

**Managing Cultural Tourism in a Post-Conflict Region - The  
Kurdistan Federal Region of Iraq**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

During any period marked by conflict, potential investors (domestic and foreign) are reluctant to invest in the tourism sector of a country or region, owing to weak investor protection and the general climate of instability, in parallel with the lack of comprehensive planning for the tourism industry. Moreover, after a period of conflict, major challenges have to be faced in rebuilding the social, cultural, educational, service and economic infrastructure.

Thus, the tourism industry in conflict and post-conflict areas often suffers a number of challenges, in the form of poor infrastructure, low investment and a lack of proper tourism management planning, or, poor implementation. In the case of the Kurdistan Federal Region of Iraq (KFR), conflict caused major challenges to heritage protection and consequently to the development of cultural tourism.

The region was subject to ethnic conflict between the Iraqi government and Kurdish opposition, in particular the armed conflict in 1961 to 2003. There was lack investment in transport infrastructure. The absence of essential facilities such as motorways, rail networks and airports severely restricted the development of a tourism industry from 1991 (the year in which Kurdish autonomy in the region was achieved) to 2005 (when the KFR was officially recognised in Iraq's Constitution of 2005) and continued until 2006. Thereafter, the tourism industry recorded an increase of approximately 700% from 2007 to 2013, after the building of two international airports and thousands of miles of motorways in the KFR.

However, so far, in the KFR, no consideration has been given to the conservation of cultural heritage, either as a legacy to the nation or in terms of its potential use to

develop tourism. This underdevelopment is attributable to a number of problems, but notably the conflict, which led to the lack of an integrated tourism policy, lack of knowledge on how to protect heritage assets, poor infrastructure and low investment.

The preservation of heritage assets has been discussed in the literature, but mostly the focus is on preservation of resources in the context of sustainable tourism (often in the context of over-utilization), and there is a lack of studies undertaken to investigate how post-conflict issues affect the protection of heritage assets, that is, what the potential challenges are to the conservation of heritage assets in post-conflict countries, and how these challenges impact on the future potential for cultural tourism development.

This thesis investigates how post-conflict issues affect heritage protection and cultural tourism, in terms of both planning and management, by exploring heritage protection and cultural tourism in the KFR as an example of both a post-conflict area and a new autonomous region. It suggests solutions and makes recommendations for the development of successful, competitive and sustainable cultural heritage tourism in the KFR.

The results show that the KFR is rich in cultural resources, but currently not enough governmental consideration is given to cultural heritage conservation. The managerial issues caused by lack of legislation and poor government administration, in parallel with some other challenges, notably a lack of funding, are the core barriers to investment in heritage protection in the KFR, and consequently creating major problems to the development of cultural tourism. Other issues include: a lack of investment and poor implementation, a negative destination image and marketing difficulties.

The findings will help decision makers to develop a strategy for cultural protection and to establish a proper cultural tourism policy in the KFR through recommendations to government. The findings will also be of interest to other post-conflict nations and regions. The thesis reports data from a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews conducted in 2015 and 2017.

**Keywords:** Cultural Tourism Policy; Cultural Tourism Development; Tourism Development; Heritage Protection; Post-Conflict; Kurdistan Federal Region

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## **List of abbreviations**

HCECR: High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalisation

KFR: Kurdistan Federal Region

KRG: Kurdistan Regional Government

MCY: Ministry of Culture and Youth

MFE: Ministry of Finance and Economy

UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organisation

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## Chapter 1. **Introduction**

### 1.1. Historical and political context

In 1992, the Kurdish people in the north of Iraq unilaterally declared the establishment of the Kurdistan Federal Region (KFR) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), without the approval of the Iraqi central government. This was after the Peshmerga (Kurdish military forces) had seized approximately 25,000 square miles of north of Iraq in 1991. The region contained 4,500 abandoned villages as a result of the discriminatory policies of successive Iraqi governments against the people of Kurdistan. The new Kurdish government controlled land without basic transport infrastructure such as airports, a railway network, dual carriageways and highways between main cities. The lack of these basic facilities in the KFR limited the development of the tourism industry until 2007. However, after the KFR was recognised officially by the Iraqi government in 2005, tourism growth recorded a roughly 700% increase between 2007 to 2013, due to a huge investment in infrastructure by the KRG, including the building of two international airports, thousands miles of highways, and the rebuilding of most of the abandoned villages.

The KFR was at the centre of one of the longest and difficult conflicts in the Middle East. One consequence was that the region greatly suffered from a lack of investment in its infrastructure. The problems stem from the formation of Iraq, and a legacy of calculated and systematic structural underinvestment. In more recent times this lack of investment occurred in most production and service sectors during several administrations, partly in retaliation to the Kurdish armed struggle against successive Iraqi governments. The ethnic conflict in Iraq saw the Iraqi central government trying to quell Kurdish mass demonstrations and uprisings, in particular the armed uprising

(1961 to 1991); it was a major challenge to all sectors of society and the region's economy, including the tourism industry. These policies were systematically escalated during the "nationalist movement" of the Ba'athist regime from 1968 onwards, when the KFR was subjected to particular underinvestment and neglect compared with other areas of Iraq. The region's underdevelopment was exacerbated by successive incursions of the Iraqi regime during the 1980s. O'Leary (2002) claims that the KFR was then demographically devastated by the Anfal Campaign (genocide) of 1986-1989.

The armed conflict between Kurdish rebels and the Iraqi government continued until the establishment of the KRG in 1992. The Iraqi government imposed an economic blockade on the KRG from 1992 until 2003. In such political and economic conditions in the KFR (especially the lack of transport infrastructure), it was almost impossible to consider tourism as a development option.

Since 2005, when the KFR was officially recognised by the Iraqi government, there has been a prolonged period of stability. Consequently, the KFR is now safe for tourists. Much-needed investment both in urban areas and in transport infrastructure mean that the landscape and climate of the region are very different from the negative images of the current situation in Middle and Western regions of Iraq that have been seen in news headlines in the past few years (Jimenez & Kabachnik, 2012). The current stable and peaceful period in the KFR has highlighted its great potential, and led to the identification of investment opportunities in many sectors of the economy. This development has led to rapid growth in the tourism industry in the KFR. The number of tourist arrivals increased by 48%, 42% and 66% for 2008, 2009 and 2010, respectively; less dramatic increases (but large increases nevertheless), of 30%, were

recorded for 2011 and 2012. In 2013, the number of tourists reached 2.95 million. However, these dramatic increases were not sustained in 2014 and 2015, the figures decreased to 1.53 and 0.78 million tourists respectively (General Board of Tourism of Kurdistan Regional Government, 2015; Rusti, 2016). The decline was largely due to the advances of Daesh (the so-called Islamic State) in some Iraqi regions. However, tourism industry began to recover its development that increased by approximately 105% in 2016, which reached 1.6 million (Ministry of Municipality and Tourism, 2017) compared to 0.78 million in 2015 (see figure 12).

The type and number of tourist arrivals vary from one city to another in KFR. A large number of tourists visited the city of Erbil contributing 68% of the total of tourist arrivals. This proportion of visitors to Erbil compared to the rest of other cities in KFR likely related to its tourist attraction, commercial city, economic and the capital of the Kurdistan region. However, in 2016, a significant number of tourists visited the city of Slemani because of internal investments in its tourist attractions in last three years (see figure 1). Therefore, currently, Erbil and Slemani became two attractive destinations, Erbil for its business motivation, the latter for its huge local investment in leisure tourist attractions.

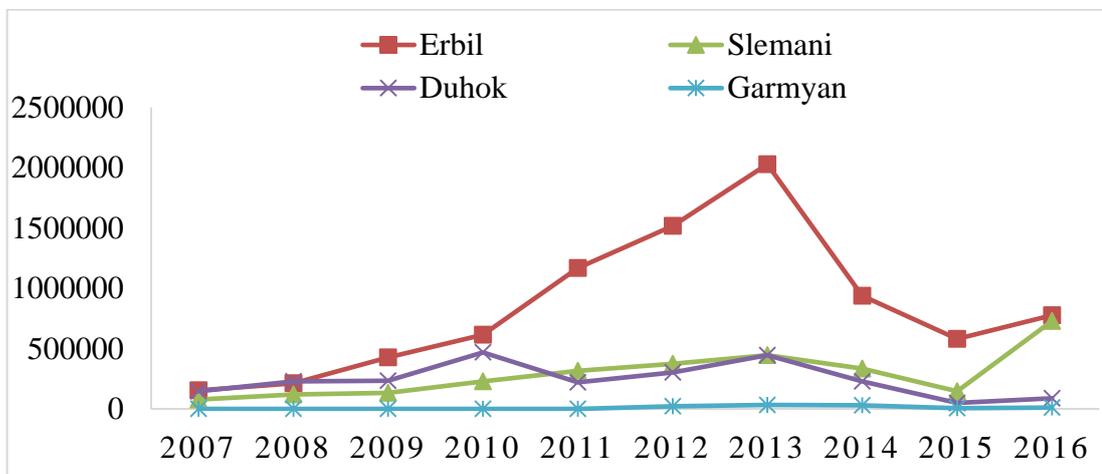


Figure 1: Number of visitors to KFR by the cities

The size of international tourists in KFR is relatively small compared to local tourist. However, the proportion of foreign tourists continued to increased from 14% in 2007 to 23% in 2016. Even this increase is slightly modest but somewhat encouraging (see figure 2).

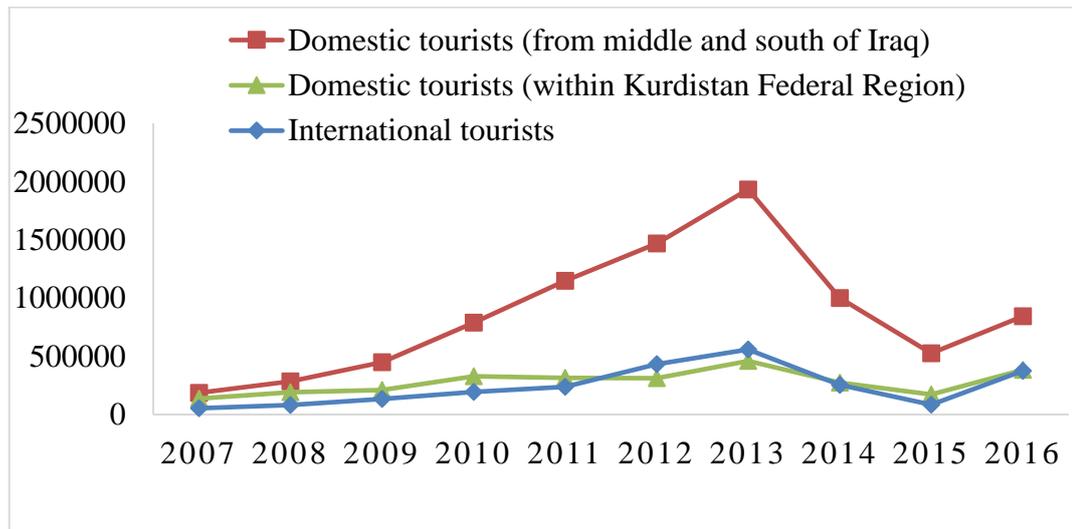


Figure 2: Domestic and international tourist arrivals

The size share of the city of Erbil (the capital of the KFR) from international tourists amounted to approximately 60% while the share of the total of the other three cities represented only 40%, this is because Erbil is a commercial and economic city (see figure 3). This shows that the main motivations of foreign tourists who visiting KFR is for the purpose of business.

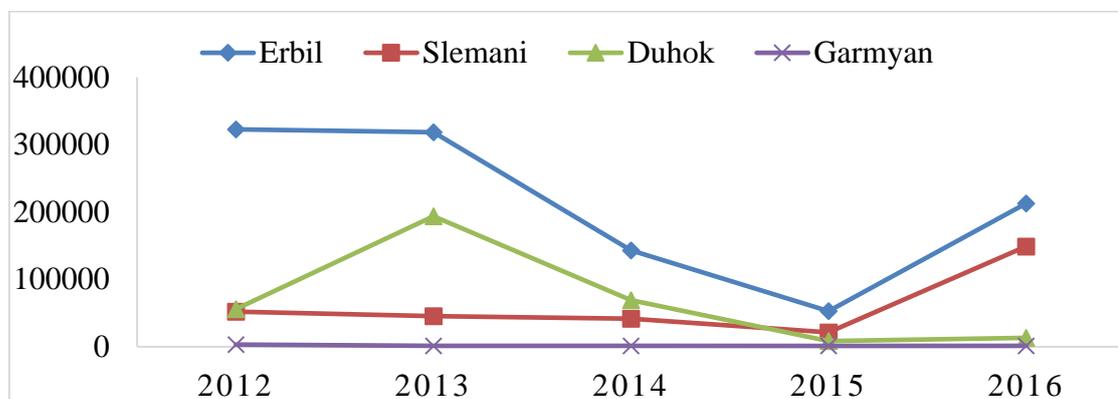


Figure 3: Number of international tourist arrivals by cities

As can be seen, the high rate of tourism growth was from a very low baseline figure, but Kurdistan has great potential for further development of its tourism sector. Yet in order to develop the sector sustainably and to benefit local people, there is a need for appropriate policy and planning to enable effective management of tourism resources. One area that is ripe for development is cultural tourism.

Due to the prolonged conflict, cultural heritage sites were neglected and undeveloped. Pavelka et al. (2010) observe that archaeological and cultural heritage sites in Kurdistan have been left to fall into disrepair and some to be demolished. In 2006, the new (unified) cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government started a programme to restore and rebuild heritage attractions. However, this was limited to a few sites, such as Erbil Citadel. Heritage is a national issue, playing an important social and economic role in national life and identity, including legacy issues, so that the unique value provided by heritage should be restored, maintained, and protected from damage for the current and future generations. In this regard, Jenkins and Jones (2001) report that cultural products should be considered unique tourist resources that are able to attract particular segments of the tourist market. Such potential tourism resources in KFR have yet to be identified for such development. The potential for the tourism industry in the KFR to be enhanced and diversified through the development of cultural heritage tourism based around local attractions provides the impetus for this thesis.

The main rationale for this study is that the tourism resources and in particular cultural assets are not adequately protected, and there is a need for research that will enable the formulation of a set of recommendations for a heritage protection programme. Second, heritage resources have not been managed effectively and there is a compelling need to ensure the exploitation of heritage assets is sustainable. Third, Erbil Citadel was

placed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites in 2014. Erbil Citadel's inclusion in the list makes this study a timely contribution to research on tourism, because World Heritage designation can be used effectively to balance appropriate management with successful tourism marketing, offering potential for destination branding based on cultural heritage resources. Fourth, after the recent dramatic falls in the price of oil, the current focus of the KFR is on diversifying and identifying alternative sources of income to oil exports as a primary (sole) source of export income, and the tourism industry could be one such source of income. This study therefore aims to provide a number of recommendations for the governments regarding the development of cultural tourism. Finally, tourism in the KFR is predominantly based on leisure tourism, as the Kurdistan region is rich in many beautiful mountains and natural areas, and has a temperate climate. However, there is still wide scope to increase tourism in KFR based on its diversity of cultures and cultural heritage sites. This study also aims to assess therefore the opportunities to develop cultural tourism industry in the KFR.

Cultural tourism plays a prominent role in the tourism sector of many regions and countries in the world, and culture and heritage have wide appeal to many different types of tourists. Culture offers destinations unique attributes, which enhances tourism development and marketing. Section 1.2 highlights the role of cultural tourism in developing the tourism industry, its impacts on local communities, and the issue of post-conflict for the tourism industry.

## 1.2. An overview of tourism and cultural tourism and associated problems

### 1.2.1. Cultural tourism

A large part of international tourism is based around historic buildings and heritage sites, such as the Taj Mahal in India, the Louvre in Paris, or city destinations such as Venice (Robinson & Picard, 2006). Such sites can be transformed very readily into tourist destinations because of their universal value and their widespread interest for prospective tourists. Ismagilova, Safiullin, and Gafurov (2015) claim that cultural heritage is a vital asset for the economic development of many modern cities. It can help to overcome seasonal fluctuations in the tourism industry and to achieve a more desirable distribution of tourists in geographical terms. It offers historical knowledge to tourists (the main motivation for tourists' visits) and can bring a positive branding image to regions, to attract greater numbers of tourists.

In this regard, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimates that visiting cultural attractions accounts for 37% of all tourism in the world in 2000, including historical monuments and buildings, museums, galleries and performing arts centres, conservatories, zoos and aquariums (Boyd, 2002; McKercher & Cros, 2002).

Moreover, according to figures from UNWTO in 2007, cultural tourism represented approximately 40% of all international tourist arrivals (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD, 2009). The UNWTO forecast that cultural tourism will grow at a rate of 15% per year due to changes in social life, increased levels of education, and general trends within the tourism industry (Iwuagwu, Alex-Onyeocha, & Lynda, 2015). These figures might encourage nations that are rich in cultural resources to enhance their tourism sector and invest in this field, especially nations, like the KFR, which have not yet been able to realise opportunities to utilise their

valuable cultural resources for tourism purposes because of political conflict and a lack of appropriate planning and policy mechanisms.

On the other hand, if not managed properly, tourism growth has many drawbacks, such as; pollution and pressure on local resources, which can, in extreme cases, even lead to the destruction of the tourism resources themselves. Ashworth (2005) argues that cultural tourism offers potential benefits for the economy, society, culture and the environment, but can be neutral or negative if not properly managed in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, Girard and Nijkamp (2009) believe that cultural tourism attracts tourists from many regions, stimulates local social and economic development, and enhances a sense of pride and local identity. However, in contrast, a significant increase in the number of tourists to a region can also have adverse effects on society. Indeed, in some circumstances, the cost of heritage tourism, for example in relation to the restoration and maintenance of archaeological sites, may be far greater than its positive effects on the local economy or state.

According to McKercher, Ho, and du Cros (2005), unplanned growth of tourism or large-scale tourism development, through an increase in tourist numbers, can destroy both tangible and intangible heritage assets. Therefore, heritage tourism requires a multidimensional approach, and should be seen not just from an economic perspective, but needs consideration of the likely social, cultural, ecological and political changes and of their impacts on the community (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012). Moreover, Al-hagla (2010) believes that the value of heritage sites is far greater than simply their financial worth. Physical and non-physical community assets are able to attract tourists, which benefits the whole community. However, this process of commodification of culture may be a threat to the cultural assets themselves if they are not used in a sustainable

manner. Indeed, any use of a tourist resource will inevitably have an impact (Butler, 1991). According to Báez and Herrero (2012), cultural heritage resources in some developing countries may be at risk of being destroyed. Again, this might be due to neglect or a shortage of resources required for their preservation, or due to uncontrolled tourism investment in certain areas. According to Sutawa (2012), damage to the environment and tourism assets in tourist destinations is the core threat to sustainable tourism; therefore, all tourism resources should be protected in the process of tourism development.

To conclude, the prioritisation of preserving cultural attractions and cultural diversity is important not only for their intrinsic social and historical value, but also for overall economic prosperity and long-term sustainability. Thus, government has the principal responsibility for both tourism policy and heritage protection.

#### 1.2.2. The impact of conflict and political instability on the tourism industry

Conflict and political instability have direct negative impact on the size of tourist arrivals. There are a number of cases that can be referred to here. For example, in the Middle East as a whole, international tourist arrivals declined by 8% in 2011 as a result of the numerous uprisings in the region (the ‘Arab Spring’), compared with a 7% increase in the same period in the Asia-Pacific regions (World Tourism Organization, 2012a). Sri Lanka presents another example, where tourism increased 21% between 1970 and 1980, but then the civil war of the 1980s between the Tamils and Sinhalese led to a huge drop in tourist arrivals (Richter, 1999). The KFR has seen a similar pattern as mentioned earlier; while total tourist arrivals reached 2.95 million in 2013, this figure decreased to 1.53 million in 2014, 0.78 million in 2015 and 1.6 million 2016 (General Board of Tourism of Kurdistan Regional Government, 2015;

Ministry of Municipality and Tourism, 2017; Rusti, 2016). This is due to a rise in the activities of militant groups in the middle and north of Iraq, in territories under the Iraqi government's control. Globally, developing countries represent only 30% of the international tourism market (Graci, 2013). This might be attributed to the political instability that characterises many of these countries.

Conflict and political instability present a significant challenge to tourism development in countries that are dealing with or that have suffered from conflict. According to Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman, and Scott (2009), the factors that affect tourism development and planning can be categorised as economic, political, environmental, technological, demographic and social, however, the tourism industry is particularly sensitive to political events. More precisely, tourism only can grow in stable societies (Richter, 1999). Conflict and political instability have the potential to devastate thriving tourist destinations, completely disrupting tourism activity and impacting on destination image (Seddighi, Nuttall, & Theocharous, 2001). However, the impacts of political instability on tourist destinations may vary and are highly dependent on the nature of the particular situation. In general, political instability brings multiple challenges to the tourism industry, such as poor or damaged infrastructure, lack of services and under-investment (Dwyer et al., 2009; Novelli, Morgan, & Nibigira, 2012; Richter, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Winter, 2008). These challenges may vary from one country to another, but all require a particular form of tourism policy and planning to respond to the tourism issues that occur as a result of conflict. Conflict is a fundamental problem that in turn fuels other difficulties; for example, potential investors (domestic and foreign) in a region's tourist resources will be reluctant to invest due to weak investor protection and the general climate of instability, lack of comprehensive planning for tourism management, and an

insufficiently diverse market. Heritage in particular is often neglected where a government is preoccupied with economic and security problems. In the chapter 2, the study explores the impacts of conflict on tourism and cultural tourism in detail.

### 1.2.3. Research aims

This thesis aims to understand how post-conflict issues affect heritage protection and cultural tourism planning and management. It does so by exploring the potential for and challenges to heritage protection and the development of cultural tourism in post-conflict areas and in new autonomous regions such as the KFR. The ultimate objective is to understand what cultural tourism policy should be designed and implemented to protect heritage assets and to develop the tourism sector in the KFR to make it successful, competitive and sustainable. These aims have been developed into the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are the specific post-conflict political issues that affect cultural heritage protection? How do these issues impact on cultural tourism development?

RQ 2: What are the influences and factors affecting the development of sustainable cultural tourism in the KFR? What recommendations can be made to the government for the implementation of successful, sustainable cultural tourism development?

The following research objectives have been articulated to respond to the research questions:

Objective 1: Explore the challenges and opportunities in the protection of cultural heritage in post-conflict situations such as the KFR, through analysing government perspectives.

Objective 2: Determine the role of key stakeholders in sustainable cultural tourism development in the KFR through focus groups with local community and business operators.

Objective 3: Understand the implications arising and make recommendations on the development of a cultural tourism strategy for Kurdistan.

### 1.3. Structure and organisation of the thesis

Chapter 2 presents a review of the relevant literature to understand the issues related to cultural tourism, including the debate around governance, management, sustainability, the impact of political and armed conflicts on tourism growth in general and cultural tourism in particular. Following this, the chapter focuses on the role of stakeholders in tourism development, and the role of public participation in tourism policy and planning. The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of the debate around tourism management and cultural tourism in particular, and the challenges that face cultural tourism management in developing countries and what lessons can be transferred and applied to the case of the KFR. Then, the last section presents the research aims and objectives in detail.

Chapter 3 explores a brief history of conflict in the KFR and the current political structure in the region. Then the chapter gives an overview of major events and background related to tourism development in recent years in Kurdistan. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the current situation of tourism development and the potential for developing the tourism industry further, based on heritage assets.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology upon which the research study is based. After detailing the research aims and objectives, this chapter reviews the debates around

methodological approaches and research paradigms, and then goes on to discuss the research design, and the process of research implementation. The research aims and objectives are restated and translated into a programme of action for the study approach, which was based on focus groups and in-depth interviews. The process of data collection is outlined, and the research limitations are discussed.

The chapters 5, 6 and 7 present results of the research study and discussion of the findings. Chapter 5 describes the current situation regarding cultural tourism in the KFR, explores the reasons behind the current under-utilisation of these vital heritage assets, and discusses strengths and opportunities for cultural tourism development. The results show that the KFR is rich in cultural resources, and number of opportunities for tourism development, however, there are number of challenges that are discussed in following chapter. This underdevelopment might be attributable to a number of reasons including a lack of an integrated tourism policy, as is the case in many regions of the developing world, but particularly those countries dealing with conflicts (sometimes over many years, as with the KFR in Iraq). Chapter 6 explores the main challenges in conserving heritage assets in the KFR, and discusses the policy tools that could be implemented to prepare these resources to attract tourists. The results show that, despite the richness of the region's heritage assets, described in chapter 5, there is not enough consideration given by the government to their protection. The challenges that face heritage protection in the KFR include: administrative and legislative issues, a lack of investment, and lack of priority from government to heritage protection issues. While cultural tourism mainly relies on heritage assets, chapter 7 discusses how the challenges of heritage protection affect cultural tourism, and also discusses further challenges to cultural tourism development in the KFR, such as negative destination image, lack of investment, and inappropriate planning. Chapter 8 presents the

conclusions to the thesis, and includes a number of recommendations for the government to formulate a strategic plan and policy to tackle the issues of heritage protection and cultural tourism in the region.

Cultural heritage plays an essential role in attracting tourists and accounts for a large part of the attraction of many destinations. The Middle East is extremely rich in cultural heritage and other tourism resources that can attract potential tourists and drive the economies of these countries towards sustainable development, but the development of tourism is inhibited by several factors. The most serious of these is the perceived political instability of the region, as a result of numerous long-standing conflicts and more recent popular uprisings in a wider context of general political unpredictability in many Middle Eastern countries. During such periods of conflict, potential investors (domestic and foreign) are reluctant to invest, due to weak investor protection and the general climate of instability, which has caused a lack of comprehensive planning for tourism management, and a lack of development in and utilisation of all tourism resources.

In the specific case of the KFR, conflict caused major problems for heritage protection and consequently for cultural tourism; heritage assets have been neglected and some damaged. In the aftermath of the conflict, from 2005 onward, the KRG has been facing a major challenge to rebuild the social, cultural, educational, service and economic infrastructure, including developing the tourism sector and heritage protection. Thus, it is necessary to develop an appropriate plan for managing cultural attractions, and to devote efforts to preserve these resources both for the sustainability of the tourism industry itself and to conserve resources for succeeding generations. This study focuses on the impacts of conflict on heritage protection and cultural tourism, and

explores the current context of heritage assets in the KFR. It aims to contribute to knowledge on issues related to heritage protection and cultural tourism, and to suggest solutions and make recommendations for achieving sustainable, competitive and successful cultural tourism in the KFR.

## Chapter 2. **Cultural tourism management in post-conflict regions**

Tourism has been a growing phenomenon over the past six decades, and globally it is still considered to be one of the fastest-growing economic sectors (Muchapondwa & Stage, 2013; World Tourism Organization, 2013). Internationally, the number of international tourist arrivals increased from 25 million in 1950 to 647 million in 2000. The figure rose to 940 million in 2010, an approximately 45% increase in just a decade, and tourism continued to develop so that by 2015 the figure stood at 1186 million overall, an increase of 26% in only 5 years from 2010 to 2015 (World Tourism Organization, 2011, 2014, 2015, 2016). Such increases seem likely to continue.

However, Tourism development is affected by numerous internal and external factors. Violence, terrorism, conflict and political instability are considered the most powerful factors to have direct negative impacts on tourism development. In this regard, Dwyer et al. (2009) cite that tourism is particularly sensitive to political instability. Moreover, Elliott (1997) reports that the tourism industry is very sensitive to external events such as national disasters and political events. For instance, tourism development has fallen dramatically in countries faced with local conflict, such as the Philippines and Pakistan (Richter, 1999), Sri Lanka (Khasalamwa, 2009; Richter, 1999), Montenegro after the Balkan civil wars (Vitic & Ringer, 2008), Cambodia (Winter, 2008), Colombia (Bassols, 2016), Burundi (Novelli et al., 2012), Haiti (Hudson, 2016), etc.

Terrorism in the 1970s had its impacts on international tourist arrivals to tourist destinations, and in the 1980s terrorism the news media made its negative impacts more effective (Richter & Waugh, 1986). Until the 1990s, scholars were focused on the impacts of terrorism on international tourist arrivals. A few case studies were conducted partially to evaluate the impact of ethnic conflict and political instability on

the tourism industry. The effects of ethnic and sectarian conflicts on tourism development became a topic of contemporary interest when ethnic conflict reached central Europe in the former Yugoslavia. In fact, two international conferences were held to discuss the challenges to the tourism industry resulting from conflict and terrorism. The first international conference on tourism security and risk was held in 1995 in Sweden to discuss diverse aspects of tourism safety (Johansson & Nyberg, 1996). The second conference, titled "The War, Terrorism, Tourism: Times of Crisis and Recovery", was held in 1997 in Zagreb, hosted by the Institute for Tourism and the Faculty of Economics at the University of Zagreb; it discussed tourism issues resulting from conflict and terrorism and sought solutions for such cases (Sönmez, 1998).

To date, though, there have been few studies conducted on tourism in conflict and post-conflict countries. Mansfeld (1999) explores factors that led to several fluctuations in tourism growth during the period 1967–1999 in Israel, and he attempts to develop guidelines for tourism management to deal with the unstable security situations that emerged, particularly after 1967. Vitic and Ringer (2008) explore the challenges and opportunities in promoting tourist destinations in Montenegro after the Balkan civil wars. Buultjens, Ratnayake, and Gnanapala (2016) in their study discuss the government's actions to respond to the challenges brought by ongoing civil war from 1983 to 2009 and the tsunami in 2004 in Sri Lanka. In contrast, Khasalamwa (2009) criticises the Sri Lankan government's actions related to post-tsunami recovery and the aftermath of conflict in Sri Lanka, in particular its failure to tackle inequality, lack of economic diversification, the lack of resources, war-related destruction and shortages of skilled personnel in key social sectors. Causevic and Lynch (2013) analyse the impacts of political situations on tourism development in Bosnia and

Herzegovina (B&H) after the Balkan conflicts, attempting to identify challenges that faced the tourism sector in B&H as a post-conflict area. That study focused on legislative challenges, and claimed that tourism policy falls under the jurisdiction of the Federation of B&H and the Republic Srpska; however, in practice, both entities apply their own regulations to manage the tourism sector, based on the Dayton Agreement (Article IV).

In relation to cultural tourism more specifically, Winter (2008) examined the ways in which the tourism sector and cultural heritage sites were managed during the decade of conflict in Cambodia, and explores the social and economic challenges that face Angkor in Cambodia as a result of a massive increase in tourist arrivals within just a decade of the conflict ending. Winter described Angkor as one of Cambodia's most important cultural heritage destinations, with a recorded 10,000% increase in international tourist arrivals from 1994 to 2005, after the Angkor–Siem Reap region was listed in UNESCO's World Heritage Site List in 1992. However, it has suffered from accumulated tourism challenges as a result of long internal conflicts. The section below explores the major challenges that conflict presents to the tourism industry.

### 2.1. The impact of conflict on the tourism industry

The tourism industry is highly sensitive to political instability (Bassols, 2016; Buultjens et al., 2016; Causevic & Lynch, 2013; Dwyer et al., 2009; Elliott, 1997; Hudson, 2016; Khasalamwa, 2009; Liu, Schroeder, Pennington-Gray, & Farajat, 2016; Mansfeld, 1999; Richter, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Winter, 2008). Conflict always changes the priorities of nations and presents a number of challenges to the tourism industry, such as poor infrastructure, lack of services, low investment (Dwyer et al., 2009; Novelli et al., 2012; Richter, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Winter, 2008),

legislative difficulties (Causevic & Lynch, 2013; Winter, 2008), administrative problems (Khasalamwa, 2009; Richter, 1999; Winter, 2008), budgetary issues (Buultjens et al., 2016; Khasalamwa, 2009; Richter, 1999), and environmental and social problems (Novelli et al., 2012). Also, of course, it will have a large negative impact on the image of a destination (Bassols, 2016; Gertner, 2007; Hudson, 2016; Liu et al., 2016; Mansfeld, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Vitic & Ringer, 2008).

Conflict always causes a rapid decrease in the number of tourist arrivals. For example, Richter (1999) reports that tourism growth in Sri Lanka reached 21% per year from 1970 to 1980, but the civil war of the 1980s between Tamils and Sinhalese destroyed the industry. There was a slight rebound in the tourism sector in response to cease-fires but without a concrete and lasting solution to violence across the whole country it proved difficult to devise a tourism plan.

Another example of effect of political instability is presented by the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2011. In the Middle East, the number of international tourist arrivals declined by 8% as a result of the numerous uprisings that occurred throughout the region in that year, compared with an increase by 7% in the Asia-Pacific during the same year, which was the fastest growth in all regions (World Tourism Organization, 2012a). Moreover, in 2012 the Middle East tourism sector was still 5% smaller than it had been in 2010 (World Tourism Organization, 2013).

A further example of a conflict area is KFR, which in 2013 had a total of 2.95 million tourists, decreasing to 1.53 million, 0.78 million and 1.6 million in 2014, 2015 and 2016, respectively (General Board of Tourism of Kurdistan Regional Government, 2015; Ministry of Municipality and Tourism, 2017; Rusti, 2016). The 48% drop in

2014 and the 73% drop in 2015 compared with 2013 were clearly a result of the instability in the area caused by the Daesh insurgency.

Conflict and political instability give a destination a negative image in the minds of potential tourists, who avoid these destinations (Bassols, 2016; Gertner, 2007; Hudson, 2016; Liu et al., 2016; Mansfeld, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Vitic & Ringer, 2008).

While tourists may choose a destination for its heritage attractions, seaside and natural scenes, sunshine or sports facilities, safety is an important destination attribute for most tourists, and their choice of destination will depend on levels of perceived risk to their personal safety, which in turn are likely to be determined by any previous visits (their own or friends' visits) to these regions, as well as the media news, (Liu et al., 2016). Mansfeld (1999) outlines a chain of effects that starts with the negative image that conflict brings to a destination, which leads to a decline in tourism, which then spreads uncertainty among tourist stakeholders. Moreover, Seddighi et al. (2001) asserts that political instability has a similar notable negative impact on tourist destinations, with the potential to turn thriving tourist destinations (or important cultural sites) into non-attractive destinations for tourists.

A number of destinations suffer from image problems that undermine their competitive efficiency in the market. Hall (2002) cites evidence that conflict in the former Yugoslavia brought a negative destination image which destroyed tourism development in the region. For instance, Montenegro lost its tourism market share during and after the Balkan civil war (Vitic & Ringer, 2008). This negative image of places could be based on incorrect news reported by the media or based on widespread issues such political unrest, natural disasters, violence and economic downturns in particular countries (Gertner, 2007), as has been the case in Haiti, where exaggeration

of security problems in the media became a challenge for tourism development (Seraphin, Gowreensunkar, & Ambaye, 2016). The uprisings and instability in Jordan's neighbouring countries in parallel with negative media portrayals of the region led to a negative image of Jordan as a tourist destination among some potential tourists (Liu et al., 2016).

A key response to such challenges is destination branding. Konecnik and Go (2008) state that consensus among stakeholders is very important for the process of destination brand-building. In this regard, in the case of Israel, Mansfeld (1999) claims that recovering a positive image requires cooperation and integration between all stakeholders involved in the tourism industry, including government agencies, tourism operators and the media, because the giving of contradictory information will promote uncertainty among tourists. Example, Vitic and Ringer (2008) claim that collaborative management, branding of World Heritage Sites, ecological tourism and wide border-parks gave an opportunity to Montenegro to recover its tourist market share after the decade of civil war in the former Yugoslavia.

Thus, the promotion and marketing of tourist attractions is considered a central tool in encouraging international tourists to return to destinations that have been negatively affected by war, genocide, ethnic or political conflict, disease, poverty, international terrorism, or any other crisis. Thus, Vitic and Ringer report that, for social and economic recovery, the government in Montenegro should focus more on destination branding to achieve success and to reshape the beliefs of international visitors and reposition itself in the world travel market; this would run counter to its promotion as a cheap popular destination for mass tourism when it was part of the former Yugoslavia (before its dissolution in 1991). Moreover, coordination between the national

governments of the former Yugoslavia would further aid the recovery of a positive destination image, which in turn would attract key international market operators and investors to the region (Hall, 2002).

It can be argued that the branding of tourist destinations plays a key role in attracting international tourists. Whenever countries face unstable political, economic, social situations this makes their branding as tourist destinations negative, which requires a comprehensive promotion plan to restore the destination to its market share. The news of conflict in a particular country has a direct negative and rapid impact on the tourism industry but its recovery takes much longer and requires a massive amount of cooperation between stakeholders at the macro level. In addition, conflict causes damage to infrastructure and tourism resources. Therefore, there is the need to restore these resources, including cultural heritage assets, through the design of sensitive restoration plans for urban areas and cultural heritage sites. Thus, in terms of cultural tourism, it is important to find appropriate tourism policies to drive the tourism industry in a sustainable manner.

In fact, though, conflict undermines a government's ability to set and implement any sort of plan. Considering the case of Burundi as a post-conflict country, Novelli et al. (2012) point out that the unstable political situation and the weakness of governance institutions in planning and management caused severe economic, environmental and social problems, which negatively affected sustainable tourism development in Burundi. In this regard, Winter (2008) claims that conflict in Cambodia caused major challenges, including inappropriate governmental, administrative and legal structures in parallel with a lack of expertise in conservation, community development, tourism and planning, as well as deficiencies in infrastructure and human resources. Moreover,

in the case of Haiti, conflict created a number of factors that constrained tourism development, such as insufficient public services and infrastructure for tourism, a lack of trained personnel, a weak regulatory environment, corruption, and negative destination images (Hudson, 2016).

Conflicts do not just damage the tourism infrastructure and destroy the tourism industry but they also reduce a region's ability to preserve its environment and tourism assets, and they cause economic and socio-cultural problems. In this regard, Robinson and Picard (2006) claim that neglected tourism assets and uncoordinated tourism became the prevailing situation in most developing and post-conflict countries, associated with environmental degradation and destruction. Moreover, conflict compounds existing socioeconomic problems such as poverty and debt. Conversely, a properly managed tourism industry with a proper tourism development plan can provide a sustainable means of generating income and alleviating poverty. In the case of B&H and the Republic Srpska, Causevic and Lynch (2013) report that the Dayton Agreement succeeded in bringing peace to the region, but did not mention how tourism planning and other economic relations should be designed at the state level. They found that tourism could play a major role both in a more positive peace process and in supporting the economy; however, without administrative and legislative support it is difficult to build cooperation among different entities to develop the tourism sector and set a long-term tourism policy, or indeed to achieve any tourism plan.

For decision makers, before setting any tourism policy, it is essential to understand the main conditions and principles of sustainability that are required for successful tourism policy. In the next section, the study summarises the main principles or elements of

sustainability that have to be taken into consideration by decision makers in developing a strategy for tourism policy and planning. The implications of the review for the setting of an appropriate cultural tourism strategy for KFR are then reviewed before the conceptual framework for the study is set out towards the end of the chapter.

## 2.2. Sustainable cultural tourism

This section discusses the major principles of successful sustainable tourism generally and of cultural tourism in particular, and explores the challenges to sustainable tourism development. To identify the core principles of sustainability, many researchers and international organisations have made a concerted effort to formulate a comprehensive and appropriate definition that would cover all aspects related to the objectives and requirements of sustainability. According to Rees (1989), "Sustainable development is positive socioeconomic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which community and society are dependent. Its successful implementation requires integrated planning, and social learning processes; its political viability depends on the full support of the people it affects through their governments, their social institutions, and their private activities". The United Nations Environment Programme UNEP and World Tourism Organization WTO (2005) claim that sustainable tourism relies on an integrated tourism development program that takes into account its current and future impacts in the economic, social and environmental spheres, as well as addressing the needs of visitors and maintaining the interests of host communities.

United Nations Environment Programme UNEP (2011) reports that sustainable tourism is a policy and programs that aim to achieve the expectations and the needs of

tourists while safeguarding the interests of local residents, with the optimal use of natural resources. These objectives entail strategies aimed at reducing waste, the preservation of biodiversity, the preservation of cultural heritage and traditional values, the support of intercultural understanding, generating local income and integrating local communities with a view to improving livelihoods and reducing poverty.

From the above definition, it appears that sustainable tourism mainly focuses on development, preservation, and the assessment of impacts on communities.

Development and preservation can tend to work in opposite directions, and achieving a balance between the two requires proper planning, strategy and management. There is much debate about tourism development, preservation and sustainability. Nuryanti (1996) believes that preservation aims to maintain heritage for the community while development aims to maximise revenues for the community; in either approach, it will be necessary to preserve heritage for future generations. Nasser (2003) claims that a tourism planner's goals are to minimise the adverse impacts and maximise the gains from tourism, which may include managing cultural resources and sustaining the environment in a way that can meet the local community's needs. Thus, particular researchers have given more consideration to one variable than another, but it is better if all components are combined in one comprehensive plan.

The attention given to sustainable tourism growth, including cultural tourism, has increased in many countries because of the potential role of the tourism industry in pushing forward economic growth (Girard & Nijkamp, 2009). Sustainable cultural tourism requires tourism policy to develop the tourism industry in a way that can offer social and economic benefits to the local community without harming the environment

or obstructing heritage preservation programmes (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012). Moreover , Angelkova, Koteski, Jakovlev, and Mitrevska (2012) believe that the sustainability of tourism requires comprehensive cooperation among tourist firms, tourist attractions and governmental authorities. Al-hagla (2010) states that the sustainable development of cultural heritage sites requires comprehensive coordination and vision; importantly, the returns from cultural tourism should be invested in broader economic and social development. Thus, proper policy and planning have to meet the principles of sustainable tourism development. Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik (2012) report that successful sustainable tourism development requires a balance in economic, social and cultural development without harming the environment and the assets that are based on it, and no single component should dominate the others in terms of importance or priority. This required involving all relevant stakeholders in the process of setting plan and decision-making, thus, a comprehensive plan and policy will have to consider all the variables if sustainable tourism development is to be achieved.

From the late 1990s onwards, a wide range of studies have focused on the involvement of tourism stakeholders in the process of decision making and tourism development planning. However, involvement of residents and stakeholders in setting plans and decision-making depends on the type governance. For example, in decentralised governance, there is much opportunity for public participation compared to centralised governance. The structure of government has a prominent role in governing tourism industry. The section below explores the literature related to governance and government.

### 2.3. Governance

The term of governance is used for different purposes, to describe state structure (such as presidential, parliamentary, democratic, nondemocratic, federal, and centralized systems), reform public power (such as transfer authority from national level to local councils of cities), to manage certain sector (such as education and health), and to analyse corporate governance (Krahmann, 2003). Governance is a widespread concept, which is discussed in different disciplines in social science including public administration (Lee, 2003), political science, sociology, and business, policy making and planning (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O'Leary, 2005).

Governance and government seem to be two similar concepts but in reality are not synonymous. Government is an organisation that practices the power and authority through regulation and law (Bingham et al., 2005; Harrington, Curtis, & Black, 2008; Jordan, Wurzel, & Zito, 2003). According to Fukuyama (2013), the government is an official body that performs its functions, it might fail or succeed in achieving its goals, as Bingham et al. (2005) claim that government is an organisation that has power to implement activities related to society. Rhodes (1996) cites that government can be defined as a formal organisation and structure of the state that imposes conditions and rules for governing the society in a way that the state and non-state organisations work together in the process of setting policies and distributed power.

In contrast, governance is government's efficiency in setting and apply rules and deliver services (Fukuyama, 2013). Governance is a ways of solving common problems such as organizational, social, national and international problems, thus, it is related to forms of authority, rights and obligations between different interested groups who suffer from common problems (Newman, 2006). Moreover, Lee (2003) claims

that governance refers to the changes in government procedure of resolving social problem, which means a factor to fulfil governmental or organizational objectives. According to Bingham et al. (2005), governance refers to shared goals of organisations and residents for implement certain common activities that may or may not have official power.

In general, it can be argued that governance refers to the mode of using power to manage issues related to society, which is defined as a form of coordination and partnerships between public and private sectors or other organisations that works together to solve problems and manage social and economic development. Governance provides stability and suitable conditions for expanding private sector, investors, and consequently, enhance tourism development (Detotto, Giannoni, & Goavec, 2017). The government has power to plan and direct tourism and able to get international investments, loans and overseas aid (Mowforth & Munt, 2015). Thus, government interventions in the development of tourism industry are very important for investment and environment protection (Puppim de Oliveira, 2005). Government intervention should aim to reduce negative impacts of tourism development and maximise benefits for the local community through organising, planning, financing, regulation and providing basic infrastructure facilities (Puppim de Oliveira, 2003; Sharpley, 2008). However, the role and the efficiency of the governance depends on the structure of government.

The structure of government can be centralised or decentralised for governing the society. In developing countries, power is exclusively in the central government (Öniş & Şenses, 2005). Thus, tourism development in less developed countries often managed under centralised government at a national level (Tosun, 2000; Tosun &

Jenkins, 1998). This is might due to the absence of private capital (Haque, 2002), or because the nature of political systems in these particular countries. As Haque (1997) cites that centralised governance in developing countries was left behind by colonialism where the economy of most local institutions depended on the centre.

