# Zawa Mountain Masterplan: A Potential Contributor to Building Image and Identity of Duhok City

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## Abstract

Every city in the world has a public image based on its structural forms including urban elements as well as natural environment. This image can entail different meanings and influence emotional and physical well-being of the inhabitants, contribute to building identity and economic development of the location. Based on that, this paper explores opportunities and designs presented in the masterplan designed for the development of unique, year-long tourist resorts on Zawa Mountain that overlooks the southern edge of Duhok city, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and how they could contribute to building image and identity of the mountain as well as the city. The study presents a comparative analysis of the standard elements that constitute a city image and characters. Its findings indicate that the development on Zawa mountain will not only build the identity and image of the mountain as a unique, modern tourist destination at different levels but will also contribute to improving the identity and image of Duhok city.

**Keywords**  Image, identity, tourism, resort, city, Duhok.

## Introduction

This paper is an exploratory research, based on the approaches outlined in Zawa Mountain Masterplan, which was designed by an international company in 2011, for the mixed-use development on Zawa Mountain as an integrated complex of year-long tourist resorts for recreation, cultural, educational, and business activities. It investigates how this planning document can improve the tourism industry in Duhok city and contribute to building a strong image and identity for both the mountain and the city which can also lead to creating a sense of place and pride for the local people. Its main objective is to identify the means and the extent by which the designs and elements of the masterplan and subsequent development of the mountain can contribute to building image and identity of Duhok city. The paper includes an overview of the study mountain and of tourism in Duhok city; theoretical information about a place or a city identity, the city image elements, and the methods for building a city image and identity; in addition to an introduction to the masterplan and an analysis of the mountain distinctive image building elements.

## Study Area

The study focuses on Zawa Mountain which runs across the southern periphery of Duhok, one of the strategic cities and a commercial hub in the northern Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Fig. 1). Duhok city also functions as the administrative capital of Duhok province that together with two other provinces constitutes Kurdistan Region. It enjoys a distinctive topography, climate, scenery, and spiritual sense of place in comparison to many other Iraqi cities. It is located within a very unique geographical and geological context with relatively suitable climatic conditions. This context, if suitably and sustainably utilized, can create profound benefits to the inhabitants of the city and its wider metropolitan region[1].

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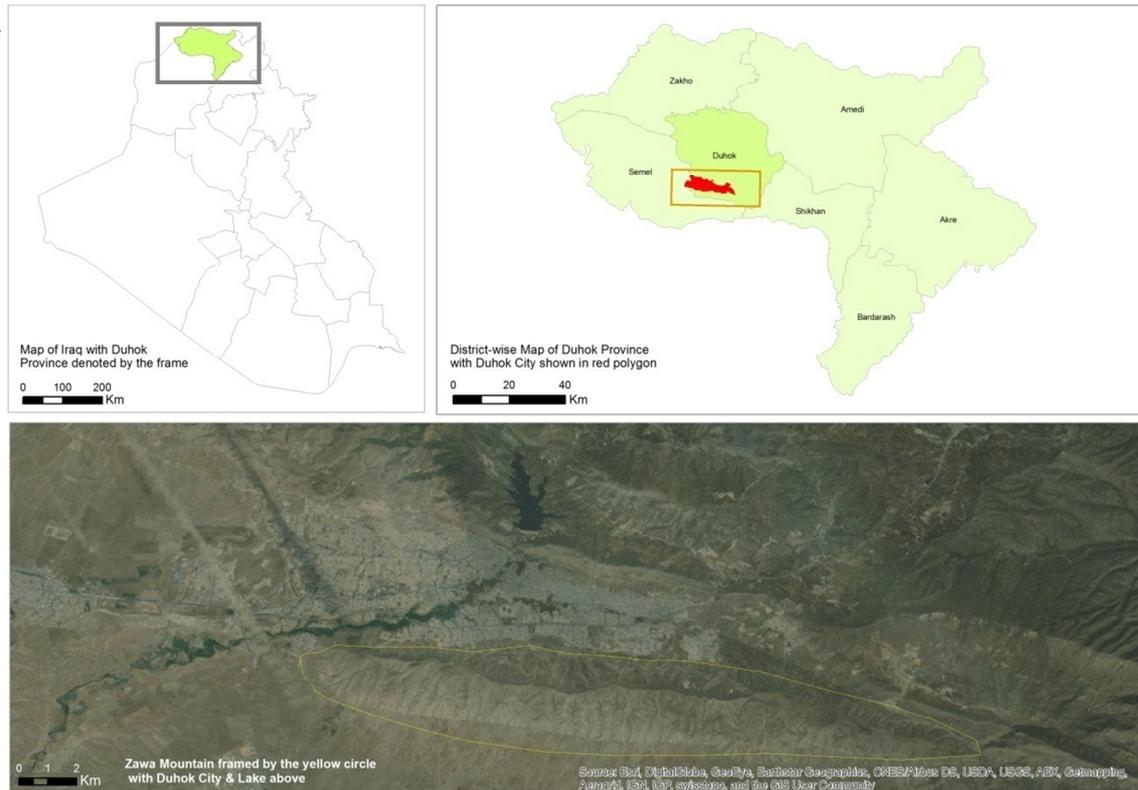[1] Duhok metropolitan region includes Duhok city, Semel town, other surrounding towns and villages.

Fig. 1: Location map of the study area (Source: The authors using ArcGIS 10.2.

