

Post War Reconstruction for Tourism Development

Case Study Khorram-Shar, Iran

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Abstract: *Tourism development has been perceived as a promoter of city development and can also affect the post-war city reconstruction. This paper investigates the strategy for reconstruction of war-damaged buildings in Khorram-Shahr a war-torn city in Iran in order to change and use them as a post-war tourism attraction. The objective of this paper is to critically review approaches in the reconstruction of buildings to assess the existing potentials of post-war tourism. The results of this paper were based on the sequential mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) to explore approaches in the reconstruction of buildings as the core elements of urban tourism. The findings of the study revealed the most relevant reconstruction strategy for post-war tourism to be considered by urban policy makers, urban designers and architects.*

Keywords: *Post-war tourism, Building reconstruction, Post-war attraction, Tourism strategy*

1. Introduction

Despite all efforts have been conducted to establish sustainable peace, our world is still suffering from harmful defects of wars and its long-term violent and destructions. Houses, buildings and infrastructure are the main destructive components in urban warfare; therefore, post-war reconstruction is the first step of rising from ruin after each war. On the other hand, the development of tourism at a regional scale has also been used as a strategy to promote regional development using the urban and heritage tourism approaches. Tourism development is viewed as an economic, socio-cultural and environmental activity that enhances social life and built environment (Abby, 2006; Chwarzer, 2008; Hall, 2000; Timothy, 1995). Tourism played a wider role by helping to remold opportunities for the urban renewal with other growing activities (Owen 1990).

In parallel with the growing of tourism, demands for travel to sites of pervious war, disaster, and atrocities are growing in recent decades. The main research streams have emanated from the late 1990s that addressed post-war tourism situations in relation to post-conflict tourism markets, new tourism trends and their characteristics (Causevic and Lynch 2013). This tourism wave had been used as a development promoter which affects local community with prosperous social and built environmental aspects. For example, Berlin was one of the leading European cities in post-war tourism in urban areas. During reconstruction era, the city parliament of Berlin with monumental triumphal arches, and government halls took a central position in the plan translated into architectural models for new Germany (Arandjelovic and Bogunovich 2014). In Middle East, segregation wall in Bethlehem be a tourist attraction within the context of Palestine-Israel conflict. Tourists visit holy sites, a refugee camp and hear about life under occupation. In those situations, war remnants may even act as a stimulus to attract tourists who are motivated by a novelty experience, different from a conventional holiday experience (Isaac 2009). Not far from Palestine, in Beirut the capital city of Lebanon, new public spaces are organized around archaeological sites uncovered during the demolition of war-torn buildings then changed the face of the city center to the tourist attraction (Samara 1996; El-Masri 1989). The focus on post-war reconstruction and

tourism in this paper has to be understood from the point of view that how reconstruction of buildings can conserve the war's effects with the aim of promoting post-war tourism.

2. Post-war tourism and urban context

One of the leading values of a city's identity is the cultural heritage which is expressed in the urban landscape and architecture of buildings. Using buildings to motivate tourism and solidify an urban identity is not a new phenomenon while architectural tourism is as old as architecture itself. (Ye and Tussyadiah 2010). In fact, buildings are the best left reminiscence to tell the history about what happened during the past. They illustrate the first image for visitors based on the physical assets and a series of experiences in urban areas. These assets and experiences of tourism attraction are generally extending to the living culture and the built environment in cities (Wilson 2002).

The linkage between post-war buildings and tourism attraction can be established on the way that, the war was a part of city's history and one of the tourism goals, especially in cultural tourism seeks to explore what happened in the past event, whether it was good or dreadful. Numerous literatures have highlighted the role of buildings and landmarks as tourism attractions in the process of renovation and restoration. This category of tourism has been used as a strategy to promote regional development in urban and heritage (Jansen-Verbeke, 1995; Opperman, Chon, & Cai, 1998; Sharpley, Telfer, & David, 2002; R. Sharpley, 2011). Many cities create new narratives of revitalization based on cultural heritage to curb their decline, as well as making the transition towards economic viability (Richards and Wilson 2006). These cities can create new narratives of revitalization based on urban culture and heritage in order to reverse their decline and to make a transition towards better condition for the residents (Richards and Wilson 2006). Hall (2009) and Owen's (1990) suggested that urban tourism could be the main element of urban renewal. Based on this model tourism can act as a catalyst for restoration cultural quarters, heritage sites, museums, events and creative businesses, which then becomes the principal factor of culture and tourism in the restoration process (Evans 2000; Smith 2007). Moreover, in many cities a landmark was made as a development project can be a valuable tourism attraction in the form of a world-class recognizable icon (Sharpley, Telfer, and David 2002). Accordingly, a landmark plays a role to keep alive in the common memory of tourists while acts as physical representation in public areas and urban landscapes (Gurler and Ozer 2013).

