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### Original Research Article

## The Authenticity of Heritage Sites and Necessity to Pay Attention to the Conflict in its Definition from Two Perspectives: Conservation and Tourism (Case Study: Al-Moez Street in Cairo)

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### Abstract

**Problem statement:** The authenticity of heritage sites, in addition to the form component, is associated with the continuity of social life, various activities and functions. The UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) in 2011 sought to establish a link between “urban conservation” and “practical market”. It has created a new misunderstanding because the heritage authenticity has encountered issues in the field of tourism that have not necessarily correspond to a deep understanding of the conservation terms. From the tourism industry perspective, authenticity depends on the tourist perception; changes according to consumer demands and economic rather than social dimensions, while from the conservation perspective, it depends on the actual sense of heritage authenticity, avoiding duplication, addition and changes, considering social context and living tradition.

**Research objective:** This paper examines the aspects of conflict caused by tourists as stakeholders in defining heritage authenticity and the presented solution is evaluated in the project of Al-Moez Street in Cairo.

**Research method:** This study deals with heritage authenticity through documentary research and used a variety of sources, including books, articles, statements and research projects.

**Conclusion:** Finally, a sustainable tourism approach with four policies: “carrying capacity”, “small-scale”, “government supervision” and “community participation” is proposed as a solution and then its use in the restoration project of Al-Moez Street, as a successful project in the field of tourism and conservation principles, has been examined.

**Keywords:** *Authenticity, Heritage sites, Conservation, Al-Moez Street, Tourism.*

### Introduction

During the last three decades, the understanding

of authenticity in conservation philosophy has undergone fundamental changes with an increasing emphasis on intangible aspects of cultural heritage. The historic urban fabric is

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what we see and experience; in other words, the authenticity of the historic site means the experience of all its aspects, including form, indigenous peoples, social life, various activities and functions. Newby (1994) believed that tourism and heritage coexist because tourism revenues can be used to sustain and conserve the values of heritage. In this instance, the cultural heritage becomes a consumer product restricted by the choice, fashion and taste of international organizations involved in the marketing of heritage products. From this point of view, the tourism industry puts aside a true interpretation of heritage authenticity. firstly, the physical separation that authorities adopt between the heritage asset and the public realm is caused by commodifying the built fabric and turning it into mere real estate. Secondly, the emotional deprivation that interventions on heritage assets cause is emerged by allowing consumer culture to take hold; that is, the offered food or clothes offered in the restored shops are appropriated for their clients, thus creating a destructive relationship between customers and heritage that replaces the original bond between the local residents and their everyday spaces (Martínez, 2016).

Moreover, tourism activities result in land-use change. Tourist activities and the growing number of tourists, causing traffic congestion, shortage of parking, rising prices and intrusion in the private domain, ultimately has led to conservation distortion (Jansen-Verbeke, 1997).

On the other hand, tourists need modern support services. A monotony in retail and service providers such as the introduction of fast-food outlets, car park facilities, street furniture and hotels often represents the main distortion in the provision of services to the local people and it also destroys the diversity of cultural heritage (Newby, 1994). Another conflict is about the culture of life. According to Herbert (1995), locals are in danger of becoming part of the “spectacle” of tourism, gazed upon by outsiders who know little about their culture or society.

Some of the social and cultural issues that caused by the different cultural norms and assumptions perceived by both the tourists and locals on such issues as child labor, the role of women, religion, alcohol and so on that may be immoral or offensive to either side. Private space, such as those associated with residential areas, as well as religious space are the most sensitive to tourist intervention (Orbasli, 2002). This cultural confrontation can be deteriorated by displays of wealth and consumerism that may be disruptive to locals. Tourism also induces changes in local lifestyles and cultures. Besides, tourism has economic impacts on local populations of historic cities. The local economy may be interrupted through the introduction of tourist earnings which made some locals richer than others. High inflation from tourism pushes prices up that could cause resentment among locals. Prices of land and property, as well as the goods that are being sold, are not responsive to local needs, ultimately leads to higher rent prices, distorting the character of the area and creating an “outside” zone in the heart of the historic city.

