



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK FOR HERITAGE
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF ARAB DISTRICT, ERBIL, IRAQ***

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**DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK FOR HERITAGE
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF ARAB DISTRICT, ERBIL, IRAQ**

By

OMAR KHASRO AKRAM

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti
Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

October 2020

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION
MANAGEMENT OF ARAB DISTRICT, ERBIL, IRAQ**

By

OMAR KHASRO AKRAM

October 2020

Chair: Sumarni Binti Ismail, PhD
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Arab District has highly influenced Erbil city growth, contributing to its present shape and urban fabric form, though, historical urban areas and built cultural heritage are still treated as part of archaeological sites, where specific urban characteristics are not yet focused. Moreover, conservation, restoration and rehabilitation processes are also not clarified by the Law, leaving a gap between practical actions and official regulations. Confronting Arab District with the two active Laws for heritage management (National Policy of Iraq N.55 of 2002 and Local Policy of Kurdistan region N.08 of 2008), it is observed that unique values are put at risk, or even being lost, due to unclear directions and guidelines for conservation processes. Based on this problem, this research objectives are firstly to synthesise the best ICOMOS (International Council Of Monuments and Sites) charters that can be applied to conservation of heritage of Arab District, to analyse similar case references on conservation management to work as base for a framework design and, finally, to develop a framework for conservation management of heritage for Arab District, Erbil, Iraq, seeking to effectively control preservation projects. This research adopts literature review on tangible heritage, deeply identifying local and international regulations, analysing similar cases of conservation management on heritage and concepts of conservation management plans and frameworks to help on the design for Arab District. The adopted methodology lies on a case study, following a qualitative method that uses a Focused Group Discussion (F.G.D.), with a group of experts from different areas and fields, under heritage conservation, and online semi-structured questionnaires to a group of specialists, with many years of experience, to properly obtain results. This study contributes on proposing the concept of “conservation management plans, from case references in other Arab countries, where their similar problems have already been solved, could work as foundation for the development of a conservation management framework for tangible heritage in Arab District, Erbil, Iraq” and a conservation management framework with its

development recommendations. As key findings, the study identifies the Venice Charter, the Charter on Built Vernacular Heritage, the Washington Charter and the Burra Charter as some of the best ICOMOS charters belonging to conservation management for historic cities, including Arab District, providing reliable information for the framework development. The study of similar cases showed different approaches to answer the same type of problems and objectives, making it possible to isolate goals, strategy, actions, monitoring, level of responsibility and reference to policies as main framework components applied to specific themes of Arab District.

This study helps not just specialists, such as decision-makers, stakeholders, planners, local government, archaeologists, and heritage professionals, but also, the society itself, including the general public, educators, and community group, having global impact towards humanity issues.

Keywords: Iraqi's Protection, Tangible Heritage, Conservation Management Framework, Iraqi's Policy, Kurdistan region Policy, Arab District, Erbil City, Iraq.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PEMBANGUNAN RANGKA KERJA BAGI PENGURUSAN
PEMULIHARAAN WARISAN UNTUK DAERAH ARAB, ERBIL, IRAQ**

Oleh

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Daerah Arab sangat mempengaruhi pertumbuhan bandar Erbil, menyumbang kepada pembentukan dan reka bentuk fabrik bandar sekarang, walaupun begitu, kawasan bandar bersejarah dan warisan budaya yang dibina masih dianggap sebagai sebahagian dari kawasan arkeologi, di mana ciri-ciri bandar tertentu belum difokuskan. Selain itu, proses pemeliharaan, pemulihan dan pemuliharaan juga tidak diperjelaskan oleh Undang-Undang, hal ini menyebabkan jurang antara tindakan praktikal dan peraturan resmi. Dengan dua Undang-undang aktif untuk pengurusan warisan (Dasar Nasional Iraq N.55 tahun 2002 dan Dasar Tempatan Wilayah Kurdistan N.08 tahun 2008), didapati bahawa nilai-nilai unik diletakkan dalam risiko, atau bahkan hilang, akibat arahan dan garis panduan yang tidak jelas untuk proses pemuliharaan. Berdasarkan permasalahan ini, objektif pertama kajian ini adalah untuk menyusun petaan ICOMOS (Majlis Monumen dan Tapak Antarabangsa) yang dapat digunakan untuk pemeliharaan warisan Daerah Arab, menganalisa rujukan kes yang sama mengenai pengurusan pemuliharaan sebagai asas bagi reka bentuk rangka kerja dan, akhirnya mengembangkan rangka kerja untuk pengurusan pemeliharaan warisan untuk Daerah Arab, Erbil, Iraq, bagi usaha untuk mengendalikan projek pemeliharaan secara berkesan. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan kajian literatur mengenai warisan nyata, mengenal pasti peraturan tempatan dan antarabangsa, menganalisis kes-kes pengurusan pemuliharaan yang serupa mengenai warisan dan konsep rancangan dan rangka kerja pengurusan pemuliharaan untuk membantu rangka kerja untuk Daerah Arab. Metodologi yang digunakan terletak pada kajian kes, mengikuti kaedah kualitatif yang menggunakan Perbincangan Kumpulan Berfokus (FGD), dengan sekumpulan pakar dari berbagai bidang dan bidang di bawah

