Un-Hidden Urban Refugees
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Design As Politics
Design studio: We the People - Democracy
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Introduction

The population without a place

The story of urban refugees

The phenomenon of refugee city is a raising trend in a countries that are dealing with urban refugees. Refugees choose to live in the cities because there is often better access to services, degree of anonymity, livelihood opportunities and there is often an existing social network. Most refugees choose to avoid attention of authorities, not to risk expansion. This comes at cost of worse housing and health conditions. Moreover, they are more vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and violence. With the help of NGO’s and their own social network the refugees often find a way to survive without causing problem for the local authorities. They are living a hidden life.

The local authorities are aware of these hidden populations and want to keep them from being part of the permanent, visible society. They see the refugees as a burden on there economy, recourses, education and health system. The government often get international aid to support the country. The support is often treated as an emergency aid for a temporary problem even though it is being used for long-term investments. Politics in these countries are not that transparent to make a clear distinction why the country is getting the aid and for what it exactly is.

The government often don’t see a reason to change their policies towards refugees to make them better integrate in society and improve their living standards. The policy that makes it harsh for refugees to integrate is often related to ownership, employment and education. If the government would change the policies, they would accept the refugees as part of their society and the problems would be their problem in stead of an international problem.

Even tough the conflict operates on international level it influences the refugee on local level. The politics often play a big role in the livelihood of refugees. Not only is the reason of their refuge based on political conflicts, the politics in the country they refuge to, determines their livelihood in the city they end up in. Even though refugees often live in poor housing conditions, their main problem is based on living conditions in their physical environment, which causes psychological problems. The absence of sense of belonging makes the refugee see himself or herself as temporary. Added with the fact that they don’t know how the future will look like for the country they come from they are waiting for the moment in which they can start to (re)build their future again.

As I believe design can influence politics, I started the work on the topic of Urban refugees. The aim of the project is to find ways to improve the livelihood of urban refugees through designing their living environment. Or one might say, by designing the refugee city. The research question is: How can the hidden, urban refugees empower themself through their living environment to unhide their presence, improve their livelihood and add value to the city?

Methodology

In recent years there has been an increasing attention towards refugees who live in urban environments. The problem of urban refugees is connected to (inter)national developments and therefore needs to be researched on different levels. However the design proposal will be on an architectural scale, a profound understanding of the conflict is needed to respond to the problem. Existing research regarding urban refugees has been done from different perspectives and for different purposes. During the course of the project new researches are being published and critical reviews are given. In order to fully comprehend and to take a clear position within the conflict different objective and subjective sources are consulted. This varies from large international institutions to individual persons.

The research is executed according to top-down method. This means that the research starts from the largest scale and gradually zooms in on the smallest scale. This way a clear overview of the cause and consequence of the problem is generated and a solution can be sought that functions on different levels. The research on an international and national level has been based on literature studies concerning the development of urban refugees over history, the related laws and policies. The organization of assisting bodies and the divers cultural layers of populations groups. Furthermore, existing literature of researches with focus groups has been put in use to understand the local problems and needs of urban refugees in a specific context.

Information needed to understand the consequences of housing refugees on national and local level, the role of assisting bodies and social and cultural values of the city has been obtained through interviews with organizations and professionals. Only in one case a direct interview is held with a refugee. Most interviews were held during field research. Moreover, during the field research observations have been made of the physical and social living environment of urban refugees. Simultaneously a general spatial and social observation is executed to grasp the genertal context. This all added greatly to understand the position and situation of urban refugees. Additionally, a plan analysis is made of a specific neighbourhood that has a long history of urban refugees and currently houses a large number of urban refugees. This is done in order to get a better understanding of the spatial and social organization of the living environment of urban refugees and locals.

In order to find answers to questions that will rise during the elaboration of the design proposal, extra research methods will be taken in hand. Related architectural theory will be consulted to find support for suggested options. Precedents will be taken into research to understand how in reality of similar projects functions. Furthermore research by design will be an integrated part of the whole design process, it will be reflected upon and developed further stage by stage.
people are left powerless. The creation of even within a democratic government, the representative democracy, people hold The idea that in current directly or government. The more the government was represent the power and the ideologies of a project in which different power structures these are the project that go through different scales; these are the project in which different power structures within a city show their appearance. Who can have a say in policies by becoming their own 'agents' and imposing their own agenda. However this is only possible when the government allows them, or has no other option left, to give them a part of its power to participate in the development of policies that would otherwise be in the hands of the government itself. But what comes first, power of representation?

Representation and Power

Nowadays representation is often linked to political representation, however representation originally did not arise from a political background. Before we get in to the more obvious notion of political representation, lets have a look at where it comes from and which definitions can be found.