A key shared value between the architectural aspects of reconstruction and tourism development in post-war cities is the preservation of the war's effect on some building as a part of the city's history (Nguyen and Le Van 1997). One of the most famous tourist attractions in the post-war cities is war monument, which is generally a project in the urban reconstruction of post-war cities. Past events are kept alive in the common memory through physical representation in public areas and urban landscapes (Gurler and Ozer 2013). These monuments reflect the psychological and sociological requirements of the societies on the landscape. Similarly, war monuments become tourist attractions in post-war cities and have the role of retaining alive the memories and history of a city's experience in the war era. According to the discussion in this paper, the scattered destruction and partly damaged buildings which are the significant problems in the reconstruction process can be potentials for post-war tourism attraction in Khorram-Shahr as the most important post-war city in Iran.

3. The context of research and methodology

To investigate post-war tourism strategy and approach, the researcher chose Khorram-Shahr located in the south west of Iran and ruined in the war between Iran and Iraq from 1980 to 1988. Two principal factors are considered in the selection of the study area, including the core characteristics of tourism such as attractions, activities and facilities like airport, railway and waterfront, which are the leading potentials for tourism development (Wöber, 2002) and secondly, the city had a prosper tourism background before the war. In addition, Khorram-Shahr is the largest city which was damaged and occupied by Iraqian's army during the war. It reached its highest population (150, 000) before the war when it was the most important trading port of the Persian Gulf. In the years before the war, it had a prosperous tourism sector because it possessed the core characteristics for tourism development, including natural attractions, leisure activities and transport infrastructure. After the war, a total of 18,710 commercial and housing buildings existed within the city. Two thousands of them were estimated as completely destroyed and the 16,000 remaining buildings were classified as damaged 22% to 75%. After the war, governments made an effort to rise from the tourism slump by increasing number of domestic travels during

the second phase of the reconstruction period (after 1995). Obviously, war is a considerable turning point in the history of Khorram-Shahr whereby the city entered to the new era of tourism after the war with changing tourism identity from leisure to post-war tourism. Based on the changes in tourism identity, urban areas of Khorram-Shahr need to comply new era of tourism development. In this situation, reconstruction approach in buildings and urban space is the main aspect to satisfy about one million war-tourists who come annually to visit the city.

The mixed method approach was adopted in the paper which began with field observations followed by a questionnaire survey (Creswell and Clark, 2011). In the first phase of the inquiry, the field observation procedure involves recording the behavioral patterns of tourists, in a systematic manner, in order to obtain information about post-war tourism attractions in urban areas of Khorram-Shahr. Tourists tracking when encountering war memorial buildings and landmarks was recorded tourist interactions as objectively as possible by using qualitative inquiry tools comprising photo recordings and field notes. Tourist tracking observation was conducted in two main zones of tourist attraction to explore the pedestrian spatial behaviour of tourists when visiting post-war buildings and the trails they took during their visits. Trails were overlaid individually and then collated onto one map, showing individual trails or the intensity of activity along particular paths. The qualitative findings of tourist tracking observations in urban areas, were followed in the second phase with a self-administered questionnaire survey to examine the views of tourists regarding post-war tourism in two specific zones of Khorram-Shahr. The sample for the questionnaire survey was based on the purposive sampling method (Kerlinger and Lee 2000) while a total of 90 questionnaires were successfully completed by local post-war visitors. The questionnaire contained three parts. The first part focused on post-war tourism potential, and the second part examined the level of satisfaction pertaining to the preservation of war's effects in buildings and urban space, and last part considered theme and feasibility of a land mark according to post-war tourism potentials in Khorram-Shahr.