On this occasion, “authenticity is a cultural form of power over space that puts pressure on the city’s old working-class and lower middle class, who can no longer afford to live or work there” (Zukin, 2009). This study examines the aspects of conflict over defining the “authenticity of heritage sites” between the “tourism industry” and “principles of conservation”, then the proposed solution is evaluated in a real project.

## Theoretical foundation and literature review

### • Authenticity

The definition of “authenticity” in dictionary is as: real or genuine, not false or imitation; actual; original (<http://www.merriam-webster.com>). The Latin root of the word is “authentic” means original, genuine, principal (<http://www.etymonline.com>). The origin of authenticity views goes back to ancient Greece and in the sense, authenticity means

adaptation to one's inner nature. No system can achieve authenticity by copying an external and imposed standard (Naghizadeh, 2000).

Plato considered the traditional man to be faithful to his authenticity and authenticity to be faithful to being traditional and considered authenticity the sum of form and content (Bina Motlagh, 2006, 71). The authenticity of an artwork is its degree of truthfulness, inherent unity, creative process and, physical appearance, as well as the effects of its message throughout history (Jokilehto, 1995, 6). Naghizadeh (2000) considered authenticity as one of the criteria of constant beauty. The concept of authenticity in urban restoration also has a lot of adherents: "since the historic evidence is based on authenticity, if the time continuity of the work is lost as a result of duplication, its authenticity is at risk (Benjamin, 2008, 223). Jacobs and Appleyard (1987) in their well-known paper "toward an urban design manifesto" listed qualities, including vitality, identity, meaning, social life and authenticity, to achieve a desirable place (cited in Golkar, 2001, 45). In modern thinking "shape" is often considered to be the most important feature of space authenticity and to determine the nature of space, employed the mechanism of physical forms and elements, such as line and surface. In other words, more attention is paid to scarcity, not spatial qualities (Naghizadeh & Aminzadeh, 2003, 99). On the contrary, Tiesdell, Oc & Heath (2000) believed that to achieve space authenticity, two qualities of sense of place and spatial affiliation are also important. Masoud, Hojjat & Nasekhian (2012), based on the components of sense of place (i.e. "form", "function" and "meaning"), considered the important components of authenticity in fabric restoration as "integrity" of, "belonging" to and "behavior" in fabric, respectively.

#### • Tourism approach to the authenticity of heritage sites

The 1996 Declaration of San Antonio acknowledged the contribution of different stakeholders to define

urban authenticity, including tourists among them (ICOMOS, 1996). Policies favoring the touristic perspective have become mainstream ever since and proposed the authenticity perception from the tourist view (Martínez, 2016, 51). Authenticity was introduced to sociological research by MacCannell (1973) to assess tourists' travel experiences at historic sites (cited in Lu, Chi & Liu, 2015, 88). Hargrove believed that authenticity in heritage tourism is a fundamental component of a meaningful experience (Hargrove, 2002). Authenticity notably improves the quality of heritage tourism (Chhabra, Healy & Sills, 2003). The tendency for authentic experience is one of the essential motivators for heritage tourists as well as nostalgia and social distinction (Poria, Butler & Airey, 2001; Zeppel & Hall, 1991).

Some studies have suggested that authenticity in tourism can be understood as a phenomenon related to the "fabric" and "experience". Coeterier's research belongs to the first category. In his pilot study in the south of the Netherlands, he determined four criteria, including form, function, knowledge and familiarity, to evaluate historic buildings. In this research, "authenticity" was a tertiary criterion of "uniqueness" as a secondary criterion of "form" (Coeterier, 2002).

