



Development Plan for Decreasing Crime Rates at El Amir Hamad Archeological Site

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Abstract

Recently, the direct causal relationship between the built environment and well-being has been shown to affect the quality of life as well as the performance of the urban environment. While it is often difficult to establish, the urban built environment plays a major role in shaping the way people behave inside it. (Thwaites, Kevin, et al., 2016)

While urbanization takes place in a transforming society, societal development leaves its impact on the urban spaces. When industries and development plans decline in some parts of the city, especially those with archaeological value, these parts become abandoned due to migration. Urban pockets or gaps inside the built environment are left behind to suffer from informality, deterioration, increasing crime and unemployment rates.

The aim of that research is to find some possible solutions for improving the public abandoned spaces that accommodate dangerous buildings, high rates of unemployment and unsafe urban areas in the regional range of Meet-Ghamr, Dakhliya governorate. (Agnieszka Lisowska, 2017).

The targeted area of the study is "minaret el Amir Hamaad" in Meet-Ghamr, Dakahleia, Egypt. It is one of the most important archaeological sites in the Islamic heritage of Dakhliya governorate, which is well known for its unique mosques and mosque minarets.

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Keywords

Archeological sites, heritage crime, urban open spaces, development plans, conservation, safety

1. Introduction

Without a doubt, accurately identifying and improving historical sites and buildings is extremely imperative as it allows communities to continue to exist while preventing history from fading away and being ruined. Abandoned sites may intentionally cause the deterioration of the assets and the surrounding urban area. (Jon M. Shane, July 2012).

The complex problems of abandoned historical sites pose a threat to the surrounding structures and present a direct risk to the type and rate of crime in a process known as "house stripping," "scavenging," or "urban mining". In these cases, the offender destroys the asset and then sells it away. Abandoned urban areas are highly linked to naturally increasing and developing crime rates and types, which increases the value of the asset. (Jon M. Shane, July 2012).

This empirical research demonstrates the importance of involving the preservation of archaeological sites that should be linked to a long-term conservation plan to protect them from being abandoned and demolished. In addition, it discusses the term "heritage crime" and the relation between crime and abandoned heritage areas.

The importance of involving the preservation of archaeological sites is discussed through studying the local area of "El Amir Hamad Corner," which is considered to be one of the extensive archaeological areas at Meet-Ghamr Dakahleia, Egypt. Additionally, the study highlights the problems affecting the area such as; negligence, demolition, abandonment, fewer amenities and services caused by the new dwellers of criminals or displaced people.

2. Research aims and objectives

The study aims to properly prepare a development plan for the archaeological site of El Amir Hamad Corner, taking into consideration the area's built environment on an urban scale through:

- Examining the current situation of El Amir Hamad Corner, and carefully investigating the physical and social conditions of the local area.
- Studying crime rates, types and distribution inside the historic area to carefully evaluate the situation and properly establish an operational plan.
- Preparing several planning alternatives and reasonably achieving the potential target related to conserving the historic site by exploiting the extensive archaeological history of the area.

3. Research methodology

- A quantitative and qualitative field study for El Amir Hamad Corner is conducted to determine the number of residents, building conditions, and types of economic activities in the area.
- From both practical and theoretical perspectives, an analytical study of the existing case of historic buildings and street network is conducted to investigate the behavioral attitude of active users, sufficient strengths, and critical weaknesses.
- A sustainable development plan is carried out for the historical region within the comprehensive framework of the strategic concept of a social and alternative relationship with complex nature and regional levels.

Finally, a conclusion is drawn based on the analytical data and research results to create an optimum solution for El Amir Hamad archaeological site.

4. El Amir Hamad Corner, Dakahlia, Egypt (case study)

Tourism is a common phenomenon in Egypt as a modern country that encompasses 1/3 of world-historical sites. Therefore, the necessity of developing and conserving these sites in a way that improves the social, sociological, and psychological aspects of the district has become evident. Besides, it is greatly significant not to abandon them so that they can be perceived as an explicit and healthy image for the space. (Mohamed Kamal Mohamed Ghodya, 2021).