Zawa Mountain is located 900m above sea level and 350m above the western Semel plain. Since decades, its hilltop and slopes have experienced consistent deforestation resulting in a grassland rocky landscape, which is now largely devoid of trees. Nevertheless, it contains a low density of shrubs and serves as a potential key recreational facility for Duhok city, metropolitan region, and the metropolis region/province; Kurdistan region; as well as the country because of its prominent location that oversees Duhok city and farther Duhok Lake at the north, Semel town and the Tigris River at the west, Mosul Lake at the south-west, and a cluster of small towns and extensive plains at the south. Although it is relatively undeveloped, Zawa Mountain has become popular for tourists. It provides spectacular panoramic views towards all aforementioned urban places and lakes, in addition to the surrounding landscapes and mountains because it has natural high vantage points, a naturalistic quality that provides it with great potential assets and focus for tourism. Currently, the local people use these points to enjoy distant views. They drive up the mountain especially to enjoy sunset and entertain themselves often through picnics and barbecue gatherings.

This mountain has been a significant cultural location since the Assyrian Period as it contains Maltai (currently Halamata cave) that includes, on its northern slopes, carvings relief depicting the Assyrian king and the principal Assyrian gods, and burial chambers dating back to 8th century BCE. In addition, archaeological excavations at the northern foot of the Mountain namely in Shendokha village, have led to discovery of many ancient antiques.

Based on its topography and landscapes, Duhok metropolitan region has an opportunity to be defined by three complementary components - the City, the Lake and the Mountain. The City refers to Duhok, a highly congested urban center with a high degree of compact development located between two mountains, *Spi* in the north and Zawa in the south. It represents a place of vibrancy, activity, business, and fun. The Lake refers to Duhok Lake, which retains water behind the dam that was constructed in 1980s for irrigation purposes. It represents a place of tranquility, recreation, and leisure, and currently includes a developing satellite town of luxurious villas. The Mountain refers to Zawa Mountain, a semi barren mountain that stretches approximately for 17 km along the southern edge of the City. It represents a place of entertainment, luxury, and relaxation. Each of the three components has a masterplan to be implemented separately in the coming years. This study specifically covers the western portion of the Mountain as initially covered under Zawa Mountain Masterplan. This part falls in UTM zone 38 within the range of 315680m East and 321600m East.

**Tourism in Duhok City**
The tourism industry in Kurdistan Region including the City has considerably evolved over the last century because of a combined range of factors including improved living conditions and income opportunities for the

local people as well as the increased need for leisure and recreation services. There are some other factors such as improved educational, cultural and social levels and awareness of people, in addition to variations in weather and temperature throughout Iraq that account for the higher demands on tourist, leisure and recreational services in this particular part of Iraq. People usually spend more money for holidays because of the increased need for these services. Since 2004, the tourist sites in Duhok city have become destinations not only for the local people, but also for citizens from many other parts of Iraq. Escaping the geographically (semi-)desolate nature of their original locations that are characterized with arid and higher temperatures and increased levels of violence and insecurity, citizens especially from the neighboring northern and central provinces have made the mountainous resorts of Duhok as major tourist destinations especially in summer. Security concerns and risks, intolerable hot temperature especially in summer, and lack of creation and leisure facilities encourage many Iraqi citizens to seek sanctuary in Kurdistan resorts, including those in the City. The topographic, climatic, and landscape characteristics of this region offer good recreational opportunities and charming landscapes to attract large numbers of tourists. As a result, tourism in Duhok province including the City has flourished entailing a number of benefits for the local people particularly in terms of employment opportunities. However, the City does not have adequate infrastructure to accommodate the improving tourism and, therefore, Zawa Mountain is foreseen as a great potential asset for boosting tourism in the City. While a flourished tourism in any place can undoubtedly contribute to building its image and identity (Govers et al., 2007), no studies have ever been conducted on this site to identify the reciprocal impact of tourism on the image and identify of the City.

**Elements of City image**
There is much literature on the image and identity of urban places. This research is based on the concepts presented by Kevin Lynch in his book "The Image of the city". Among these are legibility and imageability. Lynch (1960) defines legibility as a significant quality of the city or the ease with which its parts can be recognized and organized into a coherent pattern. He considers it significant for way-finding and contributing to the emotional and physical well-being of the residents which can be negatively affected by ambiguous identity and replaceable images. Lynch also equates the legible environment to an imageable one; the latter being the adjective of "Imageability", which is defined as "that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer". Imageability has potential value for building and rebuilding of cities. A highly imageable city is well formed, contains very distinct parts, and is instantly recognizable to the residents. A well-formed city is highly dependent upon the most predominant element - well-designed paths with special lighting and clarity of direction. Other city elements also contribute to its imageability if they are meaningful, distinct, and organized. Once placed in good forms, they can increase human ability to see and remember the urban patterns. The distinct features of a city can be isolated to see the elements that make it vibrant and attractive to the people using a mental map to understand its layout. This map includes mental representations of the city structure and its layout according to the individual. It represents people's own map of their known world. Both mental representations and physical structure of the city include many unique elements, which are defined as a network of five recurring elements - paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks (Fig. 2). People structure their perception of the city into these elements to form its image and use as a basis of its physical forms. The elements function as the basis for creating solid, distinguished structures at the urban scale and sight of the city with a special pleasure (Lynch, 1960). They can be described as follows: 1) **Paths** are the routes (e.g. roads, rivers) through which people move or travel and influence them to move on a particular pattern; 2) **Edges** are perceived boundaries or barriers between two physical phases (e.g. walls, buildings, shorelines, different zones or regions). They either block/interrupt physical and visual access to other elements or allow interaction between the observer and the environment; 3) **Districts** are the city areas with some common character or a defined identity that makes the observer recognize living or entering them or gives him an impression that the environment has a gate which he can (mentally) enter and conceive of the space as a 2D extent; 4) **Nodes** are focal points where paths converge or flow of movements are interrupted, and where their influence radiates and they stand as symbols. In other words, nodes are either junctions of paths or concentrations with thematic activities or physical characteristics (e.g. intersections, plazas, rail stations); and 5) **Landmarks** are point references with simple physical elements of various scales (e.g. buildings, signs, mountains). They serve as visual orientation and function as radial references (Lynch, 1960). Today, many urban designers sketch out the elements of cities based on Lynch's five elements, and draw on his theories to strengthen its image.
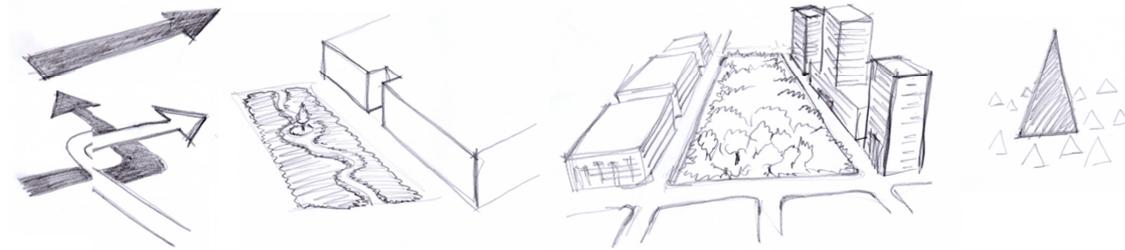
## Place Identity



