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Article

Historic Syrian Cities in the Post-War Period: Balancing Cultural Preservation and Tourism Investment

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Abstract: This paper explores the challenges and opportunities of balancing cultural preservation and tourism investment in historic Syrian cities in the post-war period. The Syrian conflict has caused significant damage to the country's cultural heritage, including its ancient cities, which are UNESCO World Heritage sites. Key issues raised include what challenges local governments to face, the impact of the war on the preservation of historic sites, how tourism can be used as a tool for economic development, and how to ensure that cultural heritage is preserved while also allowing for tourism investment. To gain an in-depth understanding of the old Syrian cities, extensive research has been conducted, including a review of existing literature and interviews with key stakeholders. The researcher found that rebuilding historic Syrian cities is a complex task that requires balancing cultural preservation with tourism investment. It will require collaboration between government officials, preservationists, developers, and local communities to ensure that these cities are restored in a way that respects their history and culture while also promoting economic growth through tourism.

Keywords: historic syrian cities; cultural preservation; tourism investment; challenges; key players

1. Introduction

Preserving the urban identity in old cities is of utmost importance for many reasons. It helps to keep alive stories and memories that have been shared by those who lived there, providing a sense of community, and belonging [1]. Additionally, preserving these sites promotes tourism as they often contain unique architecture or cultural sites that attract tourists from around the world [2,3]. This helps to boost local economies and provides an opportunity for people to learn more about the history of the city [4–6]. In order to preserve these sites, it is important to ensure that any development or changes are done in a way that respects the original character of the area [5,7]. This can include protecting historic buildings from demolition or ensuring that any new construction is sympathetic to its surroundings [7]. It is also important to involve local communities in decision-making processes so they can help shape their own urban identity [8,9].

It is essential to take steps now to ensure that historic sites remain intact for years to come. This is important not only for the preservation of our cultural heritage but also for the benefit of future generations who should be able to enjoy these sites as well [10]. Legislation can be introduced that protects certain areas from development, and incentives can be created for developers who are willing to preserve historic sites [11,12]. Additionally, public education campaigns can be used to raise awareness about the importance of preserving these sites [12]. By taking these steps now, we can ensure that our cities retain their unique character and remain vibrant places for generations to come. Historic sites are a valuable part of our shared history and culture, and they should be preserved so that future generations can appreciate them as well. Furthermore, preserving these sites will help maintain the economic vitality of our cities by attracting tourists and providing jobs in the tourism industry [13].

Syria is rich in history and culture. Archaeological sites, in addition to historical structures, are the best witnesses to this history [14]. In Syria, there are six archaeological sites registered on the list of human heritage protected by UNESCO [15]. The cultural identity of these six archaeological sites in Syria is deeply rooted in the history and culture of the region. Damascus, for example, is one of the

oldest continuously inhabited capitals in the world and has been a major center of culture and civilization since ancient times[16]. It is home to many important religious sites, including the Umayyad Mosque, which was built in 705 AD [17]. The city also contains numerous monuments from different periods of its history, including the Citadel of Damascus, which dates back to 11th century AD [17]. Bosra or Bosra al-Sham is an ancient city located in southern Syria that was once part of the Roman Empire [18]. It is home to some of the most impressive ruins from this period, including a large amphitheater and several temples [18]. The city also contains many important Islamic monuments such as the Great Mosque and several other mosques from different periods.

Aleppo is another ancient city located in northern Syria that has been inhabited since at least 3000 BC [18,19]. It contains many important monuments from different periods, including a citadel dating back to 12th century AD and several mosques from different eras. Aleppo also contains some important Christian sites such as St Simeon's Monastery and St George's Church [18]. Palmyra is an ancient city located in central Syria that was once part of the Roman Empire [20]. It contains many impressive ruins from this period, including a large temple complex dedicated to Baal and several other temples dedicated to various gods and goddesses [21]. The Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din are two of the most impressive medieval castles in the Middle East. The Crac des Chevaliers is a Crusader castle built in the 12th century by the Knights Hospitaller [22]. It is renowned for its well-preserved architecture and its strategic location. Qal'at Salah El-Din was built by the Ayyubid dynasty in the 12th century and is considered one of the most important fortresses of the region [23]. It was used as a base for Saladin during his campaigns against the Crusaders [24].

The ancient villages in northern Syria are another important part of Syrian cultural identity [25]. These villages contain many traditional buildings made out of mud brick or stone that date back centuries ago and are still inhabited today by local people who continue to practice traditional customs such as weaving carpets or making pottery [26]. these six archaeological sites represent an incredibly rich cultural identity that has been shaped by centuries of history and culture in Syria. They provide us with an insight into how people lived during different periods throughout history as well as how they continue to live today through their traditional customs and beliefs. See Figures 1 and 2.