Tourism leads to a temporarily increased number of people from outside the local district to enter into a relatively compact area. It can easily change a completely hazardous site into a safe one by introducing tourists (allowed stranger) to the local district which may transform the area's character to better one; especially, if it is already suffering from certain types of crime like drug dealing, theft, prostitution, or vandalism. (Postma,A. and Schmuecker,D. (2017).

The unused urban space and abandoned urban gaps between buildings and other physical built areas with no community attention; specially for a city that has many archeological and historical sites, can cause many problems concerning social, psychological and physical spaces. These spaces have high potential for reconstruction and conservation. Therefore, integrating these spaces into the surrounding community gradually with well-designed plans of conservation can help in developing the area throughout the time.

El Amir Hamad corner is selected as the case study to make an economic and social development plan to improve the regional security and reduce the local crime rate as it consists of some historical buildings (El Ghamry Mosque-El Amir Hamad minaret-El Arwam church). In addition, it suffers from neglect and low conservation and maintenance level. It accommodates certain types of criminal acts which make it an unsafe area for local citizens.

The city was constructed by El Amir Hamad Ben Mekled Beik in the year 1615. It was considered as an Islamic an archaeological site on 21st November, 1951 with an official declaration No. 10357. It typically consists of El Amir Hamad minaret which is close to El Grand Ghamry mosque founded on Mamluk Period. The historic mosque occupies a significant position with a Nile view of Meet-Ghamr, Egypt.

4.1 Problem Definition

The gradual deterioration of certain historical areas leaves a negative impression about the cultural aspect and safety of that social space which carries Islamic and Coptic history. In the study area of El Amir Hamad Minaret, the gradual deterioration and low conservation rates separate the area gradually from the surrounding fabric, leaving the inner space with no definite building shapes, archaeological remains, high unemployment and crime rates, and concentrated fabric in the middle of the local area. The ruined mosques and the graceful minaret are left for ruthless destruction and are left abandoned. Thus, this area acts as an adequate space for potential criminals and disordered behavior to appear.



Figure 1: Deterioration of the historical heart of the proposed site of El Amir Hamad corner, Dakhlya, Meet-Ghamr, Egypt (2004-2018)
Source: Authors

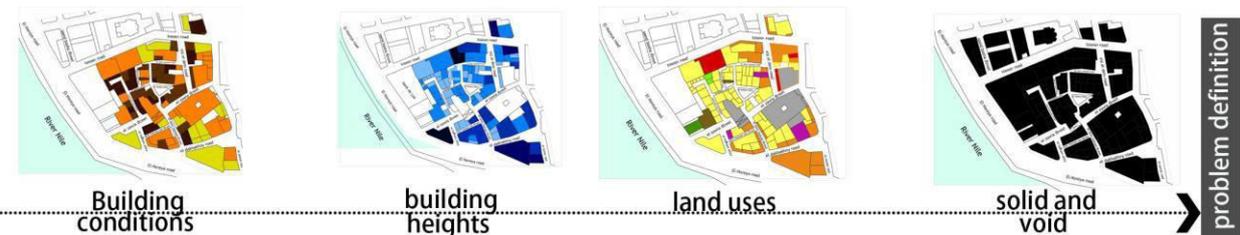


Figure 2: Case study El Amir Hamad Minaret, analysis and problem definition
Source: Authors

One of the major problems inside the proposed site is that the surrounding buildings are typically considered to be a slump informal area with no specific shape or social structure. It was announced to be an unsafe urban area by the governorate of Dakalhia, unit of informal settlements.

The study area of El Amir Hamad Corner naturally suffers from condensed building fabric in the middle of crumbling used buildings, which shows the gradual deterioration of the historic site around the graceful minaret, ruined Ghamry mosque, and most of the iconic buildings typically found to be owned by the Endowment "Awqaf". It is also neglected by the private owner, which leads the abandoned area to be a suitable host for illegal criminals, disordered acts, and urban crime. The local area in the middle with low-rise buildings typically causes a marked decrease: (a) (b) (c) decreases direct contact with the surrounding fabric as well.