4. Results

Information from the observation indicated that there were two main zones for post-war tourism attractions in Khorram-Shahr as shown in Figure 1. The first zone comprised post-war attractions in the context of culture and pilgrimage (green zone in Fig 1). The mosque of Khorram-Shahr was the main attraction point in this zone. The mosque had been reconstructed to be in a similar condition as it was in the pre-war period with little preservation of the war's effects on the buildings (as shown by Fig 2). The mosque area was connected to Riverside Street through the old bazaar. In addition, the mosque was one of the war-related cultural buildings used by the military headquarters during the first forty-five days of resistance before the occupation; after liberty, it became the symbol of victory and liberty of Khorram-Shahr (as shown in Fig 3).

The second zone comprised post-war attractions in the context of natural tourism alongside Karoon River (Blue zone in Fig 1). The war museum was the central attraction of this green zone, along with two other partly damaged buildings. The museum was reconstructed to be a post-war tourist attraction through the preservation of the war's effects in some parts, keeping some war damage, including broken windows and shot effects, and renovating the interior space and some part of the exterior elevation (as shown in Fig 4 and 5). The building had been built in 1930 for the Iranian Oil Company as the company's headquarters, and was used as a monitoring stage by the Iraqi army during the war. At the time of this study, it was being used as the cultural center and the war museum. Based on the field observations, tourists preferred to stroll through the pedestrian path along the riverside instead of walking in the narrow streets around the mosque in the downtown area. Thus, it appeared that the landmarks, the natural features of the area and the remaining evidence of the war alongside the Karoon River were most attractive aspects for tourists in this natural zone.



Fig. 1: Tourist tracking observation map
Source: field observation



Fig. 2: Khorram-Shahr Mosque after reconstruction in 2011
(Source: Field observation)



Fig. 3: Khorram-Shahr Mosque during the war in 1982
(Source: <http://shahed.isaar.ir>)



Fig. 4 and 5: Preserving war effects in the reconstruction of a building for the war museum in Khorram-Shahr (Source: Field observation)

In the first part of the questionnaire survey, the tourists' motivations and purposes for visiting the city were analyzed in order to understand the post-war tourism situation in Khorram-Shahr. Among all existing potential elements, 'post-war tourist attraction' was the main purpose for the majority of tourists (40%), while visiting 'nature' was the second main purpose (32%), followed by the purpose of visiting family and friends (6%). The other purpose items, including education, business and shopping were at less than 5 percent for each. Interestingly, 72 percent of travelers stated that visiting 'nature' and the 'post-war tourism attractions' were the most important motivations for them. Furthermore, 65 percent of visitors stated that visiting the 'post-war attractions' was their utmost reason for travelling to Khorram-Shahr.

The analysis of the survey results regarding the views on preserving war effects in the city for tourism development revealed that; 70 percent of tourists agreed with the approach of preserving war effects. Views on the reconstruction strategy to preserve war effects in buildings was also examined in relation to the mosque and the war museum as two most important buildings from selected zones. The results of the analysis indicated that,

among the survey respondents, only 14 percent of the tourists agreed with the approached of reconstruction in the mosque. However, in the case of the museum, 77 percent of the tourists agreed with the said approach. Moreover, the central tendency measurements of the three categories in the survey that examined views on preserving war effects in the reconstruction process demonstrated that the highest mean (4.05) and median (4.00) were calculated for the war museum reconstruction strategy (as shown in Table1).

TABLE I: Score of Preservation War Effects

Theme	Mean	Median	STDV
Rank of preserving war effects in urban areas	3.64	4.00	1.06
Rank of satisfaction of mosque building with less respect to war history	2.55	3.00	0.89
Rank of satisfaction of reconstruction the museum building with preserving war effects	4.05	4.00	1.07

The third part of the survey examined the landmark theme and location as an important aspect of urban tourism. Based on the post-war landmark potential uncovered in the first phase, three symbols were examined as the preferred landmark theme in Khorram-Shahr, namely, the natural symbol, war-relevant symbol and indigenous cultural symbol. According to the tourists' survey responses, the war-relevant symbol was ranked first (66%) followed by the natural symbol (30%) and the cultural symbol (28%). The last part of the survey examined a location for a landmark in Khorram-Shahr based on the identified option by observation. Based on the overall percentage of respondents, Karoon riverside (green zone in fig-1) is the first ranked with 54 percent (ranks 4 and 5) followed by the entrance and downtown area with approximately similar percentages (35%).