It believed that central government cannot take full responsibility without the help of local institutions, thus, has increased recognition of decentralisation of development policies and programmes in developing countries (Haque, 1997). Fortunately, in some developing countries, the government began to give up the state-centric mode of governance and change to decentralisation due to the pressures of globalisation (Öniş & Şenses, 2005). The change have made by privatization and deregulation, and restricting the role of public governance into the monitoring and organising (Haque, 2001, 2002). Giving power to the local government in decentralization systems will help to serve people better because it has more knowledge about local communities' needs and is able to respond fast to issues that might arise (Moore & Putzel, 1999). However, good management or mismanaging power depends on the level of education and awareness of residents, example, in some of developing countries, local people may not use the power efficiently and effectively (Tosun & Jenkins, 1998). Another problem in many of developing countries is that: over-lapping responsibilities have been witnessed among different departments owing to the lack of describe their authorities and roles which often lead to damage tourism development, thus, coordination is needed for tourism development (Tosun, 2000). Moreover, Mowforth and Munt (2015) claim that when there are more than one governmental division responsible to manage tourism industry such as the case of Guatemala and Uganda's tourism industry, there would be conflict and overlap responsibilities among governments department.

The governance and tourism policy has become an important topic in the literature debating sustainability. The type of governance plays an important role in sustainable tourism development. Kerimoğlu and Çiraci (2008) report that sustainable development relies on the country's political system and the quality of its governance. The positives or /and negatives impacts of tourism growth may differ from country to country according to their governmental structure, because, as de Kadt (1979) claims, tourism policies reflect the current political and socio-economic situations in the country (as in any other economic sector), and managing the tourism industry and its impacts differs according to different political structures of governments. In some countries, particularly in the developing world, governments are unable to maintain many of their cultural resources. This may often be simply through neglect, but there may also be political reasons; furthermore, developing countries will always have limited financial and human resources and are perhaps more likely to see failures in planning and management. In developing countries, it is hard to achieve sustainable tourism development because of their weak and fragile structures of government (Tosun, 2001). Countries that characterised with the weak and fragmented structures of government because of political instability, natural disasters or economic crises as Mvondo (2009) claims these countries often suffer from social disorders, corruption, injustice and non-respect of laws might arise. It believe that collaboration among organisations (governmental, non-governmental, local, regional, national) become an important tool for achieve sustainable tourism development (Pechlaner, Raich, & Fischer, 2009; Tosun, 2000; Uhlig, 1992). The table 1 summarises the key characteristics of post-conflict and of many developing countries that discussed in literature.

Key characteristic	Literature
Centralised governance at a national level	(Tosun, 2000; Tosun & Jenkins, 1998)
The weak and fragile structures of government	(Causevic & Lynch, 2013; Khasalamwa, 2009; Richter, 1999; Tosun, 2001; Winter, 2008)
Weakness of governance institutions in planning and management	(Novelli et al., 2012)
Overlapping responsibilities between different departments	(Tosun, 2000).
Economic dependency of local institutions on the central government	(Haque, 1997)
Weak regulatory, law and legislative basis	(Causevic & Lynch, 2013; Hudson, 2016; Winter, 2008)
Budgetary issues	(Buultjens et al., 2016; Khasalamwa, 2009; Richter, 1999)
Poor tourism infrastructure	(Hudson, 2016; Winter, 2008) (Dwyer et al., 2009; Novelli et al., 2012; Richter, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Winter, 2008)
Insufficient services and low investment	(Dwyer et al., 2009; Hudson, 2016; Novelli et al., 2012; Richter, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Winter, 2008)
Neglected tourism assets Uncoordinated tourism Deterioration of the environment	(Robinson & Picard, 2006)
The absence of private capital	(Haque, 2002)
Negative destination images	(Hudson, 2016; Mansfeld, 1999) (Bassols, 2016; Gertner, 2007; Hudson, 2016; Liu et al., 2016; Mansfeld, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Vitic & Ringer, 2008)
Lack of expertise in conservation, community development, tourism and planning	(Winter, 2008)
Corruption	(Hudson, 2016; Mvondo, 2009)
Social disorders, injustice and non-respect of laws	(Mvondo, 2009)

Table 1: Key characteristic of post-conflict and of many developing countries

#### 2.4. Stakeholder involvement in sustainable tourism

It believed that an appropriate plan should consider all stakeholder interests in the tourism industry. Stakeholder involvement has a potentially positive and effective role in sustainable tourism development and planning (Simpson, 2001). Stakeholder

involvement in policy and planning is essential for sustainable tourism. The process of stakeholder involvement in tourism planning can be defined as a face-to-face interaction, dialogues and negotiations among multiple stakeholder groups who are interested in addressing common issues. The aim will be to formulate an acceptable proposal to develop or implement tourism policy. Such stakeholders can include public, semi-public, private and voluntary groups (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). Sautter and Leisen (1999) claim that stakeholder participation has been recognised as a tourism planning and management tool, particularly in relation to sustainable tourism. Byrd (2007) states that sustainable tourism cannot be achieved if the stakeholders' interests are ignored. Thus, to achieve truly sustainable tourism, stakeholders must be involved in the entire process of decision making and planning (Ioannides, 1995), and this claim has been supported by a number of researchers (Byrd, 2007; Currie, Seaton, & Wesley, 2009).

However, before stakeholders can be involved in the process of planning for sustainable tourism development, it is necessary first to identify the relevant categories of stakeholders and to understand their viewpoints (Hardy & Beeton, 2001). Community participation and engaging other stakeholder groups in tourism planning would contribute to tourism sustainability; however, not all community groups will have the same level opportunity to participate (Khazaei, Elliot, & Joppe, 2015). Community participation in tourism development should therefore include various interest groups whatever their different degrees of power, different objectives and different expectations (Tosun, 2006).

#### 2.4.1. Stakeholders identification and analysis

A number of scholars mention that stakeholder identification is a first stage of stakeholder involvement in the decision making process and planning (Byrd, 2007; Currie et al., 2009; Nicholas, Thapa, & Ko, 2009; Potgieter & Litheko, 2016; Sautter & Leisen, 1999; Simpson, 2001). Jamal and Getz (1995) define stakeholders to include all groups or individuals with similar interests in a certain problem and affected by others' actions to solve the issue. On this point, researchers have identified a number of groups of stakeholders with an interest in particular firms and projects. For example, Clarkson (1995) classifies multi-stakeholders of corporations as primary groups (such as shareholders and investors, employees, customers, suppliers, government bodies) and secondary groups (such as the media and other special-interest groups). Both categories can affect or can be affected by corporate activities, but the corporation actually relies only on its primary stakeholders for its continued survival.

Savage, Nix, Whitehead, and Blair (1991) identify four stakeholder categories, based on their potential for both cooperation with and threats to the firm. Firstly, there are the supportive stakeholders, those who have a high potential for cooperation and less potential threat, such as managers, staff employees, suppliers, service providers and non-profit community organisations. Involving these stakeholder categories will increase the level of cooperation between all groups and with the firm (table 2).

Secondly, there are marginal stakeholders, such as consumer interest groups, stockholders, and professional associations for employees. These groups have a stake in the organisation's decisions but are concerned only with certain issues, such as product safety and pollution, which can either increase or decrease their potential for threat or cooperation. By monitoring the interests of marginal stakeholders, the

managers can make decisions on issues related to those interests, to increase their support. The third group, the non-supportive stakeholders, are those who have high potential threat and a low potential cooperation for firms, such as competing organisations, employee unions, and sometimes the news media. A defensive strategy can be the best type of action to protect firms from threats that come from such groups, alongside finding ways to change the status of stakeholders. Finally, ‘mixed blessing’ stakeholders includes those who have a high potential threat or a high level of cooperation with firms, such as clients and organisations with complementary products or services. Collaborate with the mixed blessing stakeholders could be the best approach to these groups to minimise threats and maximise opportunities to cooperate.

Type of Stakeholder based on level of threat and cooperation with the firm		Stakeholder’s potential for threat to the firm	
		High	Low
Stakeholder’s potential for cooperation with the firm	High	<i>Stakeholder type 4:</i> Mixed blessing <i>Strategy:</i> Collaborate	<i>Stakeholder type 1:</i> Supportive <i>Strategy:</i> Involve
	Low	<i>Stakeholder type 3:</i> Non-supportive <i>Strategy:</i> Defend	<i>Stakeholder type 2:</i> Marginal <i>Strategy:</i> Monitor

Table 2: Type of stakeholders based on level of cooperation and threat.

Source (Savage et al., 1991)

In relation to the tourism industry, different groups of stakeholders have similarly been identified, with the inclusion in particular of government bodies, tourists and the local community. Hardy and Beeton (2001) identify four stakeholder groups: local people, tourist operators, tourists and regulators. The last category includes people who manage the tourism sector, such as employees of government departments, consultants and members of tourism organisations, whereas ‘operators’ refers to those operating businesses in the tourism industry. Byrd (2007) likewise identifies four groups of stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism, but these are: present visitors, future

visitors, present host community, and future host community. The last group includes residents, business owners and government officials. However, only current stakeholders can be involved in tourism development and sustainability, but future host community (future generations, future local businesses and future local government bodies) can be involved in the tourism process if current tourism attractions have been protected and sustained. According to Nicholas et al. (2009), the four most common tourism stakeholder groups that affect or are affected by tourism policies, decisions and actions are: local communities; tourists; government/public sector bodies; and industry/private sector firms.

While, it is not necessary to involve all stakeholders equally in all processes and decisions, it is nonetheless important to understand all their interests (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). However, a number of barriers can prevent effective participation of local communities in tourism development, policy and planning (Cole, 2006; Michael, Mgonja, & Backman, 2013; Tosun, 2000, 2006). In this regard, Michael et al. (2013) identify such barriers in developing countries: low levels of interest in following up issues beyond family concerns; poor coordination among stakeholders (residents and their leaders); low levels of familiarity with the concept of community involvement; and low levels of education. Additional barriers were lack of skills to put their ideas into practice and lack of confidence to take part in decision making (Cole, 2006). In general, many developing countries face common challenges that limit the involvement of the community in tourism development processes; these socio-political, legal, administrative and economic barriers are mainly related to the central public administration (Tosun, 2000). Other barriers to stakeholder involvement are also mentioned in the literature. For example, in the case of Turkey, Hatipoglu, Alvarez, and Ertuna (2016) find several barriers to stakeholder involvement in

sustainable tourism development, such as lack of institutional structures for effective collaboration, obstacles to local resident participation put in place by decision-makers, narrowing visions of stakeholders, lack of strategic orientation, and self-interest based on financial issues.

On the other hand, in relation to the role of stakeholders in conservation, Yung and Chan (2011) claim that a public participation approach in heritage conservation suffers some problematic issues, including different preferences for what is good conservation, unavailability of mechanisms for effective participation or for an integrated heritage conservation approach, the diverse interests of stakeholders, and a lack of heritage conservation skills. In this light, McKercher et al. (2005) state that including a limited number of stakeholders with similar interests can lead to better mutual understanding; usually they can easily resolve the problems and misunderstandings. In contrast, when there are many stakeholders with different aims involved in tourism and cultural heritage management, potential conflicts are more likely to arise. Problems are generally more intractable when more stakeholders are involved.

#### 2.4.2. Collaboration among stakeholders

Collaboration can be defined as a joint decision making between the main stakeholders to solve a certain problem where a single actor is unable to solve that problem on its own (Gray, 1989). Collaboration in the tourism domain might refer to consensus among certain autonomous stakeholders groups and within specific parameters to resolve or manage a common problem (Jamal & Getz, 1995). According to Adu-Ampong (2017), when a single player cannot tackle an issue within the tourism industry, collaboration between stakeholders is crucial for setting and implementing of

tourism planning. Moreover, Graci (2013) states that collaboration between multiple stakeholder groups with shared interests is an effective factor for tourism development, and helps to move a destination toward sustainability; therefore, it is very important to identify the challenges at an early stage of collaboration among stakeholders. Such collaboration is vital because any action of a single stakeholder to respond the tourism issue will affect other stakeholders as well.

Collaboration as a condition of tourism development and sustainability has been a central topic of literature debate (Byrd, 2007). According to Jamal and Stronza (2009), collaboration and involving stakeholders in tourism planning are often referred to in the literature as a key pillar for sustainable tourism development. However, the lack of coordination is a common challenge for destination planners in fragmented tourism industries (Jamal & Getz, 1995). In this regard, McKercher et al. (2005) believe that if cooperation among stakeholders does not exist and there are no intentions to resolve problems, there will be an urgent need for an external party, typically a government, to impose a solution to ensure the commitment of all parties, because cultural tourism is inherently unsustainable without formal relationships and partnership between stakeholders. To achieve this goal the government body needs to have enough independent authority to deal with tourism issues; however, the national leaders in many developing countries dominate all state authorities and give a secondary role to state institutions. For instance, Wong, Mistilis, and Dwyer (2011), looking at South East Asia, claim that the role of the national ministry of tourism and its support are very important for successful cooperation among stakeholders, and in many countries the national tourism organisation has little independent authority to set proper tourism policy initiatives.

Although collaboration among all tourism industry stakeholders is crucial, in the case of cultural tourism a particular focus is required on collaboration between heritage managers and tourist managers. It is believed that tourism management and cultural heritage management are two distinct entities; they have different objectives in many cases, although in both cases each party seeks to use assets to achieve its goals.

McKercher et al. (2005) state that the central focus of cultural heritage management is limited to the provision and conservation of cultural heritage assets, while the central vision of tourism management is focused on general tourism development and increasing the number of tourists. This means there is huge potential for conflict between tourism management and cultural heritage management if they do not coordinate their strategies under the auspices of an overall development plan. The authors also pointed out that the legislative and political environment also plays an important role in determining the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage managers. Governments tend to support tourism and the sustainability of cultural heritage, but they are often reluctant to implement legislation that could curb economic development, including of tourism itself. However, it could be argued that the parallel involvement and co-management between tourism and cultural heritage management could drive cultural tourism towards more sustainability. Therefore, establishing an appropriate collaborative approach between tourism management and cultural management is necessary to develop the tourism sector in a sustainable manner.

Otherwise, arbitrary actions by one of the parties without considering the needs of the other, or any other failure of cooperation between tourism and cultural heritage management, fundamentally undermine tourism development and sustainability.

According to Aas, Ladkin, and Fletcher (2005), it seems that heritage managers' views on tourism are changing, and the central role of income for conserving cultural

heritage sites is increasingly acknowledged. However, reconciling heritage management with tourism development does not in itself generate income for heritage preservation, because the generation of income from cultural heritage sites needs effective and comprehensive planning, and a plan is needed on how to invest the income earned from the site. As culture has become a core resource in tourism, and thus in economic growth generally, studies have increased their focus on the management of cultural tourism to determine how to maximise the economic benefits of this niche while preserving cultural heritage. The authors suggest that collaboration between the different interested parties could drive heritage tourism towards more sustainability and promote economic activity, which is beneficial to all. Hence, establishing channels of communication between tourism management and heritage management is perceived to be the initial step in coordination and stakeholder engagement. However, this is a complex area, as can be inferred from the above considerations.

At a basic level, there is an inherent conflict between stakeholders in cultural heritage tourism. The best way to preserve the infrastructure of historical sites is to deny public access to them, as the public can be expected to erode sites by their presence on them, and increased public access increases the possibility of vandalism. Conversely, for tourism management the best scenario is to encourage an influx of visitors to the site to generate revenue. In the absence of public access, cultural and historical sites will be dead as tourist destinations and thus will consume revenue for conservation rather than being self-sustaining and promoting economic development in the surrounding area.

Thus, there is a need to consider ways in which heritage and tourist managers can establish or develop communication and cooperation based on public access to heritage attractions while controlling the number of visitors (by apply entry fees, for example). Conversely, if visitors are given free entry they can damage or even destroy cultural heritage sites, which is obviously also unsustainable.

#### 2.4.3. Public participation in tourism policy and planning: Involving the local community

The tourism industry is highly dependent on the hospitality and cooperation of host communities. Local community involvement in tourism planning encourages residents to support the tourism industry, which increases the economic value of tourism and addresses economic challenges (Potgieter & Litheko, 2016). Moreover, community participation in tourism planning, decision making and tourism projects helps to ensure community acceptance of tourism development and the achievement of sustainable tourism (Cole, 2006). In addition, community participation and due consideration for the attitudes of local residents help to improve tourism planning and decision making, which facilitates achieving sustainability objectives (Hung, Sirakaya-Turk, & Ingram, 2011). In this regard, Murzyn-Kupisz and Dzialek (2013) suggest that sustainable cultural tourism can be achieved when decision makers cooperate with key stakeholders and take into account the preservation of heritage assets for future generations and assess the positive and negative potential impact of developing cultural tourism on quality of life and social capital. The involvement of a wider range of stakeholders in the decision-making process can help in achieving tourism development and the sustainability of cultural attractions (Garrod & Fyall, 2000).

However, the efficiency of public participation in the phase of identifying integrated conservation policy and strategic plans, and nominating a list of historic buildings that require conservation, depends on the views of different stakeholders. There are likely to be differences between the needs and perceptions of the various stakeholders; nonetheless, balancing their interests and conflicting interests can be beneficial to all parties (Yung & Chan, 2011). From these considerations, Dinica (2009) argues that public authorities' actions are important for sustainable tourism development, and that direct debate in workshops or conferences among stakeholders is necessary to address knowledge gaps and to formulate common visions for sustainable tourism. Moreover, according to Aas et al. (2005), involving the local community in the decision making process by giving equal opportunities in discussions may help to build a consensus and then wider collaboration in the future. This can also add depth to the perspective of planners by introducing a richer understanding of the challenges that can face tourism development, based on the perspective of all stakeholders, enabling development in a way that benefits all stakeholders.

To achieve effective community participation in tourism development in developing countries, two strategies are recommended by Tosun (2006): reduce bureaucracy; and reduce the centralisation of government power. To this end, the central authority should give some of its responsibilities to local government bodies. Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can guide and encourage local people to be involved in tourism development.

Likewise, three governmental tools are suggested by Nasser (2003) for achieving sustainable tourism development: encourage local involvement in tourism business activities; facilitate a suitable environment for local business operators to make a

reasonable profit; implement plans fully. Although involving the local community in tourism activities leads to increased support from that local community for tourism development and sustainability, it does not mean that their participation in tourism planning can be ignored. However, in developing countries, community participation in tourism development has been understood from the economic point of view – community involvement in tourism business activities and the provision of new job opportunities for the local community, for example – rather than involving in decision making (Tosun, 2000).

#### 2.5. Government's function in sustainable cultural tourism

Governments are involved in tourism because of its economic return and its impacts on the environment, local communities and other social and cultural phenomena.

Public policy has a crucial role in driving the tourism industry, because government is the only organisation can provide requirements such as stability, security, legality and legitimacy, monetary and exchange services, services and basic infrastructure, immigration and visa procedures, aviation, and so on (Elliott, 1997).

The role of government is to set a plan and policy for sustainable tourism development in a way can reach all stakeholders' needs. According to Nasser (2003), appropriate cultural policy includes a strategy to ensure a decrease in the negative impact of tourism development on heritage areas, with particular consideration for the economic benefits of the tourism industry for all stakeholders. However, Angelkova et al. (2012) believe that tourism development should not be limited in this way, only to reducing adverse impacts and maximising positive impacts of tourism industry; rather, the development should be comprehensive and should not damage the natural and socio-cultural environment.

Throsby (2009) suggests there are three 'golden rules' to be followed by public authorities and decision makers when undertaking cultural tourism projects and tourism planning either at the micro level or for the whole tourism industry. This is to ensure the sustainability of heritage or natural environment tourism projects, where 'project' refers to all investment in cultural capital through maintenance, renovation, restoration, or adaptive reuse. The first golden rule is 'get the values right'. Assessing the actual value of a heritage asset as cultural capital must include both its economic value and its cultural value. Economic value might refer to any financial return from the utilisation of the assets, while cultural value refers to 'aesthetic value' (e.g. the visible beauty of the site), 'spiritual value' (e.g. value that reflects a particular tradition or religion), 'social value' (e.g. its value in terms of creating identity and a sense of community), 'historical value' (the unique historical meaning of assets), 'symbolic value' (the symbol meaning of the asset) and 'authenticity value' (the value of uniqueness of the assets).

The second golden rule is 'get the sustainability principles right'. There is a serious debate among researchers about the proper definition of sustainability and the basic principles for assessing any tourism project (or indeed the whole tourism industry) in terms of sustainability. Throsby (2009) has summarised six principles of sustainability.

- Continuity: the capacity of a project to maintain the flow of its benefits into the future.
- Intergenerational equity: dynamic efficiency in the intertemporal allocation of resources and/or fairness in the treatment of future generations.
- Intragenerational equity: fairness in the distribution of benefits or the incidence of costs within the present generation.

- Diversity: recognition of the values attributable to diversity and observance of the precautionary principle (i.e. a risk-averse position should be adopted in decisions involving potentially irreversible loss).
- Balance in natural and cultural ecosystems: ensuring that the conditions are met for maintaining the interrelationships between components of systems.
- Interdependence: recognition of the fact that economic, ecological, social and cultural systems do not exist in isolation and hence that a holistic approach is necessary.

Based on the above principles it is essential to see cultural tourism projects or tourism policy in three dimensions of sustainability – economic, ecological and cultural – and to understand the mutuality of the relations between economic, social and cultural systems. The economic dimension includes the ability of the project to serve and create revenue in the short term to meet the needs of the current generation and in the long term of the next generation. The ecological dimension includes maintenance of natural capital, of biodiversity and of ecosystem balance. This principle is required when natural heritage assets are the basis of cultural heritage tourism. The cultural dimension covers the same factors as the ecological dimension – maintenance of cultural capital, of cultural diversity, of balance of cultural ecosystems. The tourism project or tourism strategy should satisfy these principles.

The first two golden rules, identifying the right value of the projects or process, and following the sustainability principles, requires choosing the right analytical method, which is Throsby's third golden rule: 'get the analytical methods right'. This is to assess: the positive and adverse impacts of heritage tourism projects from both the short-term and the long-term perspective of different stakeholders; different values and

outcomes; income creation and income distribution; local engagement; and preservation of the natural and cultural environment.

The preservation of tourism assets and the environment is largely discussed in the literature as one of the core principles of sustainable tourism. De Monchaux and Schuster (1997) identified five techniques as government intervention tools for preserving cultural heritage, where the state can set a desired conservation policy by choosing one (or a combination) of these intervention tools. However, the government should pay particular attention to all sectors of society when choosing and combining these modes, because each tool delivers a discrete message that might influence the relationship between government and those who might be affected by a particular conservation policy. Table 3 describes these tools and the messages that are delivered to stakeholders.

Government tools	Descriptions of government action	Characteristics of the message
Ownership and operation	By direct intervention, including owning and operating assets	The state will do X
Regulation	By regulating other parties (individuals and institutional entities) that own cultural heritage resources	You must (or must not) do X
Incentives and disincentives	Drive and encourage other parties to meet the government's cultural protection policy by applying incentives or obstacles	If you do X, the state will do Y
Establishment, allocation and enforcement of property rights	By Imposing rights, duties, and conditions on property owners	You have a right to do X, and the state will enforce that right
Information	Provide information to others who intend to preserve or use heritage, to influence their actions and meet the government's policies	You should do X, or you need to know Y in order to do X

Table 3: Tools for protecting heritage assets.

Table based information from De Monchaux and Schuster (1997)

A number of comparative studies have suggested particular sets of tools, but choosing specific tools by this country or that does not prove that this particular tool (or tools) is the most effective (De Monchaux & Schuster, 1997). In this regard, Stipe (1982) believes each country has its own circumstances and own national preservation programmes, and so all procedures are correct whenever they are based on a similar set of these five possible tools. Forster and Kayan (2009) claim that government bodies should change public policy where it has to be reconciled with the implementation process. Examples include financial subsidies and incentives for maintaining a heritage property (e.g. low-interest loans and tax breaks) to motivate the owner to undertake maintenance. Consistently monitoring historic buildings to ensure their safety and preservation, though arguably often costly and ineffective, can be successful, especially when new technology is employed, for instance remotely monitoring buildings by using CCTV. In addition, announcement of the list of historic buildings that have been restored and reconstructed by private sector operators might increase the sense of pride and encourage other owners to maintain their buildings.

Regarding protecting the environment, Cater (1993) claims that plans for sustainable development often pay attention to the environment, as it is essential to ensure improvement in the living standards of local communities in both the short and the long term, and to continue to attract tourists, to meet the objectives of tourist enterprises. Perman, Ma, McGilvray, and Common (2003) identify three policy instruments as government actions that can reduce environmental pollution: institutional approaches (such as education, socialisation programmes and promoting citizenship); command instruments (controlling the quantity of product and location expansion), and economic incentives (emissions charges, direct charges based on quantity and product, user fees for use of a natural resource, marketable emissions

permits, and deposit-refund systems with fully or partially reimbursable payment incurred at purchase of a product). While such policy instruments are perhaps more directly applicable to manufacturing industries than to the tourism industry, they might be adapted for the protection of tourism assets and of the environment more widely.

## 2.6. Controlling visitor numbers: a tool of protection

Controlling the number of tourists visiting cultural tourist attractions is another component of sustainable cultural tourism. It is widely believed that large numbers of visitors to heritage destinations negatively impact on heritage assets, the environment and local communities. For instance, Winter (2008) reports that the vast increase in the number of tourists in the town of Siem Reap in Cambodia became a threat to the principal tourist attraction and cultural resources, despite its benefits in the form of massive development in hotels, restaurants, housing and catering, and improvement in the quality of life.

Different tools can be used to control visitor numbers to cultural heritage sites, including entry fees or simply limits to the number of visitors at a reception point. In this regard, Garrod and Fyall (2000) claim that setting entry fees to cultural attractions could help to better manage the site in terms of determining the number of visitors and financing the cultural heritage preservation and sustainability. Moreover, Lamsal, Atreya, Pant, and Kumar (2016) claim that entry fee system has become a policy option in many countries, as it offers financial stability and offsets conservation budgetary constraints; the authors recommend the use of a differential pricing mechanism for domestic and international visitors for attractions like the Ghodaghodi Lake Complex in Nepal.

## 2.7. The effect of tourism growth on residents' support

The economic, socio-cultural and environmental effects of growth within the tourism sector may affect residents' support for a development. Styliadis, Biran, Sit, and Szivas (2014) state greater economic and socio-cultural impacts encourage residents to support the tourism industry, as do lesser environmental impacts.

A number of researchers and international organisations highlight the positive economic role of tourism development, such as generating income and creating new jobs. Sutawa (2012) claims that tourism is a source of income that improves the lives of citizens in the tourism destination and reduces poverty. Similarly, Woodward, Editor, and Harding (1998) indicates that the economic benefits of tourism include the creation of new jobs, increased retail sales, increased tax revenues, the encouragement of local entrepreneurialism, and economic diversification in the service sector (e.g. hospitality and tour guides), manufacturing (producing souvenirs, publications, arts and crafts), and agriculture (e.g. gardens and farmers' markets). Atan and Arslanturk (2012) observe that the tourism industry has positive impacts not only on tourism-related facilities such as hotels, restaurants and travel agencies, but also on other sectors.

Growth in the tourism industry brings significant benefits to residents at both national level and local level. For instance, in 2012, it contributed approximately 9.3% of global GDP, and provided 8.7% of total global employment; these figures increased to 9.5% and 8.9% respectively in 2013 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2014), and 10% and 9.1% in 2014 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015). Moreover, in 2012, international tourist arrivals totalled approximately 1035 million and generated about US\$1078 billion worldwide. These figures increased to 1087 million tourist arrivals

and US\$1159 billion in 2013, and to 1133 million and US\$1245 billion 2014 (World Tourism Organization, 2015). Increasing revenue can be considered another variable underpinning sustainability while it improves the quality of life for the local community, is a main source of funding of cultural assets conservation programmes and contributes to the national economy.

The multiple economic benefits of tourism have encouraged increased investment in the tourism sector in most countries. The World Tourism Organization (2012b) reports that tourism is one of the core income sources for many less developed countries, and plays a major role in the diversification of income sources, and therefore is closely linked to economic development. Moreover, Aas et al. (2005) claim that there is a rapid increase in the number of tourist arrivals, which increases employment opportunities in many tourism-related activities such as hospitality, restaurants, tourist guides, recreational/leisure industries and other business operations. In other words, tourism is an engine of economic development. It is able to create a wide range of employment opportunities; it earns foreign currency; and it allows economic diversification, which can help governments avoid dependency on particular export products (Robinson & Picard, 2006).

Tourism growth comes with a number economic benefits for the local community and national economy but it can also cause some problems, both environmental and in terms of tourism resources (Ashworth, 2005; Butler, 1991; Girard & Nijkamp, 2009; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; McKercher et al., 2005; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012). In fact, the use of any tourism resources creates impacts, whether positive or negative (Butler, 1991). Appropriate tourism policy and planning, successfully implemented, can maximise revenues and tackle the negative impacts of tourism development.

Various techniques can be used to help maximise revenue in the tourism industry, principally in marketing, where the promotion of niche tourism and the use of ICT for advertising have been employed. Niche tourism refers to the positioning of competing firm the provision of particular products or services to meet the needs of particular target customers (Robinson & Novelli, 2005). While marketing aims to meet different consumers' needs and achieve their satisfaction to attract the largest number of customers possible, niche marketing is a technique of classifying the market into categories based on consumers' behaviour and needs (MacKay, Andereck, & Vogt, 2002). There are different understandings when comparing niche tourism with market segmentation; the latter is a technique for dividing the marketplace, while the former aims to satisfy the needs of a target group of tourists (Jenkins & Jones, 2001). In this regard, Novelli and Benson (2005) contend that the modern tourism markets are characterised by increased demand for alternative locations, entertainment and attractions. Niche tourism responds to this change in tourist demands and market trends.

The use of ICT also increase the level of satisfaction of tourist, which led to increase number of tourist arrival. Arnold (2005) stated that the cultural tourism market can easily interact with technology and can enhance the experience of visitors such as e-ticketing (as example). According to Jenkins and Jones (2001), cultural tourism as a commodity could benefit from ICT to provide more facilities to meet the tourists' needs. In this regard, Huh (2002) confirms that the innovations and the availability of global communications led to a rapid increase in the number of local and international tourists visiting natural and cultural heritage sites.

## 2.8. Implications for Kurdistan Federal Region: previous studies

To understand what plans and policies could be designed and implemented in KFR, this chapter has explored the theories and the literature related to policy and planning to find the main principles required. Additionally, lessons can be drawn from previous studies of similar cases, and these are looked at here. A number of studies have been undertaken on the tourism industry in post-conflict situations; however, they either focused only on one dimension or were concerned with very different situations from the case of Kurdistan.

In the case of the Sri Lanka, Buultjens et al. (2016) claim the government's response to challenges to the tourism industry after the conflict (1983-2009) and to the tsunami in 2004 was based on issuing the Tourism Act, no. 38 of 2005, to replace the Sri Lanka Tourist Board Act no. 10, which had been in effect since 1966; the new act allows the establishment of the Tourism Development Fund based on an airport tax and 1% of the turnover of all establishments registered with the Sri Lanka Tourist Board. In addition, the Sri Lanka Tourism Board has developed four administrative departments to drive the tourism industry. The government has succeed in recovering the tourism sector, and Sri Lanka has seen a huge number of tourist arrivals and big tourist projects.

While Sri Lanka is considered an example of success in the tourism industry in a post-conflict area, it is interesting to review the responsibilities of the four administrative departments established by the 2005 Act. According to the Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs in Sri Lanka (2016), the four department are: firstly, the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (aims to optimize the use of tourist resources and ensure the tourist industry is served efficiently and effectively, and aims to identify and develop tourist products and services, to formulate and

implement Tourism Development Guidelines, and to facilitate and implement legal and administrative processes for new products and service developments). Secondly, the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (is responsible for dealing with all of marketing activities related to the tourism industry of Sri Lanka. It aims to market Sri Lanka as a tourist destination and gateway to the South Asian region, in collaboration with other tourism departments and with all travel stakeholders). Thirdly, the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (It is considered the centre point for planners, firms and associations for information; it provides services such as answering inquiries about local and international events and activities, including all necessary government clearances, coordination with airlines and airport authorities, all necessary conference support services, planning, organising and implementing events, and provide advice or expertise for event organisers. It supervises events in Sri Lanka, and works to ensure that all events, meetings, conferences and exhibitions are conducted so as to meet visitors' satisfaction, with the expectation that this will optimise revenue and make a positive contribution to Sri Lanka's economy). Finally, the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism & Hotel Management (was established in 1964 to train staff and students, and aims to deliver training programmes in travel, tourism and hospitality management, and to address new challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry).

On the other hand, some authors believe that Sri Lanka's reaction after the tsunami and period of armed conflict was based on immediate challenges rather than long-term solutions. Khasalamwa (2009) claims that government actions to address the actual structural vulnerabilities were not up to expectations and even were in fact limited to immediate challenges. She suggested the process of recovering the tourism industry should have addressed all existing challenges, and she recommended setting a comprehensive approach in planning, decision-making and improving access to

resources in a way that can build proper infrastructure where there are glaring gaps as a result of pre-cease-fire conflicts.

The case of Angkor was studied by Winter (2008), can be seen as an example of the economic rehabilitation and cultural regeneration of a destination after a period of conflict and political instability. The study focused on challenges that occurred after tourism growth in post-conflict regions rather than managing cultural resources for tourism purposes in these particular situations per se. A rapid growth after just a decade of conflict in Cambodia gave a fillip to government and private sector investment in social and physical infrastructures, such as investing in a number of international projects, building local expertise, training young scholars in conservation, archaeology, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and temple management. In addition, tourism growth has had particular impacts on the town of Siem Reap, which led to massive development in hotels, restaurants, housing, catering and local immigration into the region; however, this remained contingent on the powerful cultural attraction of Angkor as a heritage site, which underpinned the attraction of international tourism. However, tourism growth raised several issues. Most obviously, the vast increase in tourist numbers became a threat to the principal tourist attraction itself, the cultural resources of Angkor. UNESCO led the Cambodian government to adopt the policies of 'sustainable development' after a workshop held by UNESCO that focused on site protection and high-quality services and facilities. Secondly, tourism growth raised challenges between the cultural heritage and tourism industries in Cambodia because of their different aims and objectives. The former aims primarily at the restoration of identity, history and national pride, while the latter aims primarily at economic development. It appears that urban and tourism development received less funding and support to provide better facilities for tourists until

budgetary resources were first allocated for that purpose in government plans from 1996, but there were few benchmarks and precise targets for achieving progress in sustainable tourism development.

Tourism growth can exacerbate regional imbalances and the inequality of the distribution of wealth across communities, and long-term planning is required to improve the equitable distribution of tourism across the region. Winter (2008) suggests that tourism resources in the Angkor region should be used as a tool to overcome poverty, and economic and social inequalities. However, after two decades of conflict, cultural heritage resources in Cambodia required more attention to sustainability, and there is the need for a restoration plan for the cultural, economic and political infrastructure.

In contrast to Kurdistan, where cultural resources are underutilised for tourism purposes, in Cambodia destinations were overloaded with visitors prior to the implementation of a comprehensive and sustainable strategy. However, an important lesson that can be learned from the case of Cambodia is that the government should be take account of the possibility of an overload of visitors in any comprehensive plan for the cultural tourism industry; such a plan should also take into consideration the equality of distribution of wealth across communities in the region, and encourage coordination between both the cultural heritage and the tourism industries.

Legislative issues highlighted in the case of B&H by Causevic and Lynch (2013) can be considered a common challenge for most post-conflict situations; however, the case of B&H is different from the case of Kurdistan, because there were massive tourist arrivals to B&H before the conflict, and it was already an attractive tourist destination,

while the tourism infrastructure in Kurdistan has been moribund for decades, despite the intrinsic richness of its tourism resources.

According to Mansfeld (1999), marketing strategy should be dynamic and constantly innovative to be able to respond to various crisis scenarios. The marketing strategy should be realistic, relying on assessing tourist data before, during and after the security situations, taking lessons from previous similar situations, and not aiming to attract international tourists in on-going security situations. To reduce the impact of any drops in tourist numbers, the government should set short-, medium-, and long-term plans for local visitors to be applied as a balancing mechanism to replace any shortage from international tourism that might arise from unexpected security events, and should facilitate instructions to investors and provide financial incentives given the possibility of financial losses. In addition, the government should disseminate through the local media the latest comprehensive information on the level of security and safety in tourist destinations, to give reliable information to travellers, for instance instructing them to leave a troubled region but not the whole country. Mansfield claimed that proper crisis management can reduce the long-term damage that might face the tourism sector in unsteady security situations, but for full elimination, the country needs stable peace and stability. Tourism growth will not continue in unstable security situations. Thus, Israeli public-sector decision makers understood that it could not attract potential visitors without peace, even during important religious events.

The impacts of instability on tourism destinations vary and are highly dependent on the nature of the situation. In the case of Israel, it owns or occupies unique religious tourist attractions that are culturally attractive for many people (particularly Jews, Christians and Muslims) all over the world. It is impossible to apply a single particular

strategy over all post-conflict situations. However, it might be possible to use some formulated recommendations to reduce the impact of a negative image that emerges after any type of insecurity in tourist destinations.

This study attempts to identify the major challenges that face the Kurdistan region, and find an appropriate cultural tourism strategy. KFR is considered one of the areas to have endured the longest period of conflict since the modern Middle East was carved out of former Ottoman lands after World War I.

### 2.9. Conceptual framework

The challenges to the tourism industry in conflict and post-conflict areas vary. A management plan and tourism policy strategies are needed to deal with the challenges and issues of the tourism industry in these countries. In the case of the KFR, the tourism industry based on leisure tourism has developed rapidly in the last decades, after decade of conflict in Iraq. However, while KFR is rich in heritage assets and heritage attractions, this research aims to understand whether cultural tourism can stimulate the tourism industry in KFR, whether heritage assets can be protected from damage, and whether these assets are currently being managed in a sustainable manner. What cultural tourism strategy could be implemented both to increase tourism demand and to sustain tourism resources in KFR? Can any additional services and facilities add value to heritage sites? These questions are summarised in the following two research questions:

RQ 1: What are the specific post-conflict political issues that affect cultural heritage protection? How do these situations impact on cultural tourism development?

RQ 2: What are the influences and factors affecting the development of sustainable cultural tourism in the KFR? What recommendations can be made to the government for the implementation of successful, sustainable cultural tourism development?

The study aims to deal with the research questions through a research framework based on a set of aims and objectives. The design of a conceptual framework to identify the link between aims, objectives and different variables is crucial as a plan for addressing the research questions properly. As Jabareen (2009) claims, a 'conceptual framework' is a set of linked concepts that function as a network, wherein each concept plays an integral role in identifying and debating the issues related to the research study. Moreover, Miller and Islam (1988) state that the conceptual framework aims to outline a set of key terms and concepts that used in discussing and debating the phenomena in the study. It could be argued that the conceptual framework is a comprehensive research plan that covers all aspects of the research questions, which helps the researcher to better address or analyse the research problem. Therefore, the following research objectives and sub-objectives have been articulated to respond to the research questions and to explore what the issues are, and what the challenges are, to the preservation of heritage assets, the development and promotion of cultural tourism in a new entity or autonomous region that might emerge in post-conflict situations:

Objective 1: Explore the challenges and opportunities in the protection of cultural heritage in post-conflict situations such as the KFR, by analysing government perspectives. This can be achieved through the following sub-objectives:

- To explore the current barriers to the preservation of heritage assets in the KFR.
- To explore the current challenges that face government plans for revitalisation of heritage assets in the KFR.
- To understand the level of cooperation among different government directorates to manage heritage resources.

Objective 2: Determine the role of key stakeholders in sustainable cultural tourism development in the KFR through focus groups with local community and business operators. The sub-objectives are:

- To explore the impacts that cultural tourism may have on local business operators. These aims are to understand how their business is affected by the change in tourism demand, to identify the barriers to the development of their business, to explore what they expect from the government to support their business, to explore what roles they can play to support cultural tourism, to explore how they value their culture and how they are willing to be involved in developing cultural tourism.
- To explore the influences that tourism growth may have on the local community. The aim is to identify the negative and positive impacts of increasing numbers of tourists, what they expect the government should do to reduce the negative impacts, investigate how they value their culture, and how they are willing to preserve their cultural resources, and to explore what roles they can play to support cultural tourism.
- To understand the level of support for the commercialisation of heritage for tourism purposes. The aim here is to explore the level of cooperation among

stakeholders, and to identify how participants understand the role of collaboration. This is achieved through elicitation of the perceptions of stakeholders.

Objective 3: Understand the implications arising and make recommendations on the development of a cultural tourism strategy for KFR.

- This is achieved through analysis of the data obtained through the previous objectives.
- To understand the perceived quality of tourist services provided (e.g. accommodation, restaurants), and which services need to be developed. The aim is to understand the motivations of tourists, the level of tourists' satisfaction, the factors that increase the level of tourists' satisfaction, and what cultural resources would contribute to an increase in the level of satisfaction.

To conclude, focus groups and interviews were developed to elicit the perceptions of stakeholders. The data collected were used to answer the research questions and to address the research objectives. In figure 4, the process of achieving sustainable cultural tourism is introduced, where government drives policy for heritage protection and for tourism development, and both sets of policy require the involvement of other stakeholders in decision making and planning. Figure 5 and figure 6 show the aims of eliciting the perspectives both of tourists and tourism business operators as examples of stakeholders' perspectives.