Figure 3: The surrounding built environment for the area (a,b,c)

Figure 4: The minaret of *Prince Hamad* Mosque and its deterioration value and historical monuments of Grand Ghamry mosque
Source: <https://heritage.weladelbalad.com>

On the other hand, the visible outline of the area includes the most towering buildings, which merely make it a suitable option to typically leave the middle severely deteriorated and less connected to the outer district. According to the most recent surveys on that area, which suffers from drug dealing, theft, prostitution, and vandalism, the two great mosques have been left for demolition with no maintenance. Thus, it suffered from neglect and developed a high rate of crime.



Figure5: A detailed map for the site problem definition
Source: Authors

4.2 El Amir Hamad Corner and safety

The area lies on the distinguished shore of the Nile River in the city of Meet-Ghamr, at the corner of El Amir Hammad, which is considered a unique archaeological architectural work. The area suffers from harsh environmental conditions, as the surrounding area which includes 104 old dilapidated houses is classified as a slum area and entered the government development program several years ago without progress or achievement until it became a breeding ground for piles of dirt and turned into an unsafe zone (Government slump development unit).

The site acquired great importance as a religious, spiritual, and commercial symbol. It was a port for transporting goods and was supported by its proximity to the Nile River. Besides, it is one of the individual models of archaeological angles in Lower Egypt and needs to be highlighted for development and inclusion in tourism programs. (Archaeological Awareness and Cultural Development, Dakahlia Archeology).

Among the most important Islamic shrines:	
Al-Mowafi Mosque	One of the most famous mosques in Mansoura, founded by King Al-Saleh “Nagm El-Din Ayoub” in 583 AH – 1187 AD.
Al-Ghamry Archaeological Mosque and Minaret	It is located in Meet Ghamr city. This unique minaret dates back to the reign of Mamluks
Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr Al- Sedik Mosque	It is located in Meet Demsis at <i>Markaz</i> Aga. It is the Mosque of Mohammad Ibn Abi Bakr Al Sedik, son of the Companion <i>Sahabi</i> of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the first Caliph of the Muslims. His tomb was discovered in 1950.
Prince Hammad	It is located next to Al- Ghamry Mosque; and it dates back to Mamluks era.

Corner	
Among the most important Coptic shrines	
Saint Mar-Gerges Church	It lies in Meet Demsis at <i>Markaz</i> Aga. It is composed of two buildings; one of which dates back to more than 1,600 years.
Monastery of St. Damiana:	It is located in Damiana village at <i>Markaz</i> Belqas. It includes five churches; one of which is an archeological church in Gothic style that was discovered late in 1947.

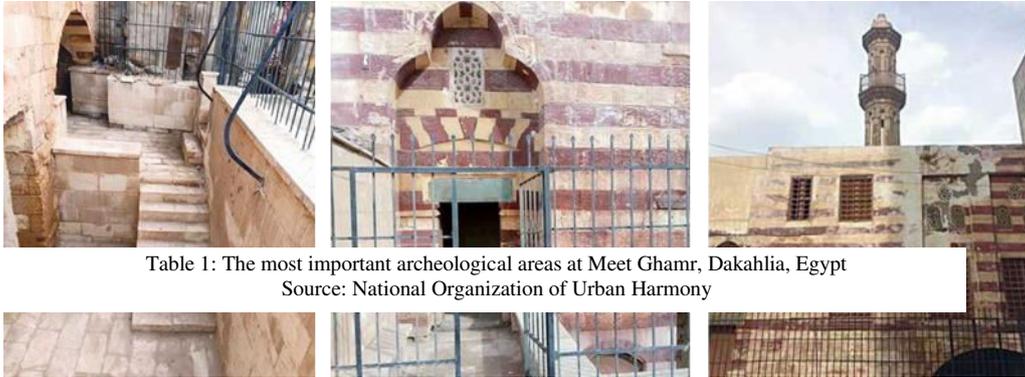


Table 1: The most important archeological areas at Meet Ghamr, Dakahlia, Egypt
Source: National Organization of Urban Harmony

Figure 6: The entrance and the shape of El Amir Hamad mosque and minaret, and the rate of deterioration

El Amir Hamad mosque is one of the historical monuments at Meet-Ghamr. It suffers severely from the potential danger of demolishing and erasing the cultural history of a significant period where a number of owners of the surrounding buildings demolished their rented houses from the endowments and started constructing modern, undefined buildings. Consequently, they damaged the local area’s history and architectural heritage for the purpose of building their own homes away from the regulations and government rules. Most of the demolished buildings are extremely damaged. They are owned by the endowment that was severely neglected for years, and many acute problems are caused by that exact reason.