The research of Lu et al. belongs to the second category, which considered the content in addition to the form. They concluded that the destination image fully mediates the relationship between perceived authenticity and tourists' satisfaction (Lu et al., 2015). The second group believed the availability of information or cues reflecting the unique history of an area is likely to have a significant impact on tourists' perception of authenticity and reinforce the formation of a positive image (Frost, 2006). Generally, the tourism approach to the authenticity of heritage sites has been criticized from three perspectives. First of all, satisfaction with heritage tourism relies not on the actual sense of authenticity but rather on tourists' perceived authenticity

(Chhabra et al., 2003). Secondly, heritage has become a product. Hence, there is a tendency to change the past to suit changing requirements; relics can be adapted, developed, copied and interpreted (Schouten, 1995). Thirdly, the tourism debate about urban authenticity revolves mostly on the economic dimension, thus social dimension and the local needs have been neglected. Similarly, the transformation of Beijing's historic center is undergone contemporary definitions of urban authenticity serving the creative city paradigm and the tourism industry (Martínez, 2016).

#### • Conservation approach to the authenticity of heritage sites

In the 1840s, a debate began in England on the principles of conservation of historic buildings divided conservators into two opposing groups: The first group was known as “destructive restoration”, reflecting the approach of “stylistic restoration” invented by “Viollet Le Duc”. The restorer in this approach decided to complete the design as he saw convenient, to achieve the unity of style in the structure and the form, at the same time. The second group was known as “anti-restoration”. They concerned with ‘historic time’, that means they insisted to “protect and conserve without intervention”. “John Ruskin” (1819-1900) initiated this movement in the mid-19th century. Ruskin criticized restorers for the destruction of the historic authenticity of building. He argued that authenticity meant that a remained building should return to its original state and use as far as possible, as its antiquity had given it historical value (Zeayter & Mansour, 2018, 346). Then, “William Morris” (1834-1896) pioneered the “Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings” (SPAB) applied the modern approach to conservation that quickly spread internationally. The SPAB manifesto addressed several issues on authenticity in the evaluation of historic buildings: “ancient monuments represented certain historic periods only so far as their authentic material was undisturbed and preserved in situ; any attempt

to restore or copy would only result in the loss of authenticity and the creation of a fake”. (Jokilehto, 1999, 185).

Later Reigel (1858-1905) extended the importance of authenticity from building to entire urban area and since the 1960s the approach to conservation has focused on complexes and areas (Zeayter & Mansour, 2018, 347). Urban conservation has three goals; physical, spatial and social (Orbasli, 2002). Physical goal is associated with the building conservation. Spatial goal views the townscape as a holistic entity, with its relationships between spaces and their function. The third goal and most neglected, is social. Orbasli (2002) believes that the social dimension is the most important, because continuity in conservation can be achieved only through the continuation of urban life. Thus, this definition of authenticity gradually diminished as “the need to identify a building’s architecture as an accurate inspiration of the past as a fixed truth” (Hubbard, 1993). In this regard Ashworth and Tunbridge discussed that the authenticity of old buildings that have survived over time, depends on such factors as building type, materials, districts and towns, natural catastrophes and socioeconomic pressures (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990).

The Nara Document (ICOMOS, 1994) considered the credibility and the truthfulness of information sources as the first main criteria to judge the authenticity of the cultural heritage (cite in Nishimura, 2010).

Zeayter and Mansour believed that five influencing factors of authenticity/ integrity are as follows:

Assurance of the truthfulness of the internal unity of conserved objects, which guards the structural quality of the restoration; credibility of information’s source and documentary evidence; establishing functional integrity to avoid museumization; avoiding replication to enhance the visual quality of the conserved urban artifact; considering social context and living tradition (Zeayter & Mansour, 2018, 349).

Among contemporary approaches, “Historic Urban

Landscape” (UNESCO, 2011) has been more accepted, because of its emphasis on the need to preserve the authenticity of heritage in the historical context, the continuity of life in communities and their social, cultural and economic activities. This approach calls for a link between “urban conservation” and the “practical reality of market”.