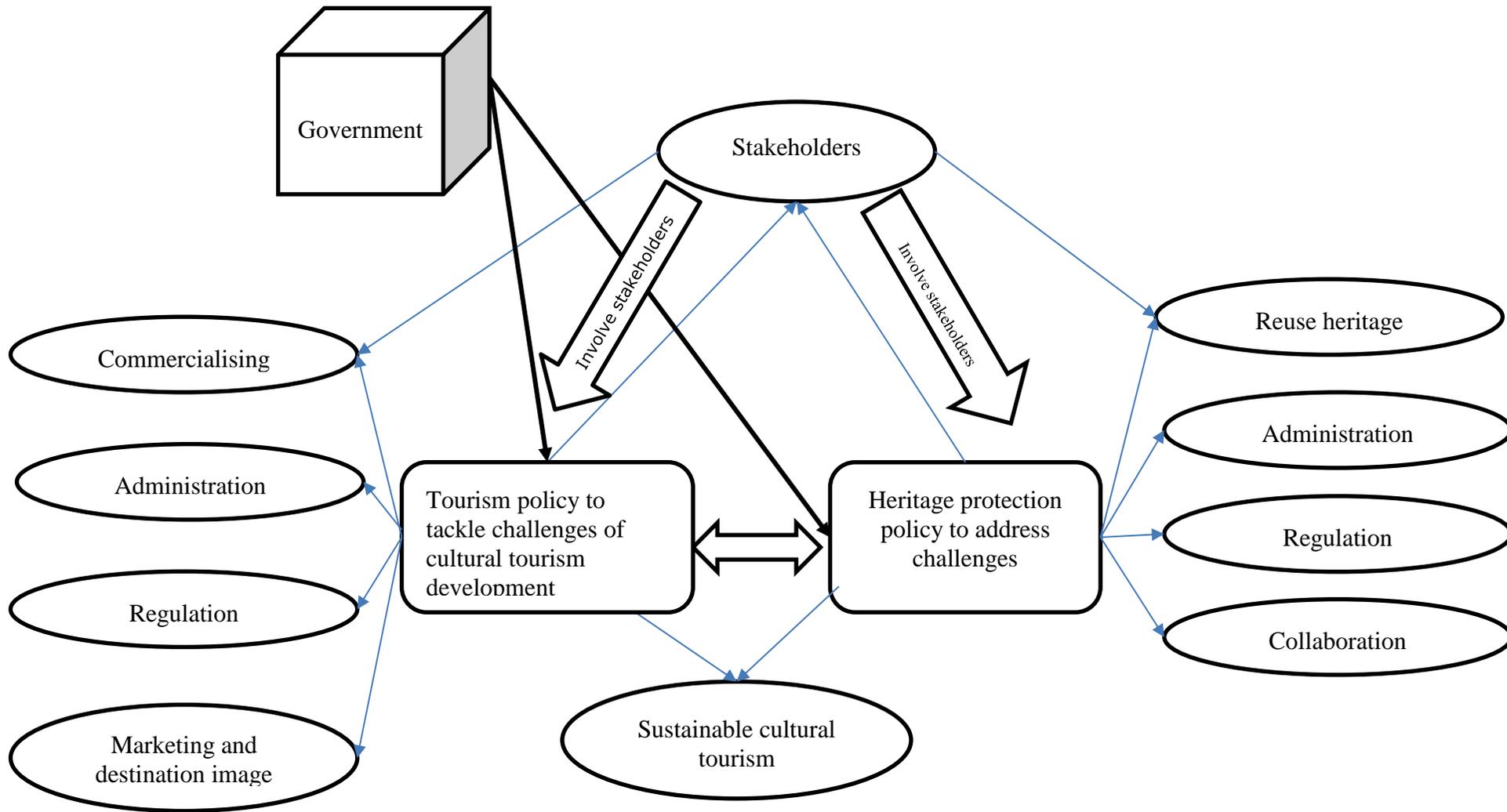


Figure 4: The process of achieving sustainable cultural tourism

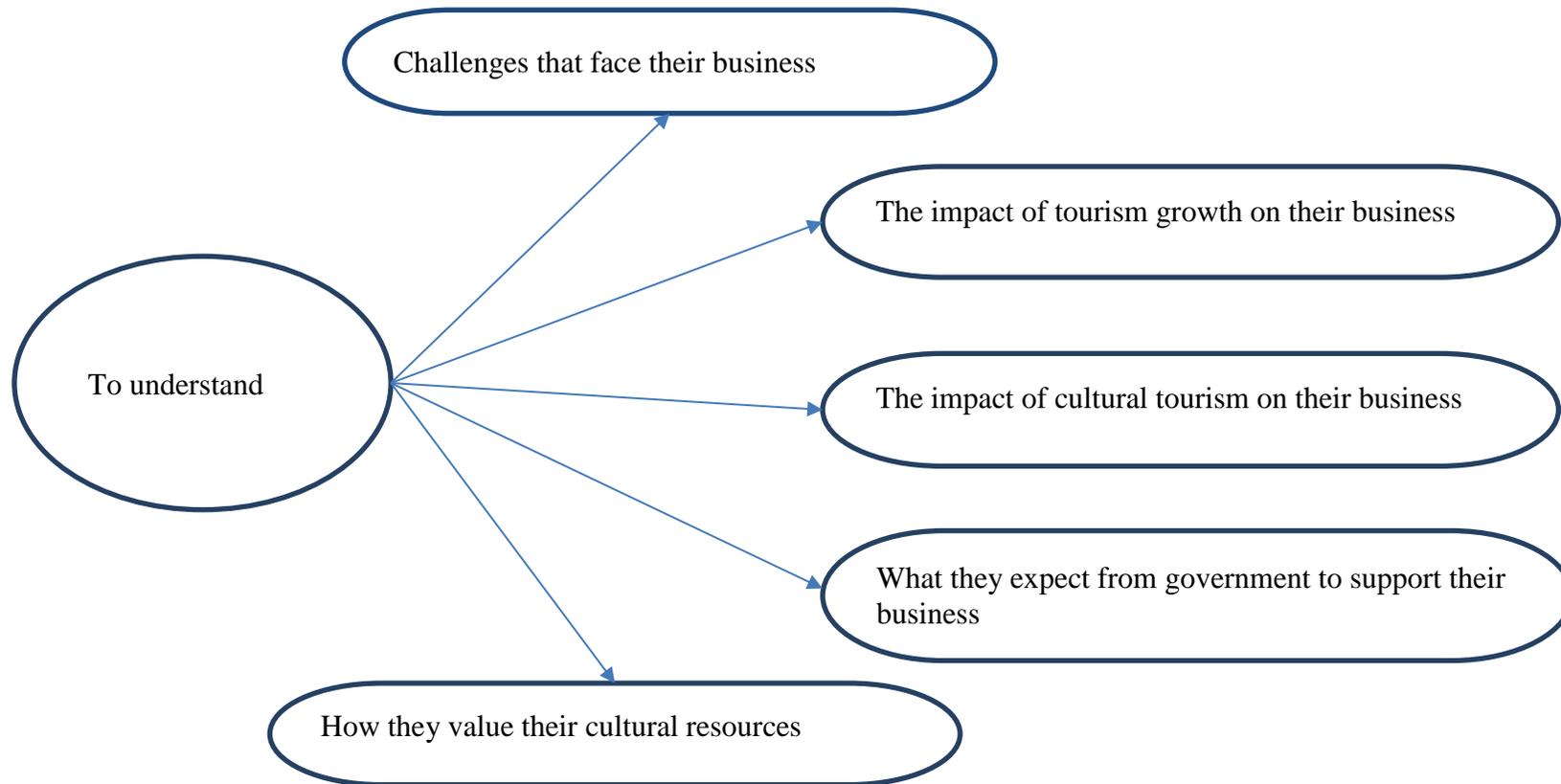


Figure 5: The aims of gathering opinions from tourism business operators

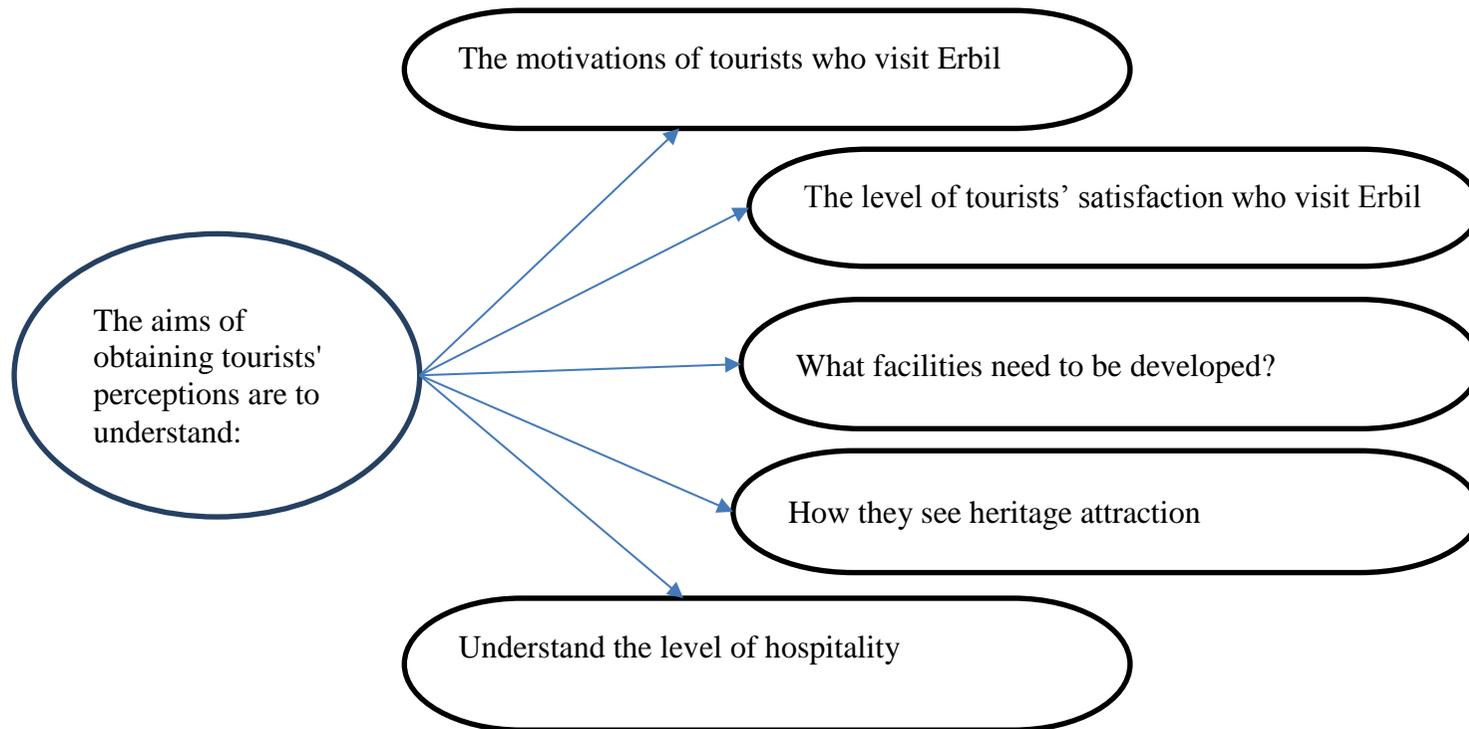


Figure 6: The aims of gathering opinions from tourists

## Chapter 3. **An overview of tourism in Kurdistan Federal Region**

### 3.1. A brief history of conflict in the KFR

After the southern part of Kurdistan (now called the Kurdistan Federal Region of Iraq) was occupied by British forces in 1918, Kurdish leader Sheikh Mahmoud Barzinji started to run the Slemani (called also Sulaymaniyah) governorate under British rule; the year after, he led the Kurdish revolution against the British in order to obtain independence from Baghdad but was unsuccessful (Ghareeb, 1981). Later, during the monarchy in Iraq, a series of Kurdish armed uprisings took place, in 1929, 1932, 1939, 1943, 1947 (Kelly, 2008). After the end of monarchy in 1958, during the period of republican rule in Iraq, there were two phases of armed conflict between the Kurds and Iraqi government. First started from 1961, which resulted in Kurdish forces controlling a large part of northern Iraq (Stansfield, 2006). A ceasefire was followed by a period of negotiation from 1970 to 1974 (McDowall, 2004). The second phase of conflict started in 1976 and lasted to 1991. This began when the Iraqi government made an agreement with the Iranian government in 1975 (the Algiers agreement) which was largely to resolve border disputes, but for the Iraq, it was motivated by the aim of eliminating the armed Kurdish movement (McDowall, 2004). In the context of the continued conflict, the Anfal genocide campaign was carried out by the Iraqi government against Kurdish civilians from 1987 to 1989, with the use of chemical weapons, mass executions (more than 100,000 civilians were killed) and the destruction of over 1000 villages (Black, 1993; Salih, 1995).

In 1991, Kurdish forces controlled three major cities, and the Iraqi army withdrew from the KFR (Jawad, 2008). Then the Kurds unilaterally declared a Kurdistan Regional Government in 1992 (Lortz, 2005) and eventually the region was officially

recognised by the Iraqi government in 2005 (Iraqi Constitution, 2005). However, there is still conflict between the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional Government over a large area (a multi-ethnic population) called disputed territory according to Iraqi constitution, the most of disputed territory captured by the KRG during the war against Daesh in 2014, and then handed to Iraqi Federal Force in October 2017 after the elimination of Daesh (See figure 7).

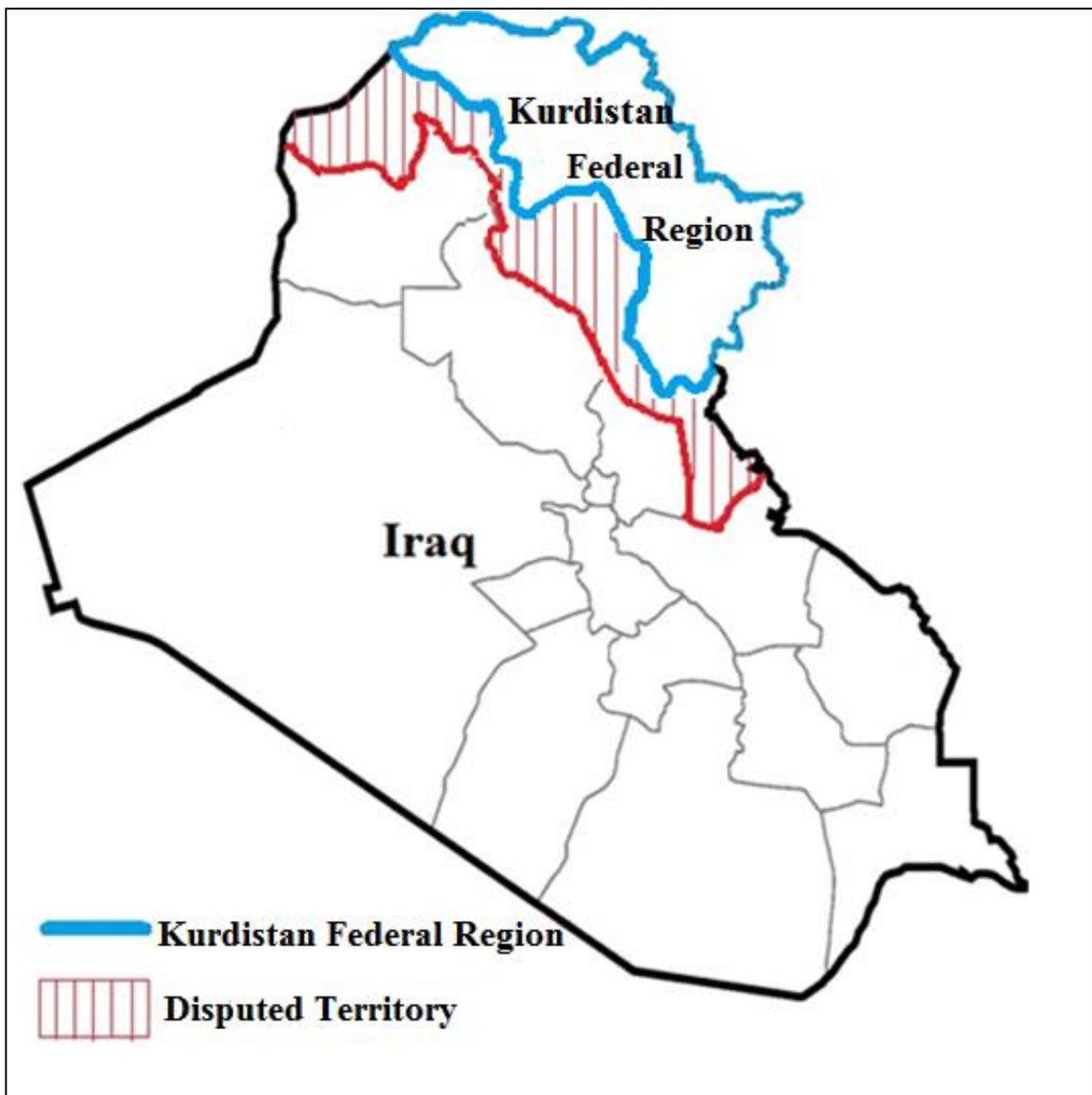


Figure 7: The shadow lines is territory conflict area between Iraq and KRG

Source: Author

Although the KFR is officially a part of Iraq, in practice it acts as independent country. It has its own army, government, flag and operates a number of KRG representations abroad, including in the UK, the USA and Europe (Foreign Relations Kurdistan Regional Government, 2017). It has made contracts with a number of international oil companies, and started to export crude oil and natural gas without the need for Iraqi government permission (Ministry of Natural Resources of KRG, 2015). On 25 September 2017, the KRG held a referendum on full independence, without having international support, which a number of countries have asked for a postponement (BBC, 2017; Foreign Secretary of Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2017). Approximately 92% voted in favour of independence (Chulov, 2017), however, the results were rejected by most of neighbouring and global states.

In general, all cities in Kurdistan, without exception, were subjected to policies of exclusion and neglect during successive Iraqi governments from 1920 until 2003. For example, no airports, motorways or railways were constructed in the region before 2003. Kurdistan was demographically devastated by the Anfal campaign of 1986–1989, and its infrastructure (already underdeveloped) was devastated (O’Leary, 2002). The unstable environment in the region since the formation of Iraq caused a lack investment in infrastructure and tourism growth was almost impossible. However, within less than a decade of stability and safety (2005–2013), the tourism industry saw rapid growth, as outlined in Section 3.3.

### 3.2. Current political structure

The main government institutions consist of the Kurdistan Regional Presidency, the President of the Government, and the Parliament. The KFR is relatively stable

politically; every four years the Parliament is elected by a popular vote, and the deputies nominate the President of the Government. However, the Kurdistan President has been elected only once in a direct popular vote, in 2005 (Kurdistan Region Presidency, 2017). To date, the government has not been able to arrange further elections because of disagreements among political parties in the region regarding the President's power and authority.

The KFR comprises parts of the three governorates of Erbil, Slemani and Dohuk in the north of Iraq. It has a total population of 5.2 million (Kurdistan Regional Government, 2016). Slemani has been divided into three provinces: Slemani, Halabja in 2015 and Kalar province in 2005 (see figure 8). The latter has its own administration, but Halabja is still ruled by the governor of Slemani.

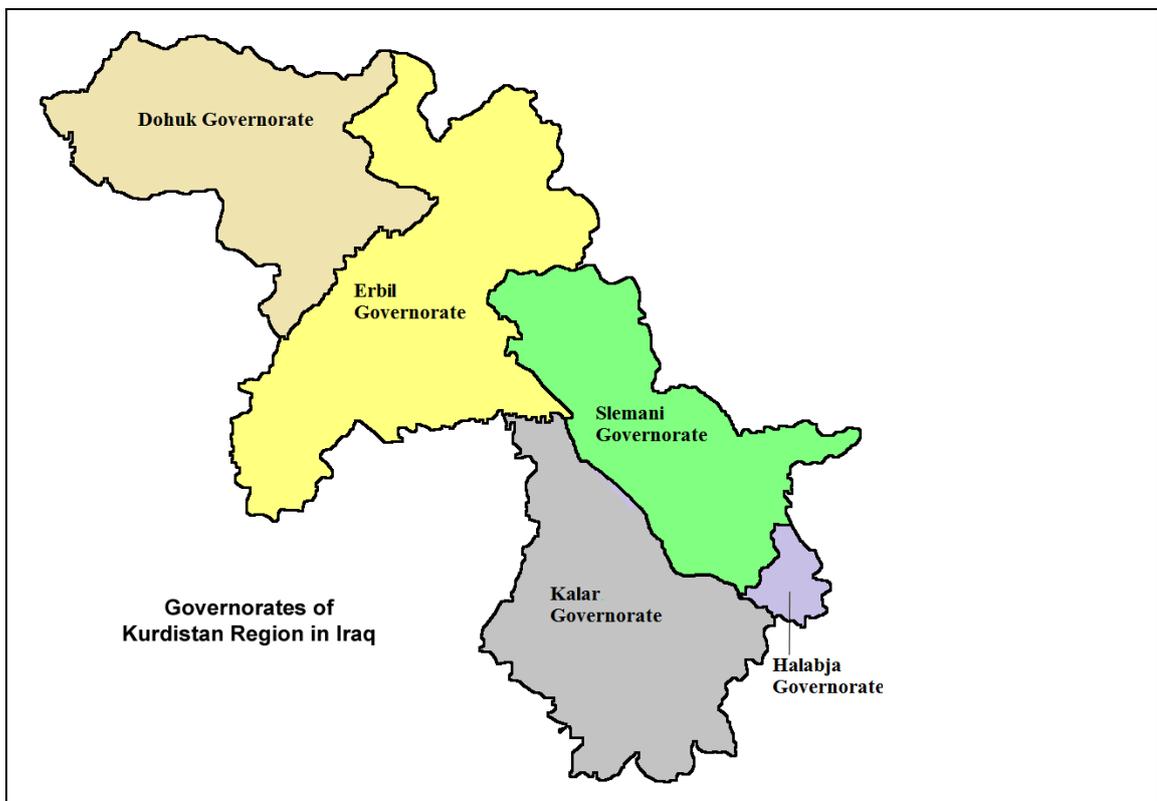


Figure 8: The provinces of Kurdistan Regional Government  
Amended from the source: (Dan, 2017)

### 3.3. Tourism development in KFR

In general terms, the Kurdish area offers much potential for tourism development, including many natural and geographic resources, as such 'The Region is geographically diverse, from hot and dry plains to cooler mountainous areas with natural springs and snowfall in the winter' (Kurdistan Regional Government, 2016). The KFR is predominately mountainous, with a number of rivers running through it. The weather is moderate in general, but spans cooler weather in the hillside resorts and long hot summers in the cities. All these characteristics make KFR a land with great leisure tourism appeal (Alkurdi, 2013). KFR has a range of tourism resources and features: natural, business, recreational resources, wildlife, birding, heritage and archaeological assets, historical relics, religious shrines and caves (Wahab, 2013).

After the overthrow of the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003, and in parallel with the formation of the new (unified) cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government in 2006, tourism in KFR grew rapidly, in particular after two international airports and motorways between all Kurdish cities were built, and huge investments were made in tourism facilities, including accommodation (see figure 9, figure 10 and figure 11).

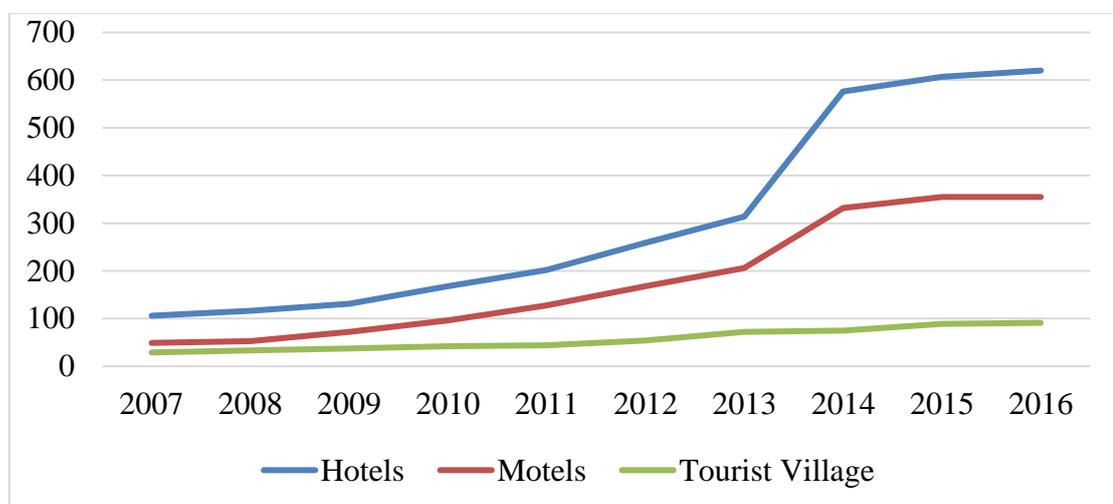


Figure 9: The growth of accommodation in KFR from 2007 to 2016

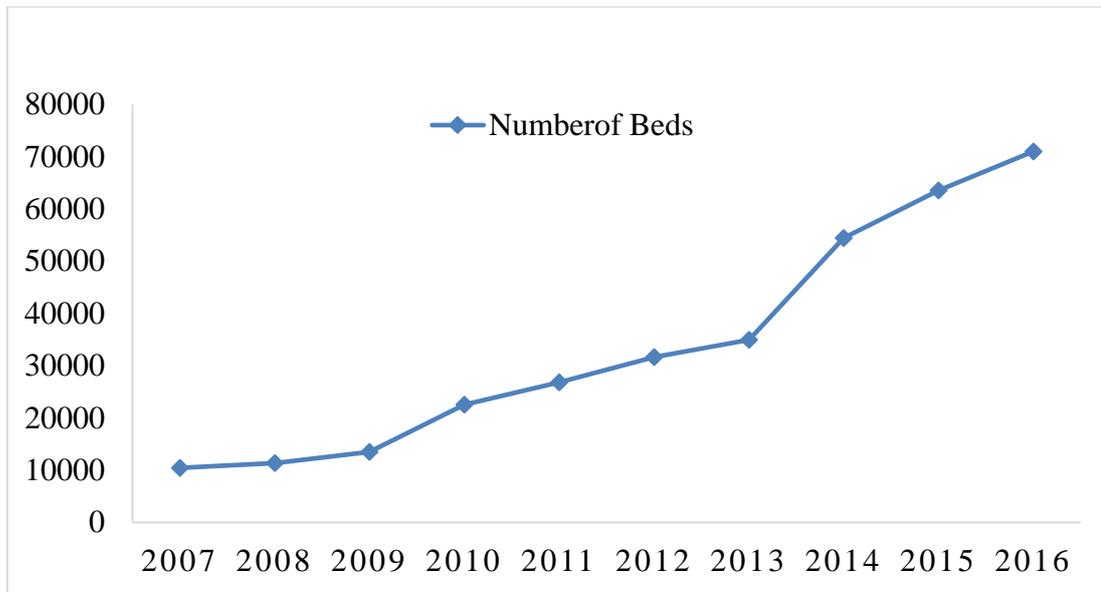


Figure 10: The number of beds in all accommodation in KFR from 2007 to 2016

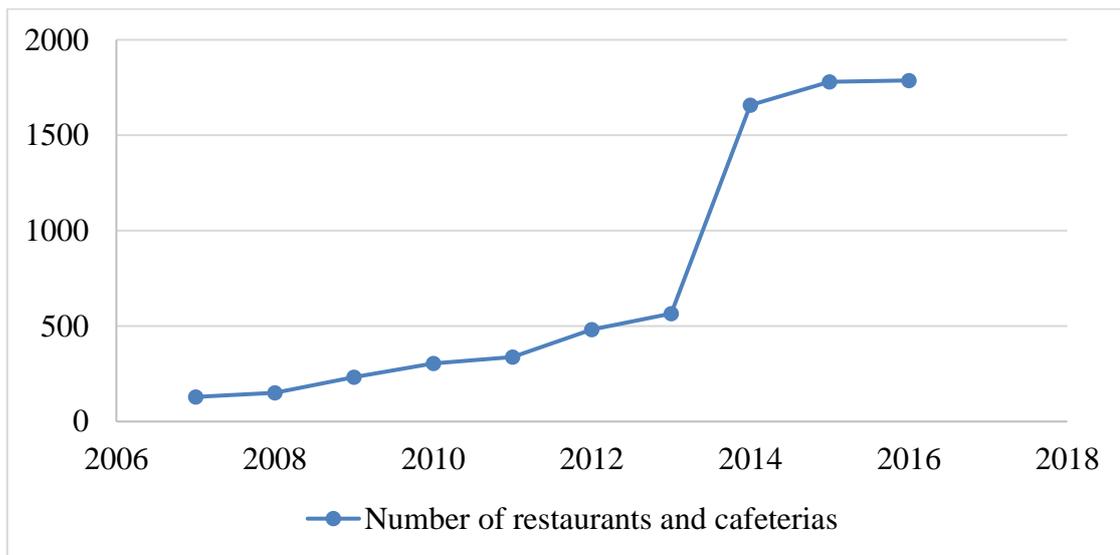


Figure 11: Number of restaurants and cafeterias in KFR from 2007 to 2016

The number of tourist arrivals increased by 48%, 42% and 66% in 2008, 2009 and 2010, respectively (see figure 12); less dramatic increases (but increases nevertheless) of 30% were recorded for 2011 and 2012. In 2013, the number of tourist arrivals reached 2.95 million, but in 2014, 2015, and 2016 they decreased to 1.53, 0.78 and 1.6

million tourists, respectively (General Board of Tourism of Kurdistan Regional Government, 2015; Ministry of Municipality and Tourism, 2017; Rusti, 2016).

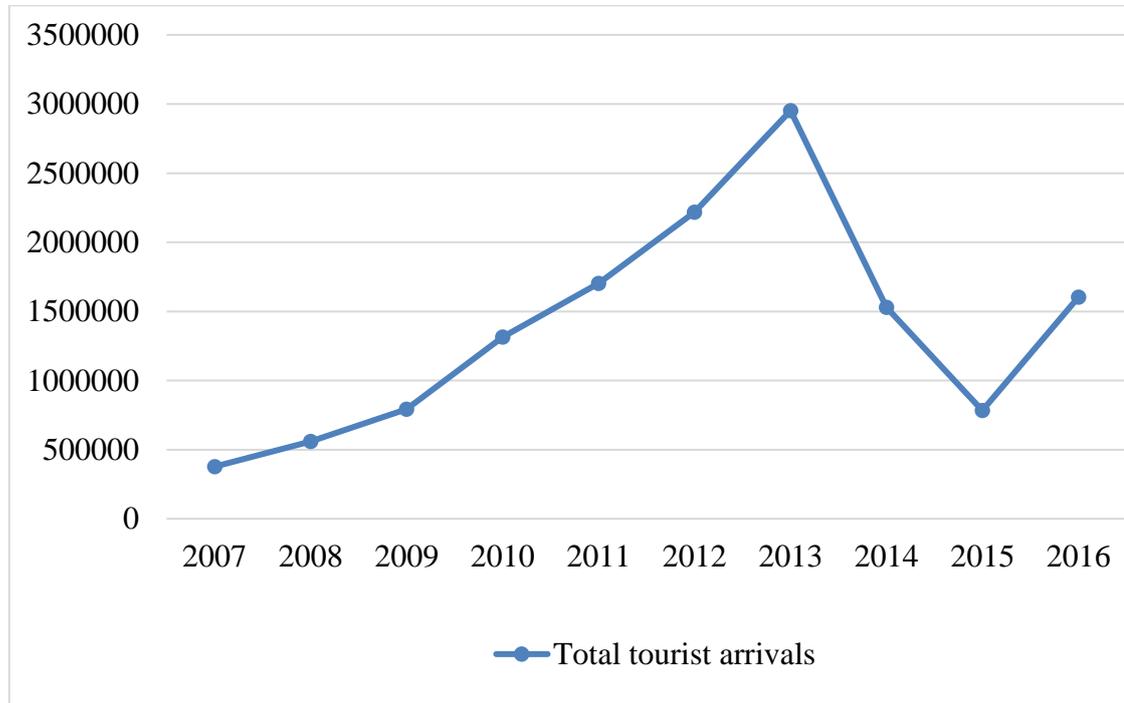


Figure 12: The number of tourist arrivals in KFR from 2007 to 2016

However, KFR still has a great potential for further development of its tourism sector if an appropriate management plan can be put in place. Auso (2012) reports that the KFR has many tourist assets, which could contribute to the national budget if tourism planning is put in place and implemented.

### 3.4. Cultural resources in KFR

The KFR has diverse tourist attractions, including both cultural and natural resources, which gives it great potential for the development of historical, religious and cultural tourism (Malaika & Raswol, 2014). McGahey (2006) says that Kurdistan possesses numerous natural attractions, such as snow-capped mountains, waterfalls, deep canyons and pastoral villages; it is also an ancient land of historical interest, and is home to the Erbil Citadel, one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited sites.

However, many tourism assets still unknown to international tourists and are undeveloped for the purposes of tourism (Wahab, 2013). According to Pavelka, Svatušková, and Králová (2007), many of the great archaeological sites are in a very poor condition, such that even simple preservation is nearly impossible. Many were damaged by the conflict, but also suffer from a lack of interest on the part of state authorities. Now there is an urgent need for the preservation of most of these important architectural monuments.



Figure 13: Damaged house inside Erbil Citadel  
source: (Palumbo, 2017)

The prime example of a heritage site among the archaeological assets of the KFR is the Erbil Citadel. The Citadel is located in the centre of the city of Erbil, on the top of an artificial earthen mound rising 32 metres. The city is believed to have been continuously inhabited for 7000 years or more, and Khan (1999) says that the Citadel itself dates back to 3000 BC and has been continuously inhabited. It is widely

considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the world (Bornberg, Tayfor, & Jaimes, 2006; Gandreau & Moriset, 2013; McGahey, 2006; Pavelka et al., 2007).



Figure 14: Outer wall of the Erbil Citadel, source: (ARS Progetti, 2017)

In 2006, a decision was taken to evacuate (and compensate) all the occupants of the Citadel in order for it to undergo a process of maintenance, revitalisation and conservation (Deisser, 2010). In 2007, the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalisation (HCECR) was established to prepare a ‘Conservation and the Rehabilitation Master Plan’ for the Citadel. In September 2007, an official agreement between the KRG and UNESCO was signed to provide advice to this Commission for the completion its project (Gandreau & Moriset, 2013). However, at the time of writing, the Citadel requires further investment for its preservation.



Figure 15: Photo inside Erbil Citadel

Source: (Johnson., 2017)

### 3.5. Chapter summary

The KFR is rich in heritage assets but, unfortunately, these valuable cultural resources were not well protected in the past, and now there is lack of organisation, protection and conservation. Tourism development in the KFR has been attempted but there is still great opportunity for its further development based on investment in its diversity of cultural assets. This study attempts to identify the major challenges to this under-development of cultural tourism in the KFR as an example of a post-conflict region.

## Chapter 4. **The research strategy: In-depth interviews and focus groups**

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology and describes in detail the research process. The chapter begins by sketching the philosophical background to qualitative methods, in particular the in-depth interview and the focus group. Section 4.2 highlights the rationale for using qualitative methods to gather data to answer the research questions. Section 4.3 then presents the details of the procedure for the in-depth interview, and similarly section 4.4 explains all stages of the focus groups. The section 4.5 presents the data analysis and highlights the developing themes, and the last section 4.6 discusses limitation and research reflexivity.

### 4.1. Research aims and objectives

The main aim of this research is to assess the potential for and challenges to the development of cultural tourism in post-conflict areas, examining the case of the KFR in particular. The thesis aims to explore current barriers to heritage protection and to make recommendations for successful, competitive and sustainable cultural heritage tourism development in the KFR. This aim has been developed into the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are the specific post-conflict political issues that affect cultural heritage protection? How do these situations impact on cultural tourism development?

RQ 2: What are the influences and factors affecting the development of sustainable cultural tourism in the KFR? What recommendations can be made to the government for the implementation of successful, sustainable cultural tourism development?

The three main objectives have been structured to respond to the above research questions:

Objective 1: Explore the challenges and opportunities in the protection of cultural heritage in post-conflict situations, through analysing government perspectives, to identify the current barriers that face preserving heritage assets in the KFR, to find opportunities and anticipated solutions to the challenges of heritage protection.

Objective 2: Determine the role of key stakeholders in sustainable cultural tourism development in the KFR through in-depth interviews with the government and focus groups with local community and business operators. This will involve exploring the impacts that cultural tourism may have on stakeholders, including the local community, business operators and tourists, by eliciting the perceptions of stakeholders in focus groups and in-depth interviews. The aim is to understand how stakeholders are affected by changes in tourist arrivals, and to explore what they expect the government to do to deal with tourism impacts (the negative and positive impacts of increasing numbers of tourists). Further aims are to understand the level of support of commercialising heritage for tourism purposes, and to identify the level of cooperation among stakeholders, and understand how participants understand the role of collaboration, and how they can be encouraged to collaborate

Objective 3: Understand implications arising and make recommendations on the heritage protection and development of a cultural tourism strategy for Kurdistan. The aim here is to understand the factors that improve cultural tourism, and what government action needs to be taken to provide high-quality tourist services (e.g. accommodation, restaurants).

In this study, the above objectives are designed to tackle the research questions through focus groups and in-depth interviews; the remainder of the chapter details the data collection process, after section 4.2 discusses qualitative research methods.

#### 4.2. Qualitative methods

By the 1970s, qualitative methods had emerged as a serious and proper approach adopted in research studies across a range of disciplines, including some that traditionally depended on the use of experiments to understand human behaviour, such as social psychology (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Many approaches have been developed to generate qualitative data. Ritchie (2003) categorised these approaches into two main groups: natural data approaches, based on obtaining data in natural form in normal daily social settings, rather than formulated particularly for a research study, such as participant observation, documentary analysis, discourse analysis and conversation analysis; and generating data specifically to respond to research questions, such as biographical or narrative accounts, individual interviews, paired (or triad) interviews, focus groups or group discussion methods. In such approaches, the researcher is required to interpret attitudes, beliefs and other phenomena recounted by study participants, which gives the researcher the opportunity to understand people's perspectives, beliefs, behaviours and motivations, and to gain participants' reflections on social phenomena.

However, the researcher should be in a neutral position in regard to data collection and analysis. Jennings (2005a) states that the researcher equally assesses all perspectives in qualitative methodology, and interprets the data without giving particular priority to one position among others. This means that the researcher's own position is reflected in the overall data analysis, and inductive practices are used to highlight multiple

phenomena in the study. Table 4 presents examples of qualitative methods of empirical data analysis.

<i>Analysis type</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
Content	Textual materials read, annotated and coded to generate categories. Categories are evaluated for relevance to emerging taxonomy in relation to empirical setting. Involves reflection and questioning of assignment of codes and categories, and the real-world context.
Constant comparative	Constant comparative analysis involves two generic stages, coding and the comparison of codes to generate categories to build an ideographic representation of the study phenomenon. Theoretical sampling is applied to establish the repetitive presence of concepts. The method has similarities with grounded theory (see below).
Successive approximation	The researcher iteratively and reflectively compares codes and categories to develop concepts, relationships and 'theory'. Questions in regard to 'goodness of fit' with the empirical world are posed constantly throughout the process. The method has similarities with constant comparison and grounded theory analysis
Domain	Categorises study units using a 'cover term', 'included terms' and a 'semantic relationship'. Categorisation is an on-going process during data collection.
Ideal types	Ideal types (models of social interactions and processes devised by Max Weber) establish a standard to which reality may be compared
Event-structure	The chronological ordering of events highlighting causal relationships in their occurrence
Matrices	Matrices demonstrate interactions between two or more elements of phenomena
Grounded theory	Grounded theory is attributed to the work of Glaser and Strauss. It is an inductive process, as are all of the qualitative methods of empirical material analysis. In its original form, theory is produced by identifying conditions that result in a phenomenon occurring, which establishes a specific context, concomitant actions and related consequences.
Other examples	Networks, models, typologies, taxonomies, conceptual trees, mind maps, semantic webs

Table 4: Examples of Qualitative Methods of Empirical Material (Data) Analysis

Source: (Jennings, 2005a)

A wide range of research highlights the quality and validity of data gathered using qualitative methods. Snape and Spencer (2003) report that qualitative methods are

suitable to explore complex issues and to respond to research questions that require understanding social phenomena. They described the most distinctive features of qualitative research in the following points. Firstly, qualitative methods offer an in-depth understanding of the social world through the experiences, perspectives and social circumstances of research participants. Secondly, qualitative methods can explore new or emergent issues because of closer interactions that exist between the researcher and the research participants. Thirdly, qualitative research generally involves smaller samples of targeted participants, but the stringent selection criteria enable an in-depth view of the phenomena of interest, which leads to the fourth characteristic, which is that the data from qualitative research is rich, detailed and extensive. Finally, analysis is open to emergent ideas that might be produced or developed during in-depth explanations, enabling identification of a range of patterns in the studied society.

However, the role of qualitative data in social research varies according to the purposes of its use. Ritchie (2003) states that in theoretical research, the function is often based on theory building, hypothesis testing and content illumination. In applied research, the function is based on the key stages of policy-making, like formulation, implementation and appraisal, to define the different types of research. Ritchie classifies the function of qualitative data into the following four categories:

1. Contextual research, in which qualitative data is used to explore what exists in social research, and describe phenomena based on the experience of a target population, and to explore the issues to identify what they are about, or what lies inside.

2. Explanatory research, to examine the rationale for what exists. Qualitative research offers a unique tool to identify the reason behind phenomena that occur and their impacts, to determine decisions, attitudes, behaviour or other phenomena that occur in people's thinking or acting.
3. Evaluative research, where qualitative data is used to assess the effectiveness of what exists, by gathering data from participants regarding both the processes and the outcomes of the policies that exist, including different types of impacts that can arise from policies; qualitative methods are flexible enough to elicit information and understand outcomes.
4. Generative research, whereby qualitative data is used to create new ideas to develop social theory or improve policy solutions and strategies, because qualitative methods are able to generate thoughts, identify emergent concepts and inform solutions.

Various methods can be used to collect qualitative data, such as interviews, focus groups, open-ended questionnaires, documentary analysis, discourse analysis, conversation analysis and observation. Choosing the appropriate form depends on the research questions rather than the researcher's preference. In this study, qualitative data collection was conducted through focus groups and in-depth interviews in order to respond the research questions and research objectives, the detail of data collection procedure is in sections 4.3 and 4.4. The following two sub-sections give a brief background of these methods.

#### 4.2.1. The use of in-depth interviews as a research method

From the 1970s, interview methods have attracted researchers' attention as a method of conducting research in the social science studies, including the tourism field (Jennings,

2005b). According to Clark, Riley, Wilkie, and Wood (1998), 'The interview as a form of collecting qualitative data is at its most useful when it gives us insight into how individuals or groups think about their world, how they construct the "reality" of that world' and always gives an opportunity to the participants to make an additional comments. Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey (2005) report that in-depth interviews give experience and skills to both parties, offer a chance to participants to deliver their thoughts freely and naturally, and offer an opportunity to the researcher to engage with people who have certain personal skills. The in-depth interview is a tool to obtain participants' perspectives directly on desired specific topics, and researchers aim to get as much data as possible. Researchers assume a role akin to that of a student (listening carefully, asking questions naturally and supposing the interviewees are experts).

According to Jennings (2005b), interviews can strictly follow a question-answer format; these are termed structured, formal or standardized interviews, and are more suitable for quantitative approaches. Alternatively, interviews can be conversational, but still within the framework of a question-answer format, and these are termed semi-structured and unstructured (informal or non-standardized) interviews, associated with qualitative methodology. Semi-structured interviews are based on a flexible list of themes to guide the interview session but without strictly determining it, each list might depend on participant categories. Unstructured interviews are much more open and look more like a normal conversation; they are centred on main themes, not specific questions. These three types of methods are compared in table 5.

	<i>Structured interview</i>	<i>Semi-structured interview</i>	<i>In-depth, unstructured interview</i>
Style	Specific protocol of questions and answers	Conversation-like	Conversation
Design	Structured	Semi-emergent	Emergent
Researcher stance	Objective	Subjective	Subjective
Researcher perspective	Outsider (etic)	Insider (emic)	Insider (emic)
Consequence of researcher stance and perspective	Limited reflexivity	Reflexivity	Reflexivity
Exchange issues during the research process	Limited reciprocity	Reciprocity	Reciprocity
Language used	Subject/respondent	Informant, participant co-researcher	Informant, participant co-researcher
	Data representation	Empirical materials Slice of life	Empirical materials Slice of life
Material/data collection	Checklist	Field notes	Field notes
	Some open-ended questions	Transcription and recording	Transcription and recording
Basis of analysis	Mathematical and statistical analysis	Textual analysis	Textual analysis
'Findings' expressed as	Numerical representation	Deep and thick descriptions	Deep and thick descriptions
Writing style for reporting research	Scientific report	Narrative	Narrative

Table 5: Comparison of structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews

Source: Jennings (2005b)

Likewise, interviews can be classified according to the number of participants involved, such as individual interviews, paired interviews and group interviews (e.g. focus groups, focus interviews, Delphi, panel and nominal group techniques).

According to Ritchie (2003), individual interviews are the most popular method in qualitative research due to their distinctive advantages in probing detailed personal

experiences and perspectives of participants concerning research phenomena. Paired (or triad) interviews are considered to be a form of in-depth interview, but with two (or rarely three people) involved in the interview session, whereby participants normally include people who are close to each other, such as parents, partners, colleagues, friends, benefiting from dialogue. They offer a chance to focus on personal details regarding phenomena, and provide an opportunity for participants to reflect and compare their own experiences.

The rationale for using in-depth interviews in this study is that the method allows the researcher to freely ask about specific points that might arise during the in-depth interview session and gives an opportunity for participants to talk freely; this helps the researcher to get as much information as possible. This method allows the researcher to get full explanatory answers through flexible tools such as follow-up questions which might help to generate new knowledge and put forward new opinions or solutions for particular problems selected over the interview. It is flexible enough to explore relevant issues that might be raised by the interviewee. Mack et al. (2005) state that the in-depth interview became a popular qualitative method because of its effectiveness in offering a human face to the research process, allowing the interchange of skills and experiences between participants and the researcher. In addition, it gives a chance to participants to express themselves freely, which they might not have in their daily lives, to explore their ideas and experiences with someone who is interested, who will listen carefully, building from general questions in an interview guide toward more particular follow-up questions to fully elicit emergent data, which is facilitated by the rapport and interpersonal cues associated with face-to-face interviews.

According to Legard, Keegan, and Ward (2003), there are several key features of in-depth interviews. The first distinctive key point of the in-depth interview is to combine structure and flexibility in one method to fully explore key topics, issues and themes comprehensively during the interview discussion. The second, interview itself is characterised by the interactive engagement between the researcher and interviewee to generate data, by which the researcher raises initial questions to encourage participants to respond freely and interactively. Thirdly, the researcher is able to use different techniques, such as follow-up questions, to acquire deeper information and a fuller understanding of the perspectives of participants, and to allow the researcher to explore factors that support participants' answers, such as reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs. Fourthly, the data from interviews is considered creative data, associated with the generation of new thoughts and ideas, because the method gives an opportunity to the researcher to encourage participants (or participants direct themselves) to put forward new thoughts on a certain subject or find solutions to issues raised in interviews. In summary, the flexible, interactive and generative nature of qualitative data collection from in-depth, face-to-face interviews enables researchers to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth picture of participant experiences that would be impossible to achieve using alternative methods.

This research aims to obtain viewpoints from government representatives and local business operators through in-depth interviews, in response to the research questions. Thus, the study obtains qualitative data by in-depth interviews to: address these research objectives; explore the barriers and opportunities for developing cultural heritage tourism; understand the level of government support in developing cultural tourism in KFR and the role of collaboration among stakeholders in sustainable cultural tourism; and gather their opinions about the development of the tourism sector

in the KFR. It also aims to understand the specific details of challenges that face tourism growth and management in the KFR in particular.

#### 4.2.2. The use of focus groups as a research method

During the 1950s, focus groups were widely used by marketing researchers to gather data on consumers' attitudes regarding products and services being made available in the rapidly expanding consumer, because it was thought that using non-directive interviewing would be better to understand and discover people's experiences (Weeden, 2005). Halcomb, Gholizadeh, DiGiacomo, Phillips, and Davidson (2007) report that focus groups play an important role in studies related service provision and consumer needs, in particular to expanding existing knowledge about a particular topic through the opinions, values and beliefs expressed by a group of participants that will assist in the development of future programmes.