Fig. 2: Five elements of a city image (Source: The authors, based on Kevin Lynch's concepts).

Almost every place on the Earth has unique tangible and intangible characteristics, such as visual characteristics and features, as well as associations and feelings that people create when they interact with it. It could have a distinctive identity with a varied visual character that constitutes an image in the observer's mind. Identity is a complex term with various definitions and is commonly defined as a term with indistinct borders (Breakwell, 1986) or as the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places (Lynch, 1960). A place can be related to identity through two ways: place identification and place identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). The former is when a person expresses his identification with a place, e.g. a person from Texas may refer to himself as Texan. The latter is the way in which a place is related to identity, making it unique. Proshansky et al. (1983) defines place-identity as a "pot-pourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas, and related feelings about specific physical settings, as well as types of settings".

Place-identity refers to ideas about place and identity in different fields of study including urban planning and design or to the aspects of identity that are linked to a place. It is also about the meaning and significance of places for the people (Ngesan et al., 2013). A place can influence the identity of people as a result of a two-way interaction between the people and their physical environment. That means people affect places while places influence how people see themselves. Thus, there is an interrelation between place and identity which is manifested in place-identity, a term that has become popular and used in the literature to highlight the impact of the physical environment on identity that creates a high degree of "place attachment" (Proshansky, 1978). The latter is part of place-identity and is defined as the feelings people develop towards places that they are highly familiar with or belong to (Gifford, 2002). The more a person is attached to a place, the more he would identify himself with that location at different scales (Giuliani, 2003).

Many social, cultural and other factors as well as the built environment combinedly shape identity of a location. Architecture and the natural and built-physical environment can influence a person's identity. According to the place-identity theory (Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky et al., 1983; Proshansky & Fabian, 1987) which considers a place as part of self-identity, the physical environment influences identity and self-perception. Proshansky et al. (1983) also stress the physical environment as an important factor for identity building. Based on that conception, an attractive, well-designed environment can help establish a framework for creating touristic brand and promoting social and physical well-being, economic growth, and place identity as well. A place can also have a strong sense of identity based around a wide range of lively local amenities.

Urban elements including the five elements of a city are important means of enhancing legibility and identity of a place (Lynch, 1960). For instance, a building can represent a structure of materials and/or characteristics of an urban environment, and therefore it can be considered as a signage system. In this respect, both buildings and urban environments can appear as symbolic entities or landmarks that represent identity of a location (Ngesan et al., 2013). A city identity can be developed through creation of way finders and landmarks and reflection of the character of its geography, history and culture.

## City Identity and Image

A city has a public image that comprises of many overlapped individual images needed for the people to successfully operate in their environment (Lynch, 1960). This image is a valuable and most important attribute of identity and is part of a variable in forming place identity (Ngesan et al., 2013). A city also has a unique identity comprising images and memories. In other words, cities are unique places with their own identity formed and affected by people, as well as social, natural and manmade factors (Fasli, 2010). Different facilities can diversify a city identity. Tourism sites, attractions, landmarks, destinations and landscapes are seen as spaces through which ". . . power, identity, meaning and behavior are constructed, negotiated and renegotiated according to socio-cultural dynamics" (Aitcheson & Reeves, 1998).

Image is constructed when a person observes the built environment through a two-way process. The environment provides distinctions and relations in the built structures while the observer selects and organizes

the observed structure and endows his observations with meanings. A city image is composed of the view of urban elements such as monumental or iconic buildings, public spaces and other distinctive features, and is analyzed through identification of the identity, structure, and meaning of its elements. Identities can be symbolic and dynamic representing physical forms and societies (Ruiz & Hernandez, 2007). Distinctiveness is the main principle of identity, which is in turn defined as the distinction that makes a particular object unique or the character which enforces uniqueness of an object. When an object is distinct from others, it is recognized as a separate identity (Clare & Uzzeli, 1996). Structure refers to the spatial or pattern relationship between a single object and other objects, and a city structure can be understood by almost all the residents. An image is composed of a spatial or pattern relationship between the contained object to the observer and to other objects. Objects like buildings have a special practical or emotional meaning for the observer, in addition to a relation between the structure and the observer that is different from the spatial or pattern relation.

