

## Effective Factors on the Reduction of Vandalism (The Destructors of Urban Furniture and Creational Centers)

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### ABSTRACT

One of the common abnormalities and deviations in our current societies is vandalism. Vandalism is defined as the voluntary destruction of the public assets and properties and it is deviation that seriously affects the quality and quantity of the urban services and imposes lots of losses and damages to the urban management annually. Regarding the importance of this issue, in this research we have attempted to identify the effective factors on the reduction of vandalism on the urban furniture and creational centers in training, socio-cultural, and socio-welfare fields and social supervision in general. This study is a discovering research that uses the questionnaire to collect its needed information and data. The location of this research is the green spaces and parks of Tehran, and the social population of the research includes all supervisors and employees of the departments of green spaces of Tehran Municipality (N=140). The results of this research show that in the training field, the indexes of environmental trainings, training supplement facilities, informing, and citizenship training have the highest effect in order of their importance. Moreover, in the socio-cultural field, the indexes of sport centers, participation, cultural facilities and social trust have the highest effect; in the socio-welfare field, the indexes of urban planning, social justice, and beautification have the highest effect; and in the field of social supervision, the index of social supervision has the highest effect on the reduction of vandalism all in the order of their importance. Among these components, the socio-welfare component, and among the indexes, the index of urban planning has the highest effect on the reduction of the vandalism, but unfortunately they are not paid enough attention commensurate with their weight and importance.

**KEYWORDS:** Vandalism, Urban Furniture, Creational Centers, Park, Green Spaces.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The society contains the humans that interact with each other on the based on a series of the social norms and values, and the condition of the survival of the society is to accept and internalize these norms and values, and any violation of them is considered as deviation. Stanley Cohen, a psychologist researcher describes the vandalism as the illegal destruction of the properties of the others and to damage their appearance (Yavuz and Kuloğlu, 2011). Vandalism is one of the deviations in modern society. The prevention and treatment of vandalism requires a precise, inclusive, and collective strategy and policy. Indeed, relying on an efficient and universal plan, we can fulfill the relevant goal, i.e. the reduction of the statistical rate of the vandalism and destructions. Thus it is necessary to identify the effective factors on the reduction of this phenomenon as approached in this research. Most available studies in this field deal with the individual, family, and economic factors of the vandals. Thus to approach other effective components like the training, socio-welfare, socio-cultural, and supervising issues is a new subject, and the objective of this research is to identify all components that are controlled and supervised by the urban management and are effective on the reduction of vandalism phenomenon in urban furniture and recreational centers.

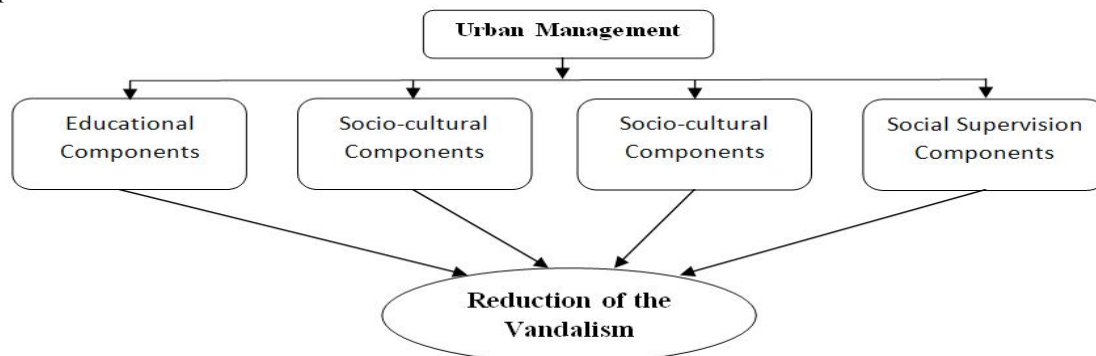


Figure 1: Effective Factors on the Reduction of Vandalism

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This research aims to find an answer to the following questions:

1. What training components are effective on the reduction of vandalism in urban furniture and recreational centers?
2. What socio- cultural components are effective on the reduction of vandalism in urban furniture and recreational centers?
3. What socio- welfare components are effective on the reduction of vandalism in urban furniture and recreational centers?
4. What social supervision components are effective on the reduction of vandalism in urban furniture and recreational centers?

The main reason for the researcher to address the research is developed phenomenon vandalism in the world and is necessary to study this subject in country.