• **Sustainable tourism: an effort to reconcile tourism and heritage site conservation**

Sustainable tourism is based on sustainable development, that is, if tourism affects sustainable development, it must be economically stable, environmentally sensitive and culturally appropriate. There are two strategies for sustainable tourism: functional approach and political economy approach. The first one analyzes tourism and its impact on the tourist destination as a cultural resource, whereas the second argues that in order to minimize the destructive effects of exploitation, host countries and populations should seek public ownership of the tourist industry and direct marketing of the product (Lea, 1988).

Proponents of functional strategy suggest two policies: “small-scale” development and “carrying capacity”. They believe that if development is fulfilled on small-scale, at the level of local activities, tourism can manage a nonconsumptive use of resources (Furze, Lacy & Birckhead, 1996). In this case, the benefits are threefold. First, compared to mass tourism, the need for financial investment in infrastructure and superstructure facilities will be less. Second, locally owned and operated businesses will not have to adapt to the corporate Western identity of multinational tourism issues. Therefore they can use more local products, materials and labor. Third, the profits made should return to local community instead of flowing back to the state or foreign organizations (Cater, 1994).

Ashworth (1995) indicated that the link between resource appraisal and output value can be made through the concept of “carrying capacity” as a tool for heritage management. This concept shows the maximum use of any place without causing negative

effects on resources, the community, economy, culture, environment and visitor dissatisfaction (Wahab, 1997). Jansen-Verbeke (1997) described the complexity of the multidimensional character of carrying capacity and believed that it is impossible to decide on several tourists that a city can “carry” in a particular period. The impact of tourism is not only determined by the actual number of tourists but is largely determined by tourism-related activities in an urban environment and the resulting physical changes. However, the concept of carrying capacity has been used as a form of management for tourist destinations in several countries, such as Britain, Chester City.

The political-economy strategy, on the other hand, is based on the structural inequalities in economic issues, characterized by severe distortions and imbalances in the share of income and profits from tourism. To minimize these effects, theorists believe that governments should intervene in the market, integrate planning with implementation and encourage “community participation” (Nasser, 2003).

Cater believed that allowing the free activity of market forces will not lead to sustainable results when tourism organizations benefit from increasing the number of visitors by ruining the environment. She suggested that governments should monitor the markets through tax measures on tourism companies. The setting of foreign visitor fees to heritage places is one way of subsidizing heritage places by their users. The collected fees should allocate for ensuring sustainable tourism development with a lower charge for locals (Cater, 1994).

It is also necessary to recognize the mutually dependent interests of the public and private sectors in tourism. Creating the conditions and business environment in which private local business can make a reasonable profit will benefit the government. Finally, the most important factor to ensure sustainability of tourism development is to increase community participation. Such an accomplishment

extends beyond economic survival, environmental conservation and socio-cultural integrity, but it permits the community to appreciate its resources (Nasser, 2003) (Fig. 1).

### Methodology

Documentary research method based on different types of sources like books, articles, statements and research projects was employed to examine the aspects of conflict arising from the presence of tourists as stakeholders in defining the authenticity of heritage. The documentary research uses the reanalysis of data sets and the results of reported studies as the basis of research (Giddens, 1999, 727). Analysis in documentary research can be quantitative, qualitative, or both (Balihar, 2007). This study took a qualitative approach. An important point to consider when using documentary sources is how to deduce from a document. To this end the researcher may reinforce the documentary data by in-depth interviews with several key experts, that is, people who are familiar with and or knowledgeable about the social phenomenon under investigation (Ahmed, 2010). Hence, in the process of analysis, interviews with six experts were used.