It could be argued that the focus group is a tool to elicit participants' opinions during group discussions. According to Strielkowski, Riganti, and Jing (2012), a focus group is defined as a group of people who present their attitudes and opinions on a certain topic in an interactive manner. Researchers use different forms of this method to achieve their aims. In this regard, Weeden (2005) reports that, in academia, the use of focus groups is now acceptable at all stages of a study, and it has been widely used in the social sciences in the last decade. This is because the focus group is a flexible method to understand the salient themes involved in a research subject, making it highly effective during the initial phase of a research study, as well as gathering rich and valuable specific data. Similarly, Smithson (2000) states that focus groups are particularly beneficial at an early stage of research to discover core relevant points of the topic that participants might mention.

Another benefit of using focus groups is that they collect high-quality data. Halcomb et al. (2007) state that the focus group is a useful research technique, as a form of group interview that generates a large amount of rich qualitative data. This is because participants may offer solutions to particular challenges as a group that differ from those they would offer as individuals, because there is an opportunity to validate and derive collective perspectives and opinions, with the interaction of ideas and concepts. Furthermore, regarding the usefulness of this method, Jangsten, Hellström, and Berg (2010) argue that focus groups obtain valuable information from the experiences, perceptions and opinions of people who share certain skills. However, the quality of data gathered from a focus group depends largely on the conversation and communication in the focus group sessions; therefore, researchers should take time to plan and develop questions on topics that encourage conversation (Weeden, 2005). The factors that might influence the quality of data in focus groups are classified below.

### *1. Questioning route*

The success of focus group discussions in collecting rich data requires preparatory planning for the set of proposed questions for the participants, which is called the questioning route. Krueger and Casey (2010) define it as a process of designing and developing a group of 10–14 questions to manage the discussions in one or two focus groups of two hours' duration. They suggested the following steps to develop a question route. Firstly, set a brainstorming session; this could be with a few colleagues who have enough knowledge about the research topic, wherein the researcher briefly explores their perspectives about the questions to be used in managing the focus group discussion. Secondly, design a draft question route from the brainstorming questions; the researcher should choose the questions that are relevant to the research study, and

then arrange questions so they progress from more open questions to more specific ones. The researcher should estimate the time needed for participants to cover each question; typically, sub-questions may need five minutes each and main questions may need 15 minutes. This can help the researcher to delete some unimportant or redundant questions. Thirdly, get feedback from the brainstorming team on the draft questioning route, which can be done by answering whether: these questions are enough to get the desired data; there are any missed questions; some questions need to be deleted; and whether the sequence of questions makes sense. Morgan (1996) states that the 'funnel' approach is an appropriate strategy for the question route to be used in focus group discussions. In a funnel-based approach, the focus group discussion begins with open questions and then moves to more specific questions to narrow debate and focus it on the research question. The researcher should ideally find an enjoyable and engaging starting point and then progressively shift to the core questions. This helps the researcher to get participants' general opinions and perspectives at the beginning of each session, in open debate, and then their views on the specific topic at the end. Halcomb et al. (2007) state that the 'funnel' approach gives a great opportunity to participants to present their individual perceptions in the first stages of discussions, and then narrows discussion to answer the research questions.

## *2. The skill of the moderator*

The implementation of a focus group needs a moderator who should have a certain level of experience to manage the discussions appropriately, encouraging participants to present their perceptions of the topic (Halcomb et al., 2007). Moreover, Weeden (2005) claims that the less the moderator interrupts, the more the data will reflect the participants' perspectives, without the interference of the moderator's opinion. It is advisable for the role of moderator to be limited to encouraging participants to share

their experiences and comment on the statements of their peers (Jangsten et al., 2010). However, potential conflicts may arise in the group that are difficult to manage (Halcomb et al., 2007). Therefore, the focus group sessions should be effectively managed by the moderators to get as much data as possible. For instance, Weeden (2005) argues that the moderator should draw attention to ethical considerations by establishing ground rules at the start of the focus group and moving discussions forward when nascent conflicts appear between participants. It is recommended that the moderator is from a similar milieu to that of participants (e.g. organisational or professional background, language, or in some cases ethnicity) to reduce challenges and communication barriers (Halcomb et al., 2007).

### *3. Anonymity and participants' convenience*

To make participants feel comfortable, anonymity should be ensured and participants should be assured of this on consent forms; the latter must be provided to participants for each focus group, and should explain that the knowledge and experiences recorded will be kept in confidential files, because the issues of confidentiality may influence discussions between participants in terms of the level of disclosure and comfort (Halcomb et al., 2007). Hence, it is advisable to identify participants by their first names or pseudonyms during focus group discussions, which helps participants to feel comfortable and more confident. In addition, Weeden (2005) argues that the moderator should create a safe atmosphere and engender a feeling of convenience for participants to present their opinions in order to hear many different perspectives. For example, participants must have a certain level of knowledge and common purpose relating to the key issues involved. Thus, it is better to organise and divide groups into sub-groups, such as separating non-experts from experts. In term of sub-group creation, Halcomb et al. (2007) state that gender and age should be taken into consideration,

because, in many conservative cultures, younger people are culturally conditioned to be reticent in presenting different perspectives or opinions to older people or to people in a higher position.

Although focus groups have been widely used during the last two decades, the technique has some limitations. Weeden (2005), argues that firstly, focus groups are quick and cheap to execute, which may lead to misuse. Secondly, the people who are willing to participate in focus groups may be different from the targeted population. It is also difficult to know the motivations of those willing to participate, and dominance of discussions by certain participants can present serious challenges to the researcher. Finally, expertise has an impact on facilitating discussion, so moderators can be more effective if they have previous experience of working with this method. According to Smithson (2000), the researchers are prone to selectively quote from focus group discussions to illustrate emerging (or preconceived) themes while ignoring the complexities of focus group behaviour. However, the advantages of focus groups in gathering rich data far outweigh the potential drawbacks.

### 4.3. Implementation of in-depth interviews

#### 4.3.1. In-depth interview structure

In-depth interview sessions were held with two stakeholder categories. Firstly they were held with government representatives, who included public policy makers and managers at the General Board of Tourism in the KRG, the head of the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalisation (HCECR) and the Directorate-General for Antiquities. The aim was to elicit their opinions regarding the challenges that face the KFR tourism industry in general and cultural tourism in particular, the barriers to using cultural resources for tourism purposes, to discuss anticipated solutions, and to explore heritage protection and the challenge of preservation. Secondly, in-depth

interviews were conducted with local business operators, including staff/managers/owners from tourism enterprises agencies, hotels, restaurants and antiques and gifts shops. This was to obtain their viewpoints about the barriers to the development of their business and to identify the tools that the government could provide to help shift their business towards further development and success.

In-depth interviews were conducted in two waves, the first in 2015 and the second in 2017. All in-depth interviews in phase 1 were held in 2015 in Erbil, the capital of KFR, and the researcher recruited 12 people to represent the government and 7 to represent local business operators. The sessions lasted 25–90 minutes. A tape recorder was used to record the in-depth interviews, with informed consent and full explanation of data handling procedures (see appendix (2) for a sample of the information sheet for interviewees, and appendix (3) for a sample of the interviewees' participant consent form). The second wave of interviews was conducted by telephone in 2017 (research funding was not available for the researcher to travel to the KFR), but it was not felt that this affected the quality of data gathered. The participants included 5 government representatives in Erbil, Duhok, Slemani and Garmyan province. This wave was used to check whether the same challenges recorded in the first wave existed in other provinces.

#### 4.3.2. Aims and objectives of the in-depth interviews

The aims of conducting in-depth interviews with government representatives in this study were: firstly, to elicit their opinions regarding the challenges to heritage protection and tourism growth in general and cultural tourism in particular in KFR; secondly, to understand their perspectives regarding the barriers and strengths of using heritage resources for tourism purposes, and anticipated solutions to these barriers; and

finally, to understand their perceptions regarding the involvement of stakeholders in policy and planning process.

In contrast, the basic aims of the in-depth interview sessions (and in a focus group) with local business operators were namely to explore:

- What they expect the government to do in order to help them to make their business more successful;
- How cultural tourism could help develop their business;
- What the government should do to develop cultural tourism in KFR and increase the number of tourists; and
- What the barriers are to developing their business.

Figure 16 shows the type of data that in-depth interviews aimed to identify, in order to respond the main research questions.

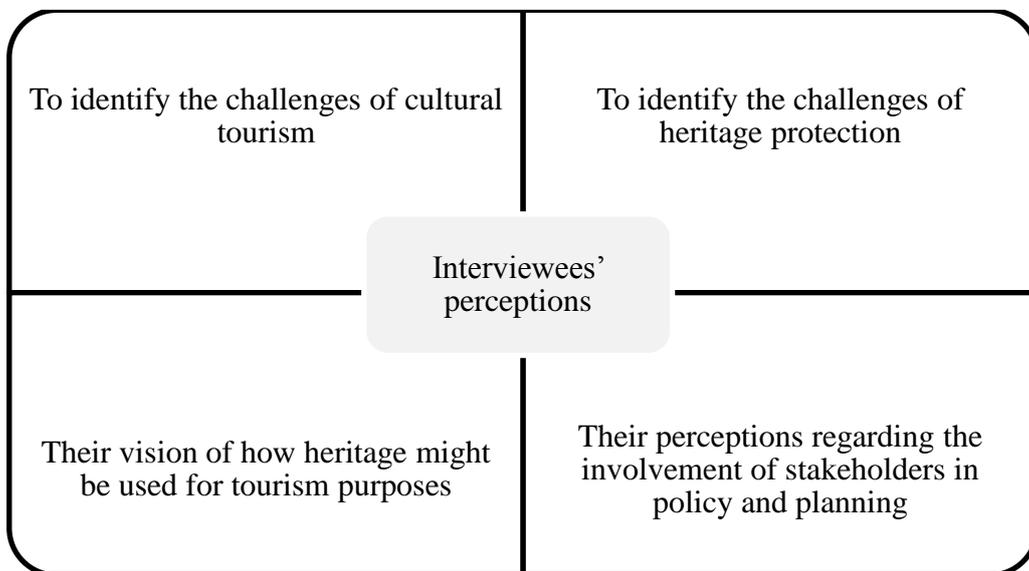


Figure 16: Aims of the in-depth interviews: to capture interviewees' perceptions in four areas

#### 4.3.3. Participant recruitment

All in-depth interviews sessions in phase 1 were held in Erbil in April 2015 and the researcher travelled to the locations of the case study to recruit participants. The study recruited 12 government representatives and 7 local business operators for individual in-depth interviews in Erbil (see table 6). All participants were recruited for in-depth interview sessions by personal visits to their offices to make appointments, due to local community traditions, and they agreed to the mentioning of their names when required. Most of interview session with government participants in phase 1 were held at their offices at their daily work time in Erbil, also the sessions with local business operators were done at their workplace. Due to the culture of the local community, the recruitment does not require making appointment in advance to take part of study. Thus, some of these interviews were held without prior appointments. All interviews were made in Kurdish language and then relevant text translated to English by the researcher himself for data analysis. The information sheets and consent forms were presented to participants in both Kurdish and English. All participants were involved voluntary in this study and were informed that they could withdraw from the study prior to publication.

The second phase of interviews was held in April 2017, where all of interview sessions in this phase were held by phone due to lack of funding for travel. However, conducting interviews by telephone did not affect the quality of the data as the researcher had experience from the first phase, and the participants were working for government bodies that were interested in being involved in this study.

Category	Participants' Name	Interviewee Code Name	Date Held	Position
Senior experts and policy makers: Ministry of Culture and Youth	Kannan Mufti	P1	14/4/2015	General Manager at Ministry of Culture and Youth (MCY)
Senior experts and policy makers: Antiquities Directorate	Mala Awat	P2	16/4/2015	General Directorate of Antiquities
Senior experts and policy makers: Architect and Archaeology	Dara Al-Yaqubi	P6	26/3/2015	Head of High Commission of Erbil Citadel Revitalisation (HCECR)
Senior experts and policy makers: Antiquities Directorate	Nader Babakr Mohamed	P8	6/4/2015	Director of Erbil Directorate of Antiquities
Senior experts and policy makers: Tourism Directorate	Nader Rosty	P12	26/3/2015	Head of Media Department in General Board of Tourism in Kurdistan
Experts and practitioners: Antiquities Directorate	Ahmed Jawdat	P4	14/4/2015	Head of Erbil Museum Department at Erbil Directorate of Antiques
Experts and practitioners: Antiquities Directorate	Sabir Hasan Husen	P5	15/4/2015	Head of Information and Cultural Department at Erbil Antiques Directorate
Experts and practitioners: Antiquities Directorate	Rafiq Rasul Sofi	P9	8/4/2015	Head of Information of Antiques Department at General Directorate of Antiquities
Experts and practitioners: Antiquities Directorate	Valentine Abdulrahman Ali	P10	8/4/2015	Head of Planning Department at General Directorate of Antiquities
Experts and practitioners: Antiquities Directorate	Muhammad Lashkri Khdir	P11	5/4/2015	Head of Museum Department at General Directorate of Antiquities
Experts and practitioners: Antiquities Directorate	Jamal Jamil As'ed	P3	8/4/2015	Department of Antiques Administrative at General Directorate of Antiquities
Experts and practitioners: Tourism Directorate	Nariman Fazil	P7	20/3/2015	Head of Media Department at Erbil General Directorate of Tourism
Tourist Business Operators	Seerwan Abdul-Rahman Shahab	P13	6/4/2015	owner of Al-Mudaris for Travel and Tourism, and Hotel Al-Mudaris
Tourist Business Operators	Lolan Mustafa	P14	8/4/2015	General Manager of "Kurdish Textile Museum"
Tourist Business Operators	Karim Shexani	P15	9/4/2015	Manager of "Erbil Antiques Stores"
Tourist Business Operators	Kalis antique	P16	30/3/2015	Manager of "khalis antique shop"
Tourist Business Operators	Fars AL-Katb	P17	13/4/2015	General Manager of "Best in Erbil Hotel"
Tourist Business Operators	Sudad	P18	12/4/2015	General Manager of "hotel quartz"
Tourist Business Operators	Ary	P19	12/4/2015	General Manager of "Wlat Hotel"
Senior experts and policy makers: Tourism Directorate	Pshtiwan Abdul-Karim Muhamed Kharib	P20	6/4/2017	General manager of directorate of tourism in Garmyan province
Senior experts and policy makers: Tourism Directorate	Yaseen Faqi Sa'ed	P21	20/4/2017	General manager of directorate of tourism in Slemani province
Senior experts and policy makers: Antiquities Directorate	Shukur Muhamed Haider	P22	8/4/2017	Director of Garmyan Directorate of Antiquities
Senior experts and policy makers: Antiquities Directorate	Mawlawi Jabar Wahab	P23	25/4/2017	General manager of General Board of Tourism in KFR
Experts and practitioners: Antiquities Directorate	Kovan Ehsan	P24	22/4/2017	Dohuk Directorate of Antiquities

Table 6: Composition of the interview sample

#### 4.3.4. In-Depth interviews: organisation and question route structure

An information sheet was handed to each interviewee and participant consent forms were provided at the beginning of the in-depth interview session, to be signed by participants (appendix (2) is a sample of the information sheet for participants, and appendix (3) is a sample of the participant consent form). The researcher introduced himself and explained the aim of the study and the aim of the in-depth interviews at the beginning of each in-depth interview session, alongside explaining the rights of participants to suspend (pause) or terminate the interviews at any time prior to publication and indeed to withdraw from the study.

There were structured questions for the in-depth interviews with government representatives (see appendix (1)), but the researcher freely selected some questions and asked additional questions when appropriate. However, all sub-questions were around the following main questions:

1. What are the current challenges and strengths in cultural resource conservation and the preparation of these resources for tourism purposes?
2. Are there enough cultural resources in KFR with potential for cultural tourism? Have these resources been adapted for tourism purposes? Do you think cultural heritage resources have been used for tourism purposes in KFR?
3. How do you see the role of cultural tourism? How do you see the use of cultural resources for tourism purposes?
4. How do you see the current government administrative structure for managing cultural resources in KFR? How do you see the level of cooperation among different directorates in managing cultural tourism resources?

5. What are the current factors in Kurdistan that might impact on the number of tourist arrivals? How could the level of tourists' enjoyment be increased and how could more tourists be attracted to the region?

#### 4.4. Focus group implementation

##### 4.4.1. The rationale for conducting focus groups

The aims of focus groups in this study were: 1) to explore the impacts that cultural tourism may have on the local community; 2) to develop an understanding of the quality of tourist services already provided; 3) to understand the level of government support in developing cultural tourism; and 4) to gather opinions from relevant stakeholders about the development of the tourism sector in the KFR.

The study begins by gathering opinions from three different categories of stakeholders (tourists, residents and local business operators) through focus groups. Firstly, focus groups were held in Erbil with local residents to respond the research objective 2.

These explored the influences of tourism growth (or the change in the number of tourist arrivals) on their quality of life and sought to understand how they value their cultural resources. The objectives were to identify the negative and positive impacts of increased numbers of tourists, to understand what they expect the government to do to reduce the negative impacts, and to investigate how they value their culture and how they are willing to preserve their cultural resources.

Secondly, focus groups were held with local business operators to respond to research objective 2. The objectives were: to explore the barriers and opportunities for developing cultural heritage tourism, and to understand the level of government support in developing cultural tourism; to examine how tourism growth would impact on their business and to understand how they could develop their business. The focus

groups examined how their businesses were affected by changes in tourism demand, identified the barriers to developing their business, explored what they expected from the government to support their business, if and how they were willing to be involved in developing cultural tourism, and explored what roles they could play to support cultural tourism. Thirdly, the focus groups with tourists elicited the perceptions of tourists in Erbil, partially to meet objective 3. The aim was to understand their motivations for visiting the city, their level of satisfaction and the factors that increased their level of satisfaction, to explore the tourism demand and their preferred cultural resources, and to estimate the quality of tourist services provided. Table 7 shows the aims of each category of focus group.

Focus group category	The aims
Residents	To understand how local residents perceive the increase in the number of tourists, and determine the negative and positive impacts of tourism development on the community. To understand what they expected the government to do to reduce the negative impacts. Secondly, to explore local residents' willingness to participate in cultural activities, and to understand their willingness to support cultural tourism.
Tourists	To understand the level of tourists' satisfaction with the combination of tourist services provided, and to identify the facilities that need to be developed and the facilities that are currently unavailable. Secondly, to identify the preferred heritage attractions that need to be developed. Thirdly, to determine the motivation of tourists who visit Erbil
Local business operators	To determine the barriers to developing their business and the challenges, if any, of involving business operators in cultural tourism; secondly, to understand what they expect the government to do in order to help them to make their business more successful; and thirdly, to understand how they can contribute to cultural tourism development.

Table 7: The aim of each category of focus group

#### 4.4.2. Focus group structure

The study used focus group sessions with the following supply and demand sides of the tourism sector: tourists, local business operators and the local community. The

tourists included local visitors from outside the region (who came from the middle and south of Iraq), and international visitors who came to the city of Erbil and visited the Citadel. The local business operators included tourism enterprise agencies, small tourism business operators, hotels, restaurants and antiques/gift shops. The local community was represented in the focus group by residents of the city of Erbil.

The focus groups were implemented in Erbil in April 2015, with the recruitment of 4-10 people into each of the three categories: tourists, local business operators and local residents. The focus groups were held at restaurants and cafes in Erbil, as many of the restaurants in KFR contain a special room and spaces for families or groups. The discussion in focus groups were in Kurdish, and then the researcher translated the relevant ideas and debates into English for data analysis. Focus group sessions each took 60–100 minutes, and participant consent forms were provided at the beginning of each focus group, to be signed by participants (see table 8). Notes were made as the focus groups took place and a tape recorder was used to record the sessions as well.

All necessary ethical procedures were observed according to the regulations of the University of Nottingham. All participants in this study were voluntary and they were informed that they could withdraw from the study prior to the publication of any work at any time without giving a reason. The information sheets handed to all participants contained some information about the study, the type of questions that could be asked and discussed in a focus group session. Moreover, all participants were informed that all paper records and audio-recorded data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher office, and digital data will be stored in the researcher's own PC in password-protected files, and/or on a secure server. They were informed that the data would be kept securely for seven years following the publication of results on a secure

server at the University of Nottingham (subject to the UK Data Protection Act, 1998), after which they would be destroyed, and the data would be accessible only to the researcher and the official bodies of the University of Nottingham, if required.

Focus Groups	Category	Location	Number of Participants	Duration	Theme
FG 1	Tourists	Erbil	10	60 minutes	Tourism facilities
FG 2	Tourists	Erbil	7	80 minutes	
FG 3	Residents	Erbil	8	70 minutes	the impacts of tourism on the community
FG 4	Residents	Erbil	7	60 minutes	
FG 5	Business operators	Erbil	4	70 minutes	the barriers of developing their business

Table 8: Focus Group Implementation

Table 9 shows how the focus groups were organised with tourists, local business operators and local residents. All stages were applied to all focus groups sessions and for all categories. The detail of the procedure is given in section 4.4.2.1 for the focus groups with tourist as an example, but appendices 9–11 give the structure of the question route for all categories.

Task name	Time	Aim
Welcoming and introducing participants	10 minutes	To inform participant about how the focus groups will be organized and managed, the main purpose of focus groups, and the role of participants.
Warming up question:	25 minutes	To encourage participant to start give their opinion and direct them to main question.
Main question:	45 minutes	Aims to understand participants' attitudes regarding the main question that related to cultural tourism development in KFR
The conclusion	15 minutes	Summarizing discussion

Table 9: Focus Groups Agenda Structure

#### 4.4.2.1. Focus groups with tourists

In this section, the detail of how focus groups were organised with tourists is given as an example; similar procedures were used for the other two categories (local community and business operators), and the details are not given again, to avoid repetition.

##### *1. Agendas*

The focus groups with tourists were implemented in Erbil, and the overall focus group sessions took 60 minutes for the first focus group and 80 minutes for the second. Table 10 shows how the focus groups were organised with tourists.

Task name	Time	Aim
Welcoming participants and introducing focus groups agenda	10 minutes	Inform participants about the main purposes of focus groups and the role of participants. And how the focus groups will be organized and managed.
Warming up question:	25 minutes	to determine the motivation of tourists visited Erbil
Main question:	45 minutes	to understand the level of tourists' satisfaction with the combination of tourist services provided to identify the facilities that need to be developed and the facilities that currently are not available to identify the preferred cultural resources and cultural tourism resources that need to be developed
The conclusion	15 minutes	summarizing discussion

Table 10: Agenda structure for focus groups with tourists

- *Welcoming participants*

Refreshments and the registration form were provided to all participants after a welcome from the moderator assistant. Then, after a brief introduction, participants were informed about how the focus groups would be organised and managed, the main

purpose of the focus groups and the role of participants. They were then asked to introduce themselves by just their first name to the other members of the group.

- *Question route*

The question route for tourists was structured into three stages: warm-up question stage, main questions and conclusion. The warm-up questions were to encourage the participant to start giving their opinion and direct them towards the main questions. The focus of the main questions was to understand participants' attitudes regarding the main themes of cultural tourism in Erbil. The conclusion stage was to summarise the main points and to give participants the opportunity to present their final comments (see appendix (9)).

Although there were structured questions for the focus groups with tourists, the researcher freely selected some questions and asked additional questions when appropriate. However, all sub-questions were around the following main questions:

- Were you satisfied with the combination of tourist services provided?
- What facilities need to be developed? What facilities are currently unavailable?
- What are the preferred cultural resources and cultural tourism resources that need to be developed?
- What are your motivations for visiting Erbil?

## 2. *Participant recruitment*

Regarding recruiting participants for focus groups with tourists, as shown in table 11, the study recruited 10 international tourists who visited the Erbil Citadel for the first focus group and 7 local tourists for the second focus group in Erbil. The researcher used posters and talked to some tourists directly to invite them to take part in the study. The reason for using posters and direct invitations is in accordance with the

nature of the tourism industry; the recruiting of participants is normally done at the tourist attractions, because it is difficult to find tourists before they arrive at their destinations, in particular in countries that lack facilities for using the internet and other technologies.

Focus Groups	Categories	Location	Number of Participants	Duration	Theme
Groups 1	Tourists	Erbil	10	60 minutes	Tourism facilities
Groups 2	Tourists	Erbil	7	80 minutes	

Table 11: Focus group implementation and tourist recruitment

#### 4.4.2.2. Focus groups with residents

##### 1. Agenda

The focus groups with the local community members were implemented in Erbil, and they took 70 minutes for third focus group and 60 for the fourth. Notes were made as the sessions took place and a tape recorder was used to record them. See appendix (10) for detail of the focus group agenda.

For the focus groups with residents, there were the following main questions, but the researcher freely selected some questions and asked additional questions when appropriate, but all sub-questions were around the main questions:

- What are the advantages brought by tourism to your local community?
- Do you think there are any disadvantages in having more tourists in Erbil?
- What should the government do to reduce the disadvantages?
- What should the government do to promote cultural attractions and attract more tourists?

- What role can residents have in developing cultural tourism? Examples include voluntary involvement in some cultural activities, and residents paying to preserve cultural tourism assets.

## 2. Participant recruitment

Regarding recruiting participants for focus groups with members of the local community, as shown in table 12, the study recruited 8 local residents in Erbil for the first focus group and 7 people for the second. Posters were not used to recruit residents to take part in the study in Erbil, because according to the culture of Erbil it is easier to recruit participants directly. In addition, there was very limited access to the internet and few internet users in the city. Furthermore, there are very poor post office services, so there was no possibility to invite people either by email or by post.

Focus Groups	Categories	Location	Number of Participants	Duration	Theme
Groups 3	Residents	Erbil	8	70 minutes	the impacts of tourism development
Groups 4	Residents	Erbil	7	60 minutes	

Table 12: Implementation of focus groups with local residents

### 4.4.2.3. Focus groups with local business operators

#### 1. Agenda

One focus group with local business operators was implemented in Erbil, and it lasted 70 minutes. Notes were made as the session took place and a tape recorder was used to record it. See appendix (11) for details of the agenda.

## 2. Recruitment

As shown in table 13, the study recruited four local business operators in the city of Erbil for the focus group. The researcher recruited participants by personal visits to their offices to make appointments. In accordance with the culture of the people in Erbil, this way of inviting participants is considered more polite and acceptable than invitations by email or phone.

Focus group	Categories	Location	Number of Participants	Duration	Theme
Group 5	Business operators	Erbil	4	70 minutes	the challenge that face local business

Table 13: Implementation of focus group with local business operators

### 4.5. Data analysis and themes

The data in this study were analysed based on grounded theory to identify themes and sub-themes. The following sections describe the procedure in detail.

#### 4.5.1. Data coding

The data coding procedure to analyse qualitative data based on grounded theory consisted of three stages: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Daengbuppha, Hemmington, & Wilkes, 2006; Kong, 2010; Tan, Kung, & Luh, 2013). Open coding is used to develop concepts, categories and properties, axial coding to develop relationships between categories and sub-categories, and selective coding to associate categories with each other, to build the theoretical framework. The procedures continue until saturation is reached, after which further analysis might become unprofitable (Daengbuppha et al., 2006). Moreover, Corbin and Strauss (1990) argue that open coding is an interpretive stage of data analysis aimed to rethink phenomena reflected in the data by breaking down them into categories. The axial coding stage is to generate tentative relationships between

categories and sub-categories and to develop further categories. Finally, they state that selective coding might be considered as the last stage of data coding, which is the process to identify the central core category, which stands in relationship with all other categories.

The study used a manual coding process and the NVIVO software program for the open coding stage, and then the same procedure was applied for the following two stages of data coding (axial and selective coding). In fact, there is a great controversy in the literature regarding the impacts that the use of computer software might have on the quality of analysis when used to analyse qualitative data. According to Mehmetoglu and Altinay (2006), the quality of qualitative data analysis relies mainly on the researcher's skills, creativity and level of theoretical awareness, whether or not the tools of data analysis are computer based, manual or mechanistic procedures. Moreover, Dey (2003) states that current computer software offers a range of steps or tools that can replace or simplify manual tasks to analyse the data, which as a technique might help to deal with the data in a fast and efficient way, giving a wider opportunity to audit the analysis and reach 'saturation' point. It can be argued that this increased efficiency can enhance qualitative analysis. In addition, Rettie, Robinson, Radke, and Ye (2008) claim that it is advisable to use software alongside classical manual approaches in data analysis, as computer software is useful as a tool to manage data but it cannot explain data, for which a manual analysis is required.

#### 4.5.2. Open coding and the identification of key points

Based on grounded theory, there are various methods to identify open coding in qualitative data analysis. First, open coding might begin by exploring the data line-by-line, phrase-by-phrase, sentence-by-sentence or word-by-word. Second, it might

proceed coding by sentences or paragraphs; the researcher tends to highlight the main ideas or concepts that come from the paragraph in qualitative data. This method could be applied at any time, but it could be more advantageous if some of categories have already been identified. A third method is based on comparing the entire document to determine the differences and similarities with the previous coded document, and the researcher might need to re-analyse the data in order to identify differences and similarities (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

The study used a manual coding process and the NVIVO software program to generate “open codes” in entire sentences and paragraphs from the data gathered. The process formulated 56 key points as an open codes from the answers to each of the main questions presented to interviewees, which were the first stage of identifying themes and sub-themes – see appendix (4). In related focus groups, the study identified a number of key points in focus groups with tourists for each of the questions below, as shown in appendix (5).

- Were you satisfied with the combination of tourist services provided?
- What facilities need to be developed? What facilities are currently unavailable?
- What are the preferred cultural resources and cultural tourism resources that need to be developed?
- What are your motivations for visiting Erbil?

Similarly, the study identified a number of key points for each of the questions below in focus groups with residents, as shown in appendix (6).

- What are the advantages brought by tourism to your local community?
- Do you think there are any disadvantages in having more tourists in Erbil?

- What should the government do to reduce the disadvantages?
- What should the government do to promote cultural attraction and attract more tourists?
- What role can the residents have in developing cultural tourism? (Examples include voluntary involvement in some cultural activities, and residents paying to preserve cultural tourism assets.)

#### 4.5.3. Identify recurrent key points

Although exploring the frequency of open codes is not a part of developing themes and main themes, it helps to highlight the major points in a context that might encourage the researcher to take these points into consideration. Therefore, the study identified the recurrent open codes within the transcripts of the data, to determine the frequency with which key points were referred to by participants of the interviews (see appendix (7)).

#### 4.5.4. Identify tentative code categories

From the open codes above and also by reinterpreting the transcripts manually and by using NVIVO (see figure 17 and figure 18), the researcher identified the following 26 tentative code categories alongside each of the main of key points in the open coding stage (see columns 1 and 2 in table 27 in appendix 8).

1. Cultural heritage sites in Kurdistan.
2. The role of tourism and cultural tourism.
3. Using cultural resources for tourism purposes.
4. Sustainable cultural tourism and controlling number of visitors.

5. List of all cultural heritage resources.
6. Underutilise cultural resources for tourism purposes.
7. Managing cultural resources.
8. The role of coordination in managing cultural tourism.
9. Issues of administrative structures and powers.
10. Property challenges to cultural resources conservation programmes.
11. Funding challenges to cultural resources conservation programmes.
12. Legislatives challenges to cultural resources conservation programmes.
13. Ability and skills barriers to cultural resources conservation programmes.
14. Vacant historical buildings as a barrier to cultural resources conservation programmes.
15. Other challenges to cultural resources conservation.
16. The role of administrative structures and powers in conservation.
17. The role of public awareness in conservation.
18. The role of the private sector in conservation.
19. The role of government support in cultural tourism.
20. The role of the private sector in tourism development.
21. The role of involving local residents in tourism activities in tourism development.

22. The role of public awareness in tourism development.
23. The role of quality of cultural tourism resources and facilities.
24. The role of diversifying cultural resources in tourism development.
25. The impact of instability in tourism development.
26. The role of promoting and marketing tourism.

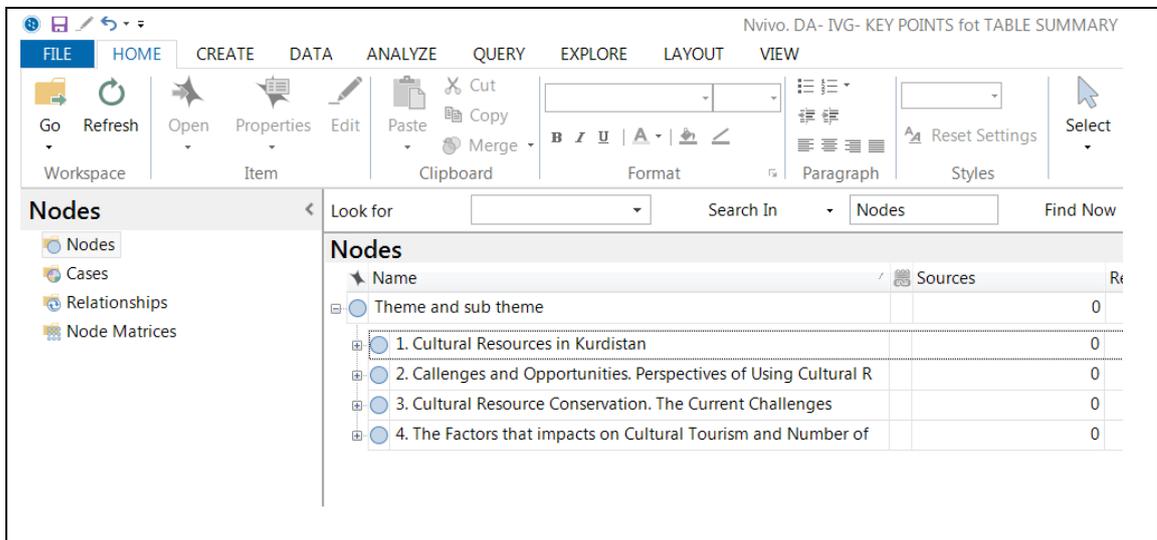


Figure 17: The NVIVO software used to analyse data

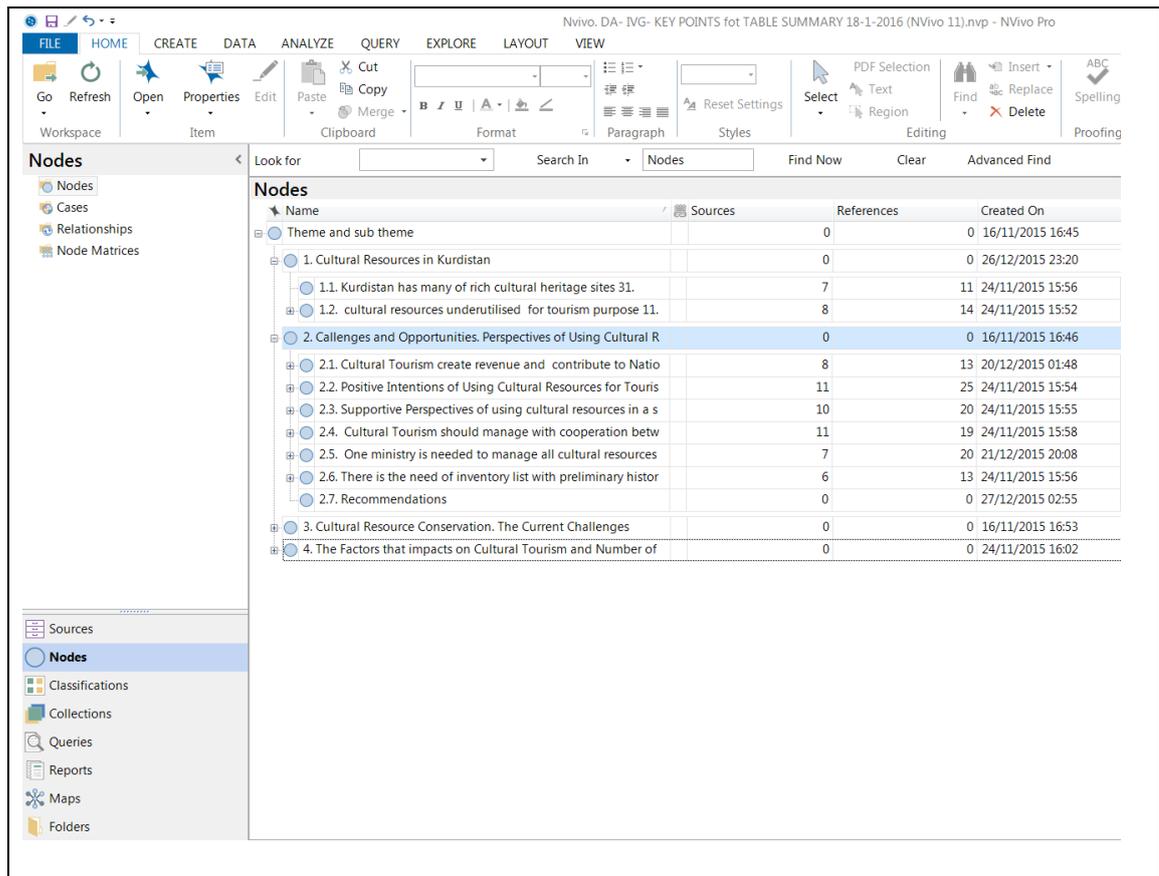


Figure 18: Sample of identifying main themes and sub-themes

#### 4.5.5. Identify sub-themes categories

In this stage, the researcher identified the link between tentative code categories, and then combined similar tentative codes together in order to create new sub-themes categories, and then grouped them together to create main themes (see table 24, table 25, table 26 and table 27 in appendix (8)).

#### 4.5.6. Identification of main themes

The above sub-themes categories were organised and grouped together to create main themes in this stage of data coding. Each sub-theme directly linked to main themes and might relate or impacts on other main themes.

Four main themes were generated as presented in table 14, table 15 and table 16. The first column presents samples of quotes from participants, the second column the sub-themes developed based on a sample of quotes, the third column the main theme identified, based on a group of similar sub-themes. The for main themes are: cultural resources in KFR, opportunities for cultural tourism and preservation of assets, challenges of cultural resource conservation, and challenges and factors that impact on cultural tourism and numbers of tourist arrivals in KFR. The first two main themes are presented and discussed in chapter 5, while the third and fourth themes are in chapters 6 and 7 respectively.

Selected Quotes	Sub-theme	Main themes that discussed in chapter 5
<i>"In Kurdistan, there are more than 3000 cultural resources that are now under the control of the Kurdistan government. If we did new research, we might find many more resources" P1</i>	Number of cultural sites in Kurdistan	1- Cultural resources in Kurdistan federal region
<i>"We have not used cultural resources properly and using them was not based on appropriate planning and programmes" P12</i>	Underutilisation of cultural resources for tourism purposes	
<i>"We see cultural resources are considered as one of the most powerful tourism resources" P12</i>	Understanding the role of tourism in the national economy	2- Opportunities for cultural tourism and preservation of assets
<i>"We need to restore and conserve these resources in order to benefit from them for tourism purposes" P7</i>	Positive intentions to use cultural resources for tourism purposes	
<i>"The lack of government support for cultural resources... We should support all cultural resources, each with its special form" P10</i>	Government support	
<i>"If we transfer any cultural resources, the first thing we should consider is to conserve and protect them from damage. This is beneficial for the resources themselves and for tourists to enjoy the site" P11</i>	Supportive perspectives on using cultural resources in a sustainable manner	
<i>"I prefer to diversify Erbil Citadel with different cultural activities; this helps tourists to enjoy visiting the sites. ...but this diversification should not affect the naturalistic appearance and history of building" P7</i>	Diversifying cultural resources	
<i>"First, we should provide good services and facilities for tourists, including hotels, restaurants and cafeterias in order to help tourists to stay there as long as they prefer" P7</i>	Facilities and services	

Table 14: The main themes number 1 and 2

<i>Selected Quotes</i>	Sub-theme	Main theme discussed in chapter 6
<i>"Social barriers include many historical buildings being inhabited by poor people now for very low rents. It is difficult to ask them to leave these houses " P3</i>	Social and property barriers to conservation	3. Challenges of cultural resource conservation
<i>"We can say there are two major barriers regarding protecting cultural resources. The first is funding" P1</i>	Funding issues: cultural resource conservation	
<i>"Now, many times we rely on laws issued by the Iraqi Parliament in 2002, but this also needs to be amended. We asked for these to be amended in the Kurdistan Parliament, but until now we are working (under the old system)" P5</i>	Legislative and regulatory barriers	
<i>"And there is the need to train staff and increase their level of skills for protecting cultural resources" P1</i>	Managerial skills and abilities	
<i>"There are some historical residential lanes that have been bought and are now owned by the government during last three years, but all have been left and neglected, and now they are empty " P8</i>	Vacant historical buildings and heritage neighbourhoods	
<i>"First, sensitive work in archaeological sites is a barrier. Working to maintain sites is different compared to historical buildings. The work of maintaining archaeological sites is slow and needs specific academic skills; it takes a lot of time" P5</i>	Sensitive working in the restoration process	
<i>"We do not have authority to make decisions. We are always subject to different ministries, and when we need to make decisions we have to follow long bureaucratic procedures that delay our work " P10</i>	Issues of routines and authority limitations	
<i>"involving local residents in cultural tourism activities is very important and would help to increase the level of awareness about valuing cultural resources among the local community " P4</i>	The role of residents in protecting cultural resources	
<i>"I can say that until now we have not recorded many of our cultural resources... We were asked to allocate a budget to record and document all cultural resources but unfortunately we haven't sorted this out" P10</i>	Identify and record cultural resources	
<i>"Unfortunately, we do not have authority to protect all tangible cultural resources... There are no laws or regulations giving us the right or authority to give these kinds of buildings to others, or rent them to the private sector" P8</i>	Issues of administrative structures and the limited authority	

Table 15: The main theme number 3

<i>Selected Quotes</i>	Sub-theme	Main theme that discussed in chapter 7
<i>Note: number of sub-themes in a 3rd theme are became sub-themes to 4th themes</i>		4. The challenges and factors that impact on cultural tourism and numbers of tourist arrivals in Kurdistan
<i>"Because the private sector sites are open for longer than government ones, and they organise and maintain their facilities better" P1</i>	The role of the private sector	
<i>"If we do not involve them in tourism activities, they will become a big challenge or barrier to developing tourism" P10</i>	The role of residents in cultural tourism	
<i>"Second, people abroad see all of Iraq as one situation, as an unstable area, which is not true. In reality, Kurdistan is safe and there is no risk facing tourists" P7</i>	The impact of conflict on destination image	
<i>" we need to focus on advertising and marketing to attract international tourists" P12</i>	Marketing and advertising	
<i>"our process of restoration now is stopped because of lack of funding." p6</i>	Financial issues	
<i>"The Antiquities Directorate might manage cultural tourism better than any other directorates but there should be coordination with the Tourism Directorate for the purpose of developing services and supporting them" P7</i>	The role of coordination in managing cultural tourism	
<i>"In Dohuk only two heritage sites are prepared for visitors, which are sculptures of Khans and Inishky Cave; however, more investments still needed to be fully ready for visitors." p24</i>	Lack of investment, poor implementation	
<i>"Our taxis are not good and do not know how to deal with tourists; taxi drivers should not talk a lot and everything. They have to be trained in order to nicely answer tourists" p8</i>	Hospitality	

Table 16: The main theme number 4

#### 4.6. Limitations of the research methodology and research reflexivity

##### 4.6.1. Limitation of the research methodology

The first limitation arising in this study concerns the procedure for participant recruitment. The researcher invited participants to be involved in the study by personally visiting the participants' offices to make an appointment or through direct

communication for those who were not at work such as residents and tourists. This is because, at the time of conducting the study, the majority of people did not have access to the Internet, or they did not have a regular access to their emails. The post office service was also too poor to post letters to guarantee that they would be received. In addition, the researcher could not identify participants through posters (with the exception of tourists) to invite them to take part in the study, due to traditions in the culture. So it was not possible to contact them by email, social network, post and other tools of recruiting participant. This meant that participant recruitment was a lengthy and time-consuming process.

Actually, in the KFR, this way of inviting participants is more culturally polite than indirect invitations by email or post. Thus, the researcher invested extensive time in the recruitment of participants. However, as a consequence, people were very supportive to take part in the study, with only two participants refusing to take part. Sometimes the participants were recruited immediately on the day of visiting them, without prior appointment. Regarding recruiting tourists, according to the nature of the tourism industry, researchers often recruit on-site tourists for surveys at tourist attractions themselves due to the difficulty of pre-arranging appointments pertaining to tourist destinations. Therefore, the researcher used a poster and talked to some tourists directly to invite them to take part in the study.

The second limitation concerns the focus group with local tourist business operators on 29/3/2015. Having invited 9 participants, only 4 of them attended the session claiming that they were very busy with daily work tasks. As the majority of them were managers, this was perhaps to be expected. Thus, the researcher decided to cancel the second focus group with this category, and replace it with in-depth interviews. In addition, in this focus group session, one of the participants was very dominant during

most of the discussion and so others were not as involved in the debate. Although, the first focus group was not quite as successful as planned, it gave experience for the researcher to successfully manage the rest of the focus groups. The focus groups were a further limitation of the methodology in this context. There were no previous studies that used focus groups in the Kurdistan community, so they were not used to interacting in this type of research activity. However, the researcher came from the Kurdish community, and so was able to develop a rapport quickly and easily and he had reviewed the literature on focus group method in detail and so was able to manage the focus group sessions successfully.