The mosque is considered to be one of the rare suspended mosques in the eastern delta region in the Ottoman period, thanks to the establishment of "wedoa" places at the bottom of the corner, as well as the creation of an external corridor under the southern area and lower rooms with intersecting domes.

(<https://gate.ahram.org.eg/daily/News/808123.aspx>)

4.3 Site analysis

The area's condition is objectively analysed to depict the difference between positive and negative points inside the area, starting from the solid and void maps, which show the real, condensed, used fabric of the private buildings with a very appalling condition inside the area near to El Ghamry mosque and El Amir Hamad Minaret, which caused the demolishing of the rest of the surrounding buildings in bad condition and leaving the area for potential criminals and prostitution.

A detailed study for the building types and occupation is carefully carried out to generate the right design decision for the used area. The analysis shows that most of the land ownership irretrievably goes to the endowment of the authoritarian government and the rest is citizen ownership "which caused the problem at first". Thus, by calculating the proper ratio, it is found that 65% goes for the endowment and 35% are citizen ownership.

Building number	Floor no	R	F	O
16-17-18-19-20-21-28-29-30-31-65-91-91	Ground floor	1	1	E
4-3''-6-7-8-11-12-13-14-15-	Ground floor	1	1	E
44-55-45-46-47-49-52-62-63-64-	Ground floor	1	1	E
3	Ground floor	1	2	E
1-2	Demolished	-	-	E
9-10-24-25-32-35-37-39-43-48-102	Ground and first floor	2	2	E
22-23	Ground +first floor	1	2	E
36-38-46	Empty land	-	-	E
40-51-92-	Ground +2 floors	3	3	E
41-42-56-59-	Ground +5 floors	5	5	E

95	Ground +6 floors	37	37	C
97	Ground +6 floors	7	5	C
96	Ground 5 shops+4 floors	12	12	C
78-82	Ground shop+4 floors	5	5	C
83	Ground 2 shops+4 floors	5	5	C
90	Ground 2 shops+4 floors	6	6	C
79	Ground 3shops+4 floors	7	7	C
Table 2: The total analysis of the site Source: Authors				G
105	Storage	-	-	C
81	Ground floor shop	S	S	C
84-85	Empty land	-	-	C
86	Ground 1 shop+3 floors	4	4	C

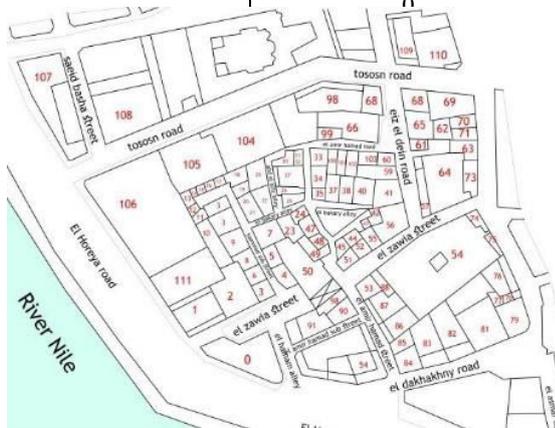


Figure7, 8, 9, 10 and 11: The total analysis of the site and building conditions

5. Understanding Heritage Crime for the Study Area

Heritage crime is a concept attached to any heritage site. It means "any offence which harms the value of heritage assets and their settings to the present and future generations or which impairs their enjoyment." In other words, it could be said that it is a punishable offence in which any individual intentionally harms the moral or physical value of heritage assets and their historical settings. (Robin Bryant (2020).