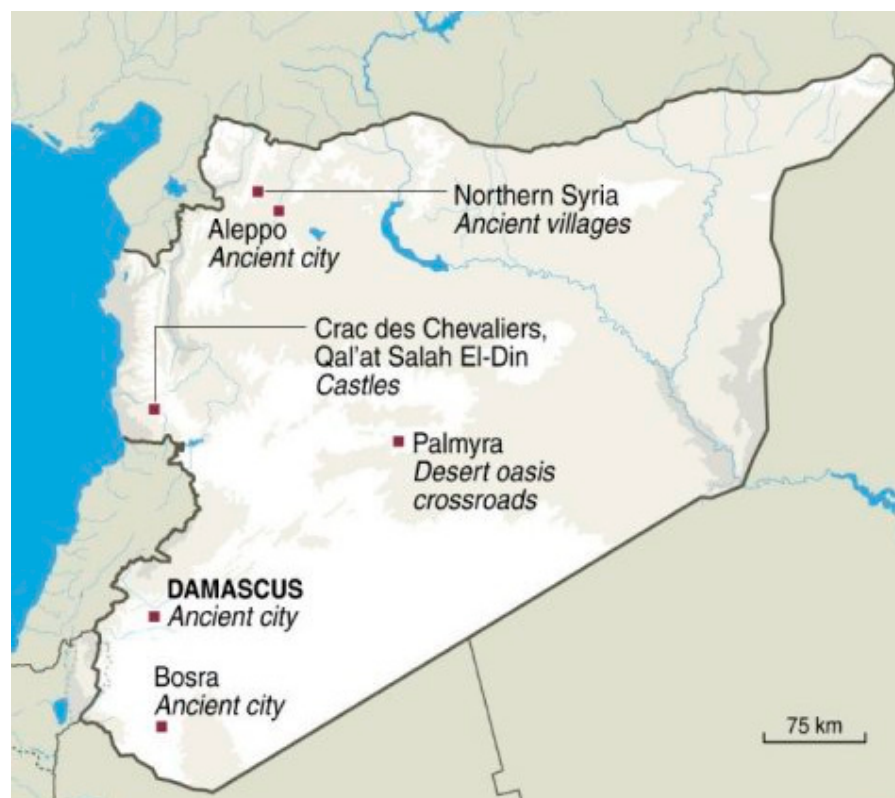


Figure 1. Heritage Map Syria, source: USPA NEWS 19 July 2016.



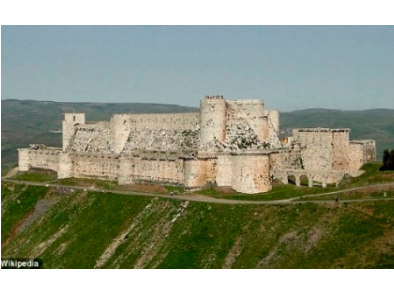



		
Aleppo Ancient city	Northern Syria's historic villages	Crac des Chevaliers- Qal'at Salah El-Din
		
Palmyra	Damascus Ancient city	Bosra Ancient city

Figure 2. Photos of Syria's six UNESCO World Heritage Sites, source: daily mail 17 March 2016.

Research on historical Syrian cities in the post-war period can provide important insights into how to balance preservation of cultural heritage with tourism investments. It involves difficult questions related to economics, restoration, revitalization, infrastructure development and cultural policies in order to create a sustainable model of development that recognizes and respects the history of cities and their inhabitants. Research findings on this issue can be applied to other urban areas affected by war in the region, providing them with valuable solutions for meaningful recovery and rebuilding.

We attempt to address the key issues that the research raised. The following is how these queries are presented: What challenges do local governments face when attempting to balance cultural preservation and tourism investment? What impact has the war had on the preservation of historic sites in Syria, and what measures can be taken to protect them? How can tourism be used as a tool for economic development in post-war Syria? What strategies can be used to ensure that cultural heritage is preserved while also allowing for tourism investment? How can local governments ensure that tourism investments are beneficial to the local economy without compromising the integrity of historic sites?

The research aims to explore the challenges and opportunities of preserving historic Syrian cities in the post-war period while balancing tourism investment. The study will examine the impact of the war on the cultural heritage of Syria, particularly on its historic cities, and how it has affected their preservation. It will also investigate the potential for tourism investment in these cities and how it can be managed sustainably to ensure that cultural heritage is not compromised. The research aims to provide insights into effective strategies for balancing cultural preservation and tourism investment in historic Syrian cities, which can inform policy decisions and contribute to sustainable development in the region.

2. Research design and methodology

To gain an in-depth understanding of the old Syrian cities in the post-war period and to provide recommendations for sustainable development, extensive research will be conducted. To begin, a review of existing literature and documents related to this topic is necessary to provide an overview of the current situation in Syria and help identify pertinent issues. Then, semi-structured interviews

with key stakeholders such as local government officials, business owners, and community members will be carried out to uncover their perspectives on preserving cultural identity and investing in tourism. After data has been collected from these interviews it will be subjected to thematic analysis techniques for further examination. In conclusion, the results of this analysis will be used to draw insight into this pressing issue and suggest solutions for greater sustainability in old Syrian cities and provide recommendations for future action. The methodology used can be detailed as follows:

- I. Data Collection: Data have been collected through a review of existing literature and documents, semi-structured interviews, and survey. Interviews have been conducted (between 5 and 25 December 2022) with key stakeholders three local government officials, two business owners and two researchers specialized in historic Syrian sites. The interviews have been focused on understanding how these cities are preserving their cultural identity and how they are investing in tourism. What challenges have Syrian cities faced in the post-war period in terms of cultural preservation and tourism investment? How have Syrian cities adapted to the changing landscape of tourism investment since the war? What strategies have been implemented to ensure that cultural heritage is preserved while still allowing for tourism investment? How has the government supported efforts to balance cultural preservation and tourism investment in Syrian cities?