The history of the word representation can be traced from the Latin word representare and repraesentatio. While repraesentatio was mostly referring to 'an act of bringing something before the mind', representare was used in relation to phantasia, which in current day would be described as fantasy. Phantasia however, is based on perception and common sense. A third definition that is given to the origin of representation is an image or a representation in art. Representation in art is used as to tool to translate, mental information into a physical object. It is an external form of representation. In philosophy the internal form of representation is called mental representation and is based on the imagination of things that are not real or not present at that moment. It is a complete internal and personal process that often goes beyond the limits of external representation. Both internal and external representation has a role in the understanding life and enriching it with a personal layer. There have been different theories that discuss the exact consequences of representation. Plato and Aristotle both philosophers, are considered the key figures in the definition of representation. The main difference between those two is that Plato believed that representation should be controlled upon as it is leading men away from reality by creating illusions while Aristotle believed that representation is the tool to get to 'the real'. While the two have different notions of what representation is capable of, they both acknowledge that representation is an act of power, depending on how you use it, it will determine where it will lead you. The theory of Plato regarding representation, as something that should be controlled upon, reflects on his political theory. According to Plato, only philosopher-kings who are wise enough to make rational decisions, should rule the state. He does not believe that uneducated people could have enough understanding to be involved in the governance of society. Representation in this context was seen as a threat, which could give people to power to create a different reality.

To be free in an age like ours, one must be in a position of authority. That in itself would be enough to make me ambitious.

Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, 1986

The most challenging design assignment for cities is the design of the governance system. Without a good functioning government any attempt to improve the city and the lives of the people, will not succeed. Proposals to solve and improve urban issues cannot be implemented or will cause more problems within the city, if there is a dysfunctional government. One of the most problem causing issues within a city is the implementation of new urban project. These are the projects that go through different scales; these are the project in which different power structures within a city show their appearance. Who has the power to decide which project can or cannot be implemented? Who create the facts on the ground? Throughout history architecture and urban planning has often been used to represent the power and the ideologies of a government. The more the government was changing their projects were changing.

The idea that in current directly or representative democracy, people hold the power to decide which projects will be implemented, is outdated. In the last decades even within a democratic government, the people are left powerless. The creation of public authorities, public-private partnerships and private initiatives have resulted that decisions are made outside the hand of the elected people. All these different ‘agents’ have their own representatives that try to impose their own agenda on governmental decisions. The government is no longer the agent that controls the power rather it divides the power. Moreover, the government is no longer in charge of the government; it is part of the governance. With governance I mean the process in which decisions are taken and implemented within a society. According to Gerald Frug the public-private partnerships even have the veto power over governmental policies. He argues that this can lead to private capture of governmental policies. How partnerships with private sector is organized however changes from government to government but it is obvious that the government whether a democracy or not, needs to work together with the private sector. On the one side this is because of financial reasons, on the other side because of efficiency and inability of the government. The idea of having very little influence on the government through voting, has caused distrust, by the people in the government and created a growing trend of private initiatives. There is a wide range within the type of private initiatives that are organized as a reaction on the privatization. Nevertheless the paradox of private initiatives is that it only causes further privatizations.

This is especially interesting when we look at individuals who do not have the right to be involved in urban policies through vote. I am talking about refugees, urban refugees in specific. Those people do not even have another option then organizing a private initiative. Due to privatization those people can have a say in policies by becoming their own ‘agents’ and imposing their own agenda. However this is only possible when the government allows them, or has no other option left, to give them a part of its power to participate in the development of policies that would otherwise be in the hands of the government itself. But what comes first, power of representation?

Political representation

This brings us to politics and the meaning of political representation. Lets see if we can understand the pure definition of it, without the current mutation. Thomas Hobbes (1588-
1679) was the first philosopher that came the closest to the theory of political representation as we know today. According to him, it is not directly linked to democracy as we more likely assume. Political representation is part of a governing system that decides who governs over who. In a monarchy one person, the king represents decisions on behalf of all. In a direct democracy people govern themselves. Every individual represent him/her-selves, there is no representative. This is based on the notion of equality and liberty of men. The power here, lies in the hands of the people, as they take their own decisions. In a representative democracy however the people do not decide, they give consent for others to decide. The power is divided over a few that are supposed to represent the wishes of the people they are represented. According to Edmund Burke (1729-1797), a more important task of the representative is to use his own judgemental capability to choose which decision would give justice to the people, even if this means the ignorance of the people’s wishes. As not every person could have the knowledge, time and interest to decide what is best for the common, it make sense to have representatives that have devoted themselves to represent the rights, more then the wishes of the people. However this goes wrong when the representative is no longer interested on acting on behalf of the common or does not value giving justice over the wishes of the different people (which often incorporates money). The current definition of political representation by Hanna Pitkin (1967) is defined as: representation is simply to “make present again.” This means that the voices, opinions and perspectives of the people should be ‘present’ in the public policy making of processes. This has become a more popular notion of representative democracy as it give people symbolically their power to be involved in the decision making process, other then the historical definition in which the representative had most of the power. Symbolic representation within politics is an important part of the social organization of a state. It is more important for the creation of the social identity of a nation, than it is for the implementation of their wishes. In most countries in the Middle East, that consist out of different social identities, descriptive representation is used to reflect the acceptance of the presence of different identities in the state. Their representative should have the similar characteristics as race, sex, ethnicity or residence. However countries in the West do not have a strong belief of this concept, the whole discussing of Obama being first black president, shows that identity and politics cannot be separated.