### Analysis

Table 1 shows the aspects of conflict over the authenticity of heritage sites between tourism and the principles of conservation. Accordingly, sustainable tourism strategies to resolve the conflicts are presented. The first point of conflict is related to the explanation of authenticity; the tourism industry approves tourists' perception as authenticity of heritage sites. However, conservation seeks the actual sense of authenticity. This study suggested two policies: "government supervision" and "community participation". The first one depends on expert knowledge and the latter depends on local knowledge as sources for the actual sense of authenticity. A combination of the expert knowledge based on standards and the local knowledge based

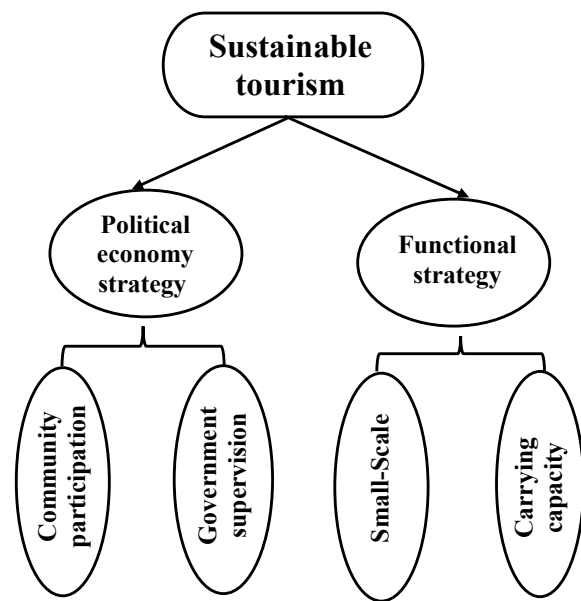


Fig. 1. Policies and strategies of sustainable tourism. Source: author.

on lived experience (Arefi, 2017, 52-59) can be useful for this issue.

The second conflict is over the possibility of copying, adding and generally any kind of changes to make heritage sites suitable for changing needs. To address this issue, this study suggests "government supervision" in addition to the policy of "carrying capacity" based on the strategies of sustainable tourism. Carrying capacity determines the most use of any place without causing negative effects on resources, the community, economy, culture, environment and the subsequent loss of tourist satisfaction.

The third conflict concerns the local people and the social context of heritage sites. "Community participation", "carrying capacity" and "small-scale" are three policies that were suggested to solve the third conflict. First allows the community to understand its heritage sources, try to advance the plans and then protect them, second concerns the survival of the local community and the prevention of its destruction and by last one, local activities thrive and profits return to the local community.

Since placemaking in developing countries, including

Table 1. Sustainable tourism policies in defining the authenticity of heritage sites at the approach of resolving “tourism” and “conservation” conflicts. Source: author.

Approaches	Conflicts of tourism and conservation approaches and sustainable tourism policies as a solution		
Tourism approach to the authenticity of heritage sites	Tourists’ perceived authenticity rather than the actual sense of heritage authenticity	Heritage has become a product (changes to adapt for changing needs)	Paying attention to the economic dimension, disregarding the social dimension and the needs of the locals
Conservation approach to authenticity of heritage sites	the actual sense of heritage authenticity - Credibility of information’s source and documentary evidence - Assurance of the truthfulness and the internal unity - Establishing functional integrity to avoid museumization	Avoiding replication to enhance the visual quality of the conserved urban artifact	Considering social context and living tradition
Sustainable Tourism’s policies	- Government supervision - Community participation	- Carrying capacity - Government supervision	- Small-scale - Carrying capacity - Community participation

Iran, is mainly a need-based or expert -driven approach, among the proposed solutions “community participation” is the least feasible. Community participation is not compatible with the top-down nature of the need-based approach (Arefi, 2017, 39, 60)

### Case study

In order to measure the proposed strategies, Al-Moez Street was selected as the historic spine of Cairo. Al-Moez Street is one of the important Islamic sites in Egypt. A variety of Islamic monuments and historical buildings are located herein. The area was named after the Leader, who entered Egypt by 969 A.D. The street is 1200 square meters in area and a panorama of the Islamic, military, religious, social, educational and architectural monuments which continuously contains the history of Islam. Now, Al-Moez Street is an important tourist attraction in Cairo (Mortada, Hasan & Hassanein, 2012).

