Muslims.

Marches (Mawakib)

Hussaini Marches start from the first day of Ashura. Light chest-beating is the primary way in which procession participants flagellate themselves to take part in the pain and suffered by Imam Hussain and his companions. While some participants strike themselves very hard, for the majority, performance of this act is more symbolic. A minority of participants (as discussed above) use chains to beat their back or a sword to cut into their forehead. Having done this, they take part in the procession with

raised sword and blood pouring over their face and clothes. Others cover their faces with mud as away to express grief.

In general Hussaini marches can be classified into three categories, according to the rituals undertaken:

Chest beating marches: During the recitation of Imam Hussain's martyrdom, participants rhythmically beat their chests.

Chain marches: these marches are a common ritual in Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and India. The chains are iron rings connected and attached to a wooden or iron handle, some Shia attach blades to the chains when hitting their backs to shed blood and to feel the pain of Imam Hussain.

Flagellation marches: These are a common custom in some Shia countries, where Shia are willing to shed their blood for the sake of Hussain. They hit small wounds that have been cut at their hairline, so that blood flows down their faces and stains their white shirts or bare chests until they are bright red with blood. This form

of Hussaini ritual has evolved into a severe way of expressing sadness and sorrow - striking oneself until the shedding of blood.

Along the routes to Karbala, bystanders construct roadside eateries to feed hungry pilgrims at rest points. Water also is used to symbolise life in the desert where Imam Hussain and his followers suffered from thirst during the battle of Karbala.

Grave Visits (Ziyara)

This ritual involves visiting the tombs of Imam Hussain and the other Imams. These visits have a very important effect on the lives of Shia Muslims, who are expected to pay loyalty to God and the prophet and his family members. These visits to express solidarity and fealty seem to be the historical-literary roots of what later became a highly ritualised aspect of the Muharram commemoration ceremonies - ritual grave visitation.

The Performance (Tashabeeh)

Another ritual sometimes included in ceremonies is a dramatic theatrical performance re-enacting events from the battle of Karbala. Elements of this dramatisation, on the tenth day of Muharram or Ashura, include a white horse marked with red spots (reminiscent of Hussain’s blood), coffins (representing the martyrdom of Hussain), cradles (representing Abdulla, the slaughtered infant son of Hussain) and posts elevating the hands of al-Abbas (Hussain’s brother) (el-Aswad, 2010).

The person performing Imam Hussain’s part is supposed to be of a good character, a very religious person, who is committed to daily prayer, and has to be from the progeny of the Holy Prophet. Unlike (Al Shimr) the person who killed and beheaded Imam Hussain, who is supposed to be very ugly and hated by people, as he will get beaten, kicked and insulted during the ritual (El-Aswad, 2010)

Daily Prayers Sessions (Krayas & Tazia)

Daily prayer sessions or Krayas are held to prepare the community for the dramatic events, and remind them of the purpose of the rituals (Ferenea, 2006). During these sessions, a reciter narrates a part of the events of the first ten days of Muharram in a lamentation style reminiscent of a liturgy, detailing graphically the suffering and martyrdom of Hussain and those with him (Deeb, 2005), the recitation is interrupted at emotional moments which are accompanied by chest beating. The blending of recitations and the rhythmic sound of ritual beating has a hypnotising effect (Hussain, 2005). The dramatic narration of the life and suffering of Hussain and his family and followers is an opportunity for people to gather, where men and women sit in separate locations, and both audiences lament and grieve in memory of Hussain (Afary, 2003).

Hussaini poems are the most important part of Ashura rituals, where the reciters of mourning present their ability to move the audience to deep tearful passions through heartfelt recitations. A reciter incites the faithful

Reenacting The Martyrdom of Imam Hussain



<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/what-would-husseini-do>

Reenacting The Martyrdom of Imam Hussain



<https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/ashura-2017-shia-muslims-around-world-mark-holiest-month-muharram-1641582#slideshow/1640319>

Shia to beat their chests on a certain rhythm, while they recite Hussaini poems during the days of Muharram.

It is believed that both evoking these tears and shedding them are acts that bring *Ajr* (divine reward) and this increases one's chances of entering heaven. Blood spilt in memory of the events of Karbala is similarly an embodied demonstration of grief and an empathetic expression of solidarity with the Imam's pain and sorrow (Deeb, 2005).