## **2. Theoretical framework of the research**

Since vandalism is one of the forms of deviations and perversions, sociological and socio- psychological theories of the deviations and failure theories have provided us with some mental preparation for approaching the related components, theories, and indexes. Thus we will first review the theoretical foundations of the subject and then we will deal with the related indexes and components as proposed in the available theories. The common point in all sociological theories is to interpret the deviated behavior per the cultural or social forces beyond the individuals. The main feature of this attitude toward the deviation is its extra-individual and social nature; that is, the available variables in the definition of the deviation are getting related to the concept of the society and the social organizations and structures (Salimi and Davari, 2006). Among the important theories on the sociology of deviations one can refer to the theories of social un-organization and the theories of cultural transmission and the deviance theories. The theorists of the social un-organization believe that some factors like the decrease of the efficiency of the social institutions and the reduction of the social traditional integrity will increase the crimes, while such factors are in turn the results of the rapid growth of the industrialization, urbanization, and the increasing migration toward the urban areas. Durkheim (1878) and Parsons (1942) believe that the social factors control the people, but when these factors become unstable, the people will have less power to control their own behaviors (Ahmadi, 2005). The main theme in deviance and cultural transmissions is the contradiction between the norms and values that different ethnic or class groups or the subcultures within a society believe in. Due to the forces of conformity levers within a group or subculture, the members of these groups and subcultures get forced to deviate the align culture for the mentioned contradiction, even these norms and values are the dominant and underlying norms and values of the society (Salimi and Davari, 2006). Social psychology presupposes the social interactive processes. That is, the person observes and learns the deviated behavior, make the deviated persons as his or her behavioral pattern, has a weak internal and external control upon his or her behavior, his/ her sociability is incomplete, and changes his/ her identity due to the social labels, and all these factors lead to the crime. Thus abnormal behaviors such as vandalism pass different routes and it is evolved in this path, i.e. such behaviors are not pre-determined, but they are formed due to some conflicts between the conditions and the factor of behavior (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004). Moreover, in aggression- failure theories, failure is considered as the factor of forming the aggressive tendencies. These theories believe that the external conditions such as the failures, lack of prestige, and feel of being oppressed are all powerful motivations to commit damaging behaviors (Mohseni Tabrizi and Rahmati, 2002). The proposed theories in the fields of sociology, social psychology of deviations and theories of failure study the effects of sociability, feel of being oppressed, failure, supervision and control, commitment to ethic and cultural values, way of spending the leisure time, individualistic behavior, culture of the society, and the learning and teaching on the emergence of the abnormalities and deviances. Thus to analyze the effective factors on the reduction of vandalism, here we study the available theories in the fields of training, culture, social welfare, and social supervision.

### **2.1. Training**

Without the training, urbanization will be an awful problem, and the citizens will be passive and apathetic people who do not feel any responsibility for their urban affairs. In such a situation, the government and its subordinate systems such as the municipality and its related organizations have to compensate the passivity of the citizens, while this procedure will load extraordinary costs on the urban management system without reaching the desired result (Atashpur, et al, 2009). Considering the public interests and assets as worthless things is the most important damage that roots in the personal immaturity, the weaknesses of the sociability process in practice, and the lack of sufficient training and informing on the environment (Bahmanpur, et al, 2010)/ any dynamic society requires active citizens in accordance to its own value and cultural features. Educating the citizens is practically a tool for nurturing their sense of belonging to the society and having a goal to be used in their lives (Faramarz, 2010). Indeed the role of educating the rules and principles of citizenship is one of the most important points that connect the urban management to the citizens (Sarraf and Abdollahi, 2008). Another effective way of encountering the negative consequences of the urban development and the growth of

technology is to improve the relations between the urban human with the nature. Since the people have to be aware of the importance of the development and maintenance of the green spaces and its vital impact on the health and happiness of their own generation, we can conduct some programs that are capable of making connection between the people and their surrounding environment and showing the role of the green spaces in their living environment (William, 1991). Training about the environment is a training that emphasizes on the development of conscious tendencies toward the environment (Palmer, 1998). Although the training in a fundamental, scheduled and classic form in the schools and the universities is a very long-term process leading to the promotion of the scientific and cultural level of the society, but during such long-term and time-consuming procedure we can activate the process of scientific and cultural development by promoting general trainings among all classes and age groups (Kordestani, 2002). The development of urban public trainings will lead to the increase of the human capitals, strengthening the power of self- controlling in people, and facilitating the affairs of the life (Kazemi, 1390). In the process of learning we can use the training supplement facilities as the reinforcing and supporting tools of the training. Using proper tools will lead to a better understanding of the concepts and maintenance of the necessary information. The best opportunity for offering training issues and informing the people about these subjects in an unofficial form is the considerable time the people spent on their urban travels, especially in large cities. Paying attention to these environments and media increases the possibility of receiving and accepting the training and necessary citizenship messages by the people. Urban squares, intersections, bridges, public spaces, and parks are very suitable places for creating such informing and training networks (Abedin Vahedian, 2007).