Coming back to the position of urban refugees, we see that their governing body, which represent their rights, is the UNHCR. The UNHCR in this case functions as a monarchy that act on behalf of the refugees. However this process is divided over a few that are supposed to represent the wishes of the people. People do not feel that they belong to the UNHCR. There is little to no relationship between the political representation and the social identity of the refugees, which is based on race, ethnicity, religion and residence of the refugees. Especially in the Middle East that houses a large number of refugees, this is becoming a problem. The solution to this should not only be searched at the UNHCR that is a state without a land, but also within the physical nation where refugees reside.

The politics of presence

In the very beginning of this essay is stated that over history architecture and urban planning is used as a tool by governments to represent their power. A lot of examples of this can be seen: Versailles representing absolutism, the house of Parliament in London, Gaudí’s palaces for bourgeoisie of Barcelona, the Nazi stadium in Nuremberg. However, this tool can also be held against them. For example, the Favela painting projects in Rio de Janeiro, Luchtsingel in Rotterdam, Tahrir Square in Cairo. These recent projects are all a product of the lack of power of the government to improve its own nation. They have created a new reality, a new identity for the society they are living in. This are often very specific projects in times where developers are realizing more and more generic projects. They mark a change in time, a point in history. Sometimes it is a grassroots initiative, which does not have far reaching intentions, sometimes it is organized to start a revolution. The projects often do not involve large structures to impose the people, however they do make use of large surfaces that occupy land, as land is a symbol of ownership. These are often public spaces. Public space plays an important role connection between the people and politics. Different theories can be found about the role of public space in a society. It ranges from the ideas of Hannah Arendt to Tahrir Square in Cairo. These tools represent people and their values. For something to get symbolic if has to be socially accepted and culturally agreed upon. Something that is not agreed upon yet, first needs to create a common sense and understanding in society before it can be used as a symbol. Hence it can be stated that symbols are an act of social representation, but also an act of political representation.

In the article, Urban Refugees as Agents of Social Change in Kampala, Sarah Dryden-Petersen writes that acknowledgment and understanding of both the presence of refugees in urban areas and their contributions to refugee and host communities are necessary guides to future policy formation by UNHCR and host governments. In Kampala urban refugees started an initiative to organize a school for refugee children. As the school was growing, and they didn’t fit in existing building anymore, they needed a new building. The biggest problem here was the restriction of refugees owning land. This restriction in itself is symbolic, since owning land and occupying land is perceived as ownership of land, which is connected to power. Moreover, by creating a building refugees would have a physical presence in the city, and this was received as a threat. The presence more then a social act could be a symbolic act that creates as social and cultural acceptance, which can have its reflection on the political position of urban refugees and their representation in politics. This is maybe one the strongest example of what the consequence of representation through architecture can be.

Between Architectural representation and Political representation

If we have to accept the changing meaning of a representative democracy, the meaningless of the vote, we better try to create new ways in which real power may be transferred to people, who are the ones, who decide which decisions will be taken. And if the governing body cannot think from the perspective of the common anymore, then the common needs to rise and stand up for their own justice. Using the same medium that was once created to present the power of the government now represents the power of the people.

The different perspective that are given to representation is to underline how architecture can be used by people, in this case urban refugees, as a tool to create acceptance and fair political representation in the governance of public policies. On the road to political representation through architecture they needs to be accompanied by Identity, Symbols and Public space to strengthen their own power. By having these tools in hand they can impose their value upon society. Not architecture, but these tools represent people and their values. Architecture however, is the only medium that can hold these tools in one, at the same time creating a new reality. For initiatives that are related to refugees, this means that before they communicate their desires in politics they first need to understand their own identity, the identity of the host government and the generic and specific values that can symbolise their presence. Only then they can position themselves and represent themselves within the society and create common understanding.

Now, the question that is remained to be answer is, what comes first power or representation? It might be the case that the decision which will stay unanswered. However what is clear is that because refugees are not democratically represented, they want more power, and because the government does not have enough power anymore, people are trying to get better represented. If there is no balance between the two it doesn’t really matter what comes first, they will either way fail in providing a peaceful nation.
References

1 In a democracy, corporations and interests groups don’t have a vote; only vote. An individuals consensus rule for public-private partnerships thus gives a veto power over governmental policy to people who are not part of the electorate. G. Frug, The Architecture of Governance, p.5.