Identity is an intangible cultural resource. A wide variety of cultural activities and places contribute to a sense of identity and well-being for everyone in the community (Creative Cultures, 2004). This is because a city image is closely related to its cultural services, environmental and entertainment facilities and charisma (Young, 1997). A city can offer a diverse range of cultural, environmental and entertainment facilities, conserved heritage, and education facilities. It can enhance its image through high quality design of the public realm by creating attractive city gateways, preserving views, and providing attractive splendid landscaping. Enhancing the symbolic values of a city's assets including cultural resources can make its image more appealing to people (Florida, 2002). Urban element attributes, such as conditions of physical setting (e.g. visibility, design), lighting and color (e.g. brightness), and signage/symbol (e.g. clarity, design) can influence place identity at nighttime. Elements such as artificial light or light displays provide visibility and protection and give people the perception of night territory domination; they also create images in the minds of people emanating from their experience with the elements especially light displays. Public spaces represent a unique identity of the place (Ngesan et al., 2013) and function as cultural icons and landmark sites and as social and creative hubs in large cities (Kari HuHtala & associates, 2010).

**Tourism Builds City identity and Image**

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1979 classified tourism into several forms. One of these is the cultural tourism, which is defined as the movement of people for cultural motivations (Aurelia, 2011b)**.** Cultural and leisure tourisms rely to a large extent on the transformation of natural resources of a place into leisure, recreational, accommodation, and service facilities. Such facilities are often made available in tourist resorts on a sustainable basis to attract tourists. Facilities such as mountainous resorts act as attraction poles for tourists because of the diversity of activities that take place there and also for favorable climatic conditions. Mountains offer the possibility for establishing tourist resorts with year-long activities that could generate considerable incomes and contribute to developing the community. Therefore, they have the potential for enabling tourism industry to have multiple effects on the local economy through offering wonderful landscapes and suitable climatic conditions that are conductive to a diversity of activities (Vasile, 2011).

Many world cities use high-profile projects and improved tourism industry to enhance their economy and the urban structure, and build a more positive image to support inward business investment. The more positive the image of a resort is, the greater the likelihood the resort can attract more tourists (Gökçe, 2007; Tashko & Dzaleva, 2011). A city with an improved image can support business investment and activity (Tashko & Dzaleva, 2011). In addition, tourism can have big socio-cultural impact that can be achieved through improvement of local infrastructure and public services and amenities. It can also foster the civic pride when citizens associate themselves with the identity of their locations (Vasile, 2011). These advantages can lead to a new level of social welfare and offer the possibility for sustainable development of resorts.

Tourism constructs or affects identities and representations of communities, whereas identities construct or obstruct tourism. Meanwhile, tourism images can construct places (Annette & Morgan, 2001). Because of the reciprocal relationship between tourism and identity, the local societies are more motivated to preserve their identities building upon their historical roots (Castells, 1991; Ruiz & Hernandez, 2007). Based on that, tourism and heritage are interrelated concepts that form (cultural) heritage tourism, a type of place-based cultural heritage-oriented tourism. Cultural heritage expresses ways of living developed by a community through successive generations, and refers to the experience of places and activities of people that represent the stories of their past and present generations (ICOMOS, 2002). It includes historic, cultural and natural attractions. Archaeological sites are examples of heritage sources that constitute the basic components of cultural identity and place image (Hall et al., 2014).

Tourism is wholly dependent on the transformation of natural capital into accommodation and leisure or service facilities; therefore, development of tourist destinations should be based on a long-term sustainable approach (Dredge, 1999). In order to establish sustainable tourism that can represent the image and identity of a place, planning is an essential component of tourism development to support the identity, culture and interests of

local people. For this purpose, tourism planning, a goal-oriented tool for destination area development, is important because it provides a common vision, direction and commitment for tourism in that area. It also encompasses many components, such as resort planning (Andriotis, 2007). Building a tourist image, an impression held by people about an imaginary or expected status of a location, is a basic principle of tourist planning (Andriotis, 2007). A person's experience with a destination is important in forming an image (Bigne' et al., 2001); therefore, that experience should be improved to result in an improved image (Gökçe, 2007).

Usually resort planning is based on two concepts: image-oriented resort and place-oriented resort (Pregill & Volkman, 1999). Image and satisfaction of visitors create a positive inter-relationship (Bigne' et al., 2001). A strong and identifiable image has a positive impact on the satisfaction of visitors to a place (Riza et al., 2012). Therefore, creating a city identity and image is a priority for urban areas including tourist destinations as an improved image can attract higher spending and contribute to establishing a sense of place and identity or add to the city's sense of place, history and identity.

A tourist destination includes genuine identity elements that are transferable virtually and materially to create a good image. From a tourist perspective, a destination has social‐cultural and artistic identities that represent its perceived psychological and artistic image. To build a destination image, one needs to closely understand and provide tourists' functional and psychological expectations in order to improve attractiveness and build a positive image (Aurelia et al., 2011a). This image can be built on a broad set of the people's expectations and its holistic attributes, common or unique aspects, or a combination of all (Aurelia et al., 2011a; Govers & Go, 2009). Destination image is an important and sensitive aspect of successful tourism management, place marketing, and the people's decision-making in choosing a location to visit for leisure (Annette & Morgan, 2001; Arturo et al., 2010). As tourists likely prefer destinations with strong positive images, tourism planning should focus on creating a positive, eternal image through development of the physical components of the destination in a sustainable manner (Gökçe, 2007). These components have potential effects on the destination image and consequently its future.