Additionally, an online survey has been realized (between 25 December 2022 and 25 January 2023) to better understand the local’s perceptions in relation to the study objective, our questions about how familiar are you with the history of Syrian cities? What do you think are the most important aspects of cultural preservation in Syrian cities? how can tourism investment be used to support cultural preservation in Syrian cities? how has the local community responded to efforts to promote cultural tourism in Syrian cities? See Figure 3.

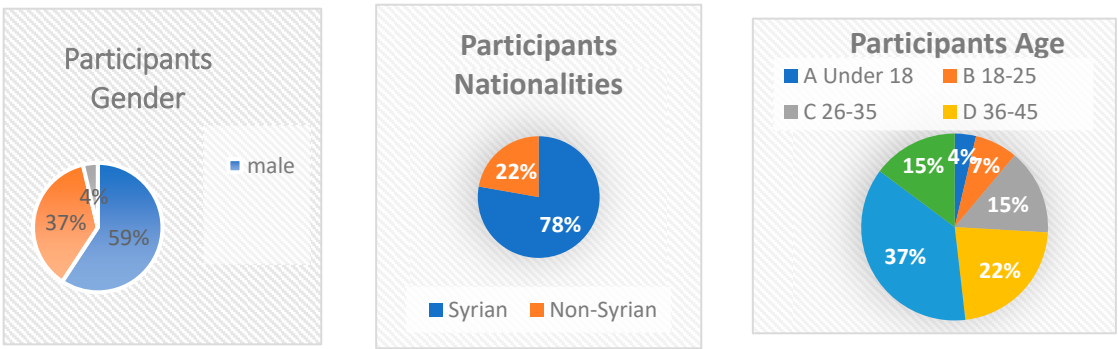


Figure 3. Sampling size and demographic.

- II. Data Analysis: The data collected from the interviews and literature review have been analyzed using thematic analysis. This method allows for the identification of patterns in the data that can help to answer the research questions. The themes that emerge from the analysis have been used to draw conclusions about how these cities are preserving their cultural identity and investing in tourism.
- III. Ethical Considerations: Ethical considerations for this research include obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring the confidentiality of participants’ information, and avoiding potential harm to participants. Informed consent forms have been provided to all participants prior to conducting interviews. All information obtained during the research process will remain confidential unless otherwise specified by the participant or required by law.

3. Conflicts destroying historical cities and their reconstruction: Literature Review

The destruction of heritage and cultural sites has been a problem throughout human history [27]. In the past, wars and conflicts have caused significant damage to these sites, leading to their destruction or vandalism [28]. In recent years, however, there has been an increased focus on the preservation of heritage and cultural sites in order to promote tourism and economic development

[29]. A number of studies have examined the impact of war on heritage and cultural sites [30–34]. For example, a study by Kostof [35] found that during World War II, many European cities were heavily damaged due to bombing raids and military occupation. This resulted in the destruction of many historic buildings and monuments, as well as the displacement of people from their homes. Similarly, a study by Hirsch [36] found that during the Bosnian War in the 1990s, numerous cultural monuments were destroyed or damaged due to shelling and other military activities.

Examining the impact of war on heritage and cultural sites has been a key focus of this research in order to understand how these sites can be preserved once the conflict has ended. Numerous studies on this topic have been conducted around the world, with a particular focus on Syria. This review can provide valuable lessons for other war-torn cities, assisting them in finding effective solutions for preserving historic sites and protecting their cultural heritage and how employment the tourism investment in historic cities.

I. *Previous case studies from other parts of the world*

The post-war period has seen a dramatic shift in the way cities are viewed, both in terms of their cultural identity and their potential for tourism investment [37]. This literature review will explore the ways in which historic cities have responded to these changes, and how they have sought to preserve their cultural identity while also taking advantage of the opportunities offered by tourism investment. The first article to be discussed is “Using Cultural Heritage as a Tool in Post-war Recovery: Assessing the Impact of Heritage on Recovery in Post-war Dubrovnik, Croatia” by K. Bishop (2014) [38]. This research examines the case of Dubrovnik, a city that has experienced significant changes since the end of the war. Bishop argues that Dubrovnik has managed to maintain its cultural identity despite these changes, largely due to its commitment to preserving its historic architecture and monuments. He also highlights the importance of local initiatives such as festivals and other events that help to promote a sense of community and pride in Dubrovnik’s history.