pemuliharaan warisan, dan soal selidik separa berstruktur dalam talian kepada sekumpulan pakar yang berpengalaman, untuk memperoleh hasil dengan betul. Kajian ini memberikan kontribusi untuk mengusulkan konsep "rancangan pengelolaan pemuliharaan, dari rujukan kes di negara Arab lain, di mana permasalahan serupa telah diselesaikan, dapat berfungsi sebagai landasan pengembangan rangka kerja pengurusan pemuliharaan untuk warisan nyata di Daerah Arab, Erbil, Iraq" dan rangka kerja pengurusan pemuliharaan dengan cadangan pengembangannya. Sebagai penemuan utama, kajian ini mengenal pasti Piagam Venice, Piagam Warisan Vernakular yang Dibina, Piagam Washington dan Piagam Burra sebagai carta ICOMOS terbaik yang tergolong dalam pengurusan pemuliharaan bandar-bandar bersejarah, termasuk Daerah Arab, selain memberikan maklumat yang boleh dipercayai untuk rangka kerja pembangunan. Kajian kes yang sama menunjukkan pendekatan yang berbeza untuk menjawab jenis masalah dan objektif yang sama, memungkinkan untuk mengasingkan tujuan, strategi, tindakan, pemantauan, tahap tanggungjawab dan merujuk kepada dasar sebagai komponen rangka kerja utama yang diterapkan pada tema tertentu di Daerah Arab.

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Kata Kunci: Perlindungan Iraq, Warisan Nyata, Rangka Kerja Pengurusan Pemuliharaan, Dasar Iraq, Dasar Wilayah Kurdistan, Daerah Arab, Bandar Erbil, Iraq.

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{قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ}
صدق الله العظيم

[الزمر : 9]

In the name of God, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

{ Say: "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition.}

God Almighty has spoken the truth
[Az-Zumar: 9]

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 5 October 2020 to conduct the final examination of Omar Khasro Akram on his thesis entitled "Development of a Framework for Heritage Conservation Management of Arab District, Erbil, Iraq" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one provides an overview of the study, where its aim is to increase the protection and conservation of tangible heritage of Arab District, while enlighten the importance of following the active policies and regulations, and outlines the structure of the thesis. It starts with the study background, followed by the problem statement, main research question and its sub-research questions, research objectives, scope of the study, the significance of research and its implications, ending with the limitation of research and thesis structure. This general structure of the study will guide the research in the subsequent chapters.

1.2 Study Background

(UNESCO, 2019b) has provided the definitions of different categories of World Heritage, such as cultural and natural heritage, which are defined in Article 1 and 2 of the World Heritage Convention 1972. A deeper approach to cultural heritage, it refers to the cultural aspects of the area, such as heritage places, monuments, traditional activities and events, folklore, languages, between others, considered fundamental to future generations, giving them the needed connection not just to social values, but also to religions, beliefs and traditions, allowing these generations to identify with others of similar beliefs and backgrounds (Erdem Erbas, 2018; Nyaupane, 2019).

Cultural heritage can be divided into two main parts, intangible heritage, related to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, instruments, objects, artifacts, and other cultures associated with specific societies or groups, which recognize them as part of cultural heritage, and tangible heritage that refers to all the material traces, such as movable and immovable objects that are significant to a community, a nation, and humanity (Prieto et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2019b).

The focus of this thesis is given to tangible heritage only (Figure 1.1), where the object of study are the buildings and urban part of Arab District, not focusing on its intangible forms and ways.

Arab district has been recognized for their built architectural heritage and urban fabric in terms of organization of spaces, structures, materials, form, and function of the group of buildings, identified as an outstanding universal value for the historic district. It is important, also, to highlight that this district is

considered as a category of a specific period and culture, where it is required to be preserved as a whole, keeping the life inside the district, as referred by (UNESCO, 2019b): *“historic towns which are still inhabited and which, by their very nature, have developed and will continue to develop under the influence of socio-economic and cultural change, a situation that renders the assessment of their authenticity more difficult and any conservation policy more problematical”*. In a deeper approach to the previous statement, the selection of Arab district as a historic area and its location adjacent to Erbil Citadel, has increased its heritage value for having a large number of ancient buildings of monumental importance, providing more unique characteristic of that area and history. Another important aspect, as mentioned in the Operational Guidelines 2019: *“properties located within the limited space but have a great influence on the historical planning”*, is that Arab District is the first settled area outside Erbil Citadel, bringing with its people the same type of heritage values and heritage buildings, including materials, construction techniques and facades designs. Due to its close relation to Erbil Citadel, recognized by UNESCO under criteria iv), related to tangible heritage, also Arab District needs to receive the same kind of focus and protection.



Figure 1.1: Classification of Cultural Heritage (Source: UNESCO, 2019b)

In specific, when focusing on (UNESCO, 2019b), it states tangible heritage as including three different aspects, such as monuments, groups of buildings and sites, where monuments consist on sculptures and painting works, architectural works, elements or structures of archaeology and groups of features and other characteristics that reflect high value of history or art. Buildings focus on a singular building or groups of buildings, connected or separated, which features historical values in terms of architecture, similarity or layouts in a landscape that shows the high level of history, art and science. Sites contain any place that includes natural heritage, monuments, landmarks or buildings connected to land, archaeological sites and any land with buildings, gardens and trees that shows the high value of history.

In the specific case of Iraqi tangible heritage, there are eleven properties on the tentative list to become a World Heritage Site, where ten of them are listed as

cultural heritage and the other one as mixed heritage. In 2000, the Public Board of Heritage and Antiques (PBHA) submitted four sites (Nimrud, Ancient City of Nineveh, Al-Ukhaidir Palace and Wasit)(Abid, 2016), while in 2010 the site of Thilkifil was submitted to the same list. Later on, in 2011, the list received two more submissions, Amedy City in Duhok and Wadi Al-Salam Cemetery in Najaf. Then, in 2014, the historical feature of the Tigris river, in Baghdad, was also listed, including Al-Mustansiryia School and Abbasid Palace (Akram, Mohammed Jamil, Franco, Ismail, & Graça, 2019; Akram, Mohammed Jamil, Ismail, Franco, & Graça, 2018; Akram, 2017). In 2017, Nippur in Al-Qadisiya and Bestansur Neolithic Settlement, located in Sulaimaniya and finally, in 2018, the old city of Mosul is located in Nineveh (WHS- UNESCO, 2018).