Due to limitations of the funding for the study, the second phase of interviews was held by telephone, rather than by face-to-face. This did not impact on the quality of the data, because the researcher had previous experience from the first phase. Yet, in recruitment, there were some challenges, the researcher spent a lot of time trying to establish contacts with the relevant directorates in order to obtain the personal telephone numbers of relevant participants. The two participants from the Directorate of Antiquities and Directorate of Tourism in Dohuk province did not have time to participate by telephone. However, the researcher was able to recruit a representative of the antiquities field.

#### 4.6.2. Research reflexivity

There is no study without some challenges for the researcher, especially as PhD research takes several years. For me, in 2015, the first challenge began before I finished the first year of my research study. In 2012, when I came to UK to start an English course, the KRG had a good relationship with the Iraqi government, and the KFR was booming in all economic sectors. The KRG decided to invest in higher

education, which I was a part of in the government program. In 2012 and 2013, the KRG paid students' university tuition fees and living costs in advance. The situation changed in 2014. The KRG announced that the Iraqi government had stopped funding KGR, and Iraq would no longer send the salary for Kurdistan's employees and the additional payments that they had agreed to fund in the past. From 2014 I got only one year's payment for undertaking this study over the course of three years. Fortunately, in July 2017 I got full payment.

This wasn't everything. In 2014, Daesh started attacking KFR, and this is another problem that I encountered. Although Daesh were unsuccessful in occupying any cities or towns that were run by the KRG, I started worrying about my close friends and relatives (including my brother) who were in the front line fighting Daesh. Despite all these challenges, I continued my research study and didn't give up what I had started. Currently, after three years, the KRG economy has recovered slightly, and Daesh has lost most of the areas that were under its control.

## Chapter 5. **Understanding the current cultural tourism context in Kurdistan Federal Region**

This chapter and the following two chapters present the research findings from the in-depth interviews (24 participants) and focus groups (36 participants) held with the relevant tourism stakeholders in a community from the KFR (a post-conflict region). The objective was to gather as much data as possible to explore the current context of heritage protection and cultural tourism industry in the KFR. In 2015 the researcher gathered data in first wave of the research study. Because all these data were gathered in Erbil, it was desirable to check whether the cultural tourism context is the same in other provinces of the KFR, and so, in a second wave of the research study, a further series of in-depth interviews were held with general managers of the Directorates of Tourism and Antiquities in Slemani, Kalar, and a representative of Dohuk province. The findings of the second supported the generalisation of the findings from the first wave. The results have been analysed based on grounded theory, as described in detail in section 4.5. Four main themes were generated: cultural resources in KFR, opportunities for cultural tourism and preservation of assets, challenges of cultural resource conservation, and challenges and factors that impact on cultural tourism and numbers of tourist arrivals in KFR (see table 14, table 15 and table 16). The first two main themes are presented and discussed in chapter 5 under the title ‘Understanding the current cultural tourism context in KFR’, while the third and fourth themes are in chapters 6 ‘Challenges that faced cultural heritage conservation in the KFR’ and chapter 7 ‘Challenges that face cultural tourism’ respectively.

This chapter describes the current status of cultural tourism in the KFR. Sections 5.1 and 5.2 explore the impacts of conflict on tourism industry and the reasons behind

under-utilising heritage assets in KFR (see figure 19). Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 discusses strengths and opportunities of cultural tourism (see figure 20). Identification of these reasons and issues can partially inform the research questions. To answer the research question properly, it is necessary to identify all challenges and opportunities for both heritage protection and cultural tourism, which the study discusses separately and in detail in chapters 6 and 7.



Figure 19: Reasons for the underutilisation of heritage assets in the KFR

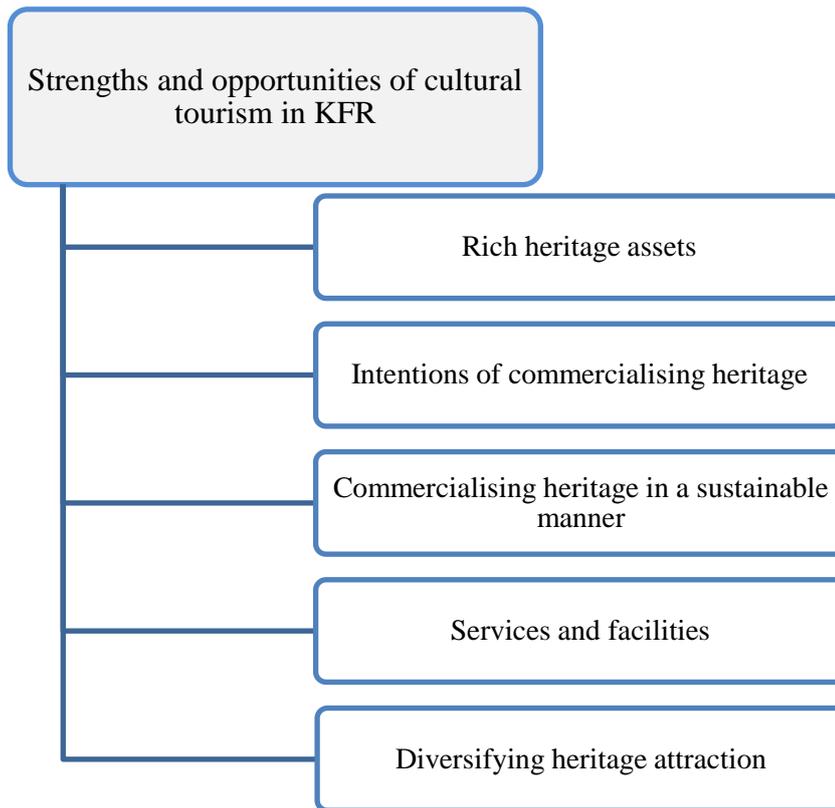


Figure 20: Opportunities for cultural tourism in KFR

Conflict brings a number of challenges to the tourism industry, such as damaged infrastructure, lack of services, low investment (Winter, 2008), environmental and social challenges (Novelli et al., 2012), impact on management plan and tourism development (Dwyer et al., 2009; Richter, 1999). These challenges might vary from one country to another, each with its own characteristics, of course, but there are some similarities, as discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.8.

Conflict in the KFR negatively impacts on the whole tourism industry, as it led to poor infrastructure, budgetary issues, administrative and legislative challenges, and some other problems. O’Leary (2002) claims that since the formation of Iraq in the 1920s, Kurdistan in particular was deliberately deprived of investment, and especially after armed conflict between the Iraqi government and Kurdish armed opposition from 1961 onwards until 2003. For example, Iraqi government destroyed over 1000 villages

(Black, 1993; Salih, 1995). Participant 5 claims that Kurdistan was neglected in development and was ruled by military force, which is one of the barriers to tourism development, because all sectors were neglected and there was no infrastructure.

From 2003 to 2009, there was no armed conflict nor political conflict between the KRG and the Iraqi federal government. However, from 2009 onwards, political conflict started again. It included administrative issues; for example, international tourists who were willing to visit the KFR were often hampered (officially or unofficially) by the Iraqi government. Participant 12 claimed that sometimes the Iraqi (federal) government does not give visas to tourists visiting the KFR because of the political conflict with the KRG, which affects the number of tourist arrivals.

*“While we are not an independent country, we always have problems in providing visas to tourists; sometimes the Iraqi federal government does not give visas to tourists; if we have authority as a country, we might provide free visas to enter the Kurdistan Region” (p12)*

As the result of continued conflict with the Iraqi government, the KRG suffered a financial crisis from 2014. This is due to cut-backs in transfers from the Iraqi government to the KRG in February 2014, and the budgetary issue in KFR become worse due to increases in security and defence spending with the fight against Daesh in August 2014, and a rapid fall in oil prices (DeWeaver, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016). Consequently, budgetary issues prevent investment in cultural tourism development, which is considered a dispensable luxury given the critical situation facing the KRG.

*“The second barrier is funding. In the beginning, we did not have this barrier, it came in 2014.” (p6)*

*“There are lots of historical buildings owned by local residents and we cannot buy or own them because we have insufficient budget to give them compensation... We cannot buy the buildings and we cannot maintain them. The situation is a deadlock.” (p9)*

The political conflict with the Iraqi government and the increase in KRG spending on safety and security from 2014 to the present (2017) had a negative impact on the tourism industry, including delaying cultural resources conservation and development of the cultural tourism industry.

*“Actually, this war that Kurdistan is currently involved in against Daesh has huge negative impacts on our activities, and has delayed our work.” (p8)*

It can be argued that conflict is the most powerful factor that negatively affects investment and utilisation in cultural tourism assets in the KFR, and that drives most of the other reasons. The section below discusses the reasons for the underdevelopment and underutilisation of heritage in the KFR.

### 5.1. Underutilised heritage assets

The point brought to attention in this study is that there has been no serious attention given to investment in cultural tourism despite the need to maximise revenues in the KFR. Many heritage assets have not been used to develop the tourism industry (Pavelka et al., 2007; Wahab, 2013). Participants in in-depth interviews mentioned a number of reasons for this (see figure 19). Firstly, cultural resources are not well organised, and have not even been given the basic protections required.

*“I see many cultural resources and archaeological sites are not well organised for tourism purposes, and they do not have enough security to protect the cultural resources.” (p9)*

Furthermore, cultural heritage sites have not been developed properly to attract visitors with the exception of special cases like Erbil Citadel, but even Erbil Citadel, the flagship of the KFR cultural heritage site and cultural tourism industry, still needs an additional five years of further work for development, restoration and revitalisation to be ready for visitors.

*“Until now we have not developed cultural resources yet, we have not promoted tourism yet. All these are barriers.... I can confirm in the next five years the Citadel will become a destination if all things are going well, but our work, our process now is stopped.” (p6)*

This means, as participant 8 said, the KFR has not finished the restoration and conservation programme for cultural heritage sites in order that they can be used by third parties for tourism purposes. Tourism agencies are unable to encourage tourists to visit heritage attractions because of a lack of organisation, services and facilities in such areas. Participants in focus group 5 (FG5), with local business operators, claimed that there are not enough facilities for tourists to encourage them to visit cultural attractions. For example, there are no restaurants or café in the Erbil Citadel. There is consequently a lack of investment by the private sector and the public sector in cultural tourism opportunities.

*“We (tourist agencies) cannot arrange packages for tourists to visit cultural attractions because they are not well organised to attract tourists.... The government should focus on cultural areas and preparing*

*them for tourism. For example, in Erbil Citadel the government should customise each house or a certain area of the castle to represent the long history of the castle and introduce the authenticity of Kurdish culture to attract tourists.” (p13)*

Only a limited number of cultural resources have received serious investment, but they are not well organised for tourism purposes. There is not even an official report on or list of the cultural sites available in KFR. Thus, it can be argued that there is not enough information on cultural assets for them to be protected from damage and to be used for tourism purposes.

It was further argued by participants that the government has neglected the tourism sector and only focuses on producing oil to support the national economy, which has resulted in a limited number of cultural sites being prepared for visitors.

*“I can say just a limited number of historical sites are ready for visitors, you can count them on your hands, and all other cultural resources are not ready for visitors, because the government is only focused on producing oil.” (p3)*

Usually, countries that rely on the single-commodity exports suffer budgetary issues due to fluctuations in prices or changes in quantity of output of this single product. In a theoretical context, the literature confirms the negative impacts of export instability of primary commodities on the national economy (in less developed countries), with frequent changes in earning revenues due to changes in prices (Lancieri, 2014; Stein, 2013). Dependence on exporting a sole product (normally a raw material) typifies many developing countries, which therefore need to find alternative or additional

sources of income. In the case of the KFR, the tourism industry can play a major role in diversifying sources of income.

A third perspective regarding cultural tourism in the KFR is investment in cultural heritage without appropriate planning. Participant 12 claimed that investing in cultural tourism is based on inappropriate planning for cultural tourism, observing that despite a government strategic plan through to 2025 that includes cultural tourism, the plan has not been implemented until now, which has led to the lack of proper use of cultural resources in KFR. In general, poor implementation is the case for many developing countries (Mycoo, 2006; Tosun, 2001). Poor implementation of tourism policies and planning is widely discussed in literature (Berry & Ladkin, 1997; Buckley, 2012; Dinica, 2009; Logar, 2010; Mycoo, 2006; Tosun, 2001). Section 7.1 discusses the potential of addressing poor implementation and sets out the major principles of successful tourism planning to be applied in the KFR.

To conclude, although the tourism industry in the KFR has seen rapid development since 2007 based on leisure tourism, cultural assets have been underutilised. The reasons for this can be summarised as follows. The KRG has not finalised a restoration plan for heritage assets and has not prepared well to receive visitors, and investment in cultural tourism has been based on inappropriate planning. For example, tourism development in Shaqlawa (KFR) has led to many areas of natural beauty having space given over to concrete buildings at the expense of green areas (Alkurdi, 2013).

Participant 6 mentioned that there is massive investment in hotels, but less consideration for other facilities, such as restaurants and public transportation in the KFR. In addition, the government has focused on oil as a sole source of income, and the infrastructure for the tourism industry and other sectors has been neglected for

decades as a result of conflict in the region. In the following chapters, the study makes recommendations and suggestions for how the government should react to address these problems.

In the KFR, there is still potential for further tourism development based on heritage assets if there is proper planning and policy, and if there is sufficient investment in preparing and making available these rich heritage assets for tourism purposes. The following sections explore the strengths and opportunities of developing the tourism industry in the KFR based on the utilisation of heritage assets.

## 5.2. The potential for development of heritage assets in the KFR

The KFR is rich with its heritage and architectural monuments (Bornberg et al., 2006; Gandreau & Moriset, 2013; Khan, 1999; Malaika & Raswol, 2014; McGahey, 2006; Pavelka et al., 2007). On this point, Kopanias, MacGinnis, and Ur (2015) suggest that the KFR is one of the richest archaeological sites globally, as it includes cave shelters, sites from the Neolithic, settlement of great empires of antiquity, castles and bridges, mosques and bazaars. Moreover, KFR is an ancient land and home to one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited sites (McGahey, 2006), and a number of its ancient heritage sites date back to the Sumerian and Assyrian periods (Pavelka et al., 2007). Such sites include Erbil Citadel, Choli Minaret, Khanzad-Banaman Citadel, Barsireen Bridge, the Great Pasha Citadel, Youkhana cave, Sherwana citadel, Qshla in koysinjaq and Majid pasha palace etc.

Unfortunately, to date there has been no national list of all heritage sites in the KFR. There are foreign academic teams involved in surveys of the historical, ethnographic, archaeological sites in the KFR, but this work is not finished yet (Bogdani, Colliva, & Insom, 2014). The Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office estimates the number

archaeological sites in the region at 1307 (Ismael, 2015). However, the present research suggested that more than 3000 cultural assets require urgent documentation. For example, Kannan Mufti (participant 1), who was director of Directorate of Antiquities from 1994 to 2006 and is currently General Director at the Ministry of Culture and Youth, reported:

*“In Kurdistan there are more than 3000 cultural resources that are now under the control of the Kurdistan Regional Government. If we did new research we might find many more resources.” (p1)*

More precisely, Mawlawi Jabar Wahab (p23), the head of the General Board of Tourism in Kurdistan, reported that there are 3748 heritage sites and historical buildings in the KFR. This claim was confirmed by both Mala Awat (participant 2), the current general manager of the General Directorate of Antiquities in Kurdistan, and Dara Al-Yaqubi (participant 6), the head of the High Commission of Erbil Citadel Revitalisation (HCECR).

In addition to cultural heritage sites, Kurdistan is also rich in other cultural assets, as stated by participant 12:

*“We are rich in tangible and intangible cultural resources... We are rich in Kurdish cultural tradition in Kurdistan; customs, traditions, religious tradition, religious events, religious diversity, Kurdish clothes, Kurdish textile products, agricultural tools, home tools.” (p12)*

These vital cultural heritage sites and multiple cultural resources in the KFR can play a major role in the development of the tourism industry if they are used to attract tourists in a sustainable manner. Robinson and Picard (2006) claim that a large number of

international tourists are travelling to see cultural heritage sites worldwide, and such assets can turn less attractive destinations into universal tourist attractions because of their unique heritage value. In general, investment in heritage assets promotes a tourist destination's image and makes it more attractive because of its historical and cultural significance, such as the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site (Agarwal, 2005). Moreover, Ismagilova et al. (2015) report that cultural heritage in the form of unique historical objects is an effective factor in tourism development, and plays an important role in economic, social and cultural recovery. Many studies have highlighted the role of heritage in developing the tourism industry (Al-hagla, 2010; Boyd, 2002; Girard & Nijkamp, 2009; Ismagilova et al., 2015; Iwuagwu et al., 2015; McKercher & Cros, 2002; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD, 2009; Robinson & Picard, 2006). Heritage assets can develop the tourism industry because of their important role in attracting international tourists and one of the strengths of cultural tourism in the KFR. However, these assets need to be protected, prepared for tourists and utilised in a sustainable manner.

In the KFR, there are number of other strengths and opportunities, which are discussed in the following sections. These opportunities relate to the core role of cultural tourism in increasing the number of tourist arrivals.

### 5.3. Positive intentions of using cultural resources for tourism purposes

In the previous section, the study highlighted the potential for tourism growth in the KFR based on the rich heritage assets available. This section focuses on another strength of developing cultural tourism in the KFR, which is the positive intention to use cultural resources for tourism purposes. The decision makers (in the tourism and antiquities directorates) have supportive perspectives on using these vital heritage

resources for developing the tourism sector. Participant 12 observes that cultural resources need to be taken into consideration in developing the tourism sector. A practical example of supporting cultural tourism is Erbil Citadel. While the restoration plan for the Citadel has not been fully implemented, the gate has been partially opened. Participant 6 (the head of the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalisation) claimed that:

*“We allow a limited number of visitors to visit Erbil Citadel while just some houses and the main road of the Citadel were prepared for tourism use, even though the programme of revitalization of the Citadel has not been finished.” (p6)*

There are two different motivations for this supportive vision amongst decision makers toward cultural tourism encouragement, which are economic and heritage protection. For example, the tourism industry is able to create a wide range of employment opportunities and to earn foreign currency (Robinson & Picard, 2006); similarly, it can increase both retail sales and tax revenues (Woodward et al., 1998). Participant 1 perceived the core role that cultural tourism could play in creating revenues and contributing to the national economy. He cited the examples of Egypt and Jordan, whose economies benefit significantly from cultural tourism, and the huge amount of their budget that comes from the tourism sector. Thus, he suggested that the government should take into consideration the role of cultural tourism to attract international tourists and create revenue. Another economic motivation is to diversify sources tax and revenue of income. It is believed that cultural heritage resources could create revenue by attracting tourists to complement revenues from the oil sector.

*“We know there are some countries that rely on tourism to manage their governance... We see cultural heritage resources contributing to national revenue by attracting tourism to complement revenues from the oil sector.” (p2)*

In the case of the KFR, 95% of the Iraqi budget (13% goes to the KRG) comes from exporting oil, which makes Iraq and the KRG a classical rentier government (Gunter, 2011). Any changes in price or production quantity of such sole products have a direct impact on the national economy and on government expenditure (Lancieri, 2014; Stein, 2013). The tourism industry might help the government in these countries as an additional source of revenue, in parallel with their single exports. In general, the economic benefits of tourism industry include: diversification of income sources (World Tourism Organization, 2012b); multiple positive impacts on tourism-related facilities and on other business operations (Aas et al., 2005; Atan & Arslanturk, 2012), which improve the quality of life of citizens and reduce poverty (Sutawa, 2012).

The second motivation for supporting cultural tourism is heritage protection. Cultural tourism is beneficial both economically and in terms of protecting cultural resources.

*“I think transferring cultural heritage resources and any cultural resources into tourist attractions has advantages for conservation of these resources in addition to the economic advantages.” (p11)*

*“If cultural resources, in particular historical buildings, are not used to attract visitors then they lose their value – if nobody visits them, they do not have value.” (p3)*

A number of researchers highlight the positive role of cultural tourism in heritage protection (Chhabra, 2009; Suntikul, Butler, & Airey, 2010; Wang & Bramwell, 2012). Cultural tourism can create enough revenue to finance heritage conservation programmes (Chhabra, 2009) and to stimulate the heritage restoration process (Suntikul et al., 2010), and so can be beneficial for both heritage preservation and tourism development (Wang & Bramwell, 2012). Thus, cultural tourism is not only for revenue creation for improving the quality of life but also can finance programmes to maintain the intrinsic value of the assets on which it is based.

In summary, there is a clear vision to support cultural tourism, but different reasons were given by participants for the need to develop cultural tourism: to create revenue, to diversify sources of income for the nation, to maximise tourist satisfaction, to attract international tourists, to protect cultural resources from damage, to maintain their intrinsic value, and to foster understanding of the Kurdish culture among international visitors (see figure 21 below).

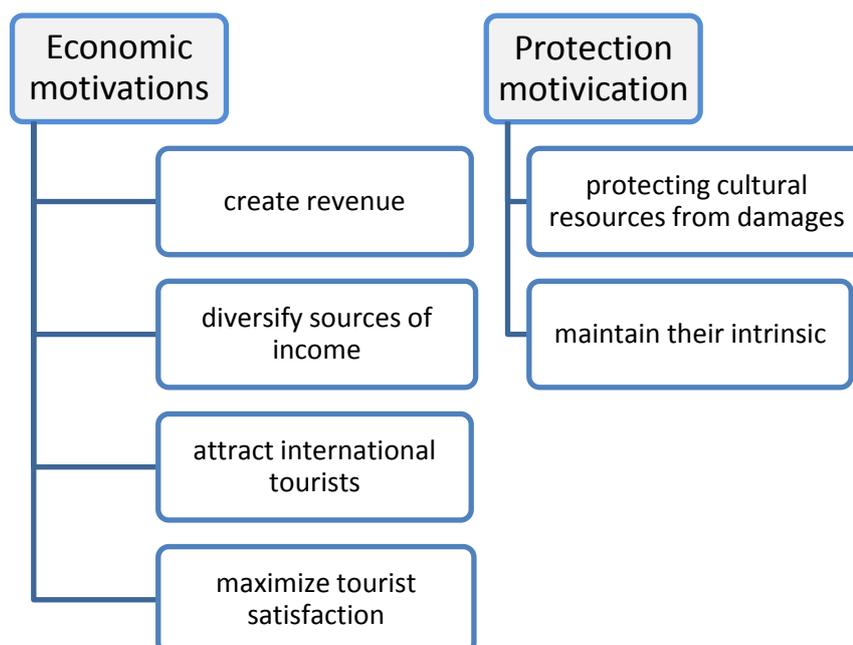


Figure 21: The motivations behind the supporting cultural tourism

These supportive perspectives of government representatives are themselves considered the strengths for the tourism sector in the KFR and suggest a latent willingness to develop cultural tourism. However, commercialising heritage assets as tourism products prior to the completion of restoration programmes might negatively impact on the future use of heritage assets. It is believed that commercialising heritage might damage the historical value of national heritage property if it is not managed properly and cautiously (Ho & McKercher, 2004; Wang & Bramwell, 2012). The next section shows how participants perceive using cultural assets in relation to sustainability, and how cultural assets should be developed, organised managed if they are to be used for tourism purposes.

#### 5.4. Supportive perspectives on the sustainable use of cultural resources

Another strength of cultural tourism in the KFR is that government representatives are genuinely interested in investing in archaeological sites for income generation but believe a number of conditions should be applied prior their use to attract tourists. For example, there was support for the use of historical buildings for tourism purposes but only after all conservation programmes had been completed, at which point they could be organised to attract visitors.

*“We should not encourage tourists to visit cultural tourism resources before protecting them and finishing the conservation programmes.”*

*(p12)*

*“These resources should pass all stages of the conservation programme and then be turned to cultural tourism resources... The site should be*

*supervised and inspected regularly by experts to ensure the protection and preservation of the resources.” (p3)*

This means that cultural sites should pass all stages of conservation, restoration and revitalisation prior to being used as tourist attractions. Other participants would refuse to make any structural modifications to cultural assets as tourist attractions without the approval of the Directorate of Antiquities.

*“The investor should not make any change to the building, any amendment should be done according to the regulations of the Directorate of Antiquities, and the building should be regularly inspected by the government representative, and any decorations should be culturally appropriate.” (p11)*

More precisely, the preparation or process of combining cultural assets to increase visitors' enjoyment should not affect the naturalistic appearance and history of the building, and should not use modern materials.

*"This helps tourists to enjoy visiting the sites, but this diversification should not affect the naturalistic appearance and history of building, and should not use modern materials." (p7)*

The authenticity of materials used for conserving the heritage site is very important and hotly debated in the literature. Stovel (2007) states that for maintaining the integrity of a heritage site, conservation should focus on protection of the existing substance of archaeological resources, whether exposed or underground, rather than just reconstruction or restoration of fragments, and for maintenance should use original materials. Rickly-Boyd (2013) argues that the authenticity of a heritage site as

a place and surrounding environment is a part of the tourists' experience which needs to be taken into consideration. In general, maintaining the authenticity of heritage sites plays a primary role in increasing the level of tourist satisfaction and also in preserving the assets themselves. This vision is another strength of cultural tourism in the KFR.

Secondly, the study explores how participants consider controlling the numbers of visitors to cultural attractions, to protect the site from damage. Some participants believed that cultural heritage attractions should not be overloaded by increased visitor volume, and that safety requires control of the number of visitors and the provision of suitable services.

*“Managing cultural tourism sites needs specific managers who have enough skills to deal with tourists and with the site, to be safe... should manage the number of visitors, provide suitable services for visitors to satisfy tourists in order to remain the enjoyment of the site, and they need to provide archaeological guides for the site.” (p8)*

Indeed, managing and controlling numbers of visitors to cultural heritage sites is one aspect of sustainable cultural tourism, and a number of tools can be applied to control number of visitors. In this regard, Garrod and Fyall (2000) claim that setting entry fees and selling only a desired number of tickets could help control numbers of visitors. Or only a limited number of visitors may be allowed through a reception entry point.

The study raised questions concerning the use of entry fees as a tool of organising the numbers of tourist visiting the sites. There were two different opinions, both of which are important. First, some participants believed that entry fees would inhibit people with less disposable income from visiting and benefiting from the site, although it

would be beneficial for organising the movement of visitors, generating revenue and counting daily visitors for further study.

*“Ticketing gives you three things: first, organised movement in and out for visitors; second, it gives you accurate statistics; and third, it gives you revenue... But this might lead to disruption of social balance: some people able to buy a ticket will benefit from enjoying the site while those who are not able to buy tickets cannot enter.... In some sites at reception one of the staff might control the capacity of the site and control the number of visitors.” (p6)*

Other participants believed that entry fees should not be imposed during the initial stage, while the site is being promoted as a tourist attraction; this is because the level of local awareness of cultural assets might not be up to the requirements.

*“I do not agree with the imposition of entry fees to organise visits. Our residents still do not understand or value these resources, and if we impose an entry fee I think people would not visit cultural sites, but if we promote cultural resources and show their value, then we can think about fees.” (p11)*

Overall, cultural heritage managers in the KFR tend to avoid imposing entry fees to cultural heritage sites. They believe that imposing any form of admission fee to enter heritage attractions essentially bars poorer visitors from access to and enjoyment of these sites. However, the study found the opposite perceptions from the residents involved in focus groups 3 and 4. Participants in focus group 3 agreed that they would pay entry fees to visit heritage attractions if those sites were prepared and organised with some cultural activities. Moreover, residents in focus groups 4 believed that when

people come to visit heritage attractions free of charge they might see it as not being valuable or important, so they recommended imposing entry fees for this reason and also to generate revenue.

An entry fee system is beneficial for creating income and revenues for conservation and protecting vital assets. In this regard, Garrod and Fyall (2000) claim that setting entry fees to cultural attractions helps in self-financing cultural heritage preservation programmes and sustainability. Moreover, Lamsal et al. (2016) claim that entry fees are a tool to tackle budgetary constraints for investing in conservation, but they suggest different prices for domestic and international visitors. Thus, an obvious market solution is to charge entry fees to generate revenues that can help preserve the heritage and that can discourage large influxes of tourists to the sites.

To conclude, there is an important indicator of the future viability of cultural tourism in KFR. From the perspectives of participants, there are some principles to be followed when using cultural heritage as tourism products, which is a ground for optimism regarding sustainable cultural tourism in the future: firstly, clear attention to protecting cultural assets in KFR, to ensuring the completion of all stages of conservation and only then actively attracting visitors; secondly, preventing any undermining of the naturalistic appearance or the history of heritage buildings, and ensuring the regulations of the Directorate of Antiquities guarantee the preservation of the site; thirdly, supervision and inspection of cultural sites regularly by archaeologists and experts, to ensure the protection and preservation of the sites, and their continued contribution to national income; and finally, control of the number of visitors, to help ensure the safety of cultural heritage sites, which could be either by imposing entry tickets or by limiting the daily entry of visitors at a reception office.

This vision regarding protection and applying conditions before commercialising heritage assets are initial steps in sustainability, which is an additional strength of cultural tourism in the KFR. However, in practice, no attention is given to sustainability in the KFR. The study therefore aims to formulate a set of recommendations for sustainable cultural tourism development in the KFR.

Another strength was the support for commercialising and diversifying tourist attractions by utilising different types of cultural assets. In the next section, based on the perceptions of participants, the study focuses on diversifying cultural attractions by combining tangible heritage with intangible heritage in order to satisfy tourist needs and maximise the numbers of tourist arrivals.

#### 5.5. Diversifying cultural tourist attractions

This section highlights the attention decision makers give to the development of cultural tourism by diversifying the different types of heritage assets. The motivation is to increase the level of tourist satisfaction and also to protect heritage from damage. The decision makers in both directorates (antiquities and tourism) and tourism business operators supported combining all types of heritage assets to make sites more attractive, such as turning heritage buildings into museums to display traditional cultural activities, classical singing and music, handicrafts, antiquities, and agricultural tools. Participants believed that applying such a strategy in the tourism sector would increase the level of satisfaction for tourists and consequently lead to greater numbers of tourists.

*“I think using historical buildings to present intangible cultural resources like music and classic singing will increase the level of enjoyment and satisfaction for tourists or visitors.... we need a place to*

*show intangible cultural resources, so if this place were a cultural heritage site, that would be great." (p1)*

Moreover, participant 10 believed that the KRG should support and invest in all types of cultural resources, for example by arranging festivals that attract tourists and promoting cultural tourism through theatres, films, etc. Furthermore, some suggested using historical buildings for cultural restaurants, cafes and hotels to attract tourists.

*"If we use some of our historical buildings as restaurants, cafes and hotels we might attract more tourists to see these old buildings." (p11)*

Although the plan for Erbil Citadel has been partially implemented, it was considered a practical example of putting multiple tourism resources together in a way would attract greater number of tourists. The plan includes maintenance, rehabilitation and conservation, and then organises residential areas in the Citadel into different types facilities and activities like cafes, restaurants, hotels, exhibitions, museum, to display Kurdish cultural traditions for tourists.

*"If we talk about the Citadel as an example, it is planned to consist of all cultural resources in terms of museums and cultural traditions such as Kurdish clothes... We planned how the Citadel's residential areas and tourism attractions will be divided and organised, such as cafes, restaurants, hotels, exhibitions, museum and things for people visiting the site, with a tour map. We planned to have three tour plans, for short, medium and long visits, with map guides." (p5)*

From the above perspectives, the primary goal of combining cultural heritage sites with some movable tangible and intangible cultural resources is to increase the level of

satisfaction among visitors and then increase the number of tourist arrivals. However, there was also felt to be a need to protect these resources. For example, participant 2 believed that turning immobile cultural resources into museums to display cultural resources would help protect both types of resources.

Participants with regard to diversifying the range of heritage attractions and increasing levels of tourist satisfaction raised a number of suggestions. Participant 8 suggested the establishment of a plan for all historical residential lanes to be used for cultural activities, such as turning them into cultural cafes, antiquarian shops and cultural handicraft mini-factories. Another suggested conserving and protecting historic buildings as an initial step in government action before turning them into museums to display heritage artefacts, handicrafts and other cultural products in order to attract tourists.

*“I think we have to conserve all our cultural resources to attract tourists, but in my opinion, we should start with the historical buildings and then we can use them as supporting facilities for other heritage artefacts, such as museums or to showcase handicrafts and cultural products.” (p3)*

To conclude, it was believed that diversifying cultural attractions by combining different types of cultural resources could protect heritage and attract greater number of tourists. A prime example was turning historical buildings into different types of museum to display cultural resources like heritage artefacts, handicrafts, traditional cultural activities, classical singing and music, clothes, antiquities and agricultural tools.

Indeed, the above vision would make heritage assets more attractive; however, without proper services and facilities the desired number of tourists would not be attracted.

The section below explores the tourist facilities and services available in Kurdistan.

#### 5.6. Services and facilities

The richness of cultural tourism resources in KFR, including tangible and intangible cultural resources, might be considered a major strength and opportunity to shift forward cultural tourism in the region. However, it can be debated that just owning rich cultural resources and using them is not enough for tourism growth: these resources need to be managed, organised and presented for tourists in a way that can reach their needs. In this regard, Chhabra (2009) reports that the cultural tourism industry is based on the services and experiences provided, which in turn depend on quality of tourist products and services. Suitable facilities increase demand at destinations, because, as Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik (2012) claim, tourists tend to travel to attractive and clean environments that offer high-quality services. Moreover, Okumus, Avci, Kilic, and Walls (2012) in their study that analyses past and current cultural tourism policy in Turkey, report that combining rich cultural resources with an appropriate level of quality services and other tourism resources will help to provide unique experiences for tourists. This in turn will make those destinations competitive in the international tourism market, but then innovation and creativity are needed in order to maintain that competitiveness. Furthermore, in the case of Greek island, Andros, Sdrali and Chazapi (2007) report that combining rich cultural heritage of the island with the development of its infrastructure (services and facilities such as hotels, bars, cafes, craft stores) and its location near the capital led to an increase in the number of tourist arrivals. Thus, providing appropriate tourist services and facilities

has become a core challenge for policy makers in achieving sustainable tourism development (Girard & Nijkamp, 2009).

Regarding the facilities currently available in the KFR, participant 12 reported that after 2003, two international airports were built, in Erbil and Slemani, and there is a plan to build an airport in Duhok; additionally, a number of motorways have been constructed, such as the Dokan-Slemani and Kirkuk-Slemani motorways. As he mentioned, now the Hamilton Road motorway is under construction, which contains five underground tunnels; furthermore, large modern supermarkets are continuously being built, and the number of hotels and restaurants increases by 20-30% every year. In addition, he claims that more than 15 internationally renowned hotel brands are working in KFR, 72 hotels have been listed on the [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) website. Furthermore, there are now: a mobile application named 'Kurdistan Guide' that works in IOS and Android; leaflet tour guides printed in five languages (English, Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish and Persian); SYGIC navigation; and numerous high-tech facilities.

These examples of tourist infrastructure might play a major role in the development of the tourism sector. However, some participants suggested more investment in roads and public transport, more facilities such as place signs (to destinations and as well as facilities such as cafes, restaurants), taxis specifically for tourists, offices to arrange their journeys, visits to cultural sites to check for the price, and greater staff language abilities.

*“The government should provide and invest in some facilities such as roads and transport to make it easy for people to reach their destinations, and place signs... Countries that support their tourism sector have specific taxis for tourists, and offices to arrange their*

*journeys... We issued leaflets for tourist guidance about destinations, with useful phone numbers and tourist attractions. These should be placed in the reception areas in airports and given to visitors to help them find facilities and destinations.” (p1)*

Currently, it looks the government encourages investment but without any planning; anyone can build and open hotels without taken training and courses, and this might negatively impact on hospitality. Participants 17, 18 and 19, who manage three hotels in Erbil, complained of the above issue. Fars AL-Katb (p17), the general manager of Best in Erbil Hotel, claimed that:

*“The government should not allow everybody to open hotels without having a certificate or doing a training course because providing poor services will negatively affect increasing numbers of tourist in the future; for example, hotels should provide cleanliness, serve 24 hours, foods, hospitality.” (p17)*

Another issue mentioned by participant 6 was that in KFR there is huge investment in hotels, but less focus on ancillary facilities like restaurants, appropriate transportation systems for tourism, visa systems, companies organising tours for tourists, tour guides, and advertisements, brochures, leaflets, books and tour maps. Moreover, in Kurdistan, taxi drivers do not have enough skills to deal with tourists, which gives a negative image of hospitality. Thus, the government should not give taxi driver licences to everyone.

*"Our taxis are not good and do not know how to deal with tourists; taxi drivers should not talk a lot and everything. They have to be trained in order to nicely answer tourists; we should not give a licence to*

*everybody. Involving residents is very important for tourism and conservation." (p8)*

In conclusion, according to the participants, there is a need for more investment and better organisation in some facilities and services for tourists. For example, the process of obtaining visas to KFR is a major issue facing the KRG, as the Iraqi government often obstructs visas to the KFR. Secondly, hotels, restaurants, taxis, public transportation and tour guides etc. have not been distributed appropriately relative to destinations' needs and according to a comprehensive plan. Thirdly, there is a need to increase the hospitality skills of staff and local residents such as taxi drivers, staff at hotels, restaurants and tour guides, and this can be achieved by training. In this regard, Agarwal (2002) states that training has core role in improving the quality of services and tourist products. Moreover, Foster, McCabe, and Dewhurst (2010) report that continued training, skill development and professional education are the key pillars to improving the quality of services and hospitality, which in turn increases the competitiveness of destinations. In relation to residents, Garcia-Falcon and Medina-Munoz (1999) claim that while tourism is a human economic activities, education and training of the local community must be taken into consideration in sustainable tourism policy.

#### 5.7. Chapter summary

The KFR is rich in unique archaeological sites, including cave shelters, sites from the Neolithic era, settlements of the great empires of antiquity, castles and bridges, mosques and bazaars. The decision makers have supportive perspectives on making these heritage assets available for visitors and more attractive. The motivations are to create revenue in general form, to diversify the national sources of income, to

maximise tourist satisfaction, to attract more international tourists, to protect cultural resources from damage, to maintain their intrinsic value as artefacts and to foster understanding of Kurdish culture internationally.

On the other hand, there was support for the suspension of the use of heritage assets under a number of conditions prior to their use as tourist attractions. Examples of such conditions are: the completion of all stages of conservation, restoration and revitalisation and keeping the natural appearance and history of buildings. This vision regarding protection prior to commercialising heritage assets for sustainable tourism is another strength of cultural tourism in the KFR. However, in practice, not enough attention is given to heritage protection. The KFR has not benefited properly from these strengths, and has not been successful in utilising its cultural resources for tourism development.

The multiple, attractive and rich heritage resources in the KFR can enhance tourism development if used to attract tourists in a sustainable manner. However, just owning rich cultural resources and using them is not enough for tourism growth; these resources should be properly managed, organised and presented to tourists in a way can meet their needs. This richness of cultural tourism resources in Kurdistan, including tangible and intangible cultural resources, cannot attract the desired number of tourists without proper services and facilities,

To develop cultural tourism in the KFR, more investment is needed in roads and public transport. Improvements are needed to signage, taxi services, cafes, restaurants, tourism offices (e.g. to arrange journeys), regular visits to cultural sites to check pricing and staff language skills. Moreover, to make heritage more attractive and valuable economically, it was suggested that heritage attractions be diversified, with

different types of heritage assets turned into tourist facilities. For example, historical buildings could be turned into cultural cafes, antiquarian shops and cultural handicraft mini-factories or museums to display heritage artefacts, handicrafts and other cultural products to attract tourists.

The reasons for the underutilisation of cultural resources for the tourism industry can be summarised as follows: the KRG has not finished its restoration plan for heritage assets and has not prepared well for visitors due to conflicts that spread across the region in the past and the lack of comprehensive planning and poor implementation; the government focused on oil as a sole income resource; and there is poor infrastructure for the tourism industry.

In the next two chapters, the study discusses the challenges of heritage protection and cultural tourism, and the role of policy and planning in preserving heritage assets and sustainable cultural tourism development. Chapter 6 discusses the challenges of conservation of cultural resources, the reasons behind the lack of heritage protection and the policy required for proper heritage protection. Chapter 7 explores the challenges that face cultural tourism, which might give some indication about the management issues for the future opportunities for cultural tourism in KFR, and the factors that influence cultural tourism in KFR. Chapter 8 presents several recommendations and suggestions for how the government should address these issues, and formulate a policy for sustainable cultural tourism development in the KFR.

## Chapter 6. **Challenges that face cultural heritage conservation in the KFR**

In the previous chapter, the study discussed the major strengths of cultural tourism, and identified a number of reasons behind the underdevelopment of cultural tourism in the KFR. The result shows that the KFR is rich in cultural resources, but there is currently not enough governmental consideration given to cultural heritage conservation, either as a legacy to the nation or to utilise heritage assets for tourism development. In many parts of the developing world, such underdevelopment is attributable to the lack of an integrated tourism policy, particularly in countries that have had to deal with conflict (sometimes over many years, as is the case of the KFR in Iraq) or are presently dealing with conflict. This chapter explores the main challenges of protecting heritage assets in the KFR, and what the government actions are required to protect heritage assets from damage and to prepare them for attracting tourists.

The results reported in this chapter show that the managerial issues caused by lack of legislation and poor government administration are the core barrier to serious investment in heritage protection in the KFR, in parallel with some secondary challenges. The findings will help decision makers to develop a strategy for cultural protection programmes, and to set appropriate cultural tourism policy. The case of the KFR is also instructive for similar nations suffering from conflict, particularly in the Middle East.

Issues of preservation of cultural heritage assets have been widely studied in both developed and developing countries. Many of these studies focus on preservation of tourism resources in the context of sustainable tourism (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; McKercher et al., 2005; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012; Murzyn-Kupisz & Dzialek, 2013),

which often aims to continue attracting tourists while preserving assets for subsequent generations. However, there is a lack of research on post-conflict regions such as the KFR, and none have discussed what government action are required to preserve heritage assets from damage. This chapter aims to fill this gap by exploring the impact of conflict and instability on cultural heritage conservation, presenting the major challenges that the KRG faces in its cultural conservation, discussing the anticipated solutions and what strategy should be followed to manage and protect heritage assets.

## 6.1. Administrative challenges

### 6.1.1. The overlap between different departments' works

The government's Directorate of Antiquities, which is responsible for the maintenance, restoration and conservation of cultural heritage sites in the KFR, faces two main administrative challenges. The first is the overlap between different departments' works and the sharing of responsibility among different directorates required to manage cultural heritage assets. Unclear duties among the government departments that are responsible for heritage protection or the division of the same obligations between different directorates might undermine the preservation of many tangible and intangible cultural resources, and cause the lack of appropriate utilisation for these resources. This is due to the lack of agreement and collaboration in decision making between directorates related to protecting, managing and utilising heritage assets. For example, some cultural resources are run by the Ministry of Culture and Youth (MCY) and some by Antiquities Directorate and other parties such as local governors.

*“Now there is mixed or interactive work; some cultural resources are run by the MCY and some by others, so it needs to be organised.” (p12)*

This issue also causes problems for directorates such as authority over the supervision of historical buildings and of other tangible and intangible cultural resources. For instance, the responsibility of Antiquities Directorate is limited to managing and protecting archaeological sites, but other tangible cultural resources (e.g. handicraft cultural products) are not the responsibility of the Directorate of Antiquities.

*“Our Directorate now is just responsible for protecting the archaeological and heritage sites, but we requested to cover all tangible resources including handicrafts.” (p11)*

This interactive work between different directorates might cause the lack of an appropriate utilisation of these resources, and might cause the loss of many tangible and intangible cultural resources.

Collaboration and coordination among different government bodies and stakeholders could be one of the tools to tackle the above issue. A number of researchers have highlighted the role of collaboration among stakeholders to manage a common problem (Adu-Ampong, 2017; Graci, 2013; Gray, 1989; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Jamal & Stronza, 2009; McKercher et al., 2005; Wong et al., 2011). When a single player cannot tackle an issue, collaboration among multiple stakeholders is necessary for establishing and implementing tourism planning (Adu-Ampong, 2017). On this subject, Gray (1989) states that collaboration is joint decision making between the main stakeholders where a single actor is unable to properly solve a certain problem on its own. According to Graci (2013), collaboration between multiple stakeholders with shared interests is an effective factor for tourism development, and helps to move a destination towards sustainability. However, a lack of coordination is a common challenge for destination planners in fragmented tourism industries (Jamal & Getz,

1995), especially in developing countries. In this regard, Wong et al. (2011) claim that the national tourism organisation in many Asian countries often has little independent authority to set proper tourism policy and impose collaboration among tourism stakeholders. The tourism industry in the KFR in most cases is not based on a systematic programme and does not have independent authority, and any change in government leader or minister can affect tourism planning and policy.

*“The heritage protection programme and tourism industry is under the minister's vision, and a new minister own perspective might not follow the former minister's plan and policy.” (p23)*

To avoid intervention work that undermines the efficiency and effectiveness of the Antiquities and Tourism Directorate, the structure of tourism industry should be amended based on new law and, as suggested by a number of participants, it would be better if the KRG combined all directorates related to antiquities and culture into one board or ministry linked directly to the Council of Ministers.