## **2.2. Culture**

Culture is a social concept that is formed by some exclusive features and functions in the context of the collective life. According to the experts, the widest context of the life is manifested in the cities and in form of urban life (Sheikhi, 2008). Citizenship culture, or so- called citizenship commitment and being active, is a wide concept that is close to the collective spirit. This concept not only refers to the learning of collective life, but also includes acquiring the values, attitudes, skills, and loyalty to the citizenship commitments, as it is sometimes known as the democratic citizen (UNESCO, 2004). One of the most important factors in fulfilling the citizenship culture is the public and conscious attitude of the people toward the social participation (Piran, 2006). Today, what guarantees the development and efficiency of the urban services is the participation of all citizens in the urban activities (Rezaei, 1996). The lack of citizens' participation in the administration of the urban affairs will have some negative consequences both for the urban management and the residents of the city (Asqarpur Masule, 2007). The social human can satisfy his/ her mental and spiritual needs in light of the social interaction and trust. He/ she can confirm his/ her social identity just with making the relationship with the others. If such a social interaction lacks the trust, the social capital will be reduced and will inevitably lead to the decrease of the relationships and the lack of trust to others and to the governments and then the society will be changed to a depressed society without any vitality (Sheikhi and Kazemi Moghaddam, 2010). Giddens introduces the social trust as a factor for decreasing the risks of the life. He believes that the governments have to do their best attempts to develop the public area (Giddens, 1998). Mayer also believes that trust is made by the need to pay attention to the public needs and the competence of doing the affairs (Mayer, et al, 1995). In 1996, Tyler showed that the effective factors on the trust include the attention to the citizens' needs, meeting these needs, following ethical standards, and fair behavior (Tyler and Degoey, 1996). Leisure time of the citizens is considered a cultural activity on the base of which each person nurtures his/ her own vision and social personality (Bagheri Bonjar, 2008). Proper planning for the leisure times in both micro and macro levels can lead to the enjoyment, self- improvement, recreation, experiencing, and nurturing the personalities; while neglecting the leisure times can lead to the time- wasting, ignorance, and even wrong entertainments, deviances, and harmful damages (Mozaffari, 2008). The cultural activities of the citizens not only depend on their leisure times, but it always includes cultural facilities as well (Bagheri Bonjar, 2008). The extended lack of facilities, spaces, and ways of spending leisure times will extend the scale of the damages and reinforce the sense of boredom of holidays and off times of the day (Moghaddas Fard, 2008). Lots of researches have shown that most teenager criminals misuse their leisure times. Accordingly, one main reason for committing the crime is that the criminals have no better activity to do. Today, most of the centers of teenager deviations use sport and recreational programs to control, prevent, and reform the criminals (Sugden and Yiannakis, (1982). Some studies that have focused on the relationship between the leisure time and the crime have shown that the participation in normal activities such as organized sports will fasten the ties of the person with the values and rules of the society (Zenony, et al, 1999).

## **2.3. Social welfare**

One of the most comprehensive definitions that contain different dimensions of the social welfare is as follows: "social welfare is a set of conditions and qualities that meet the individual and social need of the society at an acceptable level and all the people feel social, economic, and political security in such conditions" (Iranian