5. Discussion and conclusion

The research sought to identify trends of post-war reconstruction for buildings as a tourist attraction whereas the creation of a peaceful environment is one of the main intentions for post-war reconstruction. War-torn regions seek to free themselves from the atmosphere of conflict, although conflict generally remains many years after the end of a war (D'Amore and Jafari 1998). Gelbman and Maoz (2011) argued that the peace factor was a significant component of the development of border regions. They claimed that if bilateral relations between two neighboring countries were good, crossing the border in either direction was relatively easy, and this factor helped both sides to benefit from the long-term development due to sustainable peace. The tourism industry could play an integral role in the world's quest for peace (Minho 2007; Robinson 1998). Causevic and Lynch (2013), claimed that tourism can act as an agent for peace in post-conflict social reconciliation.

The findings of this paper revealed two themes for the architectural aspects of reconstruction for post-war tourism development. Two main buildings in the tourism zones were selected as having the potential for post-war tourism, namely the Khorram-Shahr Mosque and War Museum. Reconstruction approaches in these two buildings were evaluated in the questionnaire survey of the tourists. The findings of this research proved that the strategies for post-war attractions are those that combine with natural attraction of the riverside lands where the tourism background and local and tourist acceptability as the tourism place. In line with these findings, Alvarez (2010) demonstrated that most pleasurable experiences for tourists are combined attractions mixed with the appeal of the local inhabitants' pleasurable attractions consuming the city in their everyday live. Craggs and Schofield (2010) also established the model illustrates the interrelationship between elements of the inner-city urban tourism system demonstrated by Jansen-Verbeke (1986). They classified urban components regarding tourism inner city; elements include a variety of potentials and facilities, which divide the inner city into an 'activity place' and a 'leisure setting'. This was evident in Khorram-Shahr where the riverside pedestrian path had become the most attractive point to the tourists and local to appreciate the landscape and natural-urban outlook, and the popularity of this area had indirectly supported the economic activities. Consequently, the riverside pedestrian area had become an important factor for the city's eco-leisure tourism which was supported by some war-relevant symbols that remained along the river and were used as post-war tourism attractions.

Regarding the landmark theme and combination of post-war and natural attractions, the tourist agreed on the natural symbol as the preferred landmark. The survey analysis also revealed that tourists agreed on the landmark location, with the city's riverside given the highest rank as a natural attraction. Moreover, systematic observations highlighted the Karoon riverside walkway as the favorite path for tourists. Therefore, the results indicated that the zone for the post-war tourism development in Khorram-Shahr should be the Karoon riverside.

The overall findings of the qualitative and quantitative inquiry demonstrated that the preferred strategy for reconstruction of buildings through post-war tourism concerns was to preserve war effects in regard to keep the city's history. The reconstruction approach as most likely to pre-war conditions, with less attention to the war effects is not considered by tourist and residents. The mixture of the natural environment of Karoon riverside and the post-war components were identified as the most attractive criteria for post-war tourism development in the urban areas of Khorram-Shahr. Therefore, the development plan for the city's further post-war tourism and reconstruction priorities should give main concern to this area rather than developing the tourism cultural context in the downtown areas. Preserving the war effects as a tourism attraction is only advantageous in some of the post-war buildings. Consideration should be given to important buildings such as political offices, religious places and such a place that are located nearby other attractions can be mixed with additional activities such as nature areas and museums. The landmark theme and location should be considered as interacting factors in post-war tourism development and city reconstruction. Lastly, every positive change in a post-war region needs stability and tourism can play the lead role as a peace promoter towards social stability in post-war cities. The sustain peace radically affected the reconstruction plan whereby economic growth and creation of prosperity affect life of residents and built environment.

6. References

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