Corona Pandemic: the next chapter

Typically, millions of Shia from around the world flock each year to the golden-domed shrine where Hussain's remains are buried, to pray and cry, shoulder-to-shoulder. But with coronavirus numbers spiking across the globe, this year's commemoration is subdued.

The Ministry of Health, Iraq reported 5,036 new coronavirus cases in early September 2020, bringing the total cases to 252,075, including 7,359 deaths. Karbala itself was responsible for 194 of these new cases (MOH,

2020). With more and more confirmed COVID-19 cases, increased deaths and levels rising at alarming levels, the 2020 pilgrimage was scaled down. Iraqi authorities banned public gatherings, including religious visits, and urged people to stay home. Some Iraqis have, decided to perform remote visits to the shrines of Karbala, using live streaming on websites and by following satellite television channels dedicated to facilitating the pilgrimage from a distance.

Economic effects

Tourism is the most affected sector as a result of the Corona pandemic, which has posed a major challenge to countries. Just like any other religious destination, the Holy City of Karbala is witnessing an economic recession due to the Corona crisis and its consequences. The curfew was one of the most challenging factors for the city governorate. As a result of this pandemic, shop & hotel owners suffered the most. The spread of the virus in Iraq and its neighbouring countries means that tourist numbers declined rapidly and dropped to a level never

Preparing for Social Distancing in Karbala in advance of Ashura



<https://en.shafaqna.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/4C99D4A8-7143-418B-902D-A38482E6865D.jpeg>

Iraqi Shias Gather to commemorate the start of Muharram ahead of Ashura, in the central city of Najaf



<https://www.dawn.com/news/1575663>

witnessed before. This became even more evident when Iraq went into national lockdown, preventing visitors from even entering the country. (Al Sumaria, 2020)

Ashura - the 'New Normal'

According to local media, the local government, in coordination with the Holy Shrines Administration, the Department of Rites and Hussaini Processions reached agreement regarding Ashura 2020. Measures included the adoption of new preventive standards during the ritual, especially social distancing, wearing masks and gloves, hand washing and the provision of sanitising stations (AynAllIraqNews, 2020). It is hoped that adopting techniques which have not previously been implemented during Ashura would ensure the safety of visitors and pilgrims as well as the residents from any Corona outbreak.

There were also lots of developments in the area of so-called e-tourism, particularly virtual tourism; these methods have become more important in light of the Corona pandemic. As a result of travel restrictions and the difficulty of travelling from one country to another, virtual tourism became the viable alternative for many people to visit their favourite places. A good example of

this is religious tourists and pilgrims who can visit holy places virtually, and perform the pilgrimage. However, we find that the reality does not meet our electronic ambitions to overcome this crisis. While many western societies are embracing technology as an alternative, virtual tourism is still very limited in application in Iraq. This is either because of its lack of availability or due to the lack of knowledge and cultural reluctance in this aspect (Mukhlif, 2020).

Despite this, Shia Muslims around the world were encouraged to perform Ashura remotely. Many Iraqis also opted to perform their visits to Karbala's shrines virtually, using free-of-charge phone services, live streaming on websites and by following satellite television channels dedicated to facilitating the pilgrimage from afar. As a result, many Shia Muslims were able to perform their pilgrimage from home with their families (Ibrahim & Al-Salam, 2020).

Conclusion

In this day and age, the multifaceted concept of Ashura - focused on a psychological fixation on the Battle of Karbala - and the very physical and collective rituals continues to fuel Shia poetry, rituals, iconography, social

Karbala Live Youtube Page



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUIaJkFbrVQ>

customs, folklore, and a complex political theory. This event brings the Shia faithful together every year to express their common identity and, at times, to express their anger at the government (or as demonstrated in 2016, protesting against ISIS) in a cathartic frenzy (Pierre, Hutchinson & Abdulrazak, 2007) Thus, a very unusual phenomenon happens every year - millions of Shia devotees gather in the holy city of Karbala to grieve Imam Hussain and his family members and followers in a dramatic display of emotion. Shia Muslims consider visiting Karbala and participating in these rituals in whatever form they deem to be appropriate, as a highly important pilgrimage, an activity that gives them focus and purpose in life.

These rituals will continue to exist, and engagement with Ashura will grow among Shia, as part of their strong beliefs relating to the martyrdom of Hussain. However; with the Corona pandemic things are changing. Many Shia from around the world were encouraged not to travel to Karbala this year, and instead they performed their pilgrimage from home using mobile applications and TV channels.