In addition to cultural, physical and political necessities, the 1992 earthquake and its damages led to a strategic look at historical monuments (Bacharach,1995). To solve these issues, the

“development project of historic Cairo” was put on the agenda within a year by the United Nations Development Program and the Supreme Council of Antiquities. According to the project, nine historic sites along Al-Moez Street were identified. This area is called “heritage corridor” (Fig. 2). Leaving the heritage corridor, on the east side, the main emphasis is on the provision of local residential complexes and west of the corridor is dedicated to mixed uses (Antoniu, 2000).

Conservation plan accomplished between the years 1998 and 2008. Mortada et al. (2012) researched to evaluate the restoration project accomplished between 1998-2008 Their research examined the actions taken about historic buildings, ownership among public and private sectors and expected socio-economic benefits on the local community that demonstrates a successful project in both approaches of conservation and tourism. In the following, a comparative study between the actions taken in Al-Moez Street and sustainable tourism strategies is discussed.

#### • Functional strategy

Traffic volume in “development project of historic

Cairo” was considered in proportion to the “carrying capacity”, with no need to pave the streets and widen the passages.

The major part of the 1.5 km route from “Al-Fotouh Gate” to “Zuwayla Gate”, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

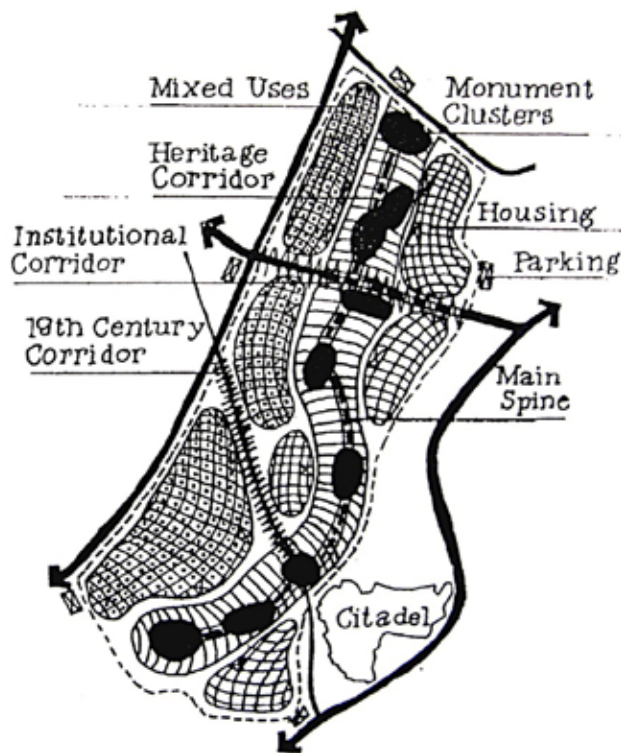


Fig. 2. Strategic plan for heritage corridors and surrounding areas. Source: Antoniou, 2000.

dedicated to pedestrians. However, emergency access to this route is always possible (Fig. 3).

Reconstruction of the activities was also proposed as a chain of bazaars and vakalehs (buildings including residential units on the upper floors and commercial use on the ground floor) that had been seen as Cairo’s spatial pattern throughout its spine (Fig. 4). The revitalization of vakalehs along the historic spine made active groups engage in constructions that were compatible with the “environment scale”. Therefore, the vakalehs returned to urban life with a wide range of functions (such as hotels, exhibitions, cafes and restaurants), while the presence of local people as the main



A



Fig. 3. Al-Moez Street with traffic restriction during the day. Source: Mortada et al., 2012.



B

Fig. 4. Vakalehs along AL-Moez Street. Source: Lamei, 2011.



owners of them was maintained along with tourists (Antoniou, 2000) (Fig. 5).

**• Political economy strategy**

Efforts to preserve and revitalize Cairo’s historic fabric have been accompanied by economic renewal, investment growth, improvement of financial structure to raise capital and the support of process by efficient power.