The second article is “Urban tourism development in Prague: from tourist mecca to tourist ghetto” by V. Dumbrovská (2017) [39]. This article looks at how Prague has managed to capitalize on its rich history and culture by investing heavily in tourism infrastructure. Dumbrovská argues that this investment has been beneficial for both tourists and locals alike, as it has helped to create jobs, boost local economies, and attract more visitors to the city. He also notes that this investment has been carefully managed so as not to detract from Prague’s unique cultural identity. The third article is “Branding post-war Sarajevo: Journalism, memories, and dark tourism” by Z. Volcic (2014)[40]. This article examines how Sarajevo has sought to preserve its cultural heritage following the war, despite significant damage caused by conflict and neglect. Volcic argues that Sarajevo has been successful in this endeavor due to its commitment to restoring historic buildings and monuments, as well as creating new public spaces for citizens to enjoy. He also highlights how this preservation effort has helped Sarajevo become an attractive destination for tourists from around the world.

Finally, “Recovering Beirut: Urban design and post-war reconstruction” by S. Halaf (1993) [41] looks at how Beirut has sought to rebuild itself following years of conflict and destruction. Halaf argues that Beirut’s success can be attributed largely to its commitment to preserving its unique cultural heritage while also investing heavily in tourism infrastructure such as hotels, restaurants, museums, galleries, and other attractions. He also notes that this approach has allowed Beirut to remain true to its identity while still taking advantage of the economic benefits offered by tourism investment.

Overall, this literature review demonstrates that post-war cities have responded differently when it comes to preserving their cultural identity while also taking advantage of tourism investment opportunities. While some cities have focused on restoring their historic architecture or creating new public spaces for citizens, others have invested heavily in tourism infrastructure such as hotels or museums. Ultimately though, all these approaches share a common goal: ensuring that post-war cities remain true to their identities while still benefiting from increased economic activity brought about by tourism investment.

II. *Studies about Syrian historical cities*

This literature review examines the challenges associated with preserving Syria's old cities in the post-war period, and how investment in tourism can help to rebuild them.

The first article reviewed is "Heritage in post-war period challenges and solutions" by A. Belal (2019) [42]. In this article, Belal discusses the challenges associated with preserving Syria's old cities in the post-war period. He argues that due to the destruction caused by the war, many of these cities are now in need of extensive restoration work. He also notes that there is a lack of resources available for such projects and that there is a need for greater international support for their preservation. Belal suggests that investment in tourism could be one way to help fund such projects and ensure that these cities remain part of Syria's cultural heritage.

The second article reviewed is "Dealing with Heritage in Syria: The Analysis of the Conflict Period (2011–2021)" by M. Zugaibi (2022)[43]. In this article, Zugaibi discusses how investment in tourism can help to rebuild Syria's old cities after the war. He argues that such investment could provide much needed jobs and revenue for local communities, while also helping to preserve their cultural heritage. Zugaibi also notes that such investments could be used to promote peace and stability in the region by helping to bring people together from different backgrounds.

Finally, the third article reviewed is "The role of cultural routes in sustainable tourism development: A case study of Syria's spiritual route" by B. Dayoub (2020)[44]. In this article, Dayoub examines how investment in tourism can help preserve Syria's old cities while also promoting its cultural identity. She argues that such investments could be used to create jobs for locals while also providing an opportunity for Syrians to reconnect with their past through visits to these sites. Dayoub also suggests that such investments could be used as a tool for reconciliation between different groups within Syria who have been divided by conflict.

In general, this literature review has highlighted some of the challenges associated with preserving Syria's old cities in the post-war period, as well as how investment in tourism can help rebuild them while preserving their cultural identity. It has shown that such investments could provide much needed jobs and revenue for local communities while also helping to promote peace and stability in the region through reconciliation between different groups within Syria who have been divided by conflict.

4. A glimpse of the destructive impact of the war on the ancient cities of Syria

The devastating effects of the war in Syria can be seen in the destruction it has caused to some of its oldest cities[15,45,46]. Aleppo, Damascus, and Palmyra are among those which have suffered greatly as a result, with their ancient monuments and artifacts destroyed or left to crumble[47–50]. Unfortunately, this damage is not simply limited to physical destruction; the war has had an immense psychological impact on the people who used to inhabit these cities, many of whom have been forced to flee due to violence or lack of resources. This brings with it a sense of loss and despair which cannot be quantified. The irreparable damage done to these cities is a tragedy for both Syria and for planet as a whole[51]; representing an incalculable loss for cultural heritage and history that will never be restored[51].

The city of Aleppo has been the site of immense destruction, damage and cultural loss due to conflict-related violence in the past five years[52]. Estimates show that 70% of all buildings have been severely damaged or destroyed, completely altering its landscape[53]. Additionally, over 90% of its once iconic mosques, churches as well as libraries, museums and archaeological sites have suffered destruction as well[45,53]. This destruction has also had an economic toll on its inhabitants with 1 million people having been displaced from their homes and a total economic loss amounting to \$4 billion for those still in the city[54–56]. It is clear that these events have affected every aspect of life within Aleppo in an extremely negative manner.