It will be interesting in the coming years to see the long-term impact of COVID, and the restrictions it has imposed on Shia devotees around the world. Estimates by the World Tourism Organisation and organisations such as the OECD are working to predict post-covid recovery of the tourism industry. Undoubtedly, there will be economic casualties, in Karbala, as there will in many other global pilgrimage sites. Shops will close and not open again, accommodation providers will not survive the COVID-enforced recession many other businesses will flounder. However, it is expected that the visitors will return after the pandemic has subsided. However, it remains to be seen whether there will be an increased and renewed fervour to travel to Karbala? Or, having experienced 'virtual' pilgrimage, and stayed at home, will followers of Hussain become more accustomed to technology and chose to celebrate this most important ritual virtually, without travelling.

Bibliography

- Abdo, G., 2010. Letter From Tehran. *The Washington Quarterly*, January, 23(1), pp. 55-64.
- Ambrosio, V. and Pereira, M. (2007) Case Study 2: Christian / Catholic Pilgrimage -Studies and Analyses, in Raj, R. and Morpeth, N. (Eds.) *Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Festivals Management: An international perspective*, CABI, Wallingford.
- Afary, J., 2003. Shi'i Narratives of Karbala and Christian Rites of Penance: Michel Foucault and the Culture of the Iranian Revolution, 1978-1979. *Radical History Review*, 01 04, Volume 86, pp. 7 - 35.
- Ahlubayt, 2010. *Ahlulbayt Organization*. [Online] Available at: <http://ahl-ul-bayt.org> [Accessed 15 03 2013].
- AlKilidar, A. J., 2008. *The History of Karbala and Hussain*. Iran: Haidaria Library.
- BBC, 2003. *bbc.co.uk*. [Online] Available at: BBC. (2003). Karbala Ans Najaf: Shia Holy Cities, BBC News. bbc.co.uk [Accessed 19 August 2020].
- Cheetam, C., 2008. *BBC*. [Online] Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7583845.stm> [Accessed 19 August 2020].
- Chelkowski, P., 2005. From Karbala to New York City: Ta'ziyeh on the Move. *TDR*, 49(4), pp. 12-14.
- Deeb, L., 2005. Living Ashura in Lebanon: Mourning Transformed to Sacrifice. *Comparative Studies of South Asia Africa and the Middle East*, January, 25(1), pp. 122-137.
- El-Aswad, E., 2010. The Perceptibility of the Invisible Cosmology Religious Rituals and Embodied Spirituality among the Bahraini Shi'a. *Anthropology of the Middle East*, Dec, 5(2), pp. 59-76.
- Ferenea, E., 2006. Remembering Taziye in Iraq. *TDR The Drama Review*, 10 April, 49(4), pp. 130-139.
- Fibiger, T., 2010. Ashura in Bahrain: Analyses of an Analytical Event. *Social Analysis*, 01 12, Volume 54, pp. 29-46.
- Hussain, A., 2005. The Mourning of History and the History of Mourning: The Evolution of Ritual Commemoration of the Battle of Karbala. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 01 01, Volume 25, pp. 78-88.
- Malik, S., 2005. *newsstateman*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/node/195315> [Accessed 19 August 2020].
- Norton, R., 2005. 'Ritual, Blood, and Shiite Identity: Ashura in Nabatiyya, Lebanon'. *TDR: The Drama Review*, 49(4), pp. 140-55.
- Pierr, J. & Abdulrazak , H., 2007. The Shi'a Remembrance of Muharram: An Explanation of the Days of Ashura and Arba'een. *Military Review*, March - April, 87(2), pp. 61-69.
- Preston, T., 2004. 'The Road to Karbala.'. *TDR*, 48(1), pp. 95-97.
- Tounta, P., 2020. *www.traveldailynews.com*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.traveldailynews.com/post/pandemic-2020-the-impact-on-tourism-and-the-shadowy-points> [Accessed 19 August 2020].
- TVPRESS, 2019. *Arba'een walk 2019: World's largest gathering in numbers*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2019/10/21/609183/Arbaeen-walk-2019-numbers-records> [Accessed 19 August 2020].
- Yalcinkaya, A. & Dundar, R., 2011. Karbala 'Battles' Between Theology and Power. *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, September, 8(9), pp. 1038-1047.