Cairo government regarded the restoration of Cairo’s historical monuments a national project worthy of meticulous care and attention. Therefore, 850 million Egyptian pounds were allotted for the execution of the project by the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with other ministries, the Governorate of Cairo and governmental bodies concerned.

Apart from allocating budget for the restoration of walls, floors, structures, etc., part of the budget was spent on persuading local people to participate. As shown in Fig. 6, the authorities set up a comprehensive conservation plan with the participation of local people, because public

participation is a foundation in the process of rehabilitation of historic areas (Lamei, 2011).

The actions taken in Al-Moez Street, based on sustainable tourism policies, are summarized in Table 2.

**Conclusion**

This paper discussed the authenticity of the heritage sites from two perspectives: principles of



Fig. 5. Tourist accommodation on Al-Moez Street. Source: Lamei, 2011.



Fig. 6. Authorities are explaining conservation measures to locals, children and students. Source: Lamei, 2011.

Table 2. Sustainable tourism policies taken in the restoration project of Al-Moez Street. Source: author.

The actions taken in Al-Moez Street	Small-Scale	Carrying capacity	Government supervision	Community Participation
Rvitalization of vakalehs along Al-Moez Street	✓			✓
Determining the capacity of passages and traffic volume		✓		
Attracting investment and support the revival process			✓	
Setting up a comprehensive conservation plan with the participation of local people				✓

conservation and tourism industry. After ICOMOS in 1996 acknowledged the contribution of tourists as stakeholders to define urban conservation, policymakers' goal of providing authentic tourism experiences conflicted with the rights of communities. Today the tourism definition of authenticity depends on: 1. the tourist perception; 2. changes according to consumer demands; and 3. economic rather than social dimensions, which has had a profound effect on the transformation of historic cities. Commercial definitions of heritage sites may serve tourism purposes, but they are lack of authenticity from a conservation perspective and severely distort it.

From a conservation perspective, the UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape; HUL (2011) seeks 1. the actual sense of heritage authenticity; 2. avoiding duplication, addition and changes; and 3. emphasis on the life of communities and their social, cultural and economic activities.

These differences have posed challenges in defining the authenticity of heritage sites. This paper proposes sustainable tourism in order to solve the problem, which is used with two strategies: "functional approach" and "political economy approach". First focuses on the capacity of tourism destination as a cultural resource and minimizing the negative effects of tourism through resource management and appropriate measures with two policies of "small-scale" and "carrying capacity". Second provides more financial responsibility for the conservation of heritage sites. With two policies of "government supervision" and "community participation", the political economy approach allows governments and local communities to hold more stake in tourism and the management of their historical resources.

This paper suggests "government supervision" and "community participation" to solve the first point of conflict, which the first one depends on expert knowledge and the latter depends on local knowledge as sources for the actual sense of authenticity. The second conflict is over the

possibility of copying, adding and generally any kind of changes to make heritage sites suitable for changing needs. To solve this issue, "government supervision" as well as the policy of "carrying capacity" was employed. Carrying capacity determines the most use of any place without causing negative effects on resources, the community, economy, culture, environment and the subsequent loss of tourist satisfaction. "Community participation", "carrying capacity" and "small-scale" are three policies that were suggested to solve the third conflict. First allows the community to understand its heritage sources, try to advance the plans and then protect them, second concerns the survival of the local community and the prevention of its destruction and by last one, local activities thrive and profits return to the local community.

The restoration project of Al-Moez Street (1998-2008) was selected as a successful project to achieve tourism goals and principles of conservation to the evaluation of sustainable tourism strategies. In this project, constructions were adapted to the "scale" of the environment by the revitalization of vakalehs along Al-Moez Street. Traffic volume was considered in proportion to the "carrying capacity" with no need to pave the streets and widen the passages; The "government" supported the project by attracting investment and local people "participated" in setting up a comprehensive conservation plan.

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