The Islamic State's capture of Palmyra in 2015 had a devastating impact, with over 60% destruction to the ancient city and its monuments[49,57–59]. The looted artifacts number up to 1,500 taken between 2015-2017 adding insult to injury for Syria's cultural heritage as well as damaging their tourism industry - from 150k visitors pre-capture down almost entirely to 890 reported tourists by

2017 statistics. It is an undeniable tragedy that this once popular tourist destination has been stripped of not only life but also much of its historically significant art and architecture.

The ancient city of Bosra or Bosra al-Sham reveals that it has been substantially affected by the Syrian Civil War[60]. According to satellite imagery, there were over 300 damaged structures in this city in 2018 - a twofold increase from 2012[61]. Furthermore, archaeological sites have been badly affected; the World Monuments Fund notes that many monuments and architectural features such as columns and porticoes have been destroyed in both Bosra al-Sham and its nearby villages.

The Syrian civil war has taken an enormous toll on the delicate beauty of Damascus and its surrounding areas[62]. The capital has been shelled and battered by airstrikes since 2011. The archaeological sites like Crac des Chevaliers have served as strongholds for belligerent forces between 2012-2013[63], with further damage resulting from their recapture in 2014. Furthermore, centuries-old villages have been eradicated as a result of clashes between government forces and rebel groups, displacing large numbers of local populations to escape the violence. Even Qal'at Salah El-Din - an important monument considered to be one of the most impressive examples of Crusader architecture - has been affected by the war, having suffered major destruction after being captured by regime forces. Such devastation paints a dire picture of what has become an ongoing tragedy for those affected both now and in years to come[64].

5. Results

After undertaking research on this current topic and acquiring knowledge from several sources, our findings have been segregated into two main classes: the complexities associated with reconstructing historic Syrian cities and the essential contributors to the dialogue on heritage cities.

5.1. Challenges of Rebuilding the historic Syrian cities

The challenge of rehabilitation and rebuilding the architectural heritage in the old Syrian cities is a daunting one. The destruction of the country's cultural heritage has been immense, with many of its ancient sites and monuments having been destroyed or damaged during the civil war. This has left a huge gap in the country's cultural identity, and it is now up to those involved in the rebuilding process to ensure that these sites are restored to their former glory. Through theoretical and field research, as well as information gathered from those concerned with the issue of rehabilitating Syria's heritage after the war. The main challenges facing those involved in this process is that.

A. *Limited financial resources:*

The cost of restoring and reconstructing the architectural heritage in the old Syrian cities is very high due to the limited financial resources available. Many of these buildings are centuries old and require extensive repairs and restoration work, which can be extremely costly. The cost of materials, labor, and other necessary supplies can add up quickly, making it difficult for many organizations to afford the necessary repairs. Additionally, many of these buildings are located in areas that have been heavily damaged by war or natural disasters, making it even more difficult to access them and complete the necessary repairs. In order to address this issue, some organizations have begun to look for alternative sources of funding. For example, some organizations have begun to seek out grants from international organizations or private donors in order to help cover the costs associated with restoring these buildings. Additionally, some organizations have begun to look into crowdfunding campaigns as a way to raise money for their projects. This has allowed them to reach a wider audience and potentially raise more money than they would be able to through traditional means.

Another option is for organizations to partner with local businesses or individuals who may be willing to provide financial support for their projects. This could include providing materials at a discounted rate or offering volunteer labor in exchange for a donation. This could help reduce the overall cost of restoration projects while still allowing them to move forward with their work. Some organizations have also looked into using technology as a way of reducing costs associated with restoration projects. For example, 3D printing has been used in some cases as a way of creating replicas of certain parts that may no longer be available or too expensive to replace.

B. *Lack of skilled labor:*

The lack of skilled labor is a major issue facing many countries around the world, but it is especially acute in Syria. The country has been embroiled in a civil war for over seven years, and the conflict has caused massive displacement of people and destruction of infrastructure. This has had a devastating effect on the economy, leaving many Syrians without jobs or the means to support themselves. The lack of skilled labor has had a particularly damaging effect on Syria’s cultural heritage. Many of the country’s historic buildings have been damaged or destroyed during the conflict, and those that remain are in need of urgent restoration work. However, this work requires highly specialized skills that are difficult to find in Syria today. Many of the skilled craftsmen who worked on these buildings have either passed away or left Syria due to the conflict, making it difficult to find people with the necessary skills to carry out restoration work.

The lack of skilled labor also affects other areas of Syrian life. For example there is a shortage of engineers and technicians needed for rebuilding infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and power plants which have all been damaged during the war. The lack of skilled labor is one of many challenges facing Syria today as it attempts to rebuild after years of conflict and destruction. It will take time for Syrians to acquire new skills and knowledge needed for reconstruction efforts, but this process must begin soon if Syria is ever going to recover from its current crisis. In addition, international organizations must provide support by providing training opportunities for Syrians so that they can gain access to these skills more quickly and effectively. Only then will Syrians be able to rebuild their country with confidence and hope for a better future.