The World Heritage List, in 2019, was composed by 1121 sites, being only six of them from Iraq (Hatra, Samarra, Erbil Citadel, Ashur, Ahwar of Southern Iraq) and lately, in 2019, Babylon (Akram, 2017; UNESCO, 2019; WHS-UNESCO, 2018). Due to terrorist attacks from the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS), unfortunately Hatra and Ashur are already damaged, while Samarra is in close dangerous of heritage loss. From this, those three heritage sites are also listed as heritage sites at risk, being Erbil Citadel the only currently safe Iraqi heritage (Akram, 2017). However, it is still at risk of being removed, based on an incorrect management, where the time given for rehabilitation was already expired (NRT channel for news, 2017).

Overall, the number of listed sites is still small considering the extensive Iraqi's history, however, there is still no existing system able to advertise them to Iraqi public, neither to encourage UNESCO's World Heritage List to include them. A good example is the archaeological site of Wasit, where the local community has lack of awareness about its submission on the tentative heritage list. This creates a tension between protection and perception on promoting human activities in protected areas, in addition to the knowledge level on conservation management in contemporary Iraq(Abid, 2016; Al-Mosawi, 2017).

(Bianca, 2000; Guzman et al., 2018) state that conservation cannot be managed on its own, but through the analysis of communities' aspirations and living patterns. Though, the understanding level on the need of heritage protection and conservation in Iraq is still insufficient. The most significant fact is that some heritage protection groups, local communities and non-governmental organizations have already tried to support some heritage sites to be listed in the WHL. Also, up to today, unfortunately there has not been placed a clear governmental decision to protect and support these sites (Al-Mosawi, 2017). In addition, no organization or group is yet able to provide reliable information explaining the uniqueness and importance of these sites, at both local and national levels. (Abid, 2016; Lusiani et al., 2013; Pieri, 2010) state that *"as concerns heritage in Iraq today, there is a gap of nonawareness between what is officially listed by UNESCO World Heritage and what is not"*.

1.2.1 Arab District, Erbil

Highlighting the city of Erbil, considered one of the oldest constantly inhabited cities in the world, only the Erbil Citadel was already listed on UNESCO's World Heritage, however fulfilling just the (iv) criteria, about built cultural property. There was not given any focus to its urban fabric, which is known by its oval shape, located 30 metres above ground level (Akram, Ismail, et al., 2016a; Al-hashimi, 2015; Ibrahim et al., 2014). Also, it was not given any focus to its surrounding districts, namely Arab District (Figure 1.2), which was the first inhabited area outside the citadel and present the same character as the one found in the Citadel, such as traditional materials, buildings, houses and same alleys and streets styles (Ibrahim et al., 2014).

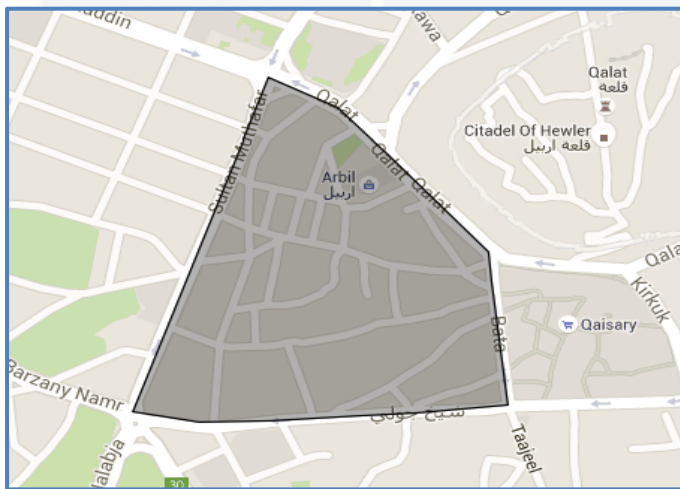


Figure 1.2: Map of Arab District (Source: Google Maps 2018, Scale 1:10000)

According to (UNESCO, 2019b), the identification of the property must include defined boundaries that should be unambiguously distinguished between the identified property and its buffer zones, when they exist. In the case of maps drawing (Figure 1.3), they shall be sufficiently detailed, in order to be able to precisely determine the nominated area. As description of the property, including its identification, an overview of its historical background and historical roots, must once more be provided.



Figure 1.3: Location of Arab District in the City of Erbil (Source: Google Earth 2018)

As mentioned before, Arab District has a big influence on the urban fabric and how it has grown through time, being considered, by itself, a great value, providing old residential areas, landscapes, public spaces, religious buildings, public services and small commercial zones, all connected through tight narrow alleys and streets, visiting the district is like a trip to the past (Baper & Hassan, 2010; Khayat & Khaznadar, 2016; Mohammadi, 2014). These street network and integrated buildings, combine different uses that were organically based on people's needs, rather than following specific plans, showing the natural way that life use to take place in the district (Figure 1.4). Community and cultural identities of the area are present in every building and alley, representing not just the history, traditions and root of the place, but also the people who lived or still live there. Through analysis of traditional buildings, it is also possible to identify a great number of cultural properties, such as ancient construction materials and the simplicity of the facades with high floor windows, all integrated in a way to provide comfort and protection during the harsh summer time (Akram, Ismail, et al., 2016; Akram, Ismail, et al., 2016a). Focusing a bit more to the used materials it is possible to identify different types, such as bricks, found in every traditional house, composing their magnificent deaf brick walls. In order to protect them it is used mortar and plaster, which in Arab District may be found in three different types: mud and straw, lime and gypsum (Al-hashimi, 2015). Windows and doors are mainly built from wood, but it is also possible to find them built in metal. Timber is used in main beams, columns and secondary timber on the floor construction (Yawer; & Ramzi, 2015). Identifying these cultural properties makes it possible to understand their importance and the advantages on their protection, allowing not just gaining knowledge about their significance, but also using them in a way to promote interest and knowledge of future generations (Akram, Franco, & Ismail, 2016).