*“I say all tangible resources should be combined in one commission or in one general board, then directly linked to the Council of Ministers.” (p8)*

*“In my opinion, it would be better to establish a new Ministry for Cultural Resources, including tangible and intangible resources. If we cannot do that, at least we should make a commission or board to protect these resources. This is very important.” (p1)*

### 6.1.2. Proliferation of bureaucracy

The second administrative challenge concerns the proliferation of bureaucracy in daily work. Bureaucracy has spread in the KRG. For example, participant 10 complained of increasing red tape and advocated empowering the Archaeological Directorate to make decisions appropriately. Excessive bureaucracy could result in the loss of many of cultural tourism resources because it delays work.

The suggestions to combine all directorates related to antiquities and culture into one board or one ministry and link them directly with the Council of Ministers would help the Directorate of Antiquities to identify problems and tackle barriers easier and better.

*“One of the things the government should do is to solve the administrative barriers... the directorates related to cultural resources should be linked and connected to the higher authority of decision makers... I think it would be better, and we asked to combine all tangible cultural resources together; it was planned since 2006, but until now this has not been implemented.” (p2)*

In fact, Erbil Citadel has enough authority and has its own administrative board to supervise the Erbil Citadel restoration plan, but it is the only example of such an arrangement. The board is linked directly with the Council of Ministers and Erbil governorate. Participant 6 (the head of High Commission of Erbil Citadel Revitalisation) claimed that:

*“We have a council board and a management board; we run our organisation such as any other normal organisation... we meet every month or every two months. In the meetings, we set strategies and discuss*

*important issues, but the details or our daily obligations are done directly in the Citadel, so we do not have authority barriers.” (p6)*

In conclusion, the Antiquities Directorate does not have enough authority to make decisions, which are always subject to different ministries, where they have to follow long bureaucratic procedures that delay work. To solve the bureaucracy issue as recommended by participants, the government could establish a minister or board responsible for the management and protection of all cultural resources, including tangible and intangible cultural resources, and that gives authority to the Archaeological Directorate for decision making, and to avoid routine procedures pertaining to the conservation programme. Erbil Citadel management is an example of successful cultural management in the KFR that could be applied to all cultural heritage sites under the supervision of the Antiquities Directorate.

Further to the above administrative challenges, two other issues were raised by participants that can be also classified as ‘administrative challenges’: firstly, the neglect of historical buildings and heritage neighbourhoods; and secondly, lack of a national heritage list that records all heritage resources.

### 6.1.3. The neglect of historical buildings

Many residential historic areas in the KFR have been neglected and left empty without reuse or any restoration, and as a consequence a number of these have been damaged. If continued, this abandonment of buildings without completing restoration can destroy these structures forever.

*“There are some historical residential lanes that have been bought and are now owned by the government during last three years, but all have*

*been left and neglected, and now they are empty. If they continue to be neglected they might suffer damage, and later on we cannot even restore or maintain them.” ( p8)*

Participant 11 believed that every empty historical building might suffer damage or be destroyed forever if not used for tourism purposes or for similar; however, all maintenance and use should be done carefully and following regulations and instructions. Önal, Dağlı, and Doratlı (1999) mention that leaving the Maras Quarters in the city of Gazimagusa, North Cyprus, for long period time without inhabitation and any restoration work led to the damage of some buildings, which became costly and difficult to restore. In this regard, El Habashi (2008) declares that the best technique for preserving historical building is to reuse them carefully.

Indeed, reuse of historic buildings as a tool for protecting cultural heritage is widely discussed in the literature from the mid- nineteenth century, and in the late twentieth century became a key subject for many of scholars (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2011). According to Shankar and Swamy (2013) the perfect way of maintaining and protecting historical buildings from damage is to reuse these assets (after restoring their original character) for some compatible purposes such as tourist-oriented activities, museums, tourist information centres, tourist hotel, arts and craft centre, etc. Alongside reuse of historical buildings for the original or similar purposes, systematic maintenance is required for heritage conservation (Coad, 2009; Forster & Kayan, 2009). From an engineering standpoint, the best way to protect historical buildings is to conduct light maintenance and retention of its original use, where possible, or at least alternative uses without lowering the integrity of the building (Coad, 2009). Moreover, Forster and Kayan (2009) argue that conducting systematic maintenance is

the best option for preserving historic buildings; however, in practice, there are often problems in implementation due to poor organisation and lack of funding.

To conclude, it is very important not to leave historical buildings and heritage residential areas empty, without completing their restoration, otherwise these cultural resources may be lost forever, or at least their belated restoration and conservation will be much more costly. The government should either maintain these assets and utilise them appropriately for tourism purposes, or render them to the private sector for the same purpose. However, the government should meet all stakeholders' preferences or at least balance different perspectives without making any negative impacts on heritage protection procedures.

#### 6.1.4. Recording historical buildings in a national heritage list

The study reveals that there were no complete lists of all the cultural resources in the KFR, which might be considered one of the challenges facing heritage protection, because without such a list it is difficult to identify the assets that require urgent government action. Attention has been given to this issue but it seems that there is not enough funding to implement a plan that exists now to record all cultural heritage resources.

*“Actually, we started mapping cultural resources three months ago. Some work had been done but it was not complete. We set a plan to record all cultural resources in detail, but this needs time. We started to implement the plan three months ago.” (p5)*

*“I can say that until now we have not recorded many of our cultural resources... There is a plan, yes, but the government should allocate an*

*appropriate budget for our plan... We were asked to allocate a budget to record and document all cultural resources but unfortunately we haven't sorted this out." (p10)*

The lack of a list of heritage attractions can be considered as a government administration problem; while heritage restoration programmes might require huge levels of funding, this is not the case for preparing a list of all heritage sites in the KFR.

In addition, the lack of a record of heritage sites prevents proper planning for restoration and investment. The Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office estimates the number archaeological sites in Kurdistan Region at 1307 (Ismael, 2015). However, as discussed in section 5.2, there are likely to be well over 3000 cultural resources. The lack of an official list is largely attributable to the conflict in the region, which reduces the government's ability to allocate sufficient funds and care for cultural heritage sites. It is obvious that there can be no successful plan for the restoration, protection, conservation or utilisation of heritage assets for any cultural tourism development without identifying and organising cultural resources for long-term, sustainable socio-economic development from the tourism industry as well as for cultural heritage preservation.

## 6.2. Legislation issues

The Antiquities Directorate suffers from some legislation challenges in undertaking their daily obligations to deal with heritage assets. The first reason is that multiple or at least dual systems of legislation apply to heritage protection in the KFR, and this can negatively impact on the conservation and restoration programmes.

The main legislation that applies in the KFR to deal with cultural resources is Law No. 55 issued in 2002 by the Iraqi Parliament; however, in some cases KRG works under Law No. 59 of 1936 (and amended Law No. 59 by Law No.120 in 1974), and this runs in parallel with the regulations issued by the KFR executive power.

*“First, the government should decide whether we have to impose the new Iraqi federal regulations about archaeological sites, or the old regulation Law No. 59 or Law No. 55. Because KRG has rejected some articles of both laws.” (p10)*

There were different views among participants in the antiquities field regarding the efficiency of current laws and regulations that govern cultural resources conservation. Some participants believed that the (Iraqi) Law No. 55 of 2002 has some failings concerning the revitalisation of historic buildings and tangible assets, which needs to be amended and then applied in the KFR.

*“Now, many times we rely on law issued by the Iraqi Parliament in 2002, but this also needs to be amended. We asked for it to be amended in the Kurdistan Parliament, but until now we are working [under the old system].” (p5)*

For instance, legislative barriers prevent the Directorate of Antiquities from protecting buildings less than 200 years old, as they are not classified as archaeological sites, which is believed to be unique to Iraq, possibly because Iraq is so rich in cultural resources.

*“Yes, there are legislative barriers. Any building less than 200 years old is not considered an archaeological site. I do not think there is similar*

*legislation elsewhere in the world, but because Iraq is so rich in cultural resources we have this law.” (p3)*

Another challenge comes from applying current regulation. Participant 11 claimed that according to the regulations, the Antiquities Directorate currently is just responsible for managing and protecting archaeological sites, but other tangible cultural resources, for example handicraft cultural products, are not the Directorate of Antiquities' responsibility. A further challenge can be seen in participant 8's opinion that there are no laws or regulations giving the right to the Directorate of Antiquities to give cultural heritage sites and historical buildings to others, or to rent them to the private sector.

Another issue is that the current regulations are applied by the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE), which prevents the Directorate of Antiquities funding local residents who own historic buildings for the conservation of their properties.

*“According to the regulations of the MFE in Kurdistan, they do not fund and invest in conservation programmes for any historical buildings if they are not owned by the government.... According to Iraqi federal regulations, if the owner of historical buildings cannot maintain them, the government must support them for that, but in Kurdistan, we don't.” (p8)*

Such issues may cause the loss of many tangible and intangible cultural resources, and the underutilisation of these resources. In this regard, participant 8 suggested the government should impose new regulations that allow the Antiquities Directorate to manage all historical buildings, including those under 200 years old, and all other tangible cultural resources, including handicrafts cultural products. Participant 10

recommended that the government should return all authority to the Archaeological Directorate to enable it to make timely decisions.

It appears, then, that, under the current law, many cultural assets are not classified as heritage, which means they are not even theoretically protected. This could result in the loss of many tangible and intangible cultural tourism resources. Therefore, issues of legislation were identified as major and fundamental barriers to the protection of cultural tourism resources in KFR, particularly pertaining to conservation and the antiquities authorities.

While Iraqi law limits heritage buildings to those constructed over 200 years ago, and mainly focus on tangible assets, heritage assets should in fact include everything of intrinsic socio-cultural and historical value, whatever its age, and whether tangible or intangible. For example, according to Vietnam's Law No. 28/2001/QH10 of 29 June 2001, both tangible material and intangible cultural assets are considered cultural heritage, and this forces the government protect them from damage and loss (Ministry of Justice of Vietnam, 2001). Heritage comprises all cultural traditions and historical values of society transferred from one generation to another (Nuryanti, 1996). These heritage assets, whether tangible or intangible, are of unique national value and can contribute to state revenue. Garrod and Fyall (2000) argue that heritage properties, which are considered notable tourist attractions in many developed economies, can include different types of cultural assets and activities. Moreover, heritage assets, whether tangible or intangible, should be managed sustainably, and the economic, environmental and socio-cultural dimensions should be considered in a way accepted by a wide range of stakeholders to ensure their usefulness to society (Wall, 2009).

Thus, there is a need to issue a new regulation to give authority to relevant government directorates to protect heritage assets in the KFR, because, currently, regulation excludes key assets (e.g. intangible cultural heritage and buildings less than 200 years old) and neglects private sector investment and maintenance of ‘protected’ heritage artefacts such as the residential quarters around Erbil Citadel.

Another point to consider is that the new regulation should formulate for the purpose of heritage protection and find sources of income to finance the tourism industry, and should respond to the current issue of heritage protection. For instance, Buultjens et al. (2016) found that the ongoing civil war from 1983 to 2009 and the 2004 tsunami negatively influenced the tourism industry and asset protection in Sri Lanka. The government's response was based on issuing a new Tourism Act to overhaul the Sri Lanka Tourist Board, which has been existence since 1966, and to establish a Tourism Development Fund based on an airport tax and 1% of the turnover of all establishments registered as tourism interests with the Sri Lanka Tourist Board. This policy brought enough revenue for the tourism industry and made it possible to invest in further development and environment protection. However, government actions in response to issues related to the tourism industry should always balance the protection of assets with economically profitable tourism activities in and around sites.

### 6.3. Social and property barriers to the preservation of archaeological sites

Another issue that negatively impacts the conservation programme in the KFR are the social and property barriers. It appears that some historical buildings are inhabited by poor people, paying low levels of rent, making it socially difficult to ask them to leave without paying some form of compensation.

*“Social barriers include many historical buildings being inhabited by poor people now for very low rents. It is difficult to ask them to evacuate these houses.” (p3)*

Regarding property barriers, many historical buildings are owned by local residents who often would prefer to redevelop them into profitable modern buildings. However, the government neither helps them to maintain their buildings nor buys these buildings and protects them itself. In this context, participant 9 reported that the owners of historical buildings might plan to build modern profitable commercial structures, but the government banned owners of these buildings from developing them, without paying any compensation or any helping to maintain the buildings. Moreover, a number of historical buildings are owned by different government directorates, or jointly owned by a number of people, which makes dealing with these resources more complex.

*“Sometimes cultural resources are jointly owned by several owners, which makes the conservation process more protracted.... Sometimes they are owned by other governmental parties, like different ministries, and they have their own individual procedures.” (p3)*

To avoid the negative impact of property barriers, it suggested that all historical buildings be owned by the state, because only the government will be able to ensure these buildings are well protected from damage.

*“Third, local residents own some of these valuable cultural resources, these resources should be owned by government because protecting them is the government’s responsibility.” (p7)*

However, it might not be necessary for the government to own all historical buildings; the role of government can be limited to organisation, control, coordination and regulation. On the other hand, the owners of historical buildings have the right to deal with their properties for cultural business activities.

To conclude, there are three problems related to property issues that negatively impact on heritage protection programmes. Firstly, some buildings are owned by other government directorates, which apply their own strategy. Secondly, a number of historical buildings are inhabited by local people who prefer not to leave these houses. Thirdly, many historical buildings in KFR are owned by residents either who do not have sufficient funds to preserve and restore these buildings or who want to modernise them. The longer the delay in government taking responsibility for these buildings, the more money will ultimately be required for their restoration. Similarly, Önal et al. (1999) claim that leaving some of the heritage assets in north Cyprus without conservation work has made restoration of these building much more difficult and much more costly.

To overcome these issues, first of all, all governmental historical buildings in different directorates should be transferred to the Directorate of Antiquities. As a further step, the government should find additional sources of income such as user fees or taxis, and undertake a plan to provide substantial compensation or assistance for existing inhabitants of historical buildings. Funding and supporting private sector property owners in partnership will help them conserve and benefit from their buildings without modernising them.

#### 6.4. Funding issues

Another issue mentioned by participants is insufficient funding. The impact of funding on cultural conservation programmes is very high, as the conservation of cultural sites (particularly architecture) often requires massive investment.

*“Second, funding is another barrier, because protecting and restoring cultural sites is intrinsically costly and needs a huge budget.” (p5)*

Any shortage in government's budget has direct negative impacts on protecting heritage. One example was given by participant 6, who explained that funding issues in 2014 negatively influenced the Erbil Citadel conservation plan, and currently the implementation has been suspended. He declared that if funding shortages continue for a long time, the Citadel conservation programme might suffer many further problems and some of the buildings might be destroyed.

The KRG might not be able to allocate sufficient money for conservation programmes due to budgetary restrictions from 2014 to the present. But if these funding shortages continue for a long time, the conservation programme might suffer further delay and further damage will be done, and then even more money will be required for restoration and rebuilding. Thus, it is suggested that the Directorate of Antiquities should fund conservation and maintenance, and fulfil its obligations properly.

However, if the government is unable to allocate enough funds for further restoration, the private sector could invest in these heritage buildings, which could be used to develop their business.

*“If the government gives me the historical buildings near the citadel which all are left aside, I will invest in these houses to develop my business and present handicraft products for customers.” (p15)*

Thus, beside funding the Directorate of Antiquities, the KRG should fund owners and private business to restore historic buildings, either for tourism business purposes of other business activities, to protect these building form damages.

#### 6.5. Skills and abilities

According to participants, the lack of skill and modern technology is another challenge that delays restoration and maintenance of cultural heritage in the KFR. In this regard, participant 7 mentioned to the lack of modern technology required for surveys of and conservation of heritage sites, and personnel who have enough experience in this field. Participant 5 also commented on skills and equipment.

*“Yes, we suffer from a lack of experts and skills related to restoration and reconstruction. We have some, but not enough. I want to mention technological barriers. There is new technology today that will help to protect cultural resources, but we do not have this technology.” (p5)*

On this point, participant 1 suggested training staff to increase their level of skills for protecting cultural resources. On the other hand, completely different perspectives were given by participants who claimed that adequate human resources are in fact available in the KFR, yet the problem was recruitment and an ability to offer appropriate employment conditions. Participant 9 reported that the Archaeological Division had been established in 2000 at Salahaddin university in Erbil to fill the gap

staff and skills in the archaeological field, but many of the former students are now unemployed or working in other fields. Some other quotes:

*“In practical respects our staff and students in the universities are working with foreign teams, and some people have studied abroad. So if we have funding, we would not suffer from a lack of skills.” (p2)*

*“I think we have enough staff experts; the issue is how we can benefit from them according to their specialties. We have a problem in recruiting and appointing people to appropriate positions.” (p10)*

In conclusion, insufficient experience and skills of staff not only obstructed some cultural protection programmes but also in some cases, as Alkurdi (2013) observes in her study in Shaqlawa in KFR, led to the setting of unrealistic objectives by policy makers for some tourism projects. However, it appears that there is disagreement regarding the current level of skills available to the cultural heritage conservation process in the KFR. While some participants believed that there is a lack of skills and modern technology and equipment required to protect cultural resources, others were of the opinion that sufficient skills are available, but are not deployed effectively due to problems with the process of recruitment. According to the former view, government should plan to increase the level of skill of staff, which work in the archaeological field, while according to the latter perspective the government should set a proper plan for recruiting staff according to their specialties. Nevertheless, the majority of participants believed that the KFR has started to obtain skills, but further training is still required. In addition, the government should benefit from new technology and modern tools for conservation.

## 6.6. The timeline for the restoration process

Working on maintaining cultural heritage assets takes longer than with normal buildings and needs more specialised skills, because conservation procedures are often sensitive work, and any restoration work should match the historic nature of the site.

*“In cultural sites we should not use modern materials and new decoration; we should be maintaining authentic appearances.” (p7)*

These characteristics of restoration might delay the conservation process for cultural heritage resources. Therefore, it is difficult to follow a timeline for maintaining archaeological sites.

*“First, sensitive work in archaeological sites is a barrier. Working to maintain sites is different compared to historical buildings. The work of maintaining archaeological sites is slow and needs specific academic skills; it takes a lot of time.” (p5)*

This is the nature of the cultural conservation process and an external factor, which is difficult to manage or change. However, to make this process more efficient, there might be benefit from dividing plans for cultural heritage conservation into short-, mid- and long-term objectives for historical buildings and training staff.

## 6.7. The role of residents

Heritage awareness among residents can play a major role in protecting cultural tourism resources (Angelkova et al., 2012; Shankar & Swamy, 2013). Greater awareness increases the support of residents for heritage protection. However, there is a lack of residents' awareness regarding the value of cultural resources in the KFR.

*“I think the level of residents’ awareness is not at the level of understanding the value of cultural resources... Whenever residents feel proud about their culture, they help to protect their cultural resources.” (p12)*

*“The government should open training courses for personnel, increasing the level of residents’ awareness of protecting cultural resources and supporting the tourism sector.” (p8)*

Participants made various suggestions for solutions to the above issues, and for government to be able to raise public awareness. Participant 8 suggested open training courses for people to increase their level of awareness. Participant 11 suggested encouraging people to understand their history and culture, and that the media should play a role in promoting cultural resources and their restoration. Many participants indicated that involving residents in cultural tourism activities might help to protect cultural resources.

*“I believe that local residents have a primary role in protecting or damaging resources, so I think involving them in cultural resources for tourism purposes surely will help to protect the resources.” (p9)*

Otherwise, ignoring the local community might become a big challenge to heritage protection and cultural tourism resources and sustainability. Without the help of local residents, the government cannot protect cultural resources.

*“Involving local people is very important to protect cultural resources. I would even say that if we do not involve them in tourism activities, they will become a big challenge or barrier to developing tourism... We see*

*that without the help of local residents, we cannot protect cultural resources properly.” (p10)*

However, participant 7 believed that local residents' involvement in cultural tourism activities should be under the regulation of the Antiquities Directorate, otherwise it cannot help to protect cultural tourism resources properly. Only participant 5 believed that involving local residents in cultural tourism activities might not have an impact on preserving cultural heritage resources, because these resources are governed by specific sets of regulations, leaving no role for local residents.

Involving the local community in tourism projects can be more profitable economically compared with moving employees in from outside the location. In addition, local residents might be more interested in local cultural activities in the location. Thus, it is advisable to encourage residents to support conservation programmes by involving them in some cultural activities.

*“I think involving local residents will encourage them to support and protect their cultural resources from damage, particularly if there are experts and certain skills among them, because they are more interested compared to people from outside the location... Local residents cost less than employees brought from outside, so it is economically better.” (p3)*

To conclude, the current level of residents' awareness regarding the value of cultural resources is not up to the required level for the protection of cultural tourism resources. Thus, government should raise public awareness, and should encourage people to understand their history, for example by running open training courses. In addition, involving residents in cultural tourism activities can increase their support for the tourism industry. An appropriate level of residents' awareness and pride in their

culture might become a core factor to help protect cultural resources, because whenever residents feel proud about their culture (and appreciate its socio-economic value) they can be expected to protect their cultural resources.

There are different tools to increase the level of public awareness. According to Shankar and Swamy (2013), public awareness and appreciation can be increased by participation in heritage awareness programmes such as heritage festivals, workshops, seminars, photo exhibitions of heritage buildings, competitions (debate, essay writing, painting, etc.), heritage walks, heritage newspapers and small booklets on heritage. Moreover, Mycoo (2006), in his study on Barbados, indicates that educational programmes help to raise public awareness regarding attention to the environment and protection of cultural and natural assets.

## 6.8. Heritage protection policy and the rationale of protecting heritage

In previous sections, the study has explored the major challenges of heritage protection in the KFR. This section and the following sub-sections discuss the logic of preserving these heritage assets and what government steps are required to respond to these challenges. The issue of evacuating heritage sites without government actions to maintain them is also discussed.

### 6.8.1. The rationale of protecting heritage

Cultural tourism enhances a sense of pride and local identity, and stimulates local socio-economic development (Girard & Nijkamp, 2009). Historical urban quarters reflect the traditions and architectural value of a nation that are worthy of conservation and that require an appropriate revitalisation strategy to ensure the continuity of urban heritage patterns (Doratli, Hoskara, & Fasli, 2004). Such assets can turn less attractive destinations into universal tourist attractions because of their unique heritage value

(Robinson & Picard, 2006). Moreover, Ismagilova et al. (2015) report that cultural heritage comprises unique historical objects that are considered an effective factor in tourism development, and play an important role in economic, social and cultural recovery. Leaving historical buildings empty for long periods without restoration can result in their utter ruin and irreplaceable valuable cultural tourism resources would be lost. Nevertheless, while the economic dimension is fundamental to sustainable heritage tourism, this should not be at the expense of social, cultural, ecological and political aspects and impacts on local communities (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012).

Indeed, maintenance, restoration and conservation of cultural heritage sites are initial steps in building sustainable cultural tourism and developing the tourism industry. Consequently, protecting these assets becomes a major challenge for the cultural tourism industry. In this regard, Chhabra (2009) argues that in order to achieve a successful tourism industry and to guarantee sustainability, all cultural heritage products should be protected and preserved, as they are the main motivation for tourist visits. Cultural heritage protection and conservation programmes are necessary to preserve heritage for future generations and for sustainable tourism (Garrod & Fyall, 2000). In addition, Ismagilova et al. (2015) state that there is a need to continue with the protection and restoration process for all cultural attractions because they are national properties and contribute to the national economy. It can be argued that without applying a proper restoration plan for heritage attractions in the KFR, these heritage assets cannot attract a desirable number of international tourists.

### 6.8.2. Heritage commercialisation

Although restoration and protection of heritage assets are recommended in the literature, restoration programmes should not adversely affect the development of tourism and the latter should not impede maintenance work and protection procedures. This theme has been debated in the literature and the preponderant opinion is that balance is required. Yang, Wall, and Smith (2008) report that conservation programmes are necessary for sustainability; however, if these programmes hamper progress in tourism development they can lead to economic impoverishment in a region. In contrast, Khlaikaew (2015) believes sustainable cultural tourism should utilise cultural assets wisely, in a way that can preserve local art and culture, and keep local natural environments; on the other hand, it is necessary to balance conservation and tourism growth.

In a theoretical context, a number of researchers express their concern about heritage protection when it is utilised for tourism purposes; however, there some have highlighted the role of cultural tourism in protecting heritage assets. For instance, Chhabra (2009) observes that commercialising heritage assets for tourism purposes is essential for creating enough funds for cultural conservation programmes. Moreover, Suntikul et al. (2010) claim that by earning revenues, cultural heritage tourism can fund and stimulate restoration processes and the conservation of cultural heritage assets. Thus, it can be argued that proper tourism management is the best option for both heritage protection and tourism development. In this regard, Wang and Bramwell (2012) remark that commercialising cultural assets for tourism purposes can be mutually beneficial for both heritage preservation and tourism development, although damage to national heritage property can result if the process is mismanaged. More precisely, Ho and McKercher (2004) believe commercialising cultural heritage assets

for tourism purposes might lead to the loss of many irreplaceable historical assets if not managed properly and cautiously. Therefore, utilisation of heritage assets as tourism products can be beneficial only if managed properly; less attention to conservation and a focus on commercialising heritage might damage the assets and then destroy the tourism industry. This means any challenges to conservation might directly or indirectly influence cultural tourism.

In fact, cultural resources have not been protected and utilised correctly in most post-conflict areas. There is a compelling need to maximise these resources as part of general economic development. Many common issues are faced in post-conflict countries related to the tourism industry and cultural heritage protection, such as legislative challenges (Causevic & Lynch, 2013; Winter, 2008) and administrative (Khasalamwa, 2009; Richter, 1999; Winter, 2008) and budgetary issues (Buultjens et al., 2016; Khasalamwa, 2009; Richter, 1999). However, each conflict country will have its own certain circumstances which will need to be addressed accordingly, albeit with benefit from knowledge of similar cases.

### 6.8.3. Recommendation and tools for heritage protection

All tourism resources should be protected from destruction and their quality maintained in the process of tourism development (Sutawa, 2012), because, as Al-hagla (2010) mentions, the process of commodification of culture may threaten the cultural assets themselves if not used sustainably. However, the prominent role of cultural assets in increasing tourist arrivals needs particular attention in terms of investment in heritage preservation.

It is a government responsibility to devote efforts and to set policy to preserving heritage resources both for the tourism industry itself and to conserve resources for

succeeding generations. Indeed, heritage assets require a proper strategy to protect them from damage (Doratli et al., 2004; Önal et al., 1999) A number of research mention that the best way of protecting heritage is to reuse these assets for the original use or similar purposes in a way beneficial for the community (Coad, 2009; El Habashi, 2008; Forster & Kayan, 2009; Shankar & Swamy, 2013); however, in parallel to reusing heritage assets, their systematic maintenance is required for heritage conservation (Coad, 2009; Forster & Kayan, 2009).

In order to succeed, government policy in heritage protection and must be implemented carefully; the government should support the private sector and owners of historical buildings to maintain them. Forster and Kayan (2009) recommend that government bodies should change public policy in order to reconcile it with the implementation process (e.g. a new instruction to facilitate maintenance in practice). Financial subsidies and incentives should be offered for maintaining heritage property (e.g. low-interest loans, and tax breaks for maintaining heritage property) to motivate owners to undertake maintenance. Consistently monitoring the historic buildings to ensure they are safe could be costly and fail to achieve the aims; however, it might benefit from new technology, for instance remotely monitoring buildings by using CCTV cameras. In addition, a list is needed of historic buildings that have been restored in the private sector, as it might increase the sense of pride and encourage other owners to maintain their buildings.

With regard to instructions, De Monchaux and Schuster (1997) identify five techniques as government intervention tools for preserving cultural heritage, each of which delivers a discrete message that might influence the relationship between government and those who can be affected by implementing a particular tool or

combination of tools with regard to all sectors of society as part of a comprehensive heritage conservation policy. Table 2, presented earlier in this thesis, describes each tool and the characteristics of messages delivered to stakeholders.

A number of studies have suggested the efficacy of some of these tools, but in most cases each heritage context is unique, and tools should be chosen accordingly (De Monchaux & Schuster, 1997). Indeed, Stipe (1982) cautions that approaches taken successfully by some countries should not be transposed to other contexts without analytical reflection, because each country has its own circumstances and own national preservation programmes; he argues that all procedures are potentially correct according to the context.

#### 6.9. Chapter summary

This chapter has highlighted the issues in protecting heritage assets in the KFR and the reasons behind the neglect of these vital resources. There are a number of challenges beyond a lack of heritage protection, involving administration, legislation, property, finance, skills and lack of experience in the heritage preservations field, as well as the level of heritage awareness among residents. However, the legal and administrative issues were identified as the most basic barrier to heritage preservation. In relation to the administrative obstacles, there are four major challenges hampering the restoration and maintenance of heritage assets: overlap between government directorates; the spread of bureaucracy in the daily obligations of government departments; vacant historical buildings and heritage neighbourhoods (many are neglected and left empty without proper restoration; and the lack of an official list of all national heritage assets.

Regarding the legislative challenges, currently multiple or dual legislative systems apply to heritage protection in the KFR, which makes for confusion. Further, heritage

assets that are under 200 years old and handicraft heritage products are not considered as heritage. In addition, the current regulations do not allow the Directorate of Antiquities to contract with the private sector for the rent of these assets for the purpose of reusing them for purposes similar their original use. Furthermore, current regulations applied by the MFE prevent the government from funding residents who own historic buildings for the purpose of reconstruction and maintenance.

In addition to these legislative and administrative barriers, social and property barriers have worsened the delays in the cultural preservation programmes in the KFR. Moreover, budgetary restrictions have led to further delays and further damage to heritage assets. Furthermore, the lack of skills and modern technology is one of challenges that delay restoration of cultural heritage assets. Another challenge is the precise process of restoration of assets; all materials should match the natural features of the site, and this has often delayed the preparation of these assets for reuse. The current level of residents' awareness regarding the value of heritage protection is not up to requirements, which might cause some damage to heritage assets.

The chapter discusses the rationale for heritage protection in the KFR in terms of its unique universal value, cultural values and economic benefits for society. It discusses how commercialising heritage assets can help to create funds for protecting heritage assets. The study discusses how reuse of heritage assets has a leading role in the protection of heritage assets by creating funding that can be used for regular maintenance, restoration and reconstruction. It gives a number of recommendations for the government to encourage and support the private sector and historical building owners to invest in restoring heritage assets.

The use of heritage assets as a tourist product is beneficial only if properly managed, because overloading visitors and giving insufficient attention to conservation may damage the assets and then destroy the tourism industry. Proper management will be the best option to ensure heritage protection, and achieving a balance between heritage protection and its reuse for tourism purposes.

## Chapter 7. **Challenges that face cultural tourism in KFR**

In chapter 6, the study explored a number of challenges that face cultural heritage conservation. While cultural tourism mainly relies on heritage assets, this chapter discusses how the issue of protection will affect cultural tourism, what effects the challenges of heritage protection will have on cultural tourism, and how the preservation of cultural assets can drive economic development through tourism. In general, the KFR was ignored by the Iraqi central regimes in terms of investment, ever since the creation of the country in the 1920s. After the new (unified) cabinet of the KRG in 2006, the government has started to recover and invest in different sectors, including the tourism industry. However, so far, there has not been enough consideration of cultural tourism.

Conflict and post-conflict areas often suffer a number of challenges regarding tourism development owing to poor infrastructure, low investment, lack of a proper tourism management plan, and poor implementation. Much research has been conducted regarding cultural tourism management issues, challenges and sustainability, yet there is a lack of studies undertaken to investigate how post-conflict issues affect heritage protection and cultural tourism planning and management. The chapter aims to fill this gap, and so explores factors and challenges that influence cultural tourism development in the KFR, and suggests recommendations for the government to make cultural tourism successful, competitive and sustainable. This chapter identifies several challenges that face cultural tourism, such as lack of investment and poor implementation, administrative problems, legislative requirements, management issues, destination image and marketing difficulties.

### 7.1. Lack of investment, poor implementation and inappropriate planning

Cultural heritage assets in the KFR have not yet been properly developed to attract visitors except for special cases like Erbil Citadel, and sculptures of Khans and the Inishky Cave in Dohuk province. Even here, the Erbil Citadel, the flagship of the KFR cultural tourism industry still needs much funding and an additional five years of maintenance and development, as stated by participant 6:

*“I can confirm in the next five years the Citadel will become a destination if all things are going well, but our work, our process of restoration now is stopped because of lack of funding.” (p6)*

*“In Dohuk only two heritage sites are prepared for visitors, which are sculptures of Khans and Inishky Cave; however, more investment is still needed to be fully ready for visitors.” (p24)*

Another example of a lack of government investment in cultural tourism is the lack of government support for allocating enough space and appropriate locations for museums. Currently, a large amount of the material of great socio-historical interest is not on display for visitors, and even the items on display are not presented to normal exhibition or museum standards because of the lack of space. The building currently housing Erbil Museum is simply too small.

*“This building for Erbil Museum is too small. We need a bigger place to allow us to show our resources properly... there are many resources that have not been exhibited because we do not have enough space. Even the current resources on display are not organised to standard exhibition or museum standards.” (p4, the Head of Erbil Museum)*

Confirmation of lack of planning and the government neglect of the tourism sector came from participant 21:

*“Another challenge of tourism development in KFR is that the current and former cabinet government completely relied on exporting oil for governmental spending and did not take consideration for the other income sources.” (p21)*

In relation to museums, participant 8 claimed that there was a hall in Erbil Museum to display handicraft cultural resources, but these attractive cultural resources are now in storage because of space limitations. However, he mentioned a plan to build a big national museum in Erbil, and one of the halls of that museum would be for handicraft products. However, this is just a plan and there is no timeline for its implementation. In addition, participant 1 mentioned that the Folklore Museum was now closed and all its materials (more than 1000 items) had been put into storage as there was nowhere else to display them.

*“We have a Directorate related to the movable culture resources of the folklore museum. Mr Wria Ahmed was managing this museum, now it is closed and they do not have a location to open a museum and they collected all the material in storage. They have around 1000 materials or products.” (p1)*

The issue of lack of investment may be due to poor implementation of the current plan and a lack of integrated tourism planning. There is a strategic plan (2007–2025) for the tourism industry in the KFR. However, it is not an integrated plan, as it only partially includes some small projects for developing cultural tourism, and these have not yet been implemented.

*“The government has not used cultural resources properly and using them was not based on appropriate planning and programmes. We have a plan, but we have not implemented it yet. We have a master plan, a strategic plan until 2025. One of the points in the master plan is cultural and historical resources, and we support these kinds of resources.” (p12)*

Although a number of the participants mentioned that poor investment is due to lack of funding, in the KFR, the budgetary issue became apparent only in 2014. This means the problem is more likely to be in management, planning and implementation.

*“The second barrier is funding. In the beginning we did not have this barrier; it came in 2014.” (p6)*

The issue of poor implementation has been widely discussed in the literature (Berry & Ladkin, 1997; Buckley, 2012; Dinica, 2009; Logar, 2010; Mycoo, 2006; Tosun, 2001), and this is a common issue in the developing world (Mycoo, 2006; Tosun, 2001). In practice, tourism development is often not sustainable where there is poor implementation of tourism planning (Buckley, 2012). In addition, Mycoo (2006) claims that the practical achievement of sustainable tourism development does not match with the theoretical context, as there is often a problem in implementation. Unfortunately, poor implementation has become a common issue and one of the major challenges to tourism policy and planning. In this regard, Berry and Ladkin (1997) state that poor implementation is a fundamental challenge for successful sustainability in developed and developing countries where typically there is a significant gap between tourism policy and implementation.

However, it seems that poor implementation is mostly an issue in developing countries, in particular those that have to deal with conflict. In practice, it is hard to

implement the theoretical approach of sustainable tourism development in developing countries, because of unstable socio-economic and political conditions, and also, the concepts of sustainable tourism have generally been designed by developed countries, and so are not necessarily directly applicable to developing countries' circumstances (Tosun, 2001).

Another reason for failure to implement tourism planning properly in developing countries might be that residents are rarely involved in tourism planning and policy. In this regard, Dinica (2009) claims that the main reason for poor implementation of many of the policies and tourism plans is that public authorities do not seriously take into account the sustainability of tourism, where political ideologies dominate the public authorities when deciding what policy instruments are eligible to be implemented for sustainable tourism.

Public participation in tourism planning and the decision making process is not useful just for implementation, but also for the development of sustainable tourism. It helps the community to accept government plans to develop the tourism sector (Cole, 2006), it encourage residents to support the tourism industry (Potgieter & Litheko, 2016), it helps to improve tourism planning and decision making (Hung et al., 2011), and it can facilitate tourism development and sustainability, especially where public participation involves a wide range of stakeholders (Garrod & Fyall, 2000).

However, the efficiency of public participation in the phase of setting integrated tourism policy depends on stakeholder's involvement. Yung and Chan (2011) argue that it requires a balancing of the interests and views of different stakeholders in a way that is beneficial to all parties. Dinica (2009) reports that the debate between multiple stakeholders (via workshops for example) will help to address knowledge gaps and

formulate common visions. Aas et al. (2005) believe that giving equal opportunities in debate can build a general consensus and wider collaboration in the future.

To conclude, although an appropriate tourism policy is essential for sustainable cultural tourism, its implementation is just as important because policy cannot achieve its desired goals without implementation. Thus, the tourism planners in the KFR should discuss tourism policy with all stakeholders before implementing that policy; otherwise it might fail to be implemented, and might not cover all the aspects it should.

## 7.2. Marketing and destination image

Marketing and advertising can play a core role in increasing numbers of tourists, but less government investment in tourism marketing and less attention to advertising is considered one of the challenges that faces the entire tourism industry in the KFR. For instance, participant 7 believed that the KFR had not been successful in tourism marketing until now, although government has started to focus on marketing, but it is still not up to the required level. Moreover, there was a lack of advertisements abroad for marketing the current tourism resources.

*“A fourth barrier is promotion and marketing. Without promotion and marketing, how does tourism work? ... There are no activities or efforts abroad to say that our tourism resources now exist.” (p6)*

International tourists in focus group 1 confirmed the lack of advertisements to introduce tourist attractions and they reported that they had not seen any TV channels promoting destinations; even in the hotels, restaurants, airports and roadsides they had not seen any advertisements for cultural attractions. This might be due to a lack of an

integrated marketing scheme for the cultural tourism industry in the KFR or might due to lack of funding, as participant 12 claimed that the government was not successful in marketing tourism resources abroad because of budgetary issues. Another participant believed that the media had not played a core role in promoting cultural tourism resources, and the KFR had not utilised new technology for advertising.

*“We lack experience in using technology in particular to promote our cultural resources. I repeat that the media has not played its role in promoting cultural resources... The media was not successful in promoting tourist sites.” (p11)*

Another reason for poor marketing might be the political situation in Iraq. Instability in Iraq became one of the challenges to tourism development in the KFR because people abroad see all of Iraq as one situation. Fundamentally, the barrage of international news reporting on the unstable political conflicts in Iraq continually reduces the number of visitors to KFR, because the Iraqi images are conflated with KFR in most people’s perceptions. Whereas in reality the KFR is relatively safe (Curry, 2014; Government Digital Service, 2017; Jimenez & Kabachnik, 2012; Overseas Security Advisory Council OSAC, 2016).

*“Iraq is recognised as a war zone and as an unstable area around the world. Kurdistan legally is a part of Iraq; so many tourists abroad imagine or understand that all Iraq is in the same situation, therefore a limited number of tourists come to visit Kurdistan... In many countries abroad, they do not know Kurdistan is a safe place for tourism, because Iraq is recognised as an unstable area.” (p12)*

Violence in the middle and west of Iraq and other unstable countries in the Middle East and North Africa region has not only had an effect on the tourism industry in the KFR, but has even led to a decline in the number of tourist arrivals in stable and famous tourist destinations like Jordan. According to the Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities of Jordan, the number of international tourist arrivals to Jordan dropped from 9 million in 2010 to 6.8 in 2011, and tourism growth has not recovered to date; in 2016 arrivals stood at 6.4 million (Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities of Jordan, 2010, 2011, 2016). The tourism industry in some cases can be affected by the type of political regime in power. Hudson (2016) claims that the military regime and associations with political repression gave a negative image to Myanmar's destinations and hindered tourism for decades.

Destination image plays a core role in tourist preferences when they choose a tourist destination, and whenever the destination records a high level of security, stability, hospitality, and lower living expenses and other variables this increases the level of enjoyment and attracts a greater number of tourists. In this regard, Gertner (2007) states that positive branding in some stable areas has facilitated national economies by attracting investment, reflected in successful businesses and factories, and an increase in visitor numbers. On the other hand, image problems (as a result of either incorrect news reported by the media, or widespread issues such as political unrest, natural disasters, violence and economic downturns in particular) may undermine a destination's competitiveness in the tourism market. For instance, Mansfeld (1999) reports that Israel faced several fluctuations in tourism growth during 1967 to 1999 due to the negative image that occurred after the 1967 conflict, which brought high-risk tourism images to tourism destinations, and led to a decline of tourism growth, spreading uncertainty among tourist stakeholders. Even government and tourism

agencies interested in recovering positive destination images, however, cannot persuade tourists unless the reasons that led to negative destination images are first addressed.

The literature suggests a number of tools to address negative destination images. Bassols (2016) claims that the factors that led to a recovery in the tourism industry in Colombia were diminishing militias' activities, the spread of peace and security in the region, the ending of travel warnings about visits to Colombia, and promotional initiatives that focused on international rather than national tourists. In the case of Haiti, Seraphin et al. (2016) believe that the pre-visit information based on giving truthful reports and making potential tourists knowledgeable about the place can reduce the negative images of destinations. Moreover, a strategic approach for recovering a negative destination image could be achieved by involving residents, enhancing local pride, vision formation, and the use of a tourism master plan that defines long- and short-term goals (Hudson, 2016). To increase tourists' confidence in Jordan as a destination, Liu et al. (2016) suggest that the government could provide information prior to travel, through travel agencies, airports, hotels, restaurants and tourist information centres. Angelkova et al. (2012) state that managing destination brand depends on local people, quality of products, policies and organisational factors. Tourist destinations require a marketing system that ensures the maintenance of a positive destination image. Participant 9 suggested that the government should promote all cultural resources by producing films for all cultural heritage assets in cities with different traditions, and arranging annual festivals that could include cultural cooking, horse racing, wearing traditional clothes, handicrafts and natural village activities. In this regard, Mansfeld (1999) suggests that recovering and revising a positive image requires the cooperation and integration of all stakeholders in the

tourism industry, including government agencies, tourism operators and the media, in order to reform the negative image of the tourist destination. The suggestion given by Mansfeld can help decision makers in post-conflict regions such as the KFR to focus on cooperation between all stakeholders when designing the marketing strategy. This is because marketing and advertising play a major role in recovering the destination image in post-conflict regions (Mansfeld, 1999; Vitic & Ringer, 2008).

It can be argued that the impact of conflict and political instability in Iraq is one of the most powerful factors that negatively affects Kurdistan's tourism sector, with multiple secondary impacts on ancillary businesses related to tourism. Meanwhile, the continued political conflict between the KRG and the Iraqi federal government needs to be addressed. However, any further agreement between the Iraqi federal government and the KRG should not be at the expense of the heritage and tourism industry, where each federal region needs to have its own authorities to be able to issue regulations appropriate to their local public policy and objectives, without negative impacts on other regions. For instance, Causevic and Lynch (2013) analyse the impacts of political situations on tourism development in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) after the Balkan conflicts, focusing on legislative challenges. Those authors claim that tourism policy falls under the jurisdiction of the Federation of B&H and the Republic Srpska; however, in practice both entities apply their own regulations to manage the tourism sector based on the Dayton Agreement (Article IV). They believed that the Dayton Agreement succeeded in bringing peace to the region, but did not mention how tourism planning and other economic relations should be designed at state level.

In general, a negative destination image highly impacts on international tourists, who rely on news for assessing the safety of destinations. Therefore, developing cultural tourism surely requires investment in marketing and advertising in order to achieve a positive destination image for the KFR. On the other hand, marketing is not just important for recovering destination image in post-conflict countries; currently, there is much competition between destinations to increase their market share. This competition makes more pressure for marketers to focus more on the effectiveness of their marketing spend. More investment in marketing attracts greater numbers of tourists, implying that an increased return on investment (Pratt, McCabe, Cortes-Jimenez, & Blake, 2010). Konecnik and Go (2008) claim that destination marketers should identify strengths and weakness of their competitors and take strategic action to attract greater numbers of tourists in a targeted market. In the case of Slovenia, for instance, they suggest that the marketing tools could be advertising, public relations, sales promotions, brochures, and the internet, due to lack of funding. Thus, the KFR has to rely on tools that do not need much funding.

### 7.3. Hospitality

Local residents can play a primary role in providing a high level of hospitality in a destination, which will help to increase tourists' satisfaction and consequently increase the number of visitors. According to Aas et al. (2005), local people's support is very important for increasing the level of hospitality and consequently increasing the level of tourists' enjoyment. In the case of the KFR, there was disagreement among participants over the level of citizen awareness of tourism traditions. The government participants involved in the study believed that the level of awareness is very poor, while the local business operators and tourists report that there is a relatively high level of hospitality. For instance, tourists in both the focus groups reported that they

were satisfied with some of the services and facilities such as hotels, restaurants, roads, airports, security, tour guides and hospitality. However, they were not satisfied with their visits to heritage attractions, as discussed in section 5.6. Participant 6, a government representative, was concerned about the negative impact that the local residents have on the tourism sector in the KFR in terms of hospitality, because he believed that when visitors arrive at destinations some do not feel welcomed and face things that run counter to tourism traditions.