According to Yaron Gottlieb, there are many different types of crimes against our heritage, including theft of lead and other metals from churches and other historic buildings; architectural theft; illegal metal detecting; unlawful alteration and damage to listed buildings; unlawful demolition of buildings and structures in conservation areas; damage to monuments; arson; graffiti; and other forms of antisocial behavior in proximity to heritage assets (Yaron Gottlieb, 2020).

Most heritage assets are properly protected by specific legislation to typically prevent harm caused by possible damage or unlicensed alteration on the international level. However, other crimes such as apparent theft, criminal damage, aggravated arson, and anti-social behavior offences can also damage and harm heritage assets and interfere negatively with the allowed public's social enjoyment and personal knowledge of their cultural heritage (Korsell et al., 2006).



Figure 12: The effect of low maintenance for the mosque

In Egypt, touristic sites are carefully secured. Most of them are protected by the established rules and local legislation. However, in some smaller cities that typically have a great deal of local historical heritage and valued assets, touristic sites suffer severely from being away from the excessive regulations and political rules and are left for gradual deterioration, as in the proposed area of Meet Ghamr, Dakhalia, Egypt. It could easily be affected by heritage crime. (H. Tavakoli and M.H. Marzbali (2021).

The proposed study area typically contains one of the famous and valued minarets of El Amir Hamad in addition to the ruined Gamry mosque, which is similar in a unique design to "Azahar Al Sharif". However, they suffer from some types of heritage crime that include architectural theft of some ornaments from the mosque and the church (particularly of wood and stone); criminal damage (e.g. graffiti on a scheduled monument); illegal remain detecting; anti-social behavior (most particularly occupying and living inside historic sites along with some other activities); unauthorized changes to historic buildings and the illegal trade in cultural objects (Robin Bryant, 2020).

Abandoning this historic site, without any sort of maintenance, results in an increase in violent crime rates through time with some specific types of punishable crimes that intentionally harm the abandoned properties and local inhabitants. Consequently, these crimes take place and increase by time (Han, Hye-Sung, and Helm, Scott. August 1st, 2010 - This entry was published).

6. Tourism Industry and Safety for the Abandoned Historic Sites

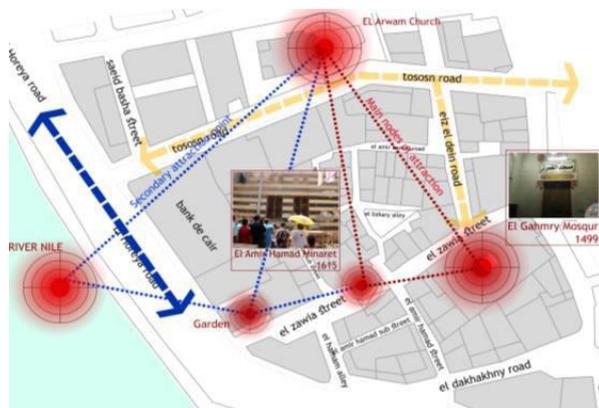
The potential tourist and resident users of a certain space simply propose an economic diversity of possible options to some more economic improvements to typically increase the nominal income for both stock holders and local habitats of that local area. The idea of the local tourism industry on the economic scale naturally involves many alternative options. Accordingly, it offers and generates continuous occupations in many altered areas. (WTO, 2002)

By encouraging local tourism through the introduction of a suitable development plan, the local economic value of the urban space increases, which helps to bring investments to the area and local hotels, cafes, food courts, gathering pedestrian points, tour guide agencies, retail, and souvenir giveaway shops can typically help to reliably deliver many diverse levels of gainful employment for local people in the neighborhood. (OECD, 2020)

According to a study conducted in Philadelphia, which is considered to be one of the heritage cities that suffer from vacant and abandoned buildings, the city is using an abandoned building remediation strategy to reduce blight and crime, stabilize real estate value, and encourage economic development. The results indicate that the low-cost method of possible renovation could possibly be an effective means to reduce crime. Moreover, this study provides useful evidence of the potential effect of abandoned building remediation policies on decreasing crime rates in cities. (Kondo MC et al., 2015).

