

Transforming Amman: Displaced Iraqis Impact on Architecture and Urban Form

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Abstract: It has become common to observe that the spatial and social displacement of people has been accelerating around the world at a fast pace. Displacement provokes disruptions and shifts of meanings and conventions. Architecture can function as a receptacle, as an instrument, or as staging of displacement. Sometimes, architecture manages to generate possibilities to turn contradiction into ambivalence. In this regard, cultural representations of memory, migration and migrant experiences provide fruitful points of departure for the development of new theoretical concepts of place and belonging that have direct effect on built architecture and urban form. Jordan has received two primary waves of Iraqi refugees; the first arrived after the 1991 Gulf War. Many of these Iraqis were middle class, including doctors, intellectuals, and teachers. Since the start in 2003 of the war in Iraq, increasing numbers of Iraqi nationals have left their homes for different parts of Iraq or have taken residence in neighbouring countries, particularly Jordan and Syria. Iraqi refugees and migrants in Jordan represent a large sector of society; this research looks into the current architecture or urbanisms of displacement which took place in the city of Amman as a result of Iraqi migration into the city. So, this research proposes a theoretical framework to examine the effects of Iraqi migration on urban form and urbanism in the city of Amman. The authors look at four agencies of impact (movement of capital, people, information, and culture) and their effects. These consequences, the authors suggest, are expressed in the configuration of urban space, urban form, and urbanism in Amman. The goal of the research is to offer a critical framework for studying the impact of migration and refugees on third world cities urban form.

Key words: Displacement, Iraqi Refugees, Amman City, Identity, Urban Form.