Image is a subjective knowledge and perception of a city (Tashko & Dzaleva, 2011). A promoted image can create tourist expectations and a desire for image verification or exploration through its implications and impact on the tourists (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). Thus, a destination image expresses knowledge, impressions, and emotional thoughts of a person about a particular place (Seyhmus & Ken, 1999), and subjectively interprets the reality made by the tourists (Bigne' et al., 2001). Image is usually formed through development of a mental construct from impressions selected from a flood of information of multiple sources including place promotion, opinions of people, media reporting, and popular culture (Reynolds, 1965; Govers et al., 2007). Tourist information such as brochures and media publications helps people understand destination image and make selection concerning destination choices, and impacts the decision-making process (Arturo et al., 2010).

People assess the destination image based on the natural and built environments and other factors related to that place. Destinations are often influenced by a number of factors classified into nine dimensions: natural resources; general infrastructure; tourist superstructure; tourist leisure and recreation; culture, history and art; political and economic factors; natural environment; social environment; and atmosphere of the place (Arturo et al., 2010).The destination image is influenced by two categories of attributes: innate characteristics such as climate, ecology, natural resources, cuisine, culture, and historical architecture, and the built characteristics, such as hotels, resorts, catering outlets, transportation, and entertainment facilities (Gökçe, 2007).

Three main approaches are nowadays used for promoting cities to be attractive tourist destinations: cultural mega events, restoration and promoting heritage, and construction of iconic buildings (Hankinson, 2006; Kavaratzis, 2005; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Iconic buildings greatly contribute to promoting a city and affect its image which in turn strongly influences the well-being and satisfaction of its residents and visitors (Jencks, 2005; Mommaas, 2002). Currently, modern societies use this type of buildings to create distinctive status symbols of their cities and attract visitors. Iconic buildings and other distinctive urban elements are tools used to communicate such status to the people. Therefore, visually attractive iconic buildings play a major role in promoting a city image. As the iconic architecture is part of the contemporary city and its image and identity, buildings are designed based upon the contextual harmony to represent and respect the character of that place in order to create and sustain identity. The building designs can create and sustain identity of a place when they consider the contextual harmony, represent and respect the character of that location (Riza et al., 2012).

Culture especially popular culture plays an essential role in building the tourist destination image. Cultural, social and other resources can be used as image-building tools to reach and attract people by providing better and different expectations for them. Arts are also seen as a means of fostering cultural identity (Bennett, 2001), whereas public arts play an important role in relating the stories and identity of a city, and in creating opportunity for the residents and visitors to participate in its development. They can add to the attractiveness and value of a place and therefore present a positive image to potential clients. They can also add character and identity to urban places and spaces.

Tourists often have expectations about tourist destinations that are different from those at their home locations, and this motivates them to visit these locations. Such expectations are cultivated with tourism attraction means, such as films, television, magazines and other publications. People often choose their tourist destination based on what they see through audiovisual means like television (Nikolaos & Maria, 2011). Tourist information sources such as brochures, travel magazines and newspapers have an important influence on the formation of the tourist destination image. They are designed to capture attention of people to become active tourist destinations by creating images and enticing potential travelers to visit them (Arturo et al., 2010). Heritage can also create great expectations for visitors. The existing heritage, if converted into a tourism resource, can attract visitors creating (cultural) heritage tourism, which is an active agent in the process of defining diverse collective identities. A place image is "represented by its cultural heritage" (Aurelia et al., 2011a), and the cultural identity of a place is represented by its material and immaterial cultural heritage. Therefore, cultural heritage is an important part of a place identity (Aurelia et al., 2011a), and cultural tourists enhance identity of a place according to its natural uniqueness (Rodzi et al, 2013).

The residents of a tourist location can help building an appropriate image through their contact with tourists (Andriotis, 2007).Culture sharpens a city image, strengthens its identity, and promotes a place (Kavaratzis, 2005). The destination image can be changed by "formation agents", such as news and folk culture (Aurelia et al., 2011a; Gartner, 2009).

## Zawa Mountain Masterplan

With the improved economy and increased urban structure, Duhok city has recently become a larger destination for local and national tourists. More efforts have been made at public and private sector levels to provide more tourist services in order to promote tourism and create an attractive touristic brand. Such efforts include, among others, development of year-long tourist resorts with diverse services and amenities on Zawa Mountain. This has triggered development of Zawa Mountain Masterplan through an international company in 2011 to investigate potential, sustainable and eco-friendly development on the western portion (6 km length) of the Mountain to leisure and recreational facilities and connect it to other components of Duhok Metropolitan Region through networks of land paths and skylines.

The masterplan considers different natural and man-made aspects related to the Mountain, such as physical environment; biological environment; socio-cultural environment; existing policy and regulatory review. It undertakes an analysis of the existing natural and man-made resources available on the Mountain, and includes indicative impact of the potential development proposed for that site. It follows a sustainable approach for establishing long-term tourism or recreation strategy scheduled for implementation in a number of phases. It endeavors to utilize the Mountain's natural assets through beauty of the natural environment; unspoiled panoramic views; altitude; landscape and topography; habitats, wildlife and ecology; archaeological remains; and tranquil setting. These assets will be enhanced through a diverse range of facilities, such as access and movement (e.g. footpaths, cycle tracks, promenades and ridge walks, transport systems), visitor facilities (e.g. viewing platforms, cable car, cultural village), and utilization of mountain views (e.g. ridge promenades, skyline travel, viewpoints) (Mount Zawa Masterplan, 2011).