Welfare Organization, 2000). Urban management attempts to improve the situation of some functions of the social welfare. For example, social welfare pay attention to the social justice and visual appearance that lead to the promotion of the indexes of life quality and finally lead to the social welfare (Abutalebi, 2010). The more we pay attention to the quality and desirability of the urban perspectives by creating diverse perspectives, the more and more positive the people will be interested in to the built spaces and this will lead to their sense of belonging and their interest in travel in the built ways and walk in the urban spaces (Hashem Nejad, 2008). Yavuz and Kuloglu state that the factors such as the quality of the space, materials and colors of the facilities and urban furniture are very effective on the emergence of the vandalism phenomenon. They add that the process of exact programming can play a significant role in the reduction of the destructions (Yavuz and Kuloglu, 2011). The conscious act of the urban management has to focus on the promotion of the quality of the skeletal environment and the spatial distribution of the social interests in order to reduce the spatial inequalities and consequently to promote the quality of life and to reach an urban inequality in which the removal of the inequalities is desired by the assignment of the resources in the best possible way (Khakpur and Ramezani, 2009). In this regard, Morton focuses on the distribution of the opportunities between the different people of the society. He believes that the lack of the equal distribution of the opportunities in accessing the goals is the main factor of the deviation (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004). One of the main factors of the stability of the urban spaces is the sense of security. Without the security, no urban space is will be arena of the social interaction and the participation of the citizens. Thus the science of the urban planning feels obliged to prepare such a key quality in the urban space (Souri, 2009). The main idea of the CPTED1 is that we can design the physical environment so that it reduces the possibility of the crime by creating the sense of security (Carmona, et al, 2003). Jacobs introduces three factors for creating the vitality in the streets: (a) making a clear differentiation between the private and public spaces (the clarity of the hierarchies); (b) the possibility of the visual supervision on the street (street's eyes); (c) creating enough attraction in the body of the streets (Encouraging the people to use the spaces in all times) (Jacobs, 1992). According to Oscar Newman's theory (1973), the spaces where it is more possible to view and to be viewed and have less space to escape will have a fewer potential for the activities of the criminals. Hence it is usually argued that the walls and fences can be considered as the physical barriers and increase the sense of insecurity, while the existence of any sign of the supervision of the people over their region can increase the sense of the security (Schweitzer, et al, 1999).

**2.4. Social supervision**

Social welfare is the set of tools and methods that force the people to match with their specific group or the society at large (Cohen, 2009). Sutherland believes that the individual become a criminal because he/ she is exposed to the definitions that prefer the crime over the respect to the law. According to him, different patterns of rectitude and deviation exist in the society but their distribution and the possibility of people' exposure to them depends on the social supervision (Ahmadi, 2005). Social supervision and control is an important tool for the maintenance of the social norms and can prevent the emergence of any kind of deviation. Indeed, if a person feels that he/ she is viewed by the others and believes in the mutual values, he/ she will not allow himself to commit a crime (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004). Several studies and researches in different countries have referred to the methods of preventing the crime and administrating the police affairs in different levels and centers: visible presence of the police, physical presence in the streets and wandering in police uniform or without the uniform, conducting the plan of regional guardsmen, using the media to introduce the police initiatives and activities, attracting the cooperation of the people in establishing and maintaining the order (Povey, 2001), national programs for outgoing in nights to encourage the residents to turn their outside lights on, go out of house, and visit their neighbors (Miller and Hess, 2008).

**Table 1. components of the research as extracted from the literature review**

Component	Subcomponent	Index
training	training content	Environmental training
		Citizenship training
	Public training	Informing
		Training supplement facilities
Socio- cultural	Citizenship culture	Participation
		Social trust
	Leisure time	Cultural facilities
Socio- welfare	Quality of urban life	Sport centers
		Beautification
	Security	Social justice
		Urban planning
Social supervision	Social supervision	Social supervision

<sup>1</sup> Crime Prevention Through Environment Design

### 3. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This study is a discovering research that uses the questionnaire instrument to collect its needed data. In this regard we prepared two questionnaires each of which contained 39 questions regulated in 5-item Likert scale. One questionnaire intended to determine the effective components on the reduction vandalism and the scale of their impact. The other questionnaire intended to specify the scale of the importance put on these components in the field of the green space of Tehran Municipality. The questionnaire presented to the statistical population of the research including all supervisors and employees of the department of the Green Spaces of Tehran Municipality (N=140). The location of the research was the parks and green spaces of Tehran city. In order to test the validity of the questionnaire we used the formal validation method, and the Cronbach's alpha of current and desired situation was obtained as 0.81 and 0.82 respectively that shows a high internal cohesion and an accepted reliability of the questions of the questionnaire. One sample t-test and independent t- test and the Friedman test were used to analyze the data collected.