Based on an ancient map dated back to 1916, describing the ancient city of Erbil, the population density of the Arab District, at that time, was bigger than the population of its neighbour districts: Tajeel and Khanqah. According to the statistical population of the city of Erbil in 1947, the population of Arab District was 5644 people. In 1957's census showed that that has increased to 6850 people. In the previous census, 6544 Muslims and 294 Christians composed the population. The census of 1977 showed 21290 people and in 1984, 26399 people (Othman, 2015). The last census, in 2015, shows around 1975 inhabitants, to around 500 houses. There is longevity among people, like Mr. Abdul Wahid that is over 85 years old and Mr. Waisse that is 90 years old (Al-Din, 2015).

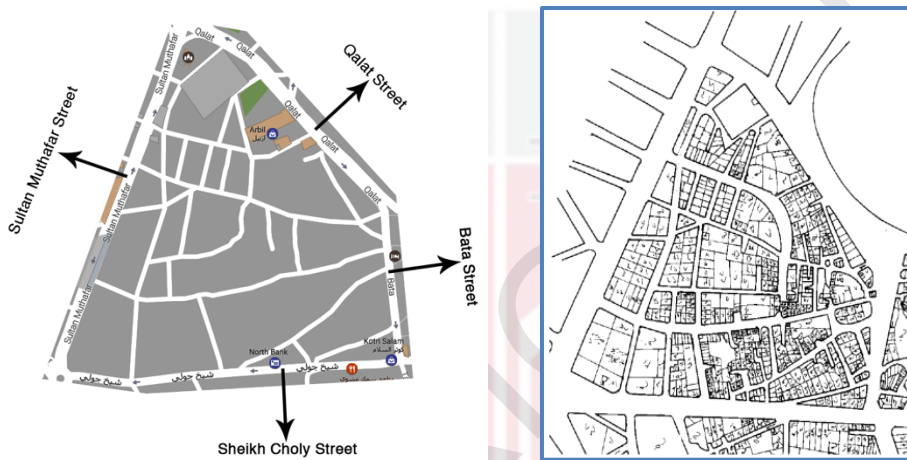


Figure 1.4: Map of Arab District (Source: Erbil Governorate 2017)

Not different from any other historical city centres though, Arab District's urban fabric and buildings, including traditional, vernacular and courtyard houses, have unique characteristics that are not found in any other place in the world and that should be conserved. Such unique characteristics are, nowadays, being exposed to many different factors and historical values are constantly threatened from a possible total loss (Al-hashimi, 2015; Mohammadi, 2014).

Documentation of cultural properties of Arab District, according to the criteria "ii" about urban fabric and "iv" about built cultural property, is one of the most important aspects, in order to maintain detailed and reliable information from all of their important factors and characteristics. Such documentation should include information according to its types and nature, using pictures and detailed descriptions, featuring house typologies with their different designs, house facades, types of materials, urban form, alleys and streets (Akram, 2017).

Arab District is a place full of tradition and values that relates to years and years of a rich culture and its evolution. Being the first settled area outside Erbil citadel, it has highly influenced the city growth, contributing to its present shape and urban fabric form (Khayat & Khaznadar, 2016).

(Yigit & Ciziri, 2009) mention that (UNESCO, 2009) states the urgent need of action regarding tangible heritage protection and that itself cannot protect all the cultural heritage of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, focusing their mission on helping to strength the capabilities of the local authorities, for them to properly act.

Though UNESCO's comes to alert Iraqi Kurdistan government to act against tangible heritage losses, the current national Law "Heritage and Antiques", Legislation n. 55 of 2002, is still vague in relation to traditional and historical zones, where they are treated as archaeological sites. Analysing the above Law, the attention is given to relics and monuments, where built and urban heritage, in terms of conservation management systems, methods, criteria and processes are not approached. As mentioned before, historical urban areas and built cultural heritage are treated as part of archaeological sites, where specific urban characteristics, including living conditions, construction licensing and non-compliance buildings are not yet focused. Moreover, conservation, restoration and rehabilitation processes are not clarified by the Law, leaving a gap between practical actions and official regulations.

At a local level, the Iraqi Kurdistan Law n.8 of 2008 for the Environmental safety and Improvement in Iraqi Kurdistan Region, the attention is given to natural heritage and environment protection, not focusing tangible heritage conservation and protection.

Unfortunately, Iraqi and Kurdistan regulations are still not clear regarding the development and control of tangible heritage's conservation, restoration and rehabilitation. Conservation management is nothing without a clear policy for its step-by-step management. Thus, central government should be the key player in terms of establishing effective policies and legislation.

Confronting Arab District with the two active Laws for managing the place, it is possible to observe a clear gap between the legislation and the practical approach, where, mainly due to the lack of understanding tangible heritage, unique values are put at risk or even being lost. Though the existing Laws focus the main problems of the district, there are still no clear directions for conservation processes, neither clear guidelines for population and authorities to act. Changes that by Law should have prior authorization, are being done and no sanctions are being applied. In addition to damaging the buildings and urban fabric, public health is also in a threat, where sewage (Figure 1.5) is being discharged on the streets and the lack of a proper water distribution system and a proper trash collection system put the population at risk.



Figure 1.5: Arab District's Sewage Problems (Source: Author 2018)

The identity and essence of the district is also at risk, where new buildings are being built, not respecting the harmony and history of the place that (Figure 1.6), once more, is demanded by Law.