Zawa Mountain has the potential for accommodating a variety of programs that can be developed on its peak, as well as the southern gentle slopes. These include, for example, outdoor recreational activities, conference and culture-based tourism, business-based tourism, and well-being tourism. The programs proposed in the masterplan encompass a diverse range of accommodation like hotels and lodges and a multitude of recreational and entertainment activities, tourism cultural, and commerce-based facilities. While the built environment should complement and reflect a society's principles and identity, Zawa Mountain masterplan designs consider the needs of the local community in Duhok, respect the cultural heritage, allow for space and resources for cultural activities, and provide spaces to support cultural events and activities, such as social clubs or groups, religious ceremonies, weddings and other social and national celebrations. Structures and facilities proposed for development on the Mountain initially include: Cable car system; archaeology museum, visitor welcome center, cultural center, art gallery, amphitheater, cinema, and festival facilities; luxurious hotels and restaurants, cafes, resort villages and villas; viewing platforms and plazas, picnic green areas, and outdoor pedestrian areas; indoor sport center, fitness halls, ice skating, mountain sports center, adventure sports plaza, sports halls and areas/grounds, fitness trails and nature (mountain) paths, spa, adventure play area and amenities; indoor botanical garden, labyrinth/maze, rose relaxation garden, water gardens, and organic farms; commercial center, public shopping plaza, shopping parade, and promenade kiosks (Mount Zawa Masterplan, 2011).

## Method and Results

This research is essentially based on Zawa Mountain Masterplan and the field inspection of the study area through visits made by the authors. ArcGIS software was used to map the study area and sketch the five elements of the Mountain tourist complex, which is being developed on the basis of the masterplan designs. A

descriptive analysis of the image and identity building elements of Zawa Mountain is presented below using the masterplan designs and the designed sketches.

**Distinctive Image Building Elements of Zawa Mountain Masterplan**
Duhok city can establish a distinctive touristic brand, a very strong identity, and a more positive image once the three elements (The City, The Lake and The Mountain) are developed cohesively to form Duhok Metropolitan Region (Mount Zawa Masterplan, 2011). This brand can be used to promote tourism in the region at the local, regional, and national levels, provide a wealth of new services and amenities for its rapidly growing population, and improve its image and identity. Zawa Masterplan is expected to develop a strong touristic image and identity for Duhok area through adopting a holistic approach to development based on natural assets, establishing a distinctive and unique land-use program for the Mountain, and designing leisure and recreational infrastructure to complement other elements that are not found in the City or the Lake. Thus, the Mountain development will supplement the vibrant character of the City center and the new recreational focus of the Lake area when it is established as a prominent place for culture, art, entertainment, and relaxation. It will offer opportunities for expressing the City identity and character and will play a key role in articulating that identity. The masterplan helps establishing tourist, leisure and recreational dynamic relations between the Mountain on one hand and the City and the Lake on the other hand. It emphasizes maintaining a high quality built environment while building a strong image and identity for both the Mountain and the City. It will establish an eco-friendly destination and provide the City with a distinctive image and cultural identity through creating an attractive image on the Mountain against the surrounding nature landscape. Development of multi-use tourist resorts on the Mountain will make it part of the City and contribute to building the City identity through modern structures and gorgeous landscapes (Mount Zawa Masterplan, 2011).

As the masterplan is implemented, the City can gain a strong visual character and a strengthened sense of place through a unique image and identity that would be regionally and nationally recognized. Establishing a strong image and identity within the metropolitan region will begin with the City's visual presence along the Mountain and the Lake area**.** The latter two will act as pivots for tourists and can also help boost businesses and economic services in the City center. Occupying the southern outskirts of the City, Zawa Mountain is currently being developed to create a good destination image for tourists seeking a destination to visit for leisure and recreation as well. The prominent location of the Mountain and the proposed skylines (e.g. light displays), quality architecture, green spaces, and water bodies are the basic components of the development which can considerably contribute to building the City image. The masterplan makes uses of the topography of the Mountain with the elevations ranging between 775-925m to establish (peak) viewpoints, such as viewing platforms, observation decks, city view cafes and plazas, lake view hotels, restaurants and plazas. The visitors can use the observation decks and the viewpoints to enjoy charming views across the city. The Mountain will offer spectacular panoramic views of the natural and urban surroundings in the metropolitan area, but also in the expansive southern and western plan areas. This site has a great value of providing extensive and open views northwards over the City, the farther Spi Mountain, and the Lake behind, west-southwards to Mosul Lake, and westwards to Semel plain. The northern edge of the Mountain is characterized by abrupt cliff edge, which creates a well-defined 'balcony' overlooking the City. The southern edge is characterized by a series of gentle slopes and valleys which have Mosul Lake as a backdrop. Based on these physical attributes, scenic vistas can be considered as a key element of the Mountain identity. In addition, the Mountain and the lower City's character and identity will be visible from the surrounding areas within a radius reaching 20Km especially from the western side. (Mount Zawa Masterplan, 2011).

The masterplan's contemporary development and design will add new characters that are not replicable in other places in the region. Unique physical structures to be developed on its peaks and gentle slopes will stand as symbols for the image and identity of the City and function as an attraction source of tourists and visitors. The physical elements will define image of the Mountain. Urban designs with brilliant and unique colors, textures, materials, and architecture; well-designed public and green spaces; and observable skylines (buildings and light displays) can help establish a distinctive, recognizable image. Public buildings of modern, distinguished designs can serve as important image builders because of their quality architecture and prominent location. Some of these buildings to be located along the Mountain ridgeline will be observable from the City. Some other buildings to be located on the other side of the Mountain ridge and its southern slopes will be seen only from the southern and western areas.