6 Henry G. Bohn 1854, “The works of the right honourable Edmund Burke.” Volume I.


8 Ibid.

Refugee cities

10.5 million refugees worldwide
of which
6 million urban refugees

12 ongoing wars
with more than 1000+ deaths a year

32 ongoing conflicts

Refugee cities

6 million

10.5 million
In the state of the cities around the world the UN-habitat remarks the increasing number of displaced people that are hiding in cities. In 2001 the UNHCR revised its count of urban refugees to 13 per cent of the global refugee population. While in 2008 the estimated amount of refugees living in urban areas was 36%, in 2009 the UNHCR estimated 58% of the world's 10.5 million refugees residing in cities. If you would put them all together this would be the same as half the population of London or the whole population of Jordan. This high amount of people moving out and in different countries is part of complex international conflicts that are resulting in war or war like conditions. Ongoing wars around the world causes people to find save shelter in different parts of the world. In the case of urban refugees the inflow of ‘outsider’ leads to a conflict between the refugees and city authorities together with local inhabitants. As in history refugees are more know as people living in camp area’s, there is very little known about how to deal with refugees in urban area’s. But what is actually the difference between refugee and urban refugee? And what is causing the local conflict in host countries? This chapter will discuss the international refugee case through history and enlighten the global problematic of urban refugees. In order to understand the relationship between refugee policies and refugee conflicts three cities which are dealing with urban refugees, are taken as into further analysis. Some assumptions can be formulated regarding both the future of host cities and refugee in cities.
The conflict development from an international point of view

The crisis of refugees has strong ties to the beginning of the notion of a sovereign state in 1648. The concept of a sovereign state was formed to end the Thirty years wars that took place in Europe over religion. The consequence was that the concept of wars over territories. A example is the World War II in which one of the causes to start the war was the loss of all that land to other countries. Today the nature of war has quite changed into more civil warfare shifted from Europe to Africa, Azia and to the Middle East. Even tough worldwide there is still a lot of conflict going on, the Middle East has currently the highest numbers of refugees fleeing their country because of political unrest. 2011 Afghanistan was on top of the list, followed by Iraq and Somalia. This is if you don’t include the Palestinian refugees, which are not seen as part of the regular refugee populations. With 4.9 million they are largest refugee population in the world. As a result of the Arab-Israel war in 1948, they are displaced and live in camps mainly in the Middle East. With the current Arab spring the amount of refugees increased noticeably in the Middle East. This caused huge pressure on the host countries and to international aid organizations.

Whether it is war over territories or war out of political conflicts it influences the lives of people in sometimes extreme ways. With the recognition of large groups of people being the victim of wars, the term refugee was widely spread. Starting from the Russian revolution in 1920 the biggest amount of refugees seeking shelter in other countries has during World War II. To deal with the 55 million people, in 1943 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was created. With the end of the WWII and the dissolution of the UNRRA, first the International Refugee Organization was established. It was followed by the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1950 as part of the General Assembly of the United Nation. Further on more assisting bodies will be discussed that take part of the international refugee crisis.

Regions in which there is a higher amount of warfare shifted from Europe to Africa, Azia and the Middle East. Even tough worldwide there is still a lot of conflict going on, the Middle East has currently the highest numbers of refugees fleeing their country because of political unrest. 2011 Afghanistan was on top of the list, followed by Iraq and Somalia. This is if you don’t include the Palestinian refugees, which are not seen as part of the regular refugee populations. With 4.9 million they are largest refugee population in the world. As a result of the Arab-Israel war in 1948, they are displaced and live in camps mainly in the Middle East. With the current Arab spring the amount of refugees increased noticeably in the Middle East. This caused huge pressure on the host countries and to international aid organizations.

Displacement patterns

In the previous part a global view is given on the historical development of war and refugees. Within this development a pattern has been formed related to why people flee and where they flee to and what happens afterwards. The ‘traditional’ pattern would be people crossing a border because of a conflict or persecution. They would come from a rural or urban area and go to camps in rural areas that were specially organized by aid organizations, mainly UNHCR. Those people are called rural refugees. Here a refugee would wait for return, (refugee) status in host country or resettlement in third country. According to International Rescue Committee (IRC) only 1% of the refugees get resettled. The problem of waiting in camps in rural areas is that they are almost fully dependent on services provided by the aid organizations. This causes a lot of tension and psychological problems. The reason why host countries decide to set up camps in isolated rural areas is because of several strategic aims. To name a few reasons, it can be to send a message to the country in conflict or they don’t want to violence to spread to their own cities. Furthermore it can be because they don’t want to integrate the refugees in their own society but also because it is easier to provide aid to refugees when they are grouped together.