Figure 1.6: Arab District's Harmony Disruption (Source: Author 2018)

Licensing and supervision are major factors to fight against clandestine or not authorised conservation, renovation and rehabilitation interventions, where a level of licensing, according to the intervention and building type, is still not stated by the Law and should be placed. In addition, monitoring and supervision acts help on protecting not just the buildings and urban fabric, but also the essence of the place and its population (Appendix I).

1.3 Problem Statement

A significant issue is that there is an absence of listing procedures, policy of physical elements, methods and criteria, although it is easy to observe different proposals for listing buildings in different cities of Iraq. (Pickard, 2001, 2016)

states that the list of buildings involves describing the building by criteria, including building type, designer, date of construction, plans, sections, elevations, building materials, and any extra information about the building or site.

Arab District's case study shows clearly how a lack of identification has led to a reduction in levels of understanding of heritage value among communities. To remedy this, the authorities should work to increase awareness and introduce controlled development by highlighting specific policy of physical elements, policy method, criteria and introducing regulations, which should be published and turned available in government departments and online. Also, this should be updated regularly, in order to support many significant monuments, buildings and sites, in the old district, to be listed in the World Heritage List. More broadly, it is recommended to divide the listed tangible heritage system into national and local levels, where both should work under a clear policy system and authorities should work to protect all the listed buildings, classifying these properties into categories, according to their significance.

In phone interviews with Mr. Hassanain Abtan, from the International Energy and Environmental Foundation, Najaf, and Mrs. Huda Shukri, Senior Civil Engineer, from Licensing Department of Baghdad Municipality, it was declared that previous attempts on heritage preservation charters and guidelines have not yet succeeded. Highlighting the internal documents from Erbil Governorate and Municipality, it is stated that Arab District was considered to be under conservation areas for protection, inside the citadel's buffer zone, however and unfortunately, because of the current economic problems that Iraq and Kurdistan region are facing, the local government was not able to allocate funds for heritage conservation, deferring all cultural heritage projects to the future.

Moreover, in contacts with Miss Helin Ramzy and Miss Duniya Yawar from Erbil Governorate, Miss Valentina Abdulrahman from the Department of Archaeology and Miss Asmaa Al-Jaf from Department of Tourism, it was possible to obtain the information that the Erbil Governorate, with the help of the Italian organization named A.R.S. Progetti S.P.A., has already shown interest on conserve and protect Arab District, as part of the Erbil Citadel's buffer zone. The study mapped the citadel as main central area to be conserved and outlined its buffer zone, where the same type of historic and cultural values is found and also in need of conservation. Apart from Arab District, the study also identifies four more areas to be preserved, namely Khanaqa West, Taajeel, Souq and Minara, where Arab District is the oldest district of them and the first human settlement outside the citadel (Figure 1.7). The study is confidential and yet not complete, due to its deferment and it was just possible to obtain a picture of it, where it was placed the identification of the areas in need to preservation, however, talking to those mentioned bodies, it was possible to confirm the dire need for the Arab District's protection and conservation, so unique historical and cultural values are not lost forever.

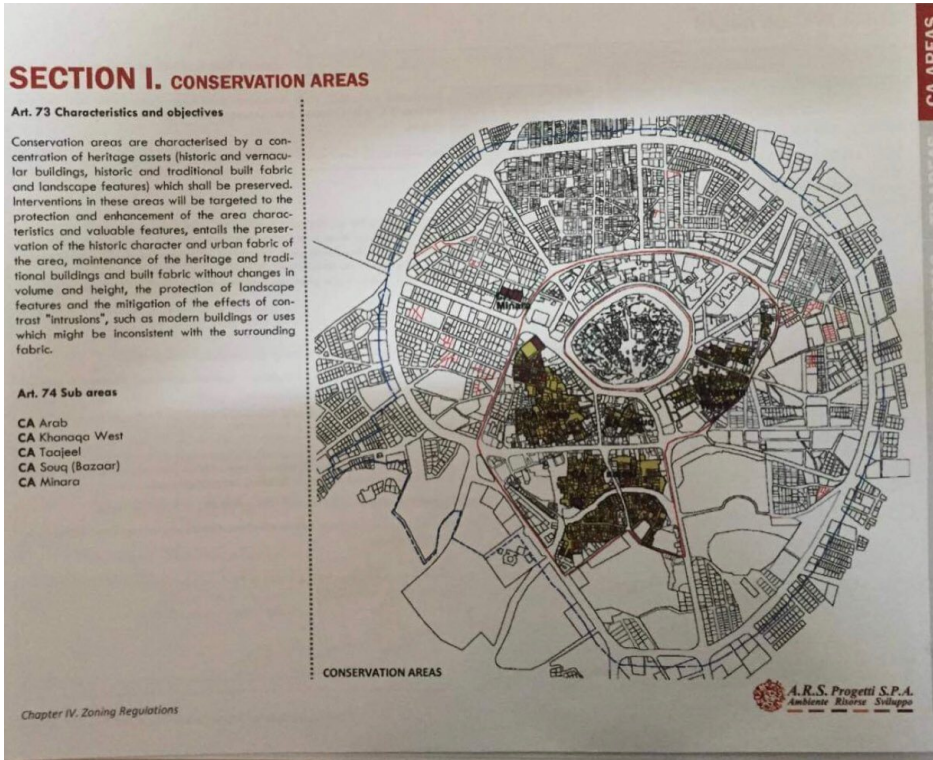


Figure 1.7: Identification of Arab District as being under conservation areas (Source: Erbil Governorate KRG)