#### 4. Finding of the research

The obtained information of the demographic specifications of the respondents of the research shows that most supervisors and employees of the department of Green Spaces of Tehran Municipality include the men (61.4% in comparison to the rate of 38.6% for the women). Besides, the educational distribution of the respondents was as follow: bachelor degree (71.4%), master degree (14.3%), college degree (7.9%), high school diploma (5%), and PhD (1.4%). The distribution of the work experience of the respondents was as follow: 11 to 20 years of work experience (32.1%), more than 20 years of work experience (30%), 6 to 10 years of work experience (22.9%), and less than 5 years of work experience (15%). The significance level of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was obtained as more than 0.05 for all variables; thus the distribution of all variables was normal. In order to find the answer of the questions of the research, we used one sample T test.

**Table 2. Results of the one sample T test**

Variable	Mean difference	T	Degree of freedom	Significance level
<b>Environmental training</b>	0.84107	13.198	139	0.000
<b>Citizenship training</b>	0.52857	6.495	139	0.000
<b>Informing</b>	0.75357	11.922	139	0.000
<b>Training supplement facilities</b>	0.78571	13.484	139	0.000
<b>Participation</b>	0.88929	12.529	139	0.000
<b>Social trust</b>	0.97429	31.852	139	0.000
<b>Cultural facilities</b>	0.79821	10.848	139	0.000
<b>Sport centers</b>	0.92714	14.415	139	0.000
<b>Beautification</b>	0.8566	16.281	139	0.000
<b>Social justice</b>	0.9655	15.235	139	0.000
<b>Urban planning</b>	1.0258	17.008	139	0.000
<b>Social supervision</b>	1.01607	14.598	139	0.000

Null hypothesis of the researched implied that the indexes of the study and the training, socio- cultural, socio- welfare, and social supervision components have no effect on the reduction of the vandalism in urban furniture and recreational centers. But according to the obtained result, the null hypothesis was rejected with 99% of confidence. Thus the answers of the research questions were obtained as follow:

1. Among the training components, environmental training, citizenship training, training supplement facilities, and informing are effective on the reduction of the vandalism in the urban furniture and the recreational centers.
2. Among the socio- cultural components, participation, social trust, cultural facilities, and sport centers are effective on the reduction of the vandalism in the urban furniture and the recreational centers.
3. Among the socio- welfare components, beautification, social justice, and urban planning are effective on the reduction of the vandalism in the urban furniture and the recreational centers.
4. Among the social supervision components, social supervision is effective on the reduction of the vandalism in the urban furniture and the recreational centers.

In order to compare the current situation of the subjected indexes of this research with the desired situation, the indexes were tested by dependent T test.

Variable	Mean difference	Difference of the std. deviation	T	Degree of freedom	Significance level
Environmental training	-0.76964	0.91749	-9.924	139	0.000
Citizenship training	-0.59286	1.14362	-6.134	139	0.000
Informing	-1.13571	1.09912	-12.226	139	0.000
Training supplement facilities	-0.98571	0.9193	-12.687	139	0.000
Participation	-0.82143	1.11412	-8.724	139	0.000
Social trust	-0.43714	0.4192	-12.338	139	0.000
Cultural facilities	-0.73214	0.96506	-8.977	139	0.000
Sport centers	-0.78857	0.84709	-11.015	139	0.000
Beautification	-0.84286	0.96398	-10.345	139	0.000
Social justice	-1.13571	1.07057	-12.552	139	0.000
Urban planning	-0.97143	1.06408	-10.802	139	0.000
Social supervision	-1.50357	1.24079	-14.338	139	0.000

Considering the obtained results, the null subject (implying the scores of the current situation of the subjected indexes are higher than or equal to the scores of the desired situation) was rejected with 99% of the confidence. Thus the current situation of all indexes is lower than the desired situation. That is, these indexes are not paid attention commensurate with their importance and role in reducing the vandalism. To determine the ranking order of the importance of each index on the reduction of the vandalism phenomenon we used Friedman test.