C. *Damage caused by conflict:*

The conflict in Syria has caused extensive damage to many of the country’s buildings, monuments, and infrastructure. This damage has been caused by both direct and indirect means, such as airstrikes, shelling, and looting. The destruction of these buildings has had a devastating effect on the country’s cultural heritage and history. The most visible damage is to the ancient monuments and archaeological sites that have been destroyed or damaged by the conflict. Many of these sites are irreplaceable and their destruction is a major loss to Syria's cultural heritage. In addition, many of the country's historic buildings have been damaged or destroyed due to shelling or airstrikes. This includes mosques, churches, palaces, and other important structures that were once symbols of Syrian culture.

The conflict has also caused extensive damage to old city's infrastructure. Roads have been destroyed or blocked off due to fighting between different factions in the conflict. Bridges have been damaged or destroyed by airstrikes or shelling. Power lines have been cut off due to sabotage or destruction by combatants on both sides of the conflict. These disruptions in infrastructure have had a major impact on the ability of Syrians to access basic services such as electricity, water, and healthcare. See Figure 4.





Figure 4. Photos of Syria's heritage site destruction, source: Aljazeera 15 April 2013.

it is clear that the conflict in Syria has caused immense damage both physically and psychologically that will take years for Syrians to recover from fully. Restoring these buildings and monuments will be a difficult task but it is essential for preserving Syrian culture for future generations.

D. *Lack of awareness:*

The ongoing civil war in Syria has caused a lack of knowledge about the importance of preserving and restoring historic structures, making it difficult to raise money and political support. This lack of knowledge is due to the disruption caused by the war, as well as the limited resources available for education and outreach. Preserving and restoring these structures can have significant economic benefits, such as generating income from visitors and creating job opportunities in hospitality and related industries, but without proper education and outreach efforts, many Syrians may not be aware of these benefits. Preserving Syria's cultural heritage requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses both educational barriers and political challenges. This includes education initiatives that target both local communities and international audiences, guided tours or workshops, and marketing campaigns that showcase Syria's rich cultural heritage. Additionally, there needs to be greater political support for preservation efforts, such as lobbying government officials or working with international organizations. By raising awareness about the importance of these structures and highlighting their economic benefits, we can work towards ensuring that they are protected for future generations to enjoy.

E. *Cultural differences:*

Different cultures have different approaches toward architecture, which can make it difficult for architects from different backgrounds to agree on how best to restore a building. Cultural differences can have a huge impact on architecture, especially when it comes to restoring a building. Different cultures have different approaches to architecture and design, and this can lead to disagreements between architects from different backgrounds. For example, when it comes to restoring a Syrian building, an architect from the United States may have a very different approach than an architect from Syria. In the United States, architects often focus on modernizing and updating buildings with the latest technology and materials. This approach is often seen as more efficient and cost-effective. However, in Syria, traditional methods are often preferred for restoring buildings. This includes using traditional materials such as stone or brick, as well as traditional techniques such as hand-carved details or intricate mosaics. These methods are seen as more authentic and respectful of the original structure.

When it comes to restoring a Syrian building, it is important for architects from different backgrounds to come together and find a way to bridge their cultural differences in order to create something that is both respectful of the original structure and also meets modern standards of safety and efficiency. It is also important for architects to be aware of local customs and traditions when working on projects in Syria so that they can ensure that their designs are appropriate for the culture they are working in. Ultimately, cultural differences can be both challenging and rewarding when it comes to restoring a Syrian building. By understanding each other's perspectives and working

together towards a common goal, architects from different backgrounds can create something beautiful that honors both the past and present of Syrian architecture.

5.2. *The key players in the heritage city debate*

The key players in the heritage city debate in Syria are diverse and include political, social, and economic actors. Political actors play a crucial role in the reconstruction of historic sites in old Syrian cities. Social actors contribute to the preservation of cultural identity and heritage in old Syrian cities by raising awareness about their importance and advocating for their protection. Economic actors are also important as they play a significant role in tourism's role in reviving Syria's historic cities. These key players must work together to ensure that Syria's cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. According to our field research and the aggregate of the interviews we conducted, we were able to identify guiding principles that must be deemed crucial when defining the roles of each player.

A. Political actors in the reconstruction of historic sites in old Syrian cities.

1. Document the existing sites: Before any reconstruction efforts can begin, it is important to thoroughly document the existing sites. This includes taking photographs, making detailed drawings, and collecting information about the site's history and cultural significance.

2. Engage local stakeholders: Local stakeholders should be consulted throughout the reconstruction process to ensure that their needs and concerns are taken into account. This could include engaging with local residents, business owners, and government officials.

3. Utilize traditional building techniques: Where possible, traditional building techniques should be used in order to maintain the authenticity of the historic site. This could include using locally sourced materials or employing traditional craftspeople who specialize in these techniques.

4. Incorporate modern amenities: While maintaining the historic character of a site is important, it is also necessary to incorporate modern amenities in order to make it more accessible and attractive to visitors. This could include adding wheelchair access or installing modern lighting fixtures.

5. Create interpretive materials: Interpretive materials such as signage or audio tours can help visitors understand the history of a site and its cultural significance. These materials can also provide an opportunity for local residents to share their stories and perspectives on the site's history and importance.