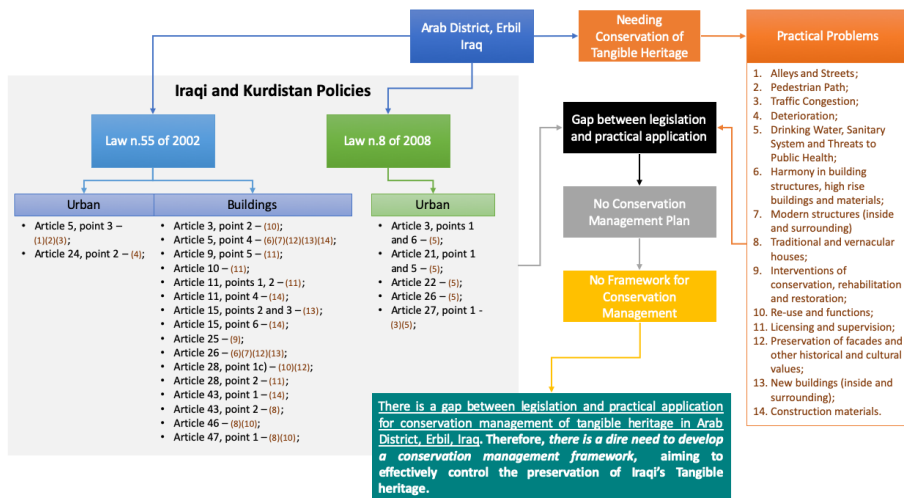


Figure 1.8: Diagram – Gap Between Legislation and Practical Approach (Source: Author)

Based on these issues (Figure 1.8), it is needed to help Arab District on its conservation and avoid losing unique values, where synthesizing the best ICOMOS (International Council Of Monuments and Sites) charters help on identifying the designation system, information about technical assistance, skills and methods of interventions. In addition, categorizing international policy of tangible heritage helps identifying policies of physical elements, policy methods and policy criteria.

After analysis, it is clear that there is still a gap related to conservation management plan of tangible heritage of Arab District, resulting in a high risk of losing important values. Therefore, there is a dire need to develop a conservation management framework, aiming to effectively control the preservation of Iraqi's tangible heritage.

1.4 Research Questions and Objectives

This research focuses on the conservation management of heritage to Arab District and assumes the following main research question (Main-RQ): *How to develop a framework for conservation management of tangible heritage to Arab District, Erbil, Iraq, through similar case references?*

Referred in problem statement, tangible heritage is at risk to be demolished or permanently damaged. To address this main research question, it is necessary to deeply study, the best ICOMOS charters and similar case references of conservation management plans of Arab countries, using them as reference and base to develop a framework for Arab District.

Sub-research Question 1: What are the best ICOMOS charters to be used on tangible heritage of Arab District?

Research Objective 1: To synthesize the best ICOMOS charters that can be applied on conservation of tangible heritage of Arab District.

This first research question (RQ1) and research objective (RO1) focus on the selection of the best ICOMOS charters that can be used on conservation management of tangible heritage of Arab District, helping on their protection. These charters are used as reference to the study, for the correct development of the framework, aiming to obtain proper directions and specific regulations on conservation management of historic cities, as well as, providing the base of the research, through the identification of designation system, information about technical assistance, skills and method of interventions.

Sub-research Question 2: What are the similar case references, of tangible heritage conservation management, in other Arab countries?

Research Objective 2: *To analyze the similar case references of conservation management on tangible heritage, in order to obtain the base for a framework to Arab District.*

In order to understand and obtain recommendations on conservation management plans and their main used themes, the second sub-research question and research objective of this study, focus on the analysis of similar case references, namely Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. It is important to analyse and identify similar problems and solutions, in order to properly develop a framework for Arab District. The study of these solutions and problems aim to identify similarities among the cases and Arab District, helping on the identification of guidelines and ways to properly protect the place, outlining conclusions with different perspectives and including knowledge and understanding, developing policy and control, project programs its plan and evaluations.

Sub-research Question 3: *How to develop a framework for conservation management to heritage of Arab District?*

Research Objective 3: *To propose a framework for conservation management to heritage of Arab District.*

This third objective aims to propose the framework itself, also aiming to turn it available to students and researchers, as well as to international and local organizations, inspiring them to care about the cultural properties of their neighborhoods. In a way to achieve this objective, it is necessary to answer the third sub-research question mentioned above. This framework aims to provide detailed information to help on the conservation management of Arab District, providing guidelines and identifying the active regulations that should be followed for each recognized problem of the place. In addition, this framework also aims to enlighten the existing Laws and the need of preservation actions according to those Laws, so unique values are kept and not destroyed forever, while growing the sense of heritage among the local population.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The research deeply identifies and classifies international policies, to obtain the main components of a framework to be applied to Arab District, highlighting themes, goals, policy types, strategies, actions, monitoring and levels of responsibility. Also, it is addressed three similar case, from other Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen, aiming to identify main themes related to similar problems, solutions and objectives and obtain the base for Arab District's framework. Through scenarios of Iraq and Kurdistan region, it is highlighted the lack of awareness towards tangible heritage, as well as the lack of management plans for preservation.

1.6 Significance of the Study and its Implications

This study provides a proposal framework for conservation management of tangible heritage to Arab District that makes a major reference to Iraqi's tangible heritage, having a global impact towards humanity issues and helping these places to be known over the world and sharing their values, cultural properties and heritage assets. It tries to fill the gap in existing literature related to conservation management for tangible heritage of Iraq, providing information for future researchers.

Moreover, the classification of international policies for development control of tangible heritage for historic sites, can help other researchers with standards, where the process on creating a framework, may help developed, developing, and under developed countries that don't have a unified policy to their states, regions and cities.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

This study is achieved through the selection of the best ICOMOS charters that can be used on the conservation management of Arab District's tangible heritage. Also, the analysis of similar cases, such as Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen, focusing their problems and solutions on conservation management, helped on the development of a conservation management framework for Arab District.