One of the ‘new’ patterns is fleeing to developed countries instead of to neighboring countries, and seek for asylum there. These are often individuals who are being persecuted because of political opinions or religious beliefs and are relatively good educated. They come from a middle or higher social class. A different change in the pattern is based on the cause of fleeing. People flee more and more out of extreme poverty, impact of climate change and their interrelation with conflicts. When the fleeing doesn’t happen in large groups it is difficult for aid organization to recognize those refugees and support them in their needs. The refugees end up going to urban areas and try to find aid there.

Furthermore there is the pattern where people flee directly to urban areas in neighboring or other countries and try to have an anonymous living there. They are more self-reliant, depending on personal network and informal economy. The reason of fleeing often is no different from the ‘traditional’ pattern. However the reason why individuals and families prefer to live in a city can be very different from each other. Sometimes people want to live in areas they are used to live or they don’t see themselves as refugees and don’t want to seek for aid. Those people are called urban refugees. The phenomenon of urban refugee is not new, however it has never been as widely accepted like it is today. Philip Marfleet writes in his book, Refugees in a global era, that the past 30 years urban refugees has been seen as illegitimate and unacceptable to state authorities and international agencies. With the increasing numbers the view of urban refugee has changed. In 2009, UNHCR changed its policy towards refugees in cities and towns. With this urban refugees are a recognized part or the global refugee crisis.

The past 30 years urban refugees has been seen as illegitimate and unacceptable to state authorities and international agencies.
The new urban challenge is:
How to deal with the consequences of housing urban refugees in the city?
The UNHCR was created to protect refugees and give them a safe shelter in camps. This notion has changed completely. Now their rights and the role of the UNHCR has to change.

The right of a Refugee

refugee laws

It is important to understand the right refugees have on an international and national level. It is part of the acknowledgement of the refugee crisis and a way of protecting vulnerable population groups. The refugee laws play an important role in the position of refugees within the host society and their livelihood. It can give them a save and protected feeling and give them hope for a better future. An important element to establish this is the non-refoulement policy which protects refugees from not being deported. Refugee laws can be divided into international laws and municipal law which includes law on national and local level. The international laws are related the human rights but are focused on refugee status. The first steps towards specific refugee protection from international point of view were made with the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (CRSR) in 1951. There was a greater need of international protection of refugees as they are left without protection of a national state.

International laws

Looking at the refugee problem, it is necessary to start from the context of international human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human right (UDHR) by the United Nation is the basic legal document which provided a basis for the development of international human rights protection.

The basic international human rights which also concerns refugees are:

I. Right to Protection Against Refoulement
It is important to protect a refugee against forcible return to a country where he/she is in danger of life, security and integrity. The right prohibits both rejection of a refugee at the frontier and expulsion after entry. Because of this governments are being more restrictive in people entering the country.

II. Right to Seek Asylum
Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.” Asylum is the protection which a State grants on its territory or in some other place under the control of certain of its organs, to a person who comes to seek it. There are a lot of countries denying asylum in the name of security of the state. A denial of asylum in the case of genuine refugees is nothing but a denial of the existence of any international community as well as a denial of the existence of a common humanity. Denial of asylum to genuine refugees is also against UNHCR policies.

III. Right to Equality and Non-discrimination
As foreigners, refugees are more vulnerable to discrimination. The state of asylum is obliged to protect all human beings against discriminatory conduct based on grounds commonly related to situations of refugees, such as race, religion, national or social origin, and lack of property.

IV. Right to life and personal security
It is the duty of the State ‘to afford every one protection through legislative and other measures as may be necessary against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, whether inflicted by people acting in their official capacity or in a private capacity’.

V. Right to Return
A refugees has often social attachment, sentiments and emotional ties with his motherland. Human rights law recognizes the right of an individual, outside of national territory, to return to his or her country.

VI. Right to Remain
This right is also called, Right not to be refugees and is part of the concept ‘preventive protection’. With this law the focus has changed from finding a solution to the consequences of war, to solving the cause of displacement.

Besides the UDHR, the International refugee law protects the life of refugees. The foundation of the international refugee law started in the aftermath of World War II and would only last for 3 years. The CRSR originally was created to protect European refugees who feared persecution. In 1967 a protocol was created and the geographical and time limits were removed. It will now last until the refugee crisis is removed.

Definition of terms

The introduction started with explaining the phenomenon and conflicts within refugee cities. But what actually is a refugee city? When does a city becomes a refugee city? To understand this, the term refugee needs to be defined first. Besides refugee there are a lot of terms being used for people who have left their home place and seek protection in other places/countries. For the purpose of this research the different terms related to the conflict shall be explained in the following chapter.