B. Social actors' Contributions to the Preservation of Cultural Identity and Heritage in Old Syrian Cities

The role of local communities in preserving cultural identity and heritage in old Syrian cities is of paramount importance. Syria is a country with a rich and diverse history, and its cities are home to many ancient monuments, archaeological sites, and cultural artifacts that are integral to the nation's identity. As such, it is essential that local communities in Syria's old cities take an active role in preserving their cultural heritage. The first step for local communities to take when it comes to preserving their cultural identity and heritage is to recognize the importance of these sites. This means understanding the historical significance of the sites, as well as their value to the community. It also involves educating citizens about the importance of protecting these sites from destruction or damage due to development or other activities. Once citizens understand the importance of these sites, they can then work together to ensure that they are preserved for future generations.

In addition to recognizing the importance of these sites, local communities must also be willing to invest time and resources into preserving them. This could involve organizing clean-up days or fundraising efforts in order to raise money for restoration projects or other preservation efforts. It could also involve working with government agencies or non-profit organizations in order to ensure that these sites are properly protected from development or other activities that could damage them. Finally, local communities must also be willing to engage with visitors who come to visit these sites. This could involve providing tours or educational programs about the history and significance of the site, as well as offering hospitality services such as food and lodging for visitors who come from out of town. By engaging with visitors, locals can help spread awareness about their cultural heritage and encourage more people from around the world to visit these important places. The following chart shows the results of our social survey. See Figure 5.

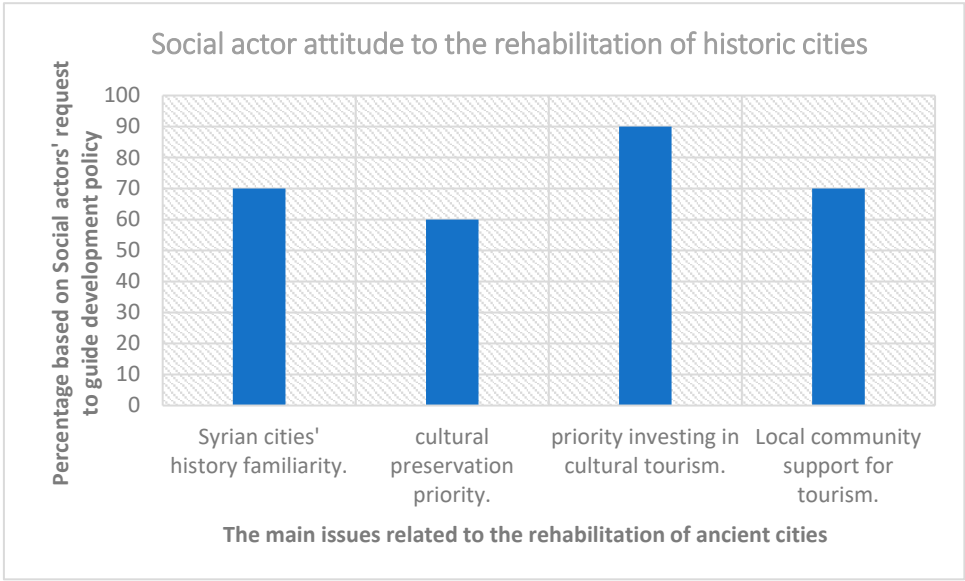


Figure 5. Social attitude assessment.

Our social survey demonstrates the population's desire for tourism investments that benefit the economy. This is understandable given the deteriorating economic situation caused by the conflict. However, cultural preservation came in last, which demonstrates a lack of awareness regarding this aspect. In addition, the willingness of the local populace to support tourism was discovered in the second stage, and this affirms the desire for economic investment in the location. Here, awareness of the significance of preserving cultural heritage must be raised because it is the source of local identity and the foundation of the economy of the future.

C. The Economic Actors Behind Tourism’s Role in Reviving Syria’s Historic Cities

One of the key economic actors that can contribute to the revitalization of Syria's historic cities is the private sector. Private companies can invest in restoring damaged buildings and infrastructure, creating job opportunities for locals and contributing to the overall economic growth of these cities. Additionally, private investors can support local businesses by providing funding for new ventures or expanding existing ones. International organizations such as UNESCO can also play a vital role in preserving Syria's cultural heritage. UNESCO has already been involved in several restoration projects in Syria and can continue to provide technical assistance and funding for future projects.

The Syrian government also has a significant role to play in reviving its historic cities. The government can provide incentives for private investment, streamline bureaucratic procedures for restoration projects, and ensure that regulations are put in place to protect cultural heritage sites. Finally, local communities must be involved in the revitalization process. They have a deep understanding of their city's history and culture and can provide valuable insights into how best to preserve it. Community involvement can also help ensure that restoration efforts are sustainable and benefit all members of society. In brief, reviving Syria's historic cities will require a coordinated effort from various economic actors. Private companies, international organizations, governments, and local communities must work together to restore these cities' cultural heritage while also promoting economic growth and social development.