Lack of security in Iraq, obliged the application of the Focused Group Discussion in Portugal, due to their participation in previous studies on Arab District. In Iraq most authorities and specialists left the country due to security reasons, also making the research to apply the confirmation of FGD's results through online semi-structured questionnaires, collecting information from local and international specialists.

The main problem collecting data was the limitations and difficulties encountered while getting permission to access government materials, taking photographs and gaining access to private governmental sources.

1.8 Research Methodology

A qualitative method fits this research in the way that it is used to develop a framework for conservation management about Arab District, focusing on the issues of the district, the criteria of cultural property of tangible heritage, references to conservation management policies, themes, goals, policy types, strategies, actions, monitoring and levels of responsibility (Yin, 2009; Akram, 2017; Wallman, 2018).

This study adopts the most common qualitative approaches, selecting a number of cases, in different Arab Countries, in order to provide a qualitative analysis (Walliman, 2018). Due to the nature of this research and its research questions, it is necessary to study more than one data source, in order to provide reliable data about the mentioned points (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Mohammadi, 2014). Also, based on its nature, where there's a framework absence, an explanatory approach must be conducted. Using an explanatory case study, it is aimed to give an answer to the main research question, explaining how the conservation management of tangible heritage of Arab District should be conducted and done.

1.9 Research Methodology

1.9.1 Phase One

This phase aims to study existing information, identify main problems and draw the research design. In addition, it also targets the limitation of the study, in order to control the research and highlight its benefits. Composed by the first two chapters, the phase one addresses the theoretical background, in chapter one, Introduction, focusing on Iraqi's heritage protection scenarios and displaying an abstract idea about them. From Literature review, in chapter two, it highlights the three main research constructs, namely tangible heritage, similar case references and development of a framework for conservation management. Conservation management policies were used as a way to connect the first two main key constructs. Results provide a theory proposition to be confirmed by the study (Figure 1.9).

1.9.2 Phase Two

In this second phase, it is aimed to design the research model, highlighting the influences from other scholars. In addition, it emphasizes the data collection, analysis and validation tools, techniques and processes. The phase two of this research centres the methodology and adopted methods, which are deeply described in chapter three. Focusing on a qualitative approach and using a case study, this phase describes its definitions and how they can be applied. Also, it is justified why these methods were chosen for this specific research. Results provide information on how the study must be conducted, in order to fulfil its initial objectives (Figure 1.9).

1.9.3 Phase Three

This phase aims to identify specific ICOMOS charters, specific policies and methods and sub-themes to Arab District. As analysis, a qualitative method is also adopted, where it is used the NVivo software. In phase three, the focus is given to findings and results related to a Focused Group Discussion (F.G.D.), mainly described in chapter four. The process of data collection is based on similar case references that are analysed to obtain themes and prepare questions to be applied in F.G.D. with International specialists. As result, this

phase provides information on specific sub-themes, prompts, and examples of actions (Figure 1.9).

1.9.4 Phase Four

This phase goals are to confirm F.G.D. results, including main components of framework, and gather information for a conservation management framework to Arab District. In the analysis, a qualitative analysis method is also adopted, where it is used the content analysis to properly achieve results. In phase four, the focus is also given to findings and results, however, this time, regarding the verification process through online semi-structured questionnaires, explained in chapter five. The process of data collection is based on F.G.D. results, performed to obtain the confirmation for the need of developing a framework to Arab District. Here, it is aimed to refine the obtained answers and propose a framework for conservation management. As results, this phase provides more specific information belonging to urban and buildings deterioration and overall comments (Figure 1.9).

1.9.5 Phase Five

This phase aims to identify the names of best ICOMOS charters, themes, goals, policy types, strategies, actions, monitoring and levels of responsibility applicable to Arab District. Phase five focuses on proposing a framework for conservation management, described in chapter six. In addition, it also aims to emphasise the discussion of main key findings, summary of thesis, recommendation for future studies and conclusions (chapter seven). This proposal addresses the main components for the framework, confirmed by local and international specialists, highlighting the main actions that should be taken into consideration, to protect heritage from possible losses. As a result, the phase provides detailed information on themes and sub-themes, as well as recommendations and knowledge claim (Figure 1.9).