Refugees

A clear definition of refugee is given in Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. It states: The term “refugee” shall apply to any person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

This means that people cannot be a refugee within their own country and are only seen as refugees if they fear persecution. Other definitions have a broader interpretation of refugees in which they include victims of general insecurity, oppression, economic dislocation. Most of the countries that were hosing Palestine refugees did not sign the 1951 Convention because they did not accept the definition of ‘refugee’ since there was a high number of Palestinians being a refugee in their ‘own’ territory. The UNRWA, who provides assistance, protection and advocacy for Palestinian refugees, has developed its own definition. Under UNRWA’s operational definition, Palestine refugees are people whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

Within the recent years a distinction is made between rural and urban refugees. Though both groups of refugees enjoy the same rights, the distinction is made because they have often different needs. The change in rural and urban refugees came with changing displacement patterns. In the paragraph concerning displacement patterns a definition is given of rural- and urban refugees.

Internal Displaced People (IDP)

Internal displaced means one is displaced within the country of nationality. However there is no legal definition of IDP. The United Nation defines Internal Displaced People as: ‘Persons forcibly uprooted from their homes by violent conflicts, gross violations of human rights and other traumatic events, but who remain within the borders of their own countries.’
Asylum seekers
The general definition of an asylum seeker is someone who seeks and applies for protection in a country outside his country of nationality, but is not a refugee or has not been recognized yet as a refugee. Those people can send end back to their home country if it is stated that they don’t need any form of international protection. Groups fleeing to other countries out of war conditions are on the forefront recognized as refugees, and don’t have to be judged through proper procedures.24

Guests
An early definition of ‘Guests’, was seen during the World War II. English children who would go to Canada for safety were called ‘war guests’. A government sometime prefers to call a group of refugees ‘guests’ even though according to the 1951 convention they would have called refugee. Calling them ‘guests’ ensures that they are secure and respected, but fails to provide them with a clear legal status.25 A legal status is important so refugees can enjoy legal rights.

Stateless
A stateless person is someone who is “not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law”. In other words, a stateless person has no citizenship or nationality. As a matter of international law, citizenship and nationality are congruous, although there may be differences between the two concepts in domestic law. Statelessness refers to the condition of an individual who is not considered as a national by any state.26

Immigrants
One might consider as an immigrant any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country.27 Immigrants often come for economic purposes or for family union. Refugees are considered as a specific group within immigrants.

Illegal Persons
Illegal is defined as something that is forbidden and not according law. According to the law anyone who enters a state should have a legitimate status. This can be a tourist visa, work visa, refugee status, etc. Someone who does not have a legitimate status, or the status is expired, is considered an illegal person.28 The main groups of illegals are:
1. People who come for an (temporary) illegal existents to work in an informal job for a short period.
2. Asylum seekers that are not recognized by a state as a refugee status but are also not deported out of the country. They are left to live a illegal life or return voluntary.

The UNHCR protects refugees from dying, not from living in unhuman conditions.

Refugee city
The term Refugee city is being used as a recent phenomenon, and has no clear definition. The first definition that comes to mind is urban areas where refugees go and form a significant part of the population. The question is, how much is ‘significant’? When does a city go from being a ‘normal’ city to a ‘refugee’ city? By looking at examples of what is named as refugee city, the characteristics of a refugee city, hence the definition of a refugee city is sought to be found.

The UN-habitat published a newsletter in which it addresses the phenomenon of refugee cities. Without explaining the clear definition of refugee city it talks about issues that urban refugees faces living in a city and issues cities face having urban refugees living in it. The same document contains a list of cities with a high population of refugees. Whether all the cities on the list are refugee cities, is left open. The percentage urban refugees of the top 5 ‘refugee’ cities are:

- Amman, Jordan: 22.1%
- Baku, Azerbaijan: 9.8%
- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 3.2%
- Cairo, Egypt: 1.6%
- Nairobi, Kenya: 1.2%

* Percentages is found trough statistic of population in the city (using different sources), combined with refugee numbers given by UNHCR. Al lot of urban refugees are not registered of counted, hence the actual percentages can be different from what is given.

With a 22.1 percentage, Amman would qualify as the only city that would have a significant number of refugees that shape the city fabric. However if you search about information about urban refugees (to find refugee cities) Nairobi in Kenya is found frequently. A lot of research and project have been done to get awareness of the refugees in this city. Remarkably Nairobi has the lowest percentage of urban refugees in the city. Is there something else in this city that makes it a true Refugee City?

Besides cities where urban refugees flee when they are in fear of their lives, the places where refugees are being resettled are sometimes also called Refugee City. The Rust Belt city of Utica in New York has brought 10.000 refugees into the city to revive its economy because of huge population loss.29 They make up 15% of the total population of Utica. Currently different cities in New York, who are dealing with shrinking population, are trying to adopt this model. The main difference with the previous definition is the refugees who live in this city have a national status and are enjoy all rights of local citizens.