Variable	Average rank	Order of the ranks
Environmental training	6.55	7
Citizenship training	5.35	11
Informing	6.17	10
Training supplement facilities	6.15	8
Participation	6.88	6
Social trust	1.12	12
Cultural facilities	6.45	9
Sport centers	7.25	5
Beautification	7.6	3
Social justice	7.97	2
Urban planning	8.66	1
Social supervision	7.48	4

As shown in table 4, the following ranks were obtained: (1) urban planning, (2) social justice, (3) beautification, (4) social supervision, (5) sport centers, (6) participation, (7) environmental training, (8) training supplement facilities, (9) cultural facilities, (10) informing, (11) citizenship training, and (12) social trust. Additionally, in order to specify the order of the importance that currently is given to these indexes in the field of green spaces, we compared their average score and the following results were obtained: (1) urban planning, (2) sport centers, (3) beautification, (4) citizenship training, (5) participation, (6) cultural facilities, (7) social justice, (8) environmental training, (9) training supplement facilities, (10) informing, (11) social supervision, and (12) social trust. This Research is a new study in this field, Because there is not much research to be compared with the results .

## 5. Summary and conclusion

As a global and universal phenomenon, especially in the urban areas, vandalism has suffered many today societies including both modern industrial societies and the developing societies at a large level. The results of the statistical operations and tests on the obtained data of this research show that the most important indexes on the reduction of the vandalism in the parks, green spaces and their urban furniture are respectively as follow: (1) urban planning, (2) social justice, (3) beautification, (4) social supervision, (5) sport centers, (6) participation, (7) environmental training, (8) training supplement facilities, (9) cultural facilities, (10) informing, (11) citizenship training, and (12) social trust. But unfortunately, the needed importance and weight has not given to these indexes in the field of the green spaces of the Tehran Municipality and the current order of importance of these indexes is as follow respectively: (1) urban planning, (2) sport centers, (3) beautification, (4) citizenship training, (5) participation, (6) cultural facilities, (7) social justice, (8) environmental training, (9) training supplement facilities, (10) informing, (11) social supervision, and (12) social trust. These results show that in order to solve the problem of vandalism as a form of contemporary deviations and deviances, the urban management requires an inclusive and multidimensional attitude. Indeed, the effect of the training, socio- cultural, socio- welfare, and social supervision

components on the reduction of this phenomenon implies the fact that nurturing the citizens' sense of belonging to the society, making them aware of their responsibility against the environment and the green spaces through the training supplement facilities and training messages, preparing the grounds for the participation in the urban affairs in light of the trust in the urban management, providing the needed sport and cultural needs and their fair distribution, designing beautiful and interesting urban spaces along with the establishment of the sense of security, and controlling and supervising the urban environments, are all a set of factors that affect the reduction of the destruction of parks, green spaces and their furniture, though the socio-welfare components are more important than the other components. Thus, considering the impact of the indexes of environmental trainings, citizenship trainings, training supplement facilities, and informing, we suggest the following plans to reduce the vandalism: conducting environmental training workshops in order to inform the financial and non-financial consequences of the destruction of green spaces to the citizens, administrating the training courses on the urban rules and principles, and making the citizens aware of their citizenship rights, preparing and distributing the training brochures for spreading the idea that the next generations will be damages for the irrational behaviors of the current generation, and designing training messages that aim to make the citizens' performance positive by using the professional graphical techniques. Moreover, considering the importance of the indexes of participation, social trust, cultural facilities and sport centers in reducing the construction of the urban properties, we suggest the following programs in order to help the urban management: offering some interesting and diverse incentives to the citizens in order to increase their participation in protecting the green spaces (such as the distribution of flowers, recognizing and introducing the citizen of the year, etc.), establishing new cultural clubs and libraries and conducting some interesting programs with the goal of enriching the leisure times of the citizens (summer festivals of the leisure times, running a system for the freshness of the resident areas, etc.), conducting public sport matches aiming at creating the culture of sport and freshness, installing sport facilities and equipments in the green spaces and parks, and having a continual plan to maintain and repair these facilities. Additionally, some practical suggestions can be offered in order to reduce the phenomenon of vandalism as follow: paying attention to the decentralization on designing the parks and green spaces in order to increase the dynamics in general, designing the green spaces with the especial emphasis on the undefended (insecure) spaces (not using a dense plant cover, using proper lighting, etc.), using bold and bright colors in urban furniture and park equipments, reinforcing the social norms through controlling and supervising the urban environments (installing CCTV cameras, hiring some watchdogs, etc.), and using proper tools and methods to force the deviant people to match themselves with the expectations of the society (imposing fiscal and non-fiscal penalties on the destructor people). Indeed, to encounter the phenomenon of the vandalism, the urban management requires a consensus of the experts of different fields such as sociology, culture, education, psychology, pedagogy, architecture, and urban planning, though regarding the higher importance of the urban planning, the role of the architectures and urban planners is more than the others.

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