*“Fifth, the lack of public awareness. If residents do not have enough tourism awareness, when a visitor comes to visit the city and goes to restaurants, they might face something against tourism tradition... we do not have a traditional tourism sector, which is a barrier.” (p6)*

An example of low resident awareness was mentioned by participant 3, who claimed that local residents caused environmental pollution by throwing litter, dumping trash, and recycling items when visiting local destinations.

*“There is a low level of awareness among residents about cultural resources, so we find people visiting cultural sites and leaving litter, dumping trash and doing other things that negatively affect the site.” (p3)*

In general, the level of residents’ support depended on their level of awareness regarding tourism traditions and how residents see the impacts of tourism growth on the economy and environment, and cultural in respects. For example, Sutawa (2012) claims that, from a socio-cultural perspective, it is difficult to protect local communities from the negative impacts of tourism. It is necessary to consider carefully how increased tourism might affect both the local population and the environment at

the destination (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Unfortunately, despite tourism's economic benefits, it has some negative impacts on society and the environment. While tourism heavily relies on the environment, the tourism development often does not properly consider environmental issues in tourist destinations because of a lack of knowledge, responsibility and planning (Butler, 1991).

Consequently, tourism growth influences the host community's perspectives either because of its direct impacts on the community or because of its impacts on the environment, society and culture. Stylidis et al. (2014) claim that the more residents have a positive perspective on tourism development and its economic and socio-cultural impacts, the more residents are encouraged to support the tourism industry; similarly, with lower negative impacts on the environment, more support is likely for tourism growth among the local community.

A suggestion was made by participants to increase the residents' level of awareness, for example by supporting local handicraft products and by involving residents in some cultural tourism activities, like festivals.

*"We should involve them in the process of tourism development, in particular in local cultural activities and handicraft products... that might attract more tourists." (p10)*

*"We encourage and support residents via the media to get involved in cultural activities. For example, involving residents in the Nowruz Celebrations Festival led to it becoming an important and famous carnival that promotes Kurdish cultural products and traditions, music and food." (p12)*

In conclusion, a proper level of residents' awareness leads to increased hospitality, because when residents understand the importance of tourism development for the community, they are more likely to support the tourism sector. Therefore, some participants suggested an increase was necessary in both the level of understanding of tourism traditions among residents, and the level of hospitality, by involving them in job opportunities related to the tourism sector, involving them in some cultural tourism activities, by supporting landlords to benefit from their historical buildings for tourism purposes, by supporting handicraft cultural business, and by providing guidance programmes.

#### 7.4. Other challenges

The barriers to cultural protection that discussed in chapter 6 also bring a set of challenges to the tourism industry. The following sections discuss the potential negative impacts of these issues on cultural tourism.

##### 7.4.1. Administrative challenges

There are a number of managerial challenges to cultural tourism. Firstly, the interactive work and sharing of responsibilities among different directorates to manage cultural resources is considered one of the biggest administrative challenges related to cultural tourism in KFR. This is because unspecified responsibilities of government directorates for protecting archaeological sites may lead to their degradation and consequently a loss of potential international tourist arrivals. Overlapping responsibilities is due to a lack of clear specification of a departments' duties, which is a common issue in many developing countries (Tosun, 2000). When two or more governmental departments are managing the tourism industry, overlapping responsibilities will occur in such countries (Mowforth & Munt, 2015).

Secondly, the proliferation of bureaucracy is considered another most influential administrative challenge that faces cultural tourism in KFR. This creates impediments and inefficiencies among the directorates in fulfilling their obligations to protect heritage assets. This issue may be due to the weak and fragmented structures of government in such countries which often suffer from corruption, injustice and non-respect of laws (Mvondo, 2009).

To overcome both these issues, a number of participants suggested changing the structure of government tourism administration, specifically by combining all directorates related to tourism and heritage protection, including tangible and intangible assets, under the responsibility of one board or one minister.

*“I think we need a directorate to be responsible for all intangible movable cultural resources to work in parallel with the Antiquities Directorate ... all cultural resources should be managed and supervised by one party in order to protect them, maintain them, and use them for tourism purposes.” (p12)*

Participant 21 recommended a very precise point: to unify all directorates related to the environment, culture, tourism and heritage resources into one ministry, to reduce bureaucracy, increase cooperation and help to make decisions faster and easier.

Participant 20 also supported linking directorates with the Ministry of the Environment because of their similar aims and objectives, which are protection of the environment, heritage and tourist assets.

*“Having a number of directorates with different names but with similar interests under different ministries makes work and obligations more complex and spreads more bureaucracy in directorates’ daily work. For*

*example, when there is the potential for investment in the tourism industry, the environment ministry might not agree to implement the project because of their rules, or might delay it because of the long process of getting approval, and similarly for other directorates. Thus, it will be better to combine all similar government bodies such as antiquities, tourism, environment, folklore, and all other tangible and intangible heritage assets, in one ministry.” (p20)*

A third administrative issue that might lead to the loss of irreplaceable tourism resources is leaving empty historical buildings for a long time without restoration. The government should either utilise and maintain these assets regularly or, if it is unable to do so, should give this opportunity to private sector firms, and encourage them to invest in heritage attractions by offering facilities and tax cuts.

Finally, a register is needed of all heritage attractions and national heritage sites. Currently, there is no formal approved list of all cultural tourist attractions in the KFR, and this needs to be addressed.

*“There is no final list approved for heritage assets in the KFR. Take Garmiyān Administration (province) as an example – we do not have statistics for a final list of heritage assets in our province.” (p22)*

Thus, the KRG should determine what cultural resources there are, record them and then conserve them in order to benefit from them for tourism purposes and to make them sources of income.

*“In general, in Kurdistan, we have not identified all cultural resources yet, we have not developed or studied them, the resources are not*

*prepared so these are barriers, as without them we cannot develop tourism, and we cannot do promotions... When visitors come to Iraq, they have to spend lots of time and effort to find cultural attractions and they have to ask if there are any or not... First, we should determine what tourism resources there are, because tourism needs resources.”*

*(p6)*

This issue is largely attributable to the continuing conflict in the region, which has reduced the government's ability to allocate sufficient funds and enough attention to all sectors in KFR. Determining and mapping cultural attractions is considered an initial step in preparations for the expansion of cultural tourism.

#### 7.4.2. Legislative challenges

Section 6.2 discussed the issue of legislation that hampers the protection of cultural heritage assets in the KFR; this issue also directly impacts on cultural tourism. A lower level of protection of heritage assets leads to loss of the notable tourist attractions. The legislative challenges in the KFR are, firstly, multiple legislative systems, with different sets of regulations applying to the management of heritage attractions. Secondly, many cultural assets do not fall under the heritage legislation, notably historical buildings under 200 years old (see section 6.2). Thirdly, there is no government directorate responsible for protecting handicraft cultural assets. Another legislative challenge is that the current regulation prevents government supporting the private sector to develop heritage attractions.

The government should relatively change rules and instructions to protect tourism resources and support private sector to develop their business. The handicraft market

could attract more tourist arrivals. Lolan Mustafa (p14), the manager of the Kurdish Textile Museum (private business) in Erbil Citadel, claimed that

*“Before listing Erbil Citadel in UNESCO’s WHS list, there were around 300 visitors to the museum daily and 1000 visitors at weekends... now nobody can access the Citadel because of the conservation programme in place.” (p14)*

Other examples of private handicraft shops are “Khalis Antique Shop”, managed by Kalis Antique (p16), and “Erbil Antiques Stores”, managed by Karim Shexani (p15). The latter shop is located 3 miles from the city centre but still attracts tourists; however, if it was closer to the city centre and Erbil Citadel, it might attract many more tourists.

*“Every day about 300 people visit my shop. My shop attracts more tourists and some of them just come to see what is around. I am very happy to see people visiting my shop even if they don't buy anything because I like my job.” (p15)*

Some participants suggested there should be more support for private businesses that make handicraft cultural products and more market opportunities to develop their business. Local cultural markets might attract greater numbers of tourists, or at least might lead them to stay longer at destinations.

*“Fourth, supporting people who work in handicraft cultural products might help them to develop their business. In addition, cultural product markets would help them to sell their products.” (p7)*

The support might include tax breaks for their businesses or low interest rates on loans, because their products might not be able to compete with modern alternative products. Participant 21 suggested that government and parliament should prepare legislation for the tourism industry to be able to encourage the private sector to invest in this field, to encourage cooperation between directorates, and to facilitate the allocation of land for investors, and to allow tourism directorates to be self-financing.

*“Additional barriers are the lack of government support for cultural tourism. I mean funding support to encourage cultural tourism. For example, someone might open cultural business activities or any cultural services in historical buildings such as in Erbil Citadel and in Tahjil Residential Lane located in Erbil... These kinds of business in these places cannot compete in the market with the modern shops that provide the same or alternative activities and services... the government should support them, should give them tax breaks for their businesses, and free or lower interest rates for loans.” (p6)*

In general, the private sector might run cultural sites better than the public sector and play a role to stimulate cultural tourism, because tourism sites managed by the private sector are often open for longer hours, and might provide better services and facilities. Participant 1 mentioned the example of the Iraqi federal government.

*“In Baghdad the government organised and managed cultural sites for tourism purposes, but they were not successful compared with the private sector.” ( p1)*

This means the government should encourage the private sector and landlords to benefit from their historical buildings by utilising them for tourism purposes, such as turning historical buildings into exhibitions or museums.

*“The private sector can turn historical buildings into exhibitions or museums that people pay to enter, but this should be organised in terms of how much should go to the government and how much to maintain the building, and what proportion should go to the private operator.” (p3)*

However, to guarantee sustainable cultural tourism and provide high-quality services, while, in parallel, generating revenues, participant 1 believed that managing cultural resources by the private sector should be under government supervision. Such sites should be regularly visited by members of the Archaeological Directorate and should be checked for prices, how many languages the staff know and use, and the availability of café, restaurant and other facilities. Where the government gives opportunities to the private sector to invest in cultural tourism, the role of government can be limited to organisation, preparation, supervision and control, without direct interaction in the tourism market. However, this condition of imposing government supervision on all private sector activities in cultural tourism would guarantee cultural tourism resources in the KFR are used sustainably.

#### 7.4.3. Property barriers to cultural tourism

Property and social barriers delay the conservation process, as discussed in section 6.3, and will also affect the development of cultural tourism, because historical sites cannot be used for tourism purposes without completion of the restoration and maintenance programme. Thus, in order to develop cultural tourism and overcome property barriers, the government needs an appropriate plan that is implemented properly. A

plan is in fact in place in the KFR to develop and invest in cultural resources for tourism, regardless of sites' inhabitation status, but it is limited to some of historical buildings and is not a comprehensive plan. The plan should tackle the issues discussed in section 6.3.

*“Some historical residential areas are still inhabited and some now are empty. We plan and set programmes to use these cultural resources properly and coordinate activities for each for tourism purposes.” (p5)*

#### 7.4.4. Insufficient funding

Insufficient funding is a fundamental challenge to the development of cultural tourism in the KFR, and causes a number of other challenges. The KRG is unable to invest in the restoration and conservation of historical buildings for tourism purposes.

*“Actually we do not have enough funding to prepare historical buildings to be used by second parties and to be used for tourism purposes.” (p11)*

Therefore, in order to make cultural tourism viable in KFR, the government must invest in heritage attractions in order to prepare and use these heritage assets to attract tourists.

*“The main barrier now is funding... the government should allocate appropriate budgets to allow us to fulfil our obligations properly for maintenance, for training, and for supporting this field, because cultural tourism is considered to provide sustainable revenue to the country and nation.” (p2)*

#### 7.4.5. Services and facilities

In the case of the KFR, as discussed in section 5.6, the quality of services and facilities such as restaurants, hotels and tourism operators is good. However, according to participants, services and tourist facilities require more investment or need better organisation, in particular in heritage attraction. For instance, tourists in focus group 1 who visited Erbil Citadel complained of a lack of basic facilities there. To make the site more attractive, they suggested opening a restaurant, or cafe, and arranging for a folklore festival, singing concerts, antique shops and gift shops in the Citadel. In addition, tourists in focus groups 1 and 2 complained also of the lack of public transport, and a lack of signs directing tourists to the attractions; this was all in addition to the restrictive length of visas for them to stay in Erbil. (Currently, a visa stipulates the length of a business or tourist visit, but, for example, those who come for the Erbil International Fair, which often lasts 12–15 days, will get a visa to stay for only 15 days, and no opportunity to stay longer.)

Therefore, first and foremost, the process of obtaining visas to visit the KFR needs to be made easier and the maximum length of stay should be increased. Secondly, an appropriate number of hotels and restaurants is needed, as at present they are not distributed appropriately in relation to destination needs and according to a comprehensive plan. Thirdly, services for tourists need to be improved, such as taxi drivers, public transportations and tour guides. To tackle these challenges, the KFR requires a proper plan for developing cultural tourism in a sustainable manner in a way that maximises revenue while reducing negative impacts on the environment and community. However, this plan should be based on a number of principles, as discussed in recommendation section in the next chapter.

### 7.5. Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed how the issues of heritage protection will affect cultural tourism, and explores further challenges to the development of cultural tourism in the KFR. First, lack of investment and poor implementation mean that many heritage assets in the KFR have not been properly prepared to attract visitors, and the current plan for tourism development has not been implemented properly. The reasons of the failure to implement tourism planning could be: the fact that residents have not been involved in the tourism planning and decision-making process; a lack of management and planning; the fact that the tourism sector as a whole has been largely ignored; and a lack of funding. Tourism planners in the KFR should discuss tourism policy with all stakeholders before attempting to implement a policy. To make cultural tourism viable in KFR, the government must invest or encourage the private sector to invest in heritage attractions in order to prepare these heritage assets for use in attracting tourists.

Second, it will be necessary to counter negative destination images. The KFR is relatively safe; any risks tourists face are essentially common to many tourist destinations worldwide. However, the political instability in Iraq as a whole gives the KFR a negative image to tourists, and it is likely that many potential visitors avoid travelling to the KFR. Marketing and advertising can play a core role in recovering a positive image of the KFR as a destination and in increasing the number of tourists. However, currently, there is little government investment in tourism marketing and even less attention to advertising, and much more is needed if the KFR is to recover a positive image. Recommendations for the government are given in chapter 8.

Third, residents' level of awareness of tourism needs to increase. There was disagreement among participants over the level of citizen awareness of tourism traditions; however, a majority of government representatives supported setting a plan to increase awareness to support tourism development. The level of residents' support depends on their level of awareness regarding tourism traditions, and how they see the impacts of tourism growth on the economy, environment and their culture. The government should increase the level of resident's awareness by involving them both in decision-making and in some tourism activities.

Fourth, there is an administrative challenge. The negative role of administrative challenges to heritage protection is related to a set of managerial problems. The administrative challenges in the KFR are: the interactive work and the sharing of responsibilities; bureaucracy; leaving historical buildings empty for long periods without restoration; and the lack of an official list of all heritage attractions in national heritage sites. These administrative challenges may lead to the loss of many resources and the loss of potential international tourist arrivals.

Fifth, there are legislative challenges. Firstly, there are multiple systems of legislation and regulation applying to the management of heritage attractions. Secondly, historical buildings and immobile cultural resources less than 200 years old do not fall under heritage law. Thirdly, there is no government directorate responsible for the protection of handicraft cultural assets, while the handicraft market for cultural products might attract more tourist arrivals. Fourthly, the current regulations prevent the government to fund private sector for the development of heritage attractions, or even accepting investment from the private sector. These legislative barriers negatively impact on the

development of cultural tourism; these barriers need to be addressed by the issuing of new laws and regulations.

Another challenge is presented by property barriers. Property barriers to the protection of heritage assets negatively impact on cultural tourism because they often delay the preparation of these building for use to attract tourists. Historical sites cannot be used for tourism purposes without completing a restoration programme. Thus, to develop cultural tourism, the government should set and implement a proper plan to overcome these issues.

Finally, attention needs to be given to the services and facilities that will be required if cultural tourism is to be developed to its full potential in the KFR. While the level of services and facilities is good in some areas, such as restaurants, hotels and tourism operators, more investment and/or better organisation is required, especially in areas such as visas, taxi drivers, public transportation and tour guides.

## Chapter 8. Conclusions and recommendation

### 8.1. Introduction

Although the KFR is rich in unique archaeological sites, from a range of historical epochs, these valuable and attractive tourism assets have so far not been protected from damage and not managed or organised very well to attract international tourists. Indeed, only a few cultural heritage sites have received adequate investment. This is largely attributable to conflict in the region (political as well as armed conflict), which has brought a set of challenges to most sectors of the economy, including the tourism industry. Table 17 summarises the major problems for developing cultural tourism and protecting heritage in KFR.

Key challenges	description of the problems
Governance issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- overlap between government directorates</li> <li>- spread of bureaucracy in government departments</li> <li>- unoccupied the historic buildings and heritage neighbourhoods</li> <li>- unregistered heritage attractions in one approved national list</li> <li>- poor management</li> <li>- failure to involve residents in tourism planning and decision-making</li> <li>- Poor implementation of a plan, policy, and heritage restoration programme</li> </ul>
Legislative issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dual or multiple systems of legislation apply to heritage protection</li> <li>- many of cultural assets do not consider as a heritage to be protected by Law</li> <li>- MFE regulation prevent funding private sector or owners of historical buildings</li> <li>- there is no government directorate responsible for the protection or promotion of handicraft cultural assets</li> <li>- there is no law for organising the tourism industry overall</li> </ul>
Other issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative destination image</li> <li>- lack of funding</li> <li>- the weak level of residents' awareness related to tourism traditions and protecting heritage</li> <li>- Skill shortages and lack of modern technology for protecting heritage assets</li> <li>- the long length of heritage protection procedure</li> </ul>

Table 17: Key challenges for developing cultural tourism and protecting heritage in KFR

The primary aims of this thesis were to understand the current context for cultural tourism; to identify the major challenges to heritage protection and the development of cultural tourism in the KFR as a post-conflict region; to suggest solutions to these issues; and then to formulate a number of recommendations for the relevant government bodies.

The study has achieved these aims by addressing two research questions. First, what are the specific post-conflict political issues that affect cultural heritage protection, and how do these issues impact on the development of cultural tourism? Second, what are the influences and factors affecting the development of sustainable cultural tourism in the KFR? What, then, are the recommendations that can be made to the government for the successful, sustainable development of cultural tourism?

Section 8.2 summarises the results of the study, to answer the research questions. It explores the combination of challenges and opportunities for both heritage protection and the development of cultural tourism by analysing government perspectives ascertained in interview, and through focus groups with representatives of the local community, tourists and business operators in the KFR, as an example of a post-conflict situation. Section 8.4 then presents a number of recommendations for government, based on the study's findings.

## 8.2. Key study findings

In the 1970s and 1980s, terrorism and violence began to have direct impacts on tourism sector, often leading to a decrease in the number of international tourist arrivals to destinations (Richter & Waugh, 1986), but few studies had been conducted to discuss the relationship between tourism and political instability. However, since

the 1990s, the issues of conflict and terrorism have been increasingly a focus of tourism development studies, in particular when ethnic conflict reached central Europe in the former Yugoslavia, and when tourists or tourist sites became the direct focus for terror attacks. A wide range of research has been conducted and two international conferences were held in 1995 in Sweden (Johansson & Nyberg, 1996) and in 1997 in Zagreb (Sönmez, 1998) to discuss the issues of conflict and terrorism on tourism. Additionally, the effects of political instability and conflicts on tourism development had also become a topic of research (Bassols, 2016; Buultjens et al., 2016; Causevic & Lynch, 2013; Hudson, 2016; Johansson & Nyberg, 1996; Khasalamwa, 2009; Mansfeld, 1999; Novelli et al., 2012; Richter, 1999; Richter & Waugh, 1986; Sönmez, 1998; Vitic & Ringer, 2008; Winter, 2008)

Most of these studies focused on identifying issues of conflict and its impact on the number of tourist arrivals to destinations. They have identified that poor infrastructure, lack of services, low investment (Dwyer et al., 2009; Novelli et al., 2012; Richter, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Winter, 2008), legislative (Causevic & Lynch, 2013; Winter, 2008), administrative (Khasalamwa, 2009; Richter, 1999; Winter, 2008), budgetary (Buultjens et al., 2016; Khasalamwa, 2009; Richter, 1999), environmental and social issues (Novelli et al., 2012), as well as impacts on destination image are all associated with conflict and political instability (Bassols, 2016; Gertner, 2007; Hudson, 2016; Liu et al., 2016; Mansfeld, 1999; Seddighi et al., 2001; Vitic & Ringer, 2008).

Yet, relatively little attention has been paid to the effect of post-conflict issues on the preservation of tourism resources or specifically on particular heritage protection. What are the potential challenges to the conservation of heritage assets in post-conflict

countries, and how these challenges will impact on the future potential for cultural tourism development represents a key omission from the literature. What government actions are required to preserve heritage assets from deterioration in post-conflict restructuring, and how tourism can be used as a key pillar of government strategy are important aspects of knowledge that could inform future studies. This study contributed to fill this gap by exploring the impact of conflict and political instability on cultural heritage conservation, presenting the major challenges that the KRG faces in its cultural conservation, discussing the anticipated solutions and what strategy should be followed to manage and protect heritage assets.

Furthermore, the preservation of heritage assets has been discussed in the literature (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; McKercher et al., 2005; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012; Murzyn-Kupisz & Dzialek, 2013), but mostly the focus is on preservation of resources in the context of sustainable tourism (often in the context of over-utilisation). This study discussed the preservation of heritage assets in the context of under-utilisation in post-conflict situation, in which many heritage assets are neglected and left empty without reuse such the case of the KFR. The study contributes to the literature by exploring the impact of challenges for heritage protection on cultural tourism development, and contributes to the literature on cultural tourism, by addressing key challenges in the development of this type of development and by identifying the types of policies and planning required which could be transferred to wider contexts. The specific areas of contribution are highlighted in the following sections.

### 8.3. Challenges of heritage protection and cultural tourism development

In general, developing countries lack of alternative economic options (Hunter, 1997), and due to low standards of living in developing countries, the focus often is on

economic growth with less attention afforded to environment and tourism resource protection (Mowforth & Munt, 2015; Uhlig, 1992). In conflict and post-conflict countries, the situation is exacerbated, and it depends on the type and length of conflict in these regions. Furthermore, the structure of government has a crucial role in protecting tourism resources and managing the tourism industry as discussed in detail in the literature chapter. In the case of the KFR, the study identified a number of reasons for the lack of heritage protection and cultural tourism development, relating to administration issues; legislative issues; services and facilities; destination image; poor implementation; property barriers; the level of residents' awareness; the lack of skills and modern technology; the process of heritage protection.

#### 8.3.1. Administration issues

It appears that there were four major administrative challenges hampering the daily duties and practices of the Directorate of Antiquities in managing the restoration and maintenance of heritage sites in the KFR.

The first administrative challenge is the overlap between government directorates in their work. There is a sharing of functions and responsibilities among government departments in relation to historical buildings and other tangible and intangible cultural resources. The dual management or sharing of functions for heritage protection or heritage utilisation among the various directorates may lead to inappropriate uses of these resources. It might even lead to the loss of many attractive cultural tourism resources and thereby the loss of potential international tourist arrivals. The second administrative challenge is the spread of bureaucracy in government departments. Unnecessary bureaucracy delays the restoration process and

heritage protection programmes and so may damage unique cultural heritage attractions.

To address the above two administrative problems, the study suggested that the administrative structure for the management of tourism assets, and in fact for heritage protection and the tourism industry more widely, needs reorganisation. To achieve this, two scenarios have been suggested. First, the KRG requires all directorates related to tourism and antiquities (including tangible and intangible assets) to be combined, under the responsibility of one government body (a ministry or high council board). Second, it is suggested that the above directorates should join the Ministry of the Environment, to become a part of a single tourism administrative structure. This is to achieve better collaboration among the different directorates that have the aims and objectives of protecting tourism resources and the environment. This would reduce bureaucracy, facilitate the protection, maintenance and utilisation of all tourism assets, protect the environment and help to make decisions timelier.

The third administrative issue concerns vacant historical buildings and heritage neighbourhoods. The restoration process will be much more costly if buildings are left empty for a long time without any maintenance. While the KFR suffers from budgetary shortages, which limit its ability to utilise and maintain these assets, the government might be able to address this issue by giving this opportunity to the private sector, with encouragement to invest in heritage assets for business development without changing the nature of the original buildings.

Finally, there is no official list, approved by government, of all the heritage attractions in the KFR, and this needs to be addressed. Without such a list, it is not possible to prioritise or adequately plan the protection of heritage assets, or their preparation for

the purposes of cultural tourism. This requires urgent government action. It is recommended that a high commission be established to be responsible for the recording of all heritage sites in KFR. The commission might nominate heritage sites in a tentative list first, which could then be refined according to a number of criteria, to produce a final official listing.

### 8.3.2. Legislative issues

The current law hinders the Directorate of Antiquities and the Directorate of Tourism in fulfilment of their daily obligations to deal with heritage assets. This in turn may result in the loss of many tangible and intangible cultural resources, or may delay or prevent the use of these resources for the development of cultural tourism.

Firstly, currently dual or even multiple systems of legislation apply to heritage protection in the KFR. At the same time, there is no law or regulation for the tourism industry. This makes for confusion and negatively affects the development of cultural tourism. Secondly, a many of cultural assets do not falls under current regulations, as they do not apply to buildings that under 200 years old. Thirdly, the current regulations prevent the MFE funding owners of historical buildings in the private sector for the purposes of reconstruction, maintenance and reuse these assets for tourism purposes or for similar use. Fourthly, currently, there is no government directorate responsible for the protection or promotion of handicraft cultural assets. The presence of more local businesses making handicraft products and souvenirs might attract greater numbers of tourists, or at least might lead them to stay at destinations for longer. Finally, there is no law for organising the tourism industry overall. This means that one government executive might set policy according to its

understanding of the tourism industry, but a frequent change of executive, with different parties in power, might mean a frequent change in policy.

The above legislative challenges might cause the loss of many tangible and intangible cultural resources, and also result in the underutilisation of these resources. Therefore, the government requires new regulations regarding the protection of cultural heritage. A principal recommendation is that the Directorate of Antiquities should be able to deal with all types of cultural heritage resources, should have the authority to supervise and deal with all cultural heritage sites – notably including historical buildings under 200 years old – as well as other tangible and intangible cultural resources.

The new regulation or law should give authority to the Directorate of Antiquities to fund owners to restore their historical buildings and or to make agreements with the private sector and local residents for heritage restoration and to protect handicraft heritage, and to rent or give historical buildings to the private sector in order to utilise them for the purposes of tourism development. The government should allocate proper budgets for conservation programmes and restoration programmes for state-owned heritage property.

While the government suffers from budgetary problems (due to disputes regarding oil with the Iraqi government and the conflict and refugee situation), new laws should allow the Directorate of Antiquities and its partners in the tourism industry to apply entry fees to tourist attractions for self-funding.

### 8.3.3. Services and facilities

Heritage assets and any other tourism resources cannot attract the desired number of tourists without accompanying high-quality services and facilities. These resources need to be properly managed, organised and presented for tourists. In the KFR, the quality of some services and facilities is good, such as restaurants, hotels and tourism operators. However, they still require more investment or need better organisation. Examples of services and facilities that require much more development include the process of obtaining visas to visit the KFR, taxi drivers, public transportation and tour guides. The process of obtaining visas to visit the KFR needs to be made easier and the maximum length of stay should increase from 15 days to up to six months. Appropriate plans are required for the building of new hotels and restaurants according to a destination's needs, because the present ones are not distributed appropriately. There is a need for more investment in roads and public transport, as well as for better signage –place signs indicating the way to facilities and tourist attractions. Regular visits to cultural sites by the Directorate of Tourism and Antiquities should be arranged, to check on prices for example (charges made by taxis, tour guides, services provided to tourists), and to encourage tourism operators to arrange tourist journeys. Another way to increase the level of tourist satisfaction is to diversify heritage sites, with different types of other heritage assets – for example, turning heritage sites into museums to display heritage artefacts, handicrafts and other cultural products to attract tourists, or turning historical buildings into cultural cafes, antiquarian shops or cultural handicraft mini-factories.

#### 8.3.4. Destination image

Destination image plays a core role in tourist preferences, and whenever a destination records a high level of security, stability, hospitality and lower living expenses and other variables this increases the level of enjoyment and attracts a greater number of tourists. Although the KFR is relatively safe, political instability elsewhere in Iraq gives a negative image to the KFR as a tourist destination. Consequently, the KRF needs investment in tourism marketing and advertising. The KRG should also encourage cooperation between all stakeholders to recover a positive destination image.

#### 8.3.5. Poor implementation

Poor implementation of a plan, policy, and heritage restoration programme is mostly an issue in developing countries, in particular those dealing with conflict. In the KFR, the reasons of a failure to implement tourism planning and heritage restoration program include lack of funding, poor management, and a failure to involve residents in tourism planning and decision-making. To make cultural tourism viable in KFR, tourism planners should discuss tourism policy with all stakeholders before attempting to implement it in practice. In addition, the government must invest in heritage conservation programme and prepare these assets to attract tourists. Undeniably, insufficient funding is a fundamental challenge to all aspects of cultural tourism development in the KFR. However, the government can find alternative sources of income, such as self-funding from the tourism industry, as recommended in section 8.4.

#### 8.3.6. Property barriers

Property barriers make the protection of heritage assets more complex. Firstly, some historical buildings are inhabited by poor residents, at very low rents, making it socially difficult to ask them to leave without giving compensation. Secondly, many historical buildings are owned by local residents, who would often prefer to turn them into a profitable modern building. The government neither funds them for maintaining their buildings nor buys these historical properties to protect them. The longer it takes to solve this problem, the more money will eventually be needed for reconstruction, and take longer time conservation programmes will be needed before these heritage assets can be used to attract tourists. Additionally, a number of historical buildings are owned by different government departments (other than the Directorate of Antiquities), and they might deal with these heritage assets in ways very different from how the Directorate of Antiquities would deal with them.

To overcome these issues, first of all, all heritage assets property must be transferred from various government departments to the Directorate of Antiquities. It would then have direct access and be able to take direct action to protect and commercialise these assets. Another step is developing a policy to encourage the private sector to invest in heritage assets, to offer suitable compensation to current occupiers and to start the restoration process. This is because heritage sites cannot be used for tourism purposes without completing the restoration programmes.

#### 8.3.7. Residents' level of awareness

According to government representatives, the level of public awareness of tourism traditions and their respect for heritage assets is inadequate. Local residents can play a primary role in protecting both the environment and tourism resources; they can also

provide a high level of hospitality at a destination. The level of residents' support depends on their level of awareness regarding the value of their heritage assets, and how they see the impacts of tourism growth on the economy, the environment and their culture. The government will be able to increase the level of residents' awareness by involving them in activities such as heritage festivals, workshops, seminars, photo exhibitions in heritage buildings, training courses and creating job opportunities in the tourism industry for local residents, and involving them in decision-making.

#### 8.3.8. The lack of skills and modern technology

Skill shortages and a lack of modern technology negatively impact on the restoration of cultural heritage in the KFR. However, the skills currently available are not deployed effectively, partly because recruitment processes do not match people to their specialties. Therefore, a plan is needed to increase staff skills, recruit new staff when required, to reorganise positions of current government employees, and to benefit from modern equipment. Such a plan would help protect heritage, promote heritage conservation, and then develop cultural tourism.

#### 8.3.9. The process of heritage protection

Although the length of heritage protection takes longer time because of sensitivity in the process of restoration. However, the authenticity of a heritage site is very important, and so any plan and implementation should not impact on natural and realistic heritage. The materials and decorations used to reconstruct and maintain heritage sites must be identical with the original; consequently, the preparation and implementation takes longer than is the case with modern buildings. But to organise

the work, the heritage conservation plan can be divided into short-, mid- and long-term.

#### 8.4. Recommendations for policy and planning

Although there is concern about the process of protecting heritage assets when used for tourism purposes, the reuse of heritage assets has a major positive role in their protection, by creating funding that can be used for regular maintenance, restoration and reconstruction. However, the use of heritage assets as a tourist product can be beneficial only if managed in a sustainable manner. Therefore, successful tourism policy, planning and management can be the best options to ensure the process of commercialising heritage assets if it is not at the expense of the resources themselves. It is necessary to balance heritage protection with its reuse for tourism purposes.

##### 8.4.1. Recommendation for sustainable cultural tourism

Stakeholders often affect and are affected by tourism policy. This is because, as Girard and Nijkamp (2009) argue, the tourism sector provides positive economic impacts; nevertheless, it might also have a number of negative impacts on the environment and society, which will have effects on relevant stakeholders. Therefore, cultural tourism policy should ensure a decrease in the negative impact of tourism development on heritage and the environment, with particular consideration of the significance of the economic benefits to all stakeholders (Nasser, 2003). A successful plan will meet all stakeholders' needs, whether to reduce and deal with negative impacts of the tourism industry on the environment and community, or to invest in projects that attract more tourists.

In fact, the government is the sole organisation that can provide tourism with requirements such as stability, security, legality and legitimacy, monetary and

exchange services, basic infrastructure, immigration and visa procedures, and aviation (Elliott, 1997). The government needs proper cultural tourism policy and planning to tackle the challenges of cultural tourism, to utilise all tourism resources to improve the quality of life of the community, and to maintain the heritage resources for the future generation. In this regard, Logar (2010) claims that the government needs to implement a proper tourism policy based on a set of economic, regulatory and institutional policy instruments to be able to drive the tourism industry to more sustainable tourism development. Appropriate cultural tourism policy is based on guidance from international organisations and on communication between the public authorities and other stakeholders (Dinica, 2009). In other words, all factors – economic, environmental, social stakeholders' interests – must be taken into account by decision makers (Novelli et al., 2012).

Tourism and planning are widely discussed in the literature. Throsby (2009) suggests three "golden rules" to be followed by public authorities and decision makers when undertaking cultural tourism projects and tourism planning processes to assure sustainability. The first is 'get the values right'. This involves assessing the actual value of heritage as cultural capital, including its economic and cultural value. The second golden rule is 'get the sustainability principles right', where the tourism project or tourism strategy should satisfy all the principles of sustainability (such as continuity and intergenerational equity). The third golden rule is 'get the analytical methods right', which means adjusting both above golden rules to assess the positive and adverse effects of heritage tourism projects or tourism policy in the immediate and long term from the perspective of different stakeholders. These golden rules developed by Throsby could aid decision makers in choosing the most suitable instrument (or group instruments) for cultural tourism policy.

To achieve sustainable cultural tourism, the government should design a tourism policy with the cooperation of all tourism stakeholders based on recommendations from international organisations and on academic research. In this light, Logar (2010) has developed three categories of tourism policy instruments (economic, regulatory and institutional) as a strategy for sustainable tourism development. Logar's tourism policy instruments might be useful to apply in the case of the KFR. For example, the KFR suffers from insufficient funding for various projects, and a number of local tourism business operators complained about a lack of government support. Logar's economic policy instruments could be applied to the case of the KFR, as follows:

- Tourist eco-taxes: such as tourist tax when they pay for services such as hotels and restaurants
- User fees: when tourist use tourism resources such as visiting heritage site and natural environment site
- Financial incentives: giving lower taxes for those tourist business operators who provide a high quality of services. This is to improve the quality of services. For instance, to regulate urbanisation, the prices of building permits could be increased for those destinations that do not require further investment, and vice versa.

The regulatory or control policy instruments could be in the form of quotas. One example would be setting maximum numbers of visitors to destinations, including heritage sites; although, currently, there is no visitor over-load at heritage sites in the KFR, it could be taken into consideration in the future. Zoning regulations could be used to restrict construction in particular areas. Logar's institutional instruments include the provision of eco-labels to encourage maintaining the environment and

increasing competitiveness. These can be awarded to those tourist business operators who provide tourist facilities that meet particular environmental criteria. Finally, changes in property rights could include the privatisation of state-owned facilities that need urgent investment. All these policies should be assessed prior to implementation in terms of their efficiency (for improving sustainability), acceptability (by relevant stakeholders) and feasibility (economically and technically). However, each country has its own circumstances which mean that a certain instrument (or group of instruments) should be chosen to achieve particular policy objectives.

The above tools and tourism policy instruments would be suitable for the overall tourism industry in the KFR, including cultural tourism. However, the study focuses on heritage protection and sustainable cultural tourism. Forster and Kayan (2009) believe that government bodies should change public policy, to reconcile it with the implementation process (e.g. new instructions that facilitate maintenance in practice). In this light, the KRG should:

- Offer financial subsidies and incentives for maintaining heritage property (e.g. low-interest loans and tax breaks for maintaining heritage property)
- Consistently monitor historic buildings to ensure their safety and preservation (though arguably often costly and ineffective, it can be successful, especially when new technology such as CCTV is employed)
- The announcement of a list of historic buildings that have been restored by private sector firms might increase sense of pride and encourage other owners to maintain their buildings.

The above tools should be taken into consideration for the design of tourism policy in the KFR in order to prevent heritage assets from damage or misuse.

On the other hand, De Monchaux and Schuster (1997) identify five techniques as government intervention tools for preserving cultural heritage: First, if the government is owner and operator of the heritage attraction, the message is ‘The state will do X’. Second, if the government issues regulations for those who own a heritage attraction, the message is ‘you must (or must not) do X’. Third, if the government encourages the private sector to invest in heritage protection and cultural tourism, the message is ‘If you do X, the state will do Y’. Fourth, if the government enforces a property right for those who own a heritage attraction, the message is ‘You have a right to do X, and the state will enforce that right’. Finally, if the government provides information and guidance for those who want to preserve and invest in heritage attractions, the message is ‘you should do X, or you need to know Y in order to do X’.

According to results of this study, the above five policy instruments could be the right options to respond to the current heritage tourism situation in the KFR. The respective policy instruments specifically become:

- the government will either restore and maintain heritage assets itself, or might give this opportunity to the private sector
- when a heritage property is to be restored (or even simply maintained), it will not be permissible to change any parts of any heritage assets and the instructions of the Directorate of Antiquities and the Directorate of Tourism must be followed.
- In the maintenance, reconstruction and restoration for any of heritage attraction sites, the state will give the right to utilise these assets (e.g. for 20 years) without rent (if the property is owned by government or free tax for several years if the property right is privately held)

- If an attraction is privately owned, the government will enforce property rights. The message is that there is a right to benefit from a property after its restoration and maintenance following the instruction of the Directorate of Antiquities.
- The government will give free guidance and support for any investment in heritage assets, but all work should be under the supervision of the Directorate of Antiquities and the Directorate of Tourism, and regular maintenance as well as initial restoration must be according to government policy and instruction.

Further policy instructions were suggested by participants to promote the use of heritage assets as tourism products. First, ensure all stages of conservation are completed and then organised to attract visitors. Second, prevent any undermining of the original appearance of heritage buildings, and ensure any modifications are according to the regulations of the Cultural Heritage Directorate, which guarantees to keep the authenticity of the site. Third, supervise and inspect cultural sites regularly by archaeologists and experts. Fourth, control the number of visitors to help to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage sites, either by imposing entry tickets or by limiting daily numbers of visitors at a reception office. Finally, diversify heritage attractions by combining different types of cultural resources, for example by turning historical buildings into different types of museum to display cultural resources like heritage artefacts, handicrafts, traditional cultural activities, classical singing and music, clothes, antiquities and agricultural tools. Or, historical buildings could be turned into cultural cafes, cultural hotels, cultural restaurants, antiquarian shops, or cultural handicraft mini-factories, producing souvenirs.

The motivations for such steps are to generate revenue, to diversify sources of income, to maximise tourist satisfaction, to attract international tourists, to protect cultural

resources from damage, to maintain the intrinsic value of artefacts, and to foster understanding of the Kurdish culture internationally.

#### 8.4.2. Recommendations to encourage the private sector

While the private sector plays a core role in stimulating the tourism industry, including cultural tourism, in the KFR the government does not give enough attention to or practical support for the private sector. For example, legislation barriers prevent the private sector benefiting from loans and invest in cultural tourism, and also prevent it from investing in heritage attraction. Thus, the government should encourage the private sector to invest in historical buildings and the making of handicraft cultural products, and give opportunities to business, and encourage businesses to use historical buildings as cultural restaurants, cafes, hotels, or museums to display handicrafts and other movable heritage assets, in order to attract greater numbers of tourists.

To achieve the above goals related to support of the private sector, the government could take two steps: firstly, apply the recommendation given in section 8.3.1 for sustainable cultural tourism; secondly, consider the recommendation for heritage protection and cultural tourism development given in sections 8.1 and 8.2. For example, this might require the passing of new laws by the Kurdistan Parliament to overcome the current regulatory barriers, by offering tax breaks to businesses, or free or low-interest loans.

#### 8.5. Limitations and contributions

The first limitation is that the KFR not only lacks tourism infrastructure but also lacks research studies on its tourism industry. This was a challenge at the first stages of the present study, but the researcher was able to fill this gap by personal contact with

government bodies, information from government websites and in-depth interviews with professionals in government bodies.

Another limitation was that no previous studies have used the focus group method to investigate issues in a Kurdish community. However, the researcher was able to overcome this challenge. Firstly, the researcher comes from the same community as the participants; secondly, the researcher carefully reviewed the literature on focus groups, and there was enough detail on data collection to proceed with the study. Thus, the first contribution of this study is that it should be a useful resource for researchers from different subjects and backgrounds who want to undertake research in the KFR based on focus groups and in-depth interviews as well. This study makes important contributions to tackle various challenges to the development of cultural tourism in the KFR, and suggests areas for future research.

Many studies have focused on the impact of conflict and political instability, as well as terrorism, on tourism development. Most of these studies have examined countries that were already tourist destinations but that were affected by political or ethnic conflict, such as Sri Lanka, the Balkan countries and Israel. But no studies have been done on regions rich in different types of tourism resources but that have never had the opportunity to develop their tourism industry. Another point is that many previous studies looked at the impact on conflict on tourism growth, while few have looked at how to protect tourism resources or have explored the challenges of resource protection in such situations, in particular heritage assets. This study fills these gaps, and might be of particular interest for similar regions in the Middle East and elsewhere that have suffered from ethnic conflict.

Another rationale for this study was the recent addition of Erbil Citadel to UNESCO's World Heritage Site List, which can be used as a form of branding in the tourism context. This study might encourage decision makers to focus on cultural tourism, and also might encourage other researchers to investigate cultural tourism in the KFR. Moreover, the study was undertaken while a number of other Middle Eastern and North African were experiencing ethnic and political conflict.

Further study is required to assess and understand which other heritage sites in the KFR could be listed in UNESCO's World Heritage Site List, as the previous Iraqi government did not undertake any action for that. As the KFR is still in the early stages of its conservation programmes, further study is required to check on the authenticity of the conservation work done, and also to compare the work done on different assets. As no set of regulations has been approved yet for heritage protection or for development of the tourism industry, future work is required, in particular in the law and social science fields, to compare laws and regulations in a number of similar countries, to provide recommendations for decision makers to formulate new laws for the KFR. In addition, this study has highlighted the core role of stakeholders and the need for their participations and for consideration to be taken of their perspectives in setting tourism policy and planning. Further study is still required to assess, evaluate, and confirm the tools and tourism policy instruments that have been presented and recommended in this study for the KFR. The findings can be tested in similar cases elsewhere. Such studies should be based on quantitative methods, for confirmation of the results among wider numbers of participants, or mixed-method to confirm the results and get different perspectives from participants.

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## Appendices

### Appendix (1). Organisation of the in-depth interviews

All in-depth interviews in phase 1 were held in Erbil. The researcher recruited 12 people who represented the government and seven who represented local business operators. The sessions lasted 25–90 minutes for each. An information sheet was handed to each interviewee and a consent form was provided at the beginning of the session was signed by participants.

The researcher introduced himself and explained the aim of the study and the aim of in-depth interview at the beginning of each session. The researcher informed interviewees of their right to leave at any time, temporarily or permanently prior publication. The text below is an example from an in-depth interview.

*“My name is Kadhim Magdid Braim, and I am a research student at the University of Nottingham and this work is part of my data collection process for my PhD thesis. This research aims to find challenges of heritage protection and suggest a set of recommendation to design an appropriate cultural tourism policy that could be implemented to increase tourism demand and sustain tourism resources in Kurdistan in a way whereby cultural resources can attract greater numbers of tourist arrivals. To achieve that, the study examines the challenges that face heritage protection and cultural tourism development and anticipates possible solutions as well as determining opportunities of cultural tourism.*

*The goals of conducting in-depth individual interviews with a limited number of experts and public figures are: Firstly, to identify the barriers that face tourism development and cultural tourism development in Kurdistan, the barriers to the use of cultural resources (like Erbil Citadel) for tourism purposes, and anticipated solutions for such barriers if any. Secondly, the strengths of using cultural heritage sites for*

*tourism purposes. Thirdly, identify the challenges for conservation programmes for cultural heritage assets, community involvement in the tourism development process, and the role of collaboration among stakeholders in developing tourism sector.*

*Your attendance, your role, your opinions and your contributions are very valuable and help the researcher to produce good research. I can confirm that the success of the research depends on your contributions. Therefore, please give your opinions whenever you have your own ideas. There is no perfect or complete answer. All your ideas are important for me. Please give your experience whenever you feel it is necessary.*

*In order to go back and listen to your valuable information, and for the reliability of my work, I would like you to give me permission to use an electronic device to record this in-depth interview. Now, please read the consent form and sign it if you agree.”*

#### Question route

There were no structured questions for the in-depth interviews, but the researcher prepared set of questions to be asked during interview session and the researcher freely selected some questions and asked additional questions when appropriate because the session was based on the in-depth interview techniques.