Finally, there are organizations/individuals that use ‘refugee city’ based on creative, deviating interpretations. The website, refugeecity.com describes the concept of Refugee city as: Refugee City goal is to create the next generation of business leaders in communities around the world.30 Furthermore a Refugee city is called as place after a disaster/earthquake-hit, where people go who lost everything.31

The definition for Refugee City further on used in this thesis is based on the first definition in which the Refugee City is the place where refugees live with or without a legal refugee status. This can be a place within a country, city or neighbourhood or can be a country itself. It might be possible that a percentage of refugees in a country is low, but the percentage in certain area’s is relatively high. By calling this areas Refugee City it shows that this is the arrival and transit point of the city/ country/region where there is a high number of ‘temporary’ vulnerable people.
Cities with refugees 3 case studies

The UNHCR has stated that there are generic problems for urban refugees all over the world. Remarkably the refugees do not live in the same political, social and physical environment. Three cities are taken as a case study to understand what are the specific principles that generate generic problems. The percentage of urban refugees living in the city have been leading in the choice of these cities to be taken as case study.

Amman 22.1%

The capital of Jordan, Amman is often described to be a refugee haven for people in the Middle East fleeing war. Since the Circassians in 1878, the city has been housing many refugees over the past century. Jordan has not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, like a large number of countries in the Middle East and Asia. In 1998 the Jordanian government and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding, according to which asylum-seekers may remain in Jordan pending RSD by UNHCR. The largest number of refugees in Amman are Palestinians. Some of them reside in refugee camp. Refugees (Iraqis, Syrians, Sudanese, etc) often live in high dense and poor neighborhoods in East Amman.

Amman

- Historically, Arab countries did not sign the convention because they argued that the convention did not adequately preserve the Palestinians’ right of return and self-determination.

Kuala Lumpur 3.2%

The first wave of refugees came to Malaysia in 1975. The country has been hosting Chins, Rohingyas, Myanmar Muslims, Rakhine and Mon, mostly in Kuala Lumpur. The biggest fear of the refugees in Malaysia is deportation. The Malaysian government keeps arresting and deporting undocumented migrant, whether refugee or not. As Malaysia has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, there is little UNHCR can do to protect the refugees. However there are a large numbers of Refugee self help project that provide refugee to be self-reliant. The UNHCR is more active in building capacity for refugees then providing them financial support and helping them with resettlement. The refugee mostly live in the high densed, old part of the city. There are no camps.

Kuala Lumpur

Nairobi 1.2%

The largest refugee population in Kenya are Somalis. Although there have been camps build to support the refugees, a large number still prefers live in Nairobi. Kenya has signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, nevertheless refugees still have a deep fear for persecution because police officers often blame them for being a terrorist and threaten them with deportation. The refugees are allowed to work in Kenya with a work permit but this is very hard to gain. For this reason many refugees work in informal jobs making them economically self-sufficient but still vulnerable. The UNHCR provides protection and basic needs mainly to refugee camps. Support to urban refugees is more limited.

Nairobi

Area: 1,680 km²
Population: 2,347,000 (2010)
Density: 4,000-20,000 people/km²
Refugees: 750,000-750,000

Area: 243 km²
Density: 6,494 people/km²
Refugees: 4,000-100,000

Area: 684 km²
Population: 3,750,000 (2010)
Density: 4,509 people/km²
Refugees: 37,000-50,000

Source: http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4b0e4cba6.html
Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

Universal declaration of human rights
1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol

Ministry of the Interior,
Ministry of Justice

Universal declaration of human rights
1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol

Department of Refugee Affairs
(Ministry of State for Immigration and Registration of Persons)

Kenya
Jordan
Malaysia

The UNHCR is the main international agency that protects and supports the rights and needs of refugees. UNHCR operates with and for governments that are dealing with refugees. Besides providing support they are also involved in the policy development of countries.

The refugee policy created on national level doesn’t change much over time. Every country has its own specific policies regarding refugees which is applicable in every city. The national policies reflect the most on a personal level. People get individually affected by restrictions like employment.

International policies mainly follow and do not lead in the policies regarding refugees. Not every country has signed the refugee convention and protocol, which makes more difficult for UNHCR to be involved in the development of refugee policies.

Although the UN is considered to have democracy as one of the core values, the will of the refugee ‘people’ is barely taken as source of legitimacy in the development of refugee policies. This is reasonable when you consider the timespan of policy development and the temporary nature of refugees.

In a refugee camp, refugees can organize themselves more easily. A camp can function as a separate entity that falls directly under the UNHCR. Therefore the will of the people can taken more in consideration by the UNHCR.