It is evident that private, public and shared spaces planned for the Mountain are essential for contributing to building its identity and the social cohesion between it and the community. Based on that, the masterplan includes considerable vacant and green spaces in this site.

The distinctive mixed-use development will feature a range of cultural and entertainment amenities alongside landscaped parklands and distinguished facilities, such as cultural village, and will entertain large or unique cultural activities and events that will potentially attract visitors from all over the country. Cultural

resources can help shape a community's unique identity and sense of place (Baeker & Donna, 2001). Public arts add character and identity to a place and are seen as a means of fostering community pride and cultural identity (Ghilardi, 2001). The masterplan builds upon the Mountain's historical attributes to create a very distinctive development both in content and design which will further enhance the City identity, character and quality. Access to Halamata Cave will be made easier and more comfortable than the current path by connecting it to the Mountain through a trail.

The publicity of the Mountain tourist resorts through media will not only promote marketing of the site, but will also build a good image for the Mountain as well as the City which will lead to more attractions of visitors. Images of the Mountain and the City to be shown on TV and other mass media will be crucial for its cultural identity. To create a brand identity for the Mountain, development of signage and wayfinding programs and promotional materials related to the mountain resorts will contribute to improving the image of the City and create a distinctive identity for the mountain. These include for example gateways, billboards, and TV advertisements.

A multiplicity of places and events can contribute in a decisive way to creating bonds of identity between the local people and the Mountain. It will also give intrusive pleasure of the surrounding natural scenario which will make it a memorable, unique district. Uniqueness and diversity of the Mountain resorts, buildings, structures, and services will remain as unforgettable memories as paths, edges, nodes, district and landmarks in the minds of the visitors.

**Five Elements of Zawa Mountain Image**

Development of Zawa Mountain as a touristic and cultural city will include the five elements defined by Lynch as a city's structural elements (Fig. 3). These elements will form an interlaced network of physical structures that climb the Mountain and stretch down to the southern gentle slopes and hills, thus connecting to other two elements of the metropolitan region.

**Districts:** Development of the Mountain as an integrated complex of tourist resorts, recreation and cultural services will act as a distinctive, elevated district that can be viewed from many areas within the City or from the surrounding regions especially at night time. With harmonious and well-planned environment and precincts as well as integrated and unique structures and facilities, the Mountain area will gain a district identity and thus help improving image of the City and enhancing its identity as a highly demanding tourist destination. The cultural village; the commercial village; and different types of resorts will act, each with its unique buildings and structures, as smaller distinctive districts.

**Paths:** The Mountain development will create a network of disorganized, non-parallel paths due to the rugged topography of the mountain. The Mountain will have a network of land-leveled and elevated paths; the former includes roads, streets, footpaths like trails and walkways, and the latter includes cable car lines, forklift lines, and observation decks/tracks. The paths will allow for connection and movement to the Mountain and function as internal networks connecting all facilities on the Mountain. The main existing asphalt road that extends from the main Mountain gateway in the lower western part and runs up to the end point of the developed area on the Mountain in the east constitutes the major path.
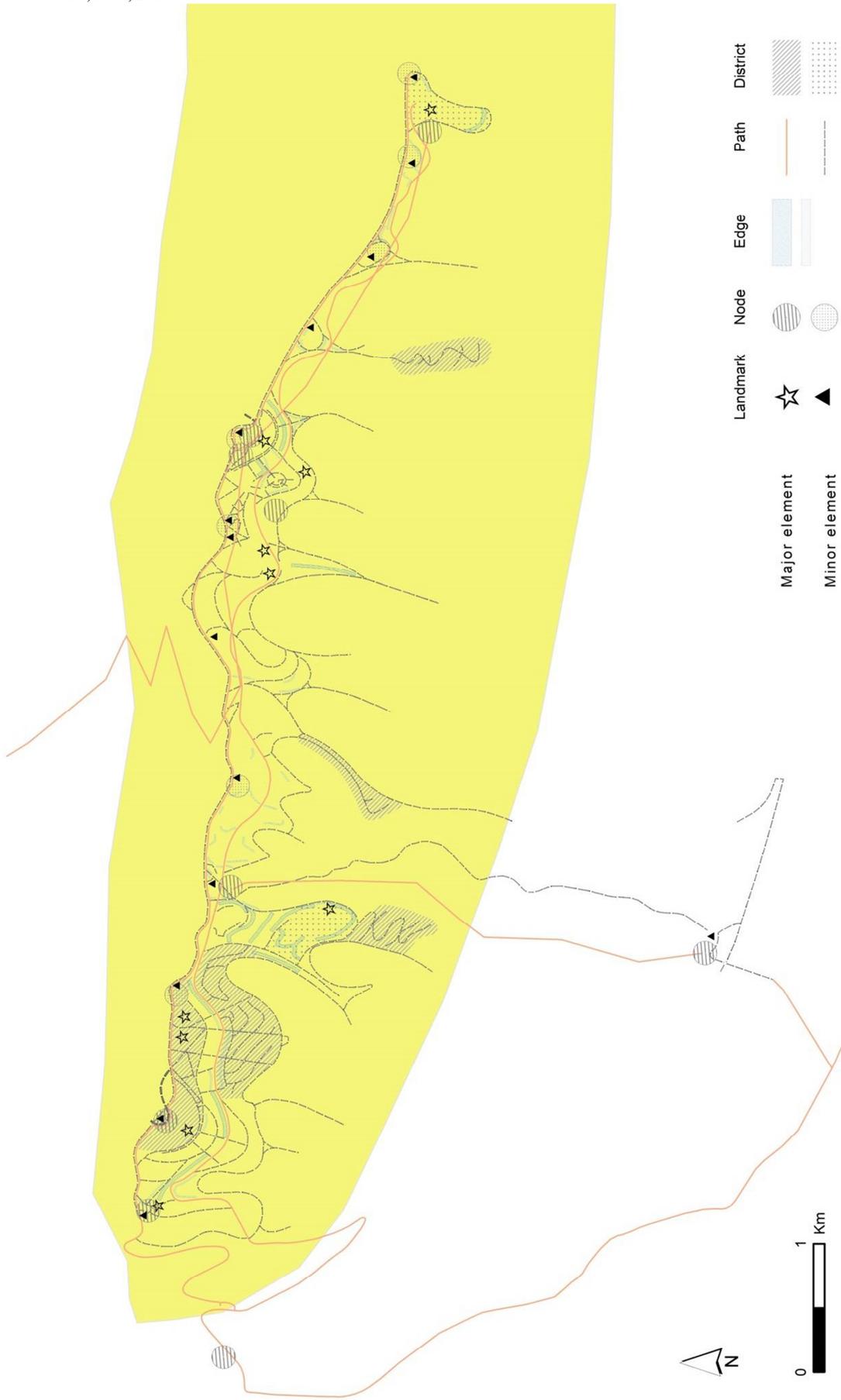
Figure 1: The visual form of Zawa Mountain (Source: The authors, based on Mount Zawa Masterplan and using ArcGIS 10.2).