- i. Question for in-depth interviews with experts

#### *Question related to tourism in general:*

- Please could you tell me something about yourself? What are your responsibilities and duties in your position?

- Please could you tell me the current barriers that face tourism development in KFR?
- What should the government do to support the tourism industry?

*Question related to cultural tourism:*

- What are the current barriers that face cultural tourism in KFR?
- What resources/sites should be improved/developed in order to promote cultural tourism in Erbil?
  - *Please could you identify the factors that could make these sites more attractive?*
  - *How could we increase the level of satisfaction for tourists to make them come back?*

*Question related to cultural heritage management:*

- What is your role (or your organisation's role) in cultural heritage management?
- Do you think there is a difference between managing cultural heritage and managing cultural heritage tourism?
- Which organisations do you think might better manage cultural heritage?
- Do you think the development of cultural heritage tourism should be done in a sustainable manner? And how?

- Do you think the involvement of local communities in the development of cultural heritage tourism could help to sustain tourism resources? And how?
- Are there any challenges facing conservation programmes for cultural heritage sites in KFR?
- What should the government do to promote cultural heritage assets in KFR?

ii. Question for in-depth interviews with local business operators

*Warm-up question (25 minutes)*

- 1. Please, tell us a bit about yourself.
- 2. Please, tell us about your business. How long have you had it?
- 3. What would be the impacts of an increase in the number of tourists on your business?
- 4. Did you see any increase in tourist arrivals after the Erbil Citadel was listed as a World Heritage Site? Did this make any difference to your business?

*Main question (45 minutes)*

- 1. In your opinion, what are the barriers to the development in Erbil of tourism in general and cultural tourism in particular?
- 2. Are you happy about the level of cooperation among stakeholders working in the tourism industry?

- 3. Are you satisfied with the role of government in supporting local tourism business operators?
- 4. What type of support would you expect to get from the government?
- 5. What are the key points the government should include in its cultural tourism strategy?
- 6. What role could you and other business operator play (in such strategy) in the development and implementation of the cultural tourism strategy (e.g. make an offer, marketing, and advertising)?

## Appendix (2). Information sheet for participants (for interview participants)

### Information Sheet

(For **INTERVIEW** Participants)

Study title:

Managing Cultural Tourism in a Post-Conflict Region: The Kurdistan Federal Region of Iraq

Researcher: BRAIM, Kadhim Magdid Braim

This project aims to identify challenges of heritage protection and to set a number of recommendation for the government to design an appropriate cultural tourism policy that could be implemented to increase tourism demand and sustain tourism resources in KFR.

The aims of conducting in-depth interviews in this study are identify:

- The barriers that face heritage protection and cultural tourism development in Kurdistan
- The barriers of the use of cultural resources for tourism purposes
- The level of government support for conservation programmes for cultural heritage assets
- The role of collaboration among stakeholders in developing the tourism sector
- Anticipated solutions for the above barriers if any

You will be asked about your perception of barriers that face heritage protection and cultural tourism development in Kurdistan, the barriers to the use of cultural resources (like Erbil Citadel) for tourism purposes. We want to know what you think the government should do to develop cultural tourism and sustain tourism resources, and the role of coordination between stakeholders in tourism development.

The information gathered will be used for my (PhD) research purposes about " Managing Cultural Tourism in a Post-Conflict Region: The Kurdistan Federal Region of Iraq". The Kurdistan Regional Government is sponsoring this project.

A tape recorder may be used to record the in-depth interviews. However, this is voluntary, and nothing will be recorded without your permission. The tape recorder will be securely stored by me in a locked filing cabinet and in my university computer until the end of the project, and then in accordance with the Data Protection Act (UK), the data will be kept securely for seven years following publication of results on a secure server at the University of Nottingham. The data can only be accessed by me and by 'the official bodies of the University of Nottingham - if required'.

Information gained will be reported under conditions of individual anonymity. Data from the in-depth interviews will be used in quotations and compared with other ideas, and may be included in the final project report. No personal information (such as your name, or where you work) will be published anywhere. However, for some of the public figures their name and position will be recognizable but they have the options to be made anonymous or not.

We anticipate that the in-depth interview will take about 30-90 minutes. Your participation in this study is voluntary and if you wish to withdraw at any time please let me know prior of publication. If this should happen, all data will be destroyed and the information you provided will not be used.

Should you need further assistance regarding this study, or have any further questions please contact:

Researcher's Contact details:

Kadhim Magdid Braim

PhD Student at

The University of Nottingham

Email: laxkibr@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix (3). Participants' consent form (for interview participants)

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM *(for interview participants)*

Title of the Study: Managing Cultural Tourism in a Post-Conflict Region: The Kurdistan Federal Region of Iraq

Name of the Researcher: Kadhim Magdid Braim

Please read and tick the boxes as appropriate

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason prior of publication.
3. I could take a break at any time during the in-depth interview.
4. I understand that I have the right not to answer particular questions if I consider them to be sensitive or commercial proprietary.
5. I give my consent for the interview to be audio-recorded as described in the information sheet.
6. I give my consent for my data to be used as it has been explained in the information sheet.
7. I agree to allow my interview statements to be published and to be attributed to my organization.

I also agree to being identified by name (please choose): Yes  No

8. I understand that the research findings, including the comments / data I provide in the interview, may be published as a PhD thesis, academic conference papers, journal articles and other academic publication / dissemination channels.
9. I understand if the academic findings are to be published in other places, for example media articles, no specific references to individual interviewees will be made.
10. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of the Participant..... Date.....Signature.....

Researcher Kadhim Magdid Braim Date..... Signature Kadhim

Contact details:

Kadhim Magdid Braim, PhD Student at: The University of Nottingham

Email: laxkibr@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix (4). Open coding of in-depth interviews with the government representatives

- i. Open codes related to the first main question in in-depth interviews  
(Are there enough cultural resources in KFR with potential for cultural tourism? Have these resources been adapted for tourism purposes? Do you think cultural heritage resources have been used for tourism purposes in KFR?)
  - Kurdistan has many rich cultural heritage sites
  - Cultural resources are underutilised for tourism purposes
  - First Experiment of Use Cultural Resources in KFR
  - Process of preparation for tourism purposes not completed
  - Government focused on producing oil
  - There is the need for an inventory or preliminary list of all cultural sites in Kurdistan
  - There are challenges to having an inventory
  
- ii. Open coding related to the second main question in in-depth interviews  
(How do you see the role of cultural tourism? How do you see the use of cultural resources for tourism purposes?)
  - Cultural tourism creates revenue and contributes to national economy
  - Advantages - cultural resources attract international tourists
  - Advantages - cultural tourism has advantages for conservation
  - Positive intentions to use cultural resources for tourism purposes
  - Supportive perspectives on using cultural resources in a sustainable manner

- The site should be regularly checked by experts to ensure the protection of the resources
- Turning historical buildings into museums
- Controlling numbers of visitors
  
- iii. Open coding related to the third main question in in-depth interviews  
(How do you see the current government administrative structure for managing cultural resources in KFR? How do you see the level of cooperation among different directorates in managing cultural tourism resources?)
  - Cultural tourism should manage with cooperation between all parties
  - Good coordination exists now
  - Weak coordination exists now
  - Regulation should impose coordination between all parties
  - One ministry is needed to manage all cultural resources and the tourism sector
  - There are bureaucratic procedures in managing cultural resources
  - Antiquities directorate should be responsible for all cultural resources
  - Antiquities directorate might better manage cultural resources
  
- iv. Open coding related to the fourth main question in in-depth interviews  
(What are the current challenges and strengths in cultural resource conservation and the preparation of these resources for tourism purposes?)
  - There is a property owner barrier in the cultural heritage conservation process

- There is a social barrier in the cultural heritage conservation process
- There is a funding barrier in the cultural heritage conservation process
- There are dual legislative systems dealing with cultural heritage resources
- There is the need to train staff and increase their level of skills
- Staff are sufficiently skilled
- There is a lack of technology
- There is challenge caused by vacant historic buildings
- Sensibility in restoration procedures is considered a challenge
- There are bureaucratic procedures to get authorities to make decisions
- Antiquities directorate is not responsible for the preservation of all cultural resources
- There is no bureaucratic barrier for the Citadel
- Low level awareness of residents toward preserving cultural resources
- Involving residents in cultural activities helps to protect cultural tourism
- Involving residents in cultural activities does not help to protect cultural tourism
- Barriers to involving the private sector and owners in preserving cultural resources
- The government should do

- v. Open coding related to the fifth main question in in-depth interviews  
(What are the current factors in KFR that might impact on the number of tourist arrivals? How could the level of tourists' enjoyment be increased and how could more tourists be attracted to the region?)

- Should diversify cultural heritage site with other type cultural resources
- Diversifying historical building would increase enjoyment
- Plan for diversifying cultural heritage sites
- Required facilities and need to develop facilities for tourism growth
- These facilities now exist
- There is a need for government support to enhance cultural tourism
- There is a need to involve the private sector in managing cultural tourism resources
- Public sector should run cultural tourism resources
- Local residents should be involved in tourism activities
- Should increase the level of public awareness of tourism traditions
- Conflict and instability change priorities in the tourism sector
- Kurdistan needs to focus on tourism advertising
- Advertising plays a role in marketing cultural tourism
- The role of advertising
- Funding is a challenge for new projects
- Living expenses barriers

Main Questions	Open codes
Are there enough cultural resources in KFR for the potential of cultural tourism? Are these resources prepared for tourism purposes? Do you think cultural heritage resources have been used for tourism purposes in KFR?	<p>Kurdistan has many of rich cultural heritage sites</p> <p>Cultural resources underutilised for tourism purpose</p> <p>First Experiment of Use Cultural Resources in Erbil</p> <p>Process of preparation for tourism purpose not completed</p> <p>Oil- government focused on producing oil</p> <p>There is the need of inventory list with preliminary history of all cultural sites in Kurdistan</p> <p>There are challenges of having inventory list</p>
How do you see the role of cultural tourism? How do you see using cultural resources for tourism purposes?	<p>Cultural Tourism create revenue and contribute to National Economy</p> <p>Advantages- cultural resources attract international tourists</p> <p>Advantages- cultural tourism has advantages for conservations</p> <p>Positive Intentions of Using Cultural Resources for Tourism Purpose</p> <p>Turning Historical Building into Museums</p> <p>Supportive Perspectives of using cultural resources in a sustainable manner</p> <p>The site should be regularly checked by experts to ensure the protection of the resources</p> <p>Controlling Number of Visitors</p>
How do you see the current government administrative structure for managing cultural resources in KFR? How do you see the level of cooperation among different directorates in managing cultural tourism resources?	<p>Cultural Tourism should manage with cooperation between all parties</p> <p>Good coordination exist now</p> <p>Weak coordination exist now</p> <p>Regulation should impose the coordination between all parties</p> <p>One ministry is needed to manage all cultural resources and tourism sector</p> <p>There is bureaucratic procedures in managing cultural resources</p> <p>Antiquities director should responsible to all cultural resources</p> <p>Antiquities directorate might better manage cultural resources</p>
What are the current challenges and strengths in cultural resource conservation procedures and the preparation of these resources for tourism purposes?	<p>There is property owner barrier in cultural heritage conservation process</p> <p>There is social barrier in cultural heritage conservation process</p> <p>There is funding barrier in cultural heritage conservation process</p> <p>There is dual legislations in dealing with cultural heritage resources</p> <p>There is the need to train staff and increase their level of skills</p> <p>There is enough level of skills of staff</p> <p>There is the lack of technology</p> <p>There is challenge caused by vacant Historic Buildings</p> <p>Sensibility Working in Restoration Procedures considered one of challenges</p> <p>There are bureaucratic procedures to get authority to make decision. Issues of Administrative Structures Powers</p> <p>Antiquities director is not responsible to preserve all cultural resources</p> <p>There is no bureaucratic barriers in citadel</p> <p>Low level awareness of resident toward preserving cultural resources</p> <p>Involving resident in cultural activities help to protect cultural tourism</p> <p>Involving resident in cultural activities does not help to protect cultural tourism</p> <p>Barriers of involving private sector and owners in preserving cultural resources</p> <p>The government should do</p>

<p>What are the current factors in KFR that might impact on the number of tourist arrivals? How could the level of tourists' enjoyment be increased and greater numbers of tourists attracted?</p>	<p>Should Diversify Cultural heritage site with other type cultural Resources Diversifying historical building would increase enjoyment Plan for diversifying cultural heritage sites Required facilities and need to develop facilities for tourism growth These facilities now exist There is the need of government support to enhance cultural There is the need of involving private sector in managing cultural tourism resources Public sector should run cultural tourism resources Local Resident should Involve in Tourism Activities Should increase the level of public awareness of tradition of tourism Conflict and Instability changes the priority in tourism sector Kurdistan need to focus on tourism advertising Advertising played its role in marketing cultural tourism The role of advertising Funding is challenge for opining new project Living expenses barriers</p>
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Table 18: Identify open codes according to in-depth interview questions

Appendix (5). Open coding of focus groups with tourists

Main Questions	Open codes
1. Were you satisfied with the combination of tourist services provided?	<p>The restaurant provides excellent services, and a wide variety of foods</p> <p>People in Kurdistan are very hospitable</p> <p>There is a good level hospitality at tourism business services</p> <p>Tour guide was good</p> <p>Kurdistan is safe for tourists</p> <p>There is a large number of hotels in Erbil</p>
2. What facilities did you see that need to be developed? What facilities did you find to be currently unavailable?	<p>There is a weak public transport system in Erbil</p> <p>lack of advertisement and marketing, people not aware of many of tourism resources available</p> <p>Tour guide was not good</p> <p>The limited duration of the visa given to visitors</p>
3. What are the preferred cultural resources, and how do you see cultural tourism resources?	<p>Inappropriate environment and see sights around citadel</p> <p>Facilities need to be introduced</p>
4. What are your motivations for visiting Erbil?	<p>The nature of city of Erbil is enjoyable</p> <p>The castle made Erbil more attractive to visitors</p>

Table 19: Identify open codes according to questions in focus groups with tourist

Appendix (6). Open coding of focus groups with residents

Table 20: Identify open codes from the focus groups with residents

Main questions	open codes
What are the advantages brought by tourism to your local community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tourism leads to local revenue creation</li> <li>- tourism creates new jobs</li> <li>- leads to new hotels, restaurants and other amenities</li> <li>- people might learn and understand new languages</li> <li>- lead to understand another culture</li> <li>-promote Kurdish culture abroad</li> </ul>
Do you think there are any disadvantages in having more tourists in Erbil?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- causes road congestion and traffic jams</li> <li>- tourism causes pollution to the environment</li> <li>-raises the price of goods and accommodation</li> <li>- the type of clothes worn by tourists might affect young people's attitudes</li> <li>-tourism might destroy cultural resources</li> <li>-tourists might contracting the diseases and spread diseases among local residents</li> <li>- Turkish and Arabic shops affect our language</li> </ul>
What should the government do to reduce the disadvantages?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-set a plan to increase the level of residents' awareness to take care their environment</li> <li>-increase the number of bins in tourist destinations</li> <li>-place posters to support keeping the environment clean</li> <li>-set a plan so that any new hotels and restaurant do not affect destinations</li> <li>-prepare our cultural resources for tourism purpose properly</li> </ul>
What should the government do to encourage cultural tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-encourage agency companies to give discount packages</li> <li>-produce a film on cultural site attractions</li> <li>- focus on media to promote cultural tourist attraction</li> <li>-open training centre for young people to revitalise Kurdish cultural food, handicrafts, and textiles</li> <li>-encourage private sector to invest in cultural tourism resources</li> <li>-encourage local business operators to make souvenirs such as citadel souvenirs and minaret souvenirs</li> <li>-Put maps and posters in visible places to explain the history of Kurdish cultural resources</li> <li>-diversify cultural site by adding some cultural activities</li> <li>-Open antique, gift and Kurdish culture clothes shop in cultural attraction sites</li> <li>-continue revitalization program of cultural sites</li> </ul>
how you feel and when tourists visiting KFR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- residents feel proud when tourists visit the city</li> <li>- local tourists visit Kurdistan's famous mountains, calm weather and safety</li> <li>- foreign tourists come to see cultural attractions and to conduct business</li> </ul>
What do you think for imposing entry fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- residents suggest imposing entry fees to visit cultural sites</li> </ul>

Appendix (7). Recurrent open coding in in-depth interviews with government representatives

Open codes	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P1 0	P1 1	P1 2	
Kurdistan has many of rich cultural heritage sites	1	4	1			1		1			1	2	11
Cultural resources underutilised for tourism purpose	1	3	2			2	2	1	1			1	14
First Experiment of Use Cultural Resources in Erbil	1				1	2							4
Process of preparation for tourism purpose not completed						1		1	1				3
Oil- government focused on producing oil			1										1
Cultural Tourism create revenue and contribute to National Economy	1	5	1			1	1	2			1	1	13
Advantages- cultural resources attract international tourists	1	1				1							3
Advantages- cultural tourism has advantages for conservations											2		2
Positive Intentions of Using Cultural Resources for Tourism Purpose	1		1	1	5	2	3	6	1	1	2	2	25
Turning Historical Building into Museums	1	3	2			2							8
Supportive Perspectives of using cultural resources in a sustainable manner		1	3	1	3	4	2	2		1	2	1	20
The site should be regularly checked by experts to ensure the protection of the resources			1	1	1		1	1					5
Controlling Number of Visitors						4					1		5
Cultural Tourism should manage with cooperation between all parties	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	3		1	3	2	19
Good coordination exist now					2		1	1					4
Weak coordination exist now			1									2	3
Regulation should impose the coordination between all parties			1										1
One ministry is needed to manage all cultural resources and tourism sector	3	4	3					3	3	2		12	20
There is bureaucratic procedures in managing cultural resources		3						1	2	1			7
Antiquities director should responsible to all cultural resources			1					1	1		1	1	5
Antiquities directorate might better manage cultural resources	1						1					1	3
There is the need of inventory list with preliminary history of all cultural sites in Kurdistan					1	4	2	1	2	3			13
2.6.1.there are challenges of having inventory list								1		2			3

Table 21: Recurrent open codes regarding challenges and strengths of cultural tourism

Open codes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	
There is property owner barrier in cultural heritage conservation process			2	1			2	2	1	1			9
There is social barrier in cultural heritage conservation process			2		1								3
There is funding barrier in cultural heritage conservation process	1	4	1		1	2			2	1	1		13
There is dual legislations in dealing with cultural heritage resources		5	1	1	1			7	1	1			17
There is the need to train staff and increase their level of skills	1				2		2	1	1		1	1	9
There is enough level of skills of staff		3				1				1			5
There is the lack of technology					1		1						2
There is challenge caused by vacant Historic Buildings					1			1			2		4
Sensibility Working in Restoration Procedures considered one of challenges	1				1		2						4
There are bureaucratic procedures to get authority to make decision. Issues of Administrative Structures Powers		3	2					1		2			8
Antiquities director is not responsible to preserve all cultural resources		2						2			1		5
There is no bureaucratic barriers in citadel						2							2
Low level awareness of resident toward preserving cultural resources	1							1			2	2	6
Involving resident in cultural activities help to protect cultural tourism			3	1			2	1	1	2		1	11
Involving resident in cultural activities does not help to protect cultural tourism					2								2
Barriers of involving private sector and owners in preserving cultural resources				1				3					4
The government should do	2	3		2		1	1	2	2	1	3	3	17

Table 22: Recurrent open codes regarding challenges of cultural resources

conservation

Open codes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	
Should Diversify Cultural heritage site with other type cultural Resources	2				2	2	1	1	1				9
Diversifying historical building would increase enjoyment	2						2	1					5
Plan for diversifying cultural heritage sites	1				1	2			1				5
Required facilities and need to develop facilities for tourism growth	5					4	4	5					25
These facilities now exist	3			2		1	2						14
There is the need of government support to enhance cultural	1			1		5	2	3		2	3		17
There is the need of involving private sector in managing cultural tourism resources	1		2	1			1	3	1	2	1		12
Public sector should run cultural tourism resources							1						1
Local Resident should Involve in Tourism Activities			3					1		1			5
Should increase the level of public awareness of tradition of tourism			1			2	1	1				1	6
Conflict and Instability changes the priority in tourism sector		1			2		1	1				4	9
Kurdistan need to focus on tourism advertising						2	1	1	2		2	2	10
Advertising played its role in marketing cultural tourism												2	2
The role of advertising						1			1			1	3
Funding is challenge for opining new project					1	1							2
Living expenses barriers	2												2

Table 23: Recurrent open codes regarding factor that impact on cultural tourism

Appendix (8). Identify sub-themes category

Open codes	Tentative code categories	Sub-themes categories
Kurdistan has many of rich cultural heritage sites	Cultural heritage sites in Kurdistan	Number of Cultural Sites in Kurdistan
Cultural resources underutilised for tourism purpose	Underutilisation of cultural resources for tourism purposes	Underutilisation of cultural resources for tourism purposes
First Experiment of Use Cultural Resources in Erbil		
Limited number of historical sites ready for visitors		
Process of preparation for tourism purpose not completed		
Oil- government focused on producing oil		

Table 24: First groups of similar sub-category to create main theme

Open codes	Tentative code categories	Sub-themes categories
Cultural Tourism create revenue and contribute to National Economy	The Role of Tourism and Cultural Tourism	Understanding the Role of Tourism in National Economy
Advantages- cultural resources attract international tourists		
Advantages- cultural tourism has advantages for conservations		
Positive Intentions of Using Cultural Resources for Tourism Purpose	Using Cultural Resources for Tourism Purpose	Positive Intentions of Using Cultural Resources for Tourism Purpose
Turning Historical Building into Museums	Turning Historical Building into Museums	
Supportive Perspectives of using cultural resources in a sustainable manner	Sustainable cultural tourism and Controlling Number of Visitors	Supportive Perspectives of using cultural resources in a sustainable manner
The site should be regularly checked by experts to ensure the protection of the resources		
Controlling Number of Visitors	Controlling number of visitors	
Cultural Tourism should manage with cooperation between all parties	Managing Cultural Resources	The Role of Coordination in Managing Cultural Tourism
Good coordination exist now	The Role of Coordination in Managing Cultural Tourism	
Weak coordination exist now		
Regulation should impose the coordination between all parties		
One ministry is needed to manage all cultural resources and tourism sector	Issues of Administrative Structures Powers	Issues of Administrative Structures Powers, and the limited authorities of the antiquities directorates to take responsibility of protecting all types cultural resources
There is bureaucratic procedures in managing cultural resources		
Antiquities director should responsible to all cultural resources		
Antiquities directorate might better manage cultural resources		
There is the need of inventory list with preliminary history of all cultural sites in Kurdistan	List of all of Cultural heritage Resources	Identify and Record Cultural Resources
There are challenges of having inventory list		

Table 25: Second groups of similar sub-category to create main theme

Open codes	Tentative code categories	Sub-themes categories
There is property owner barrier in cultural heritage conservation process	Property Challenges of Cultural Resources Conservation Program	Social and Property Barriers of Archaeological Sites
There is social barrier in cultural heritage conservation process		
There is funding barrier in cultural heritage conservation process	Funding Challenge of Cultural Resources Conservation Program	Funding Issues. Cultural Resource Conservation
There is dual legislations in dealing with cultural heritage resources	Legislation challenge of Cultural Resources Conservation Program	Legislation and Regulation Barriers
There is the need to train staff and increase their level of skills	Ability and Skills Barriers of Cultural Resources Conservation Program	Managerial Skills and Abilities
There is enough level of skills of staff		
There is the lack of technology		
There is challenge caused by vacant Historic Buildings	The Empty Historical Buildings of Cultural Resources Conservation Program	The Empty Historical Buildings and Heritage Neighbourhoods
Sensibility Working in Restoration Procedures considered one of challenges	Others challenge of cultural resources conservation	Sensibility Working in Restoration Process
There are bureaucratic procedures to get authority to make decision. Issues of Administrative Structures Powers	The role of Administrative Structures Powers in conservation	Issues of routines and Authority limitations
Antiquities director is not responsible to preserve all cultural resources		
There is no bureaucratic barriers in citadel		
Low level awareness of resident toward preserving cultural resources	The role of public awareness in conservation	The role of residents in protecting cultural resource
Involving resident in cultural activities help to protect cultural tourism		
Involving resident in cultural activities does not help to protect cultural tourism		
Barriers of involving private sector and owners in preserving cultural resources	The Role of involving Private Sector in conservation	
The government should do		

Table 26: Third groups of similar sub-category to create main theme

Open codes	Tentative code categories	Sub-themes categories
Should Diversify Cultural heritage site with other type cultural Resources	The role of Diversifying Cultural Resources in tourism development	Diversifying Cultural Resources
Diversifying historical building would increase enjoyment		
Plan for diversifying cultural heritage sites		
Required facilities and need to develop facilities for tourism growth	The role of Quality of Cultural Tourism resources and facilities	Facilities and services
These facilities now exist		
There is the need of government support to enhance cultural	The role of government support of cultural tourism	Governments Support
There is the need of involving private sector in managing cultural tourism resources	The Role of Private Sector in tourism development	The Role of Private Sector
Public sector should run cultural tourism resources		
Local Resident should Involve in Tourism Activities	The role of Involving Local Resident in Tourism Activities in tourism development	The role of residents in cultural tourism
Should increase the level of public awareness of tradition of tourism	The role of public awareness in tourism development	
Conflict and Instability changes the priority in tourism sector	The impact of Instability in tourism development	The Impact of Conflict and Instability
Kurdistan need to focus on tourism advertising	The role of Promoting and Marketing Tourism	Marketing and advertisement
Advertising played its role in marketing cultural tourism		
The role of advertising		
Funding is challenge for opining new project	Financial Challenge	Financial Issues
Living expenses barriers		

Table 27: Final groups of similar sub-category to create main theme

Appendix (9). Focus groups' agendas with tourists

The focus groups with tourists were implemented in Erbil, and the overall focus groups sessions took 60 minutes for the first focus group and 80 minutes for the second. Notes were written down as the focus groups took place and a tape recorder was used to record the sessions as well. Table 28 shows how the focus groups were organised with tourists.

Task name	Time	Aim
Welcoming participants	10 minutes	Inform participants about how the focus groups will be organised and managed, the main purpose of focus groups, and the role of participants.
Warming up question	25 minutes	To determine tourists' motivations for visiting Erbil
Main question	45 minutes	To understand the level of tourists' satisfaction with the combination of tourist services provided To identify the facilities that need to be developed and the facilities that currently are not available To identify the preferred cultural resources and cultural tourism resources that need to be developed
The conclusion	15 minutes	summarising discussion

Table 28: Focus Groups Agenda Structure with Tourists

i. Welcoming Participants

A refreshment and registration form were provided to all participants after a welcome from the moderator assistant. Then, after a brief introduction, participants were informed about how the focus groups would be organised and managed, the main purpose of the focus groups, and the role of participants. They were then asked to introduce themselves by just their first name to the group's other members.

ii. Question route:

The question route for tourists was structured into three stages: warm-up question stage, main questions stage and conclusion stage. The warm-up questions were to

encourage the participants to start giving their opinions and to direct them towards the main questions. The focus of the main question stage was to understand participants' attitudes regarding the main themes of cultural tourism in Erbil. The conclusion stage was to summarise the main points and gave the participants the opportunity to present their final comments.

*Warm-up questions (25 minutes)*

- Please, could you tell me a bit about yourself?
  - Where are you from?
- Why did you choose Erbil as your destination for this trip?
  - How long are you going to stay in Erbil?
- How did you organise your travel (travel agency, online, etc.)?
- Are you staying with friends, relatives or in a hotel?

*Main questions (45 minutes)*

- When you travel for leisure do you prefer to visit cultural heritage sites or natural sites (e.g. mountains, Lake Site)?
- Overall, are you satisfied with your visit to Erbil on this occasion?

Why?

- Are there any aspects of your visit you did not like (e.g. accommodation, transportations, etc.)?
- What could be improved in the way things are organised or presented to make your tourist experience more enjoyable?

- Which services and facilities you would like to see improved next time you visit Erbil (e.g. exhibitions, IT services, folklore)?
- What facilities would you like to be introduced in order to enjoy and appreciate Erbil's cultural heritage on your next visit?
- In order to improve your experience of heritage attractions, the local government might introduce an entry fee. Would you be happy to pay something to visit the heritage attractions next time?
- Were you aware that Erbil Citadel is a UNESCO world heritage site?
  - Is the listing of Erbil Citadel important to you? Does it make the Citadel a more attractive destination?
- Would you return to Erbil in the future?

The conclusion and summarising main points (15 minutes)

Appendix (10). Focus group agenda with residents

The focus groups with local residents were implemented in Erbil, and the overall sessions took 70 minutes for first focus group and 60 minutes for the second. Notes were written down as the focus groups took place and a tape recorder was used to record the focus groups sessions as well. Table 29 shows how the focus groups were organised with residents.

Task name	Time	Aim
Welcoming participants and introducing focus group agenda	10 minutes	Inform participants about how the focus groups will be organised and managed, the main purpose of focus groups, the role of participants.
Warming up question:	25 minutes	To understand how local residents perceive the increase in the number of tourists
Main question:	45 minutes	To determine the negative and positive impacts of tourism development on the community. To explore local residents' willingness to participate in cultural activities To understand their willing to support cultural tourism
The conclusion	15 minutes	summarising discussion

Table 29: Focus Groups Agenda Structure with Local Residents

i. Welcoming Participants stage

A refreshment and registration form were provided to all participants after a welcome from the moderator assistant. Then, after a brief introduction, participants were informed about how the focus groups would be organised and managed, the main purpose of the focus groups and the role of participants. They were then asked to introduce themselves by just their first name to the group's other members.

ii. Question route:

The question route for local residents was structured into three stages: warm-up question, main questions and conclusion. The warm-up questions were to encourage the participants to give their opinions and direct them towards the main questions. The

focus of the main question stage was to understand participants' attitudes regarding the main themes of cultural tourism in Erbil. The conclusion stage was to summarise the main points and gave the participants the opportunity to present their final comments.

*Warm-up question (25 minutes)*

- How do you feel towards tourists visiting Erbil? Do you feel proud when you see people are travelling hours to come to see your city?
- Are you happy with the increasing number of tourists?
- Why do you think tourists come and visit Erbil?
- What can Erbil offer to tourists (e.g. cultural heritage...)?

*Main question (45 minutes)*

- What are the advantages brought by tourism to your local community?
- Do you think there are any disadvantages in having more tourists in Erbil?
- In your opinion, what should the government do to reduce the disadvantages?
- Do you think the government should invest more money in the protection and develop of heritage to attract more tourists?
  - Do you think the government should invest more in other things?
- What should the government do to promote Erbil's cultural heritage and attract more

- What role can the residents have in developing cultural tourism (e.g. voluntary involvement in some cultural activities; residents willing to pay to preserve cultural tourism)?

*The conclusion and the end of focus groups (15 minutes)*

- Summarising main points and looking for consensus

Appendix (11). Focus groups' agendas with local businesses operators

The focus groups with local businesses operators were implemented in Erbil, and the overall focus groups sessions took. Notes were written down as the focus groups took place and a tape recorder were used to record the focus groups sessions as well. **Table 30** shows how the focus groups were organised with local businesses operators.

Task name	Time	Aim
Welcoming participants	10 minutes	Inform participant about how the focus groups will be organised and managed, the main purpose of focus groups, the role of participants.
Warming up question:	25 minutes	To determine the impacts of an increase of number of tourists on their business?
Main question	45 minutes	To determine the barriers to developing their business and the challenges To understand what they expect the government to do in order to help them to make their business more successful To understand how they can contribute to cultural tourism development
The conclusion	15 minutes	summarising discussion

Table 30: Focus Groups Agenda Structure with Local Business Operators

i. Welcoming Participants stage

A refreshment and registration form were provided to all participants after a welcome from the moderator assistant. Then with a brief introduction, participants were informed about how the focus groups would be organised and managed, the main purpose of the focus groups, the role of participants, and were then asked to introduce themselves by just their first name to the group's other members.

ii. Question route:

The question route for local businesses operators was structured into three stages warm-up question, main questions and conclusion. The warm-up questions were to

encourage the participant to start giving their opinion and direct them towards the main questions. The focus of the main question stage was to understand participants' attitudes regarding the main themes of cultural tourism in Erbil. The conclusion stage was to summarise the main points and gave the participants the opportunity to present their final comments.

*Warm-up question (25 minutes)*

- Please, tell us a bit about yourself and about your business. How long have you had it? Is it in Erbil?
- What would be the impacts of an increase of number of tourists on your business?
- Did you see any increase in tourist arrivals after the Erbil Citadel was listed as a World Heritage Site? Did this make any difference to your business?

*Main question (45 minutes)*

- In your opinion, what are the barriers to develop your business and the development in Erbil of tourism in general and cultural tourism in particular?
- Are you happy about the level of cooperation among stakeholders working in tourism industry?
- Are you satisfied with the role of government in supporting local tourism business operators?

- What type of support would you expect to get from the government (e.g. funding, protect local business, training, involving local business operators in the process of decision making)?
- What are the key points the government should include in their cultural tourism strategy?
- What role could you and other business operator play (in such strategy) in the development implementation of the cultural tourism strategy (e.g. make an offer, marketing, and advertising)?

*The conclusion and the end of focus groups (15 minutes)*

- Summarising main points and looking for consensus

## Appendix (12). Information sheet for participants (for focus group participants)

### Information Sheet (For **TOURISTS** in Focus Groups)

Study title:

Managing Cultural Tourism in a Post-Conflict Region: The Kurdistan Federal Region of Iraq

Researcher: BRAIM, Kadhim Magdid Braim

Email: laxkmbr@nottingham.ac.uk)

This project aims to identify challenges of heritage protections and to set a number of recommendations for the government to design an appropriate cultural tourism policy that could be implemented to increase tourism demand and sustain tourism resources in KFR.

The aims of the focus groups with tourists is to understand:

- The level of tourists' satisfaction for the combination of tourist services provided, the facilities that need to be developed and the facilities that currently are not available
- Which cultural tourism resources need to be developed
- Tourists' experience regarding Erbil Citadel

You will be asked about your opinion regarding a set of topics related to cultural tourism in Erbil.

- What brought you to Erbil?
- How did you organize your travel; e.g. travel agencies, online...?
- What is your opinion regarding the quality of the combination of facilities provided; e.g. the tour guide, accommodation, transport, restaurant, safety, cultural tourist resources, level of the use of information and communication technology?
- What is your opinion regarding cultural attraction? Which cultural tourism resources need to be developed, what is your experience regarding Erbil Citadel?

All information will be kept strictly confidential. It will only be used by the project researchers and no individual will be able to be identified in any results from this project. All the data and material from data collection procedures will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet, and any digital data will be stored on a password-protected university computer and on a secure server at the University of Nottingham, UK. In accordance with the Data Protection Act in UK, the data will be kept securely for seven years following publication of results on a secure server at the University of Nottingham, where it will be accessible only to the researcher and 'official bodies of the University of Nottingham-if required'. All your contribution will remain anonymous.

This focus groups expect be mixed in terms of gender and age and we anticipate that the study will take about 60-120 minutes. However, participation in the study is voluntary and you may stop at any point if you do not wish to continue.

If you have any questions, please contact:

The researcher: BRAIM, Kadhim Magdid Braim.

Email: laxkmbr@nottingham.ac.uk)

Information Sheet

(For **LOCAL BUSINESS OPERATORS** in Focus Groups)

Study title:

Managing Cultural Heritage Tourism in Post-Conflict Areas: The Case of Kurdistan – Iraq

*“Developing an economic efficient framework to manage the Erbil Citadel World Heritage Site for tourism purposes”*

Researcher: BRAIM, Kadhim Magdid Braim

This project aims to design an appropriate cultural tourism policy that could be implemented to increase tourism demand and sustain tourism resources in Kurdistan.

The basic aim of focus groups sessions with local business operators is to understand:

- What they expect the government to do in order to help them to make their business more successful
- How cultural tourism could help develop their business
- What the government should do to develop cultural tourism in Erbil and increase the number of tourists.

You will be asked about your opinion regarding a set of topics related to cultural tourism in Erbil.

- How the role of government should be to support your business?
- What type of support would you expect to get from the government?
- In your opinion, what should the government do to develop cultural tourism that could help to your business?
- How cultural tourism might help to develop your business?

All information will be kept strictly confidential. It will only be used by the project researchers and no individual will be able to be identified in any results from this project. All the data and material from data collection procedures will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet, and any digital data will be stored on a password-protected university computer and on a secure server at the University of Nottingham, UK. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, the data will be kept securely for seven years following publication of results on a secure server at the University of Nottingham, where it will be accessible only to the researcher and ‘official bodies of the University of Nottingham-if required’. All your contribution will remain anonymous.

This focus groups expect be mixed in terms of gender and age and we anticipate that the study will take about 90-120 minutes. However, participation in the study is voluntary and you may stop at any point if you do not wish to continue.

If you have any questions, please contact:

The researcher: BRAIM, Kadhim Magdid Braim.

Email: laxkmbr@nottingham.ac.uk)

Information Sheet  
(For LOCAL RESIDENTS in Focus Groups)

Study title:

Managing Cultural Heritage Tourism in Post-Conflict Areas: The Case of Kurdistan – Iraq

*“Developing an economic efficient framework to manage the Erbil Citadel World Heritage Site for tourism purposes”*

Researcher: BRAIM, Kadhim Magdid Braim

This project aims to design an appropriate cultural tourism policy that could be implemented to increase tourism demand and sustain tourism resources in Kurdistan.

The aim of the focus groups sessions with local residents is to understand:

- How do local residents perceive the increase in the number of tourist arrivals?
- The negative and positive impacts of tourism development on the resident community
- What the government should do to utilise Erbil Citadel for tourism purposes?

You will be asked about your opinion regarding a set of topics related to cultural tourism in Erbil.

- Do you think the increase of tourist arrivals in recent years led to improved quality of life in Erbil?
- What are the negative and positive impacts of the tourism development on your daily life, the environment and security?
- We want to know your opinion about what the government should do to reduce negative impacts, and to utilise Erbil to attract more visitors?

All information will be kept strictly confidential. It will only be used by the project researchers and no individual will be able to be identified in any results from this project. All the data and material from data collection procedures will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet, and any digital data will be stored on a password-protected university computer and on a secure server at the University of Nottingham, UK. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, the data will be kept securely for seven years following publication of results on a secure server at the University of Nottingham, where it will be accessible only to the researcher and ‘official bodies of the University of Nottingham-if required’. All your contribution will remain anonymous.

This focus groups expect be mixed in terms of gender and age and we anticipate that the study will take about 90-120 minutes. However, participation in the study is voluntary and you may stop at any point if you do not wish to continue.

If you have any questions, please contact:

The researcher: BRAIM, Kadhim Magdid Braim

Email: laxkmbr@nottingham.ac.uk)

Appendix (13). Participants' consent form (for focus group participants)

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM *(for focus group participants)*

Project title:

Managing Cultural Heritage Tourism in Post-Conflict Areas: The Case of Kurdistan – Iraq

*“Developing an economic efficient framework to manage the Erbil Citadel World Heritage Site for tourism purposes”*

Contact Person: BRAIM, Kadhim Magdid Braim

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be used in future or published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that data will be stored in a secure electronic file with hardcopies kept in a locked cabinet for 7 years.
- I understand that I may contact the indicated people if I require further information about the research and if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.
- I give my consent to *(audio-recording of the Focus groups)*, which will be used for the only purpose of accuracy of reporting. All comments will be reported anonymously.

Signed ..... (Participant)

Print name .....Date .....

Contact details:

Kadhim Magdid Braim

PhD Student at: The University of Nottingham

Department: Architecture and Built Environment (social science)

Research Groups: Architecture, Climate & Environment

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Appendix (14). Themes and sets of sub-themes, with selected quotes

Main themes	Sub-theme	Selected Quotes
1- Cultural resources in Kurdistan federal region	Number of cultural sites in Kurdistan	<i>"In Kurdistan, there are more than 3000 cultural resources that are now under the control of the Kurdistan government. If we did new research, we might find many more resources" P1</i>
	Underutilisation of cultural resources for tourism purposes	<i>"We have not used cultural resources properly and using them was not based on appropriate planning and programmes" P12</i>
2- Opportunities of cultural tourism and preservation of assets	Understanding the role of tourism in the national economy	<i>"We see cultural resources are considered as one of the most powerful tourism resources" P12</i>
	Positive intentions to use cultural resources for tourism purposes	<i>"We need to restore and conserve these resources in order to benefit from them for tourism purposes" P7</i>
	Government support	<i>"The lack of government support for cultural resources...We should support all cultural resources, each with its special form" P10</i>
	Supportive perspectives on using cultural resources in a sustainable manner	<i>"If we transfer any cultural resources, the first thing we should consider is to conserve and protect them from damage. This is beneficial for the resources themselves and for tourists to enjoy the site" P11</i>
	Diversifying cultural resources	<i>"I prefer to diversify Erbil Citadel with different cultural activities; this helps tourists to enjoy visiting the sites. ...but this diversification should not affect the naturalistic appearance and history of building" P7</i>
	Facilities and services	<i>"First, we should provide good services and facilities for tourists, including hotels, restaurants and cafeterias in order to help tourists to stay there as long as they prefer" P7</i>

Table 31: Table of First and Second Themes and sets of Sub-themes, with selected Quotes

Main themes	Sub-theme	Selected Quotes
3. Cultural Resource Conservation: The Current Challenges	Social and property barriers to conservation	"Social barriers include many historical buildings being inhabited by poor people now for very low rents. It is difficult to ask them to leave these houses " P3
	Funding issues: cultural resource conservation	"We can say there are two major barriers regarding protecting cultural resources. The first is funding" P1
	Legislative and regulatory barriers	"Now, many times we rely on laws issued by the Iraqi Parliament in 2002, but this also needs to be amended. We asked for these to be amended in the Kurdistan Parliament, but until now we are working (under the old system)" P5
	Managerial skills and abilities	"And there is the need to train staff and increase their level of skills for protecting cultural resources" P1
	Vacant historical buildings and heritage neighbourhoods	"There are some historical residential lanes that have been bought and are now owned by the government during last three years, but all have been left and neglected, and now they are empty " P8
	Sensitive working in the restoration process	"First, sensitive work in archaeological sites is a barrier. Working to maintain sites is different compared to historical buildings. The work of maintaining archaeological sites is slow and needs specific academic skills; it takes a lot of time" P5
	Issues of routines and authority limitations	"We do not have authority to make decisions. We are always subject to different ministries, and when we need to make decisions we have to follow long bureaucratic procedures that delay our work " P10
	The role of residents in protecting cultural resources	"involving local residents in cultural tourism activities is very important and would help to increase the level of awareness about valuing cultural resources among the local community " P4
	Identify and record cultural resources	"I can say that until now we have not recorded many of our cultural resources... We were asked to allocate a budget to record and document all cultural resources but unfortunately we haven't sorted this out" P10
Issues of administrative structures and the limited authority	"Unfortunately, we do not have authority to protect all tangible cultural resources... There are no laws or regulations giving us the right or authority to give these kinds of buildings to others, or rent them to the private sector" P8	
4. The Factors that impact on Cultural Tourism and Numbers of Tourist Arrivals in Kurdistan	The role of the private sector	"Because the private sector sites are open for longer than government ones, and they organise and maintain their facilities better" P1
	The role of residents in cultural tourism	"If we do not involve them in tourism activities, they will become a big challenge or barrier to developing tourism" P10
	The impact of conflict on destination image	"Second, people abroad see all of Iraq as one situation, as an unstable area, which is not true. In reality, Kurdistan is safe and there is no risk facing tourists" P7
	Marketing and advertising	" we need to focus on advertising and marketing to attract international tourists" P12
	Financial issues	"our process of restoration now is stopped because of lack of funding." p6
	The role of coordination in managing cultural tourism	"The Antiquities Directorate might manage cultural tourism better than any other directorates but there should be coordination with the Tourism Directorate for the purpose of developing services and supporting them" P7
	Lack of investment, poor implementation	"In Dohuk only two heritage sites are prepared for visitors, which are sculptures of Khans and Inishky Cave; however, more investments still needed to be fully ready for visitors." (p24)
	Hospitality	"Our taxis are not good and do not know how to deal with tourists; taxi drivers should not talk a lot and everything. They have to be trained in order to nicely answer tourists" p8

Table 32: Table of Third and Fourth Themes and sets of Sub-themes, with selected Quotes