For urban refugees it is a different case. They take part of the existing (political) structure and are not allowed to organize and represent themselves. The UNHCR is less active and represented in the city and does not provide all the needs of urban refugees. Therefore it is important to have democratic system for refugees that is easy to implement and functions on a neighborhood and national level.

Urban refugee policy

This diagram shows the political structure related to the intergovernmental refugee issue.

The UNHCR and NGOs function more and more as a spokesperson for the refugees but are neither directly nor indirectly chosen by the them.

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Urban refugees should have the right to represent and express themselves in politics but also in their physical environment.

Research

The first chapter tries to reveal the conflict between refugee policies and the living conditions of urban refugees. What are the current global problems concerning urban refugees? Who are the actors involved and how are refugee politics organized? What are their needs and rights?

The policies that were once created after the World War I by the United Nations Higher Committee for Refugees (UNHCR) to protect refugees are not sufficient for the current displacement patterns of refugees. The laws that are put by the UNHCR to protect refugees are only sufficient to protect the refugees from living in war conditions not to protecting them from living in inhuman conditions. In 1951, when the Refugee Convention was written, the idea was that the refugees would be hosted in camps, mainly organized by UNHCR. This is only possible when a war affects a large group of individual refugee families. The refugees who prefer to go to cities instead of camp because they don’t have any camp to go to. Simultaneously, more and more refugees feeling war, prefer to feel hopeless in camps and they want to stand on their own two feet. These refugees resemble immigrants but without money to buy residency and without a country to go back to. Hence both types of urban refugees have different needs and expectations from the city.

The individuals who flee to cities are more willing and in need of assistance whether financial or social. The refugees who prefer the city over a camp are mainly in need of assistant only when they first arrive. For both types the main obstacle to live a peaceful life, is restrictions from juristical point of view, like no legal right to work. Moreover xenophobia is causing a lot of problems. Waiting for the UNHCR to make a deal with the local government, municipalities and NGO’s, to provide the needs of refugees, they are trying to give assistance through existing sources like schools and medical centres. In this case UNHCR function more as refugee spokes person rather than aid organizations, a spokes person that is neither directly chosen by the refugees nor indirectly chosen by the NGO’s communities. Hence, the NGO’s play a key role in the political organization of refugees. They are the link between refugee and international community, and between refugee and government.

Design

The next chapter presents the in depth research of one of the case study cities to understand the impact of housing urban refugees and the relationship between government and refugee. The long history and the involvement of many parties show the depth of the refugee issue. It is not easy to solve the conflict in a straight and rightful way. Waiting for the UNHCR to make a deal with local governments might take longer than the actually period of war. Does the solution for the conflict really have to go through representatives that are impossible to reach by representatives and that are politically framed to go against the top down decisions? It seems justified to develop a design that enables refugees to represent themselves, in politics but also in their physical environment. Additionally the design should have the flexibility to respond to the needs and wishes of refugees.
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2 While it is difficult to gather reliable data, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 58 percent of refugees now reside in cities, compared to one third living in camps. (PRM Principles for Refugee Protection in Urban Areas, http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c137.html; march 2012, p. 134)


5 Marfleet, P., Refugees in a Global Era, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2005

6 The General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative organ of the UN. Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority.


9 The camps are established in collaboration with the host country and UNRWA, a special UN agency for Palestine refugees. Currently nearly a third of all registered Palestine refugees live in refugee camps which often resemble urban slums.


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19 Universal Declaration, Article 13 (2); African Charter, Article 12 (2); CERD, Art. 5d (ii), Art. (4) of the ICCPR, Art. 22 (5) of the American Convention; Art. 3 (2) of the Fourth Protocol to the European Convention prohibits the deprivation of the right to enter the territory of the state of which a person is a national. The African Charter limits restrictions to those provided for by law for the protection of national security, law and order, public health or morality. Article 12 (2)


Amman, the chosen city and the Jordanian context.

1.2 million urban refugees
46 percent total population
320 thousand immigrants in 2010
4 million tourist in 2010
65% below the age of 30 total population
Our political system is in reform, we have economic problems, unemployment and we have limited resources. Why should we helping the refugees while our own people are in problem?

Jordan is a chosen city. It is not a city that is in the centre of attention by its ground-breaking developments, political reform, war conditions, terrorism or any kind of news that are frequently seen in countries in the Middle East. It is not a city of extremes that catch the eye of world media. However there is something that is unique and remarkable about the city that is worth touching upon, the relationship to urban refugees. With half of the population having a refugee origin and one out of four still being a refugee, Amman is the refugee capital of the world. This obviously did not happen over night. Throughout history a large number of refugees choose to live in urban areas in Amman. But why does the government allow those people to live in their country? How did the city deal and still deals with these sudden