The recently established cable car system is another major path provided by the Mountain. It offers fast access to the Mountain. A 2-lien cable currently runs along the Mountain's northern ridge and connects it's speaks to the City and then to the Lake area in the future. The cable car will take passengers through a journey that will help them discover the landscape and urban structures of the metropolitan region. This piece of infrastructure is a good asset that can be construed as a major distinctive path in this region. It is expected that the cable car will not only improve mobility and access to the Mountain and the Lake but will also contribute to enhancing the identity of both elements. By connecting the Mountain to the City center and the Lake area, the cable car line can be seen as an extended elevated piece of infrastructure and a distinctive path that will be visible within the metropolitan area and from the surrounding areas as well. Another cable line is proposed to be established to connect the Mountain's southern peaks to the lower hillsides passing through gently sloped hills. This will also create a visible path that can be seen, together with some sections of the former line, from the plain areas located to the south of the Mountain. In addition, this network provides an amenity for the passengers to explore the City and the surrounding landscapes and provide them with an exemplar experience. Minor paths include intertwined networks of internal roads and footpaths (trails); the ridgepath, a foot path that runs along the northern Mountain's ridge line; the observation decks that extend into the northern cliffs; and a chairlift line that will run from a relatively midpoint on the Mountain towards the southern hills and entrance to be established there. The latter will function as a skyline connecting the southern areas to the Mountain. The gullies on the southern slopes can be developed as attractive footpath access routes to the Mountain. With the steep gully sides and, in time, small trees affording some protection from the sun, these paths can become pleasant walking routes. In general, all these paths are expected to provide the visitors with an enjoyable walking environment and a new experience of viewing the natural landscapes and scenic views, in addition to well-designed facilities.

**Nodes:** A strong sense of entry into the Mountain can be created at key gateways and intersections that will connect it to the surrounding elements. These locations will function as identity nodes – places that will be recognized for their unique charm - or important junctions of paths that will characterize identity of the City and the Mountain. The gateways and the cable car stations will be nodal points that could become urban centers and attract visitors to the Mountain resorts. The City and lake view plazas and observation decks/viewing platforms on the high Mountain peaks are other nodes that will attract visitors to enjoy the landscapes afar.

**Edges:** There will not be a quite significant number of edges on the Mountain. The only remarkable edges on the Mountain will include the green areas located in the middle or at the edge of the land paths. Each of these will be planted with single or several organized lines of perennial or forest trees.

**Landmarks:** The Mountain development will offer opportunities for creating visual landmarks, such as lighting displays at night and iconic buildings like cultural village, commercial village, history museum, and luxurious hotels. Night lighting displays will function as distinctive landmarks that will stand out of the Mountain and can be seen from far places. They will also act as radial reference points to the Mountain or the City for observers from the surrounding areas especially in the western and southern sides.

## Conclusions

Zawa Mountain, once completely developed according to the designed masterplan, will be considered the most identifiable image maker in Duhok Metropolitan Region. Its modern designs and well organizations of facilities will have a significant impact on the perception of its identity and image as well as those of the City. They will give both places unique identities and enhance their identities, characters and qualities. Based on its masterplan, the Mountain development with modern structures and facilities will improve the image of tourism in the City, can also lead to building better image for it, and upgrade the City image for outsiders into an attractive place for living, working and recreation. A positive image and a brand identity for Duhok will symbolize its value and the quality of life one can expect from living and working there.

With the implementation of this masterplan, the desolate and relatively barren plateau and gentle slopes of the Mountain will be developed into a unique architecture and landscape architecture masterpiece in Iraq. As an integrated tourist complex with different leisure, entertainment and recreation facilities, this masterpiece with its diversified facilities and services are expected to create a wider repercussion at national and regional levels and attract visitors throughout the country. With the influence of its prominent higher location, unprecedented skylines, quality architecture, attractive and well-shaped greenspaces and water bodies, the Mountain will stand as a unique tourist, recreational, entertainment, educational and commercial district in the region. The Mountain will express the local landscape of rugged topography, mountain peaks, hillsides, distant lake calm water, blue sky, and the City's urban texture. It will become a graceful and memorable place through high quality architecture, well-designed roads and other paths, lively public spaces, glorious water bodies in desolate land, and a gentle skyline.

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