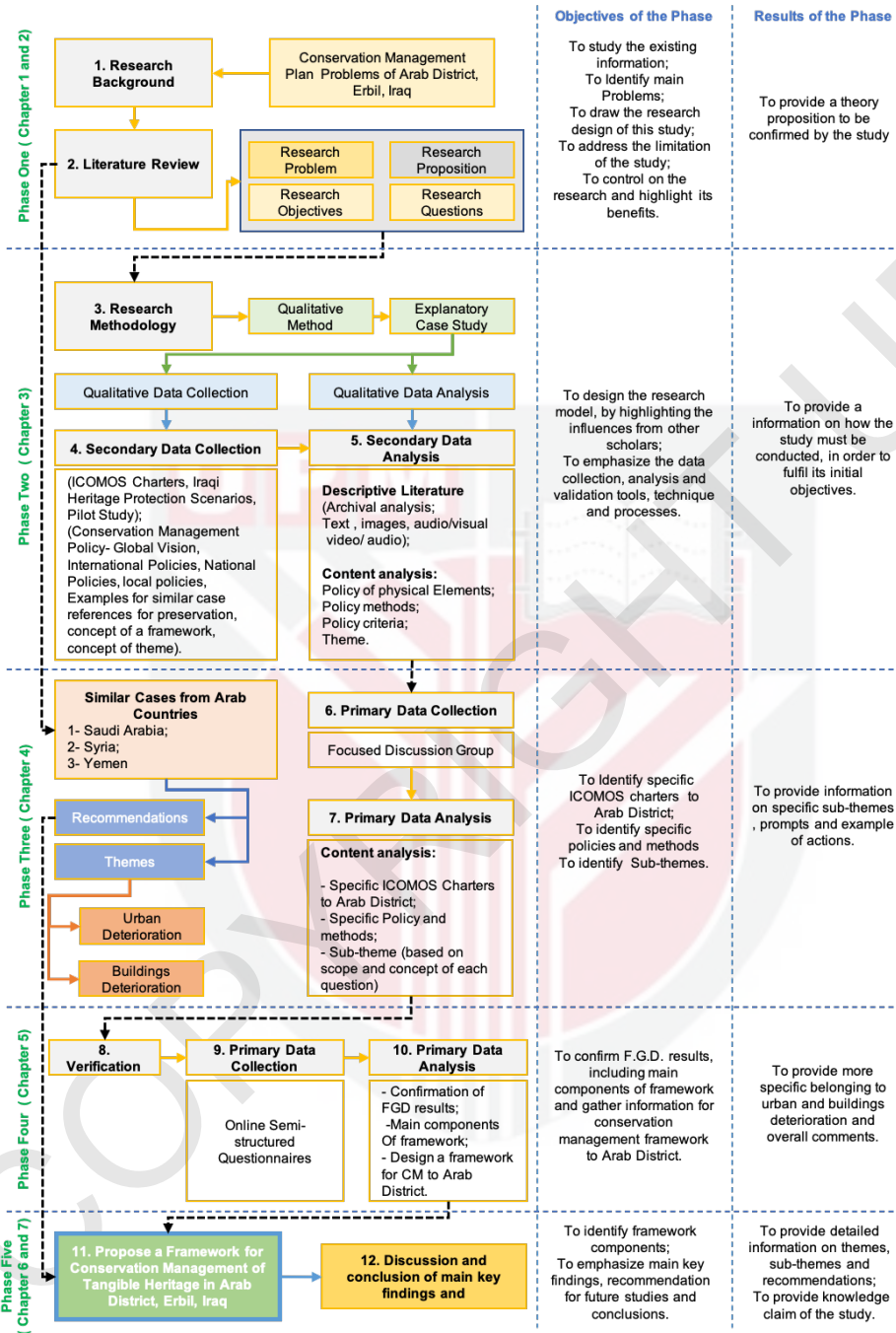


Figure 1.9: Research Process Diagram (Source: Author)

1.10 Thesis Structure

This study is divided into seven different chapters (Figure 1.9):

Chapter one focuses an overview and outlines the main approached topics, including the study background, problem statement, research questions and objectives, study scope, significance and limitations, providing a general structure to the subsequent chapters.

Chapter two highlights the three main key constructs of the study, focusing tangible heritage, similar case references and the development of a conservation management framework in a review approach, giving a vision of the literature on existing conservation management policies and guidelines, at both local and international levels, and contributing for the base of this research through its theory proposition.

Chapter three highlights the methodology and the adopted methods, focusing on a qualitative approach through a case study, defining them and how can they be applied.

Chapter four focuses the results obtained in a Focused Group Discussion (F.G.D.) to identify specific ICOMOS charters, specific policies, methods and sub-themes to Arab District.

Chapter five also focuses results, though, this time, obtained through online semi-structured questionnaires, applied in a way to confirm previous results acquired from the Focused Group Discussion.

Chapter six focuses the framework for conservation management, highlighting its main components, obtained from the validation results. In this framework, it is also highlighted the main actions to protect heritage from possible losses.

Chapter seven focuses on the framework itself, highlighting the summary of findings and emphasizing the discussion of main key findings, summary of thesis, recommendation for future studies, and conclusion.

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Omar K. Akram received the B.Sc. degree in architectural engineering from Cihan University, Kurdistan Region - Iraq, in 2014 and the MSc. degree in urban planning and design from University Putra Malaysia, Malaysia, in 2017. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. degree in urban planning and design at University Putra Malaysia, Malaysia. Since 2012, he is working as an international student advisor on architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning and design fields. From 2014 to 2015, he was a quality supervisor with the De Ghoul, S.L., Spain and Iraq and in 2015 he was a member of the Evaluation Committee with the Cihan University, Kurdistan Region-Iraq. From 2016 he is a private researcher working for the Municipality of Alcácer do Sal, Portugal. Moreover, he is an Invited Lecturer at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Furthermore, he works as supervisor on research methodology for postgraduate studies. In 2017, Omar became a co-founder of ONDAS Group and a scientific reviewer on the journal of cultural heritage management and sustainable development-Emerald publishing SCOPUS. From 2018, he is an Invited Lecturer at Superior School of Technology and Management, Polytechnic Institute of Beja, Portugal. In 2019, Omar became an individual member of ICOMOS-Portugal, currently working as a volunteer to serve an external reviewer for the 2020 World Monuments Watch, participating in the project of Lalish Temple, located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, that has been inscribed in UNESCO's tentative list in April 2020, as well as a reviewer for the ICOMOS GA 2020 Scientific Symposium: 20th General Assembly & Scientific Symposium, Sydney, Australia. Also, he works as Education Director in IQUPM (Iraqi students union member in UPM) and in July 2020 he was invited as a panellist for final crit of architecture design at KAED, IIUM in Malaysia. In August 2020, Mr. Akram was invited as a reviewer for World Heritage Nominations 2021 in the project "The Coptic Monasteries of Wadi al-Natrun, Egypt". His research interest includes research methodology, conservation and heritage management, Islamic architecture, theory and history of architecture, and smart cities, being author and co-author for several scientific publications.

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