7. Proposed Development Plan for the Study Area

Cultural tourism positively brings about a massive consequence in flourishing any archaeological site by its vast impact of radically increasing pedestrian safety, social balance, positively enhancing criminal attitude, and economic balance to the place, so it was humbly proposed to conserve the historic site with all the great archaeological buildings inside it (ElAmir Hamad Minaret, El Local Ghamry mosque, and El Arwam Church) and to widely establish a current path for tourists to instantly get inside the site to enjoy the magnificent scenes offered by the historic buildings and mosques inside after carefully restoring it to the past situation. From the outside, tourists can enjoy the broad view of the Nile and El Arwam Church. The solution proposal indicates precisely the following steps of a considerable improvement:



The touristic path proposed according to the arrangement of the significant archaeological building inside the site with profound respect to the main streets, secondary streets, car pathways, pedestrian walkways, and empty land distribution.

- **First step:** carefully explore all the vacant land to properly manage to solve the problem related to considerable space.
- **Second step:** state the archaeological lots that can be involved in the touristic path.
- **Third step:** start rearranging the local inhabitants inside the area at the visible edge of the historical site to conserve all the historic buildings.
- **Fourth step:** use all empty lands inside the area to make amenities and services for the tourists and manage the sites belonging to the endowment to refresh the history of those buildings.
- **The fifth step:** properly plan a touristic path for the typical tourist to naturally enter the site as indicated in

Figure 13 : The historic site potentials.
Source: Authors.

Figure 14: The proposed solutions based on current potential of the site.
Source: Authors

the leading figure (8 and 9).

Three possible pathways are clear to the specific plan proposed as follows:

7.1 First Proposed Path:

The first route starts from one of the main streets of the area that looks over the River Nile, "El Horya Road", leading directly to the middle of the historic site towards the Arwan church and then through "Ez El Dein Road", which faces the "Ghamry Mosque" with its fantastic architecture. Then, the tour is led to the proposed pedestrian area that starts from "Zawiya Street" and ends by the main gathering point to end the official trip as illustrated in the following diagram.

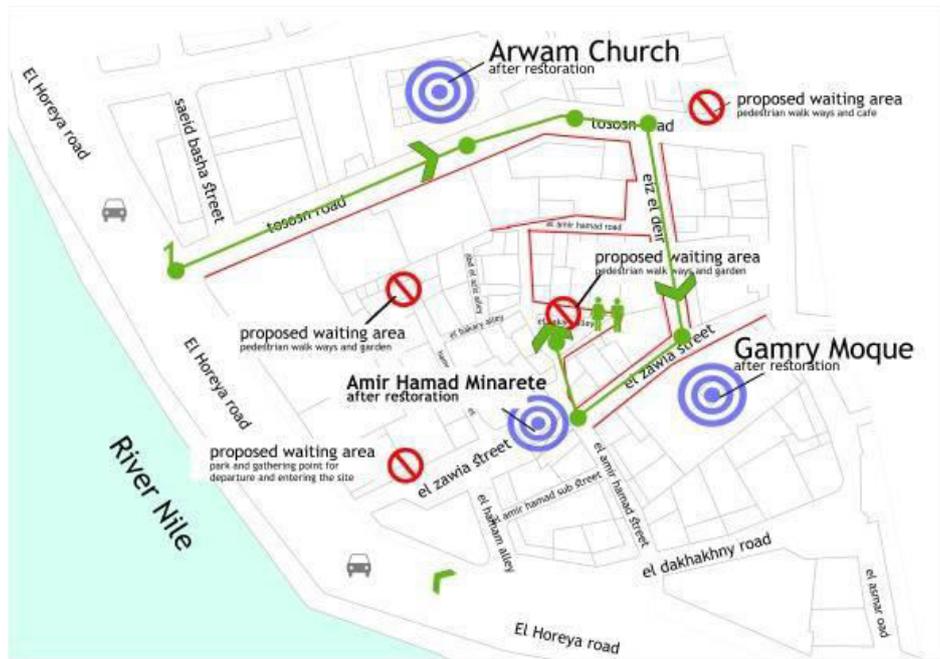


Figure 20: The first proposal for the site
Source: Authors

7.2 Second Proposed Path:

It starts from the main street "El Horeya road" and the proposed main waiting and gathering point, and then inside the historic site towards the Arwan church, then inside the site from "Eez el Dein road" which faces El Ghamry mosque, and then to a pedestrian area starting from "Hamad street" and ending at the proposed main gathering point to end the official trip as illustrated in the following diagram.