6. Discussion

Despite the destruction, there is still hope for the future of these cities as they are being slowly rebuilt and restored. The challenge now is to find a way to preserve the cultural identity while also encouraging tourism investment. The destruction of these cities has been heartbreaking for many Syrians who have seen their homes destroyed and their cultural heritage threatened. In order to preserve the cultural identity of these cities, it is important that they be restored in a way that respects

their history and culture. This means that any new construction should be done in a way that does not detract from the existing architecture or disrupt the traditional urban fabric.

It is also important to ensure that any new development does not displace existing residents or businesses. At the same time, it is essential that these cities become attractive destinations for tourists so that they can generate much-needed revenue for reconstruction efforts. This means creating an environment where visitors feel safe and welcome while also providing amenities such as restaurants, hotels, and other attractions. To this end, it is important to ensure that any new development takes into account local customs and traditions so as not to alienate potential visitors.

In addition, it is essential that local communities be involved in the process of rebuilding their cities so that they can take ownership of their own heritage sites and ensure they are preserved for future generations. This includes providing training opportunities for local people so they can learn how to restore buildings and monuments as well as providing access to funding sources so they can participate in restoration projects themselves. The old Syrian cities have suffered greatly during the civil war but there is still hope for them if we can find ways to preserve their cultural identity while also encouraging tourism investment.

It is clear that local communities have an essential role in preserving cultural identity and heritage in old Syrian cities. By recognizing the importance of these sites, investing resources into their preservation, and engaging with visitors who come from around the world, locals can help ensure that this important part of Syria's history is not forgotten but instead celebrated by future generations.

Tourism investment is an important tool for revitalizing old Syrian cities after years of conflict and destruction. It can help rebuild infrastructure, restore historical sites, create new businesses, and promote cultural events that will bring people together while also attracting foreign visitors from abroad who are interested in exploring Syria's culture and history firsthand. With proper planning and implementation of tourism investments into old Syrian cities, it is possible for them to become vibrant tourist destinations once again that contribute positively to both the local economy as well as international relations between Syria and other countries around the world.

The findings, such as the anticipated challenges and the diversity of players in this massive urban endeavor, are discussed with S. Noaman. He demonstrates a number of strategic, economic, social, and environmental conclusions that can be drawn to cover gaps in Iraq's long-term waste management. The findings of this research are expected to assist Iraq in achieving its long-term goals for sustainable growth following a disaster[65].

We also encounter S. Barakat, who recognizes the significance of the situation. Integration of cultural heritage into broader responses, ongoing political and financial support, local capacity, participation of Indigenous actors, recognition of complementarity between replacement and conservation approaches, prioritizing quality over speed of recovery, conservation codes and laws, and respect for belief and religion[66]. We also meet M. S. Affaki, who talks about what to rebuild and how, goals and methods, and the importance of public involvement. It also suggests a context-specific reconstruction strategy aimed at contributing to social recovery by tackling the city's sociocultural and economic issues[67].

Despite the fact that we have discussed the challenges and roles of the various people involved in restoring ancient Syrian cities, this process, like all urban projects, is complex and has overlaps for the various people involved. This is obvious when you consider the scale at which we are operating. Looking at the scale in this case requires participation between different players at different levels.

At the micro level- the historic site level- the challenge is to protect the physical integrity of historic sites while accommodating the needs of tourists. This requires careful planning and management to ensure that visitors can access and appreciate these sites without causing damage or disruption. For example, some cities have implemented strict regulations on visitor behavior, such as prohibiting photography or limiting the number of visitors at any given time.

At the meso level - national - national policies must be developed to support cultural preservation while also promoting tourism as a source of economic growth. This involves investing in infrastructure and services that enhance the visitor experience while protecting historic sites. For

example, governments may provide funding for restoration projects or establish guidelines for sustainable tourism practices. At the same time, they must balance these efforts with broader economic development goals that may conflict with preservation objectives.

At the macro level - International - international organizations can play a role in supporting cultural preservation efforts in Syria. This may involve providing technical assistance or funding for restoration projects, as well as promoting responsible tourism practices among visitors from around the world. However, international involvement must be carefully managed to avoid undermining local ownership and control over cultural resources. Ultimately, achieving a balance between cultural preservation and tourism investment requires collaboration among stakeholders at all levels – from local communities to national governments to international organizations – who share a commitment to protecting Syria's rich heritage for future generations.

7. Conclusion:

The post-war period in Syria presents a complex challenge of balancing cultural preservation and tourism investment in historic cities. The conflicts have destroyed many ancient cities, leaving them in ruins and requiring extensive reconstruction efforts. Rebuilding these cities presents various challenges, including funding, political instability, and lack of expertise. The key players in the heritage city debate include government officials, international organizations, local communities, and tourists. The debate is complex and has overlaps for the various people involved. At the micro level, local communities are concerned about preserving their cultural heritage while also benefiting from tourism revenue. At the meso level, governments are interested in promoting economic growth through tourism while also preserving cultural heritage sites. At the macro level, international organizations are focused on preserving cultural heritage sites while also promoting sustainable tourism practices. Ultimately, finding a balance between cultural preservation and tourism investment is crucial for ensuring that historic Syrian cities can be enjoyed by future generations while also providing economic benefits to local communities.

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