Figure 15: The second proposal for the site
Source: Authors

7.3 Third Proposed Path:

It starts from the main street "El Dakhakny road", reaching to El Ghamry Mosque and then to Prince Hamad Minaret, passing through the other conserved buildings and finally to the nearest gathering point proposed, which includes all the amenities that any tourist may need.



Figure 16: The third proposal for the site
Source: Authors

According to previous research, the rate of potential crime decreases gradually over time with proper maintenance and management. The development of the area and the gradual introduction of tourism effectively increase the activity inside the area and bring a new economic factor to the area.

This humble effort can help in developing the surrounding area and stimulate the local governorate to integrate the idea of developing abundant historical sites into their management plan. Furthermore, it helps other Middle Eastern government agencies to propose integrated management tools for the stimulation of historic cities.

8. Conclusion

The potential problem of abandoned buildings and vacant lots lies in their being devastated structures seen daily by urban residents. They may create physical opportunities for violence by sheltering illegal activity, ignoring the historical assets and areas and enabling them for destruction, abundance, and neglect. This could lead to severe radical changes on the minor scale of urban fabric and in crime typology and rates as well.

A complete management plan should be applied by the government to improve those sites to restore them gradually, rather than barely keeping as they are. An essential part of the potential problem is the endowment policies and how they improperly treat the old assets of the local area.

By introducing the historical tourist resources to the site, many problems can be easily rectified by time. It also contributes to the elimination of crime and fear of crime rates, which ensures the continued development plan proposed to the captive population of those areas. The economic aspect of the site comprises a crucial factor that affects the development of the site. Urban planning studies for heritage areas that rely on tourism as their main source of income in order to benefit from their development, the creation of new economic value that is supportive to the wellbeing and lifestyle of the inhabitants and users of the area.

Improving the behavioral, social, psychological conditions and wellbeing of the local community represents a significant challenge to typically minimize the crime rate and fear of crime

9. Recommendations

- The proposed management plan intensely supports the successful completion of the work and appropriately regulates cultural tourism at such archaeological sites. The alternative relationship between crime rates and cultural tourism undoubtedly remains a sensitive spot of debate for a long time. Some researchers suggest that tourist destinations can clearly affect the safety perception of visitors. On the other hand, incorporating a modern type of active users from different cultures inside any space can definitely affect crime rates as they gradually decrease. By the time, the local area is improved as a recent economic source for work will take place and also a new lifestyle will be developed under the supervision of the government and will seriously affect economic and social level.

-Taking into consideration the image of the local area, which naturally makes it a unique space to explore despite the heritage site itself, such as (culture, hospitality, infrastructure, and local attractions), uniform management of the security of the site, introducing the site to the local tourism that makes it safer by time.

-The authorized public and private sectors should voluntarily undertake the civic responsibility to properly maintain and instantly improve the historic site from all practical sides of possible crime and demolition.

-Promptly introduce alternative activities and historical events related to the most common heritage buildings to be gradually held in the local area, such as celebrating Islamic and Christian religions.

-Carrying out public meetings with local users and local stakeholders to inform them about the historical importance of radically improving the standard of living inside the area and to identify the importance of safety and security problems.

-Promptly introduce a long-term plan of possible threats that could be critically involved by introducing cultural tourism inside the protected area which should be positively related to the emergency plans of the used site.

-An authorized public or private force should be applied inside the local area to instantly solve and interfere whenever necessary.

Empirical data on the area of crime types and sufficient quantity should be appropriately cleared from time to time to identify hot spots and initiate the exact action at the right time. Additionally, crime data should be generously offered by the local government for the general public to ensure the key role of local awareness and encourage inhabitants to help in solving crime problems. Finally, it is highly recommended to increase the inhabitant's ownership feeling which leads to enhancing the perception of safety and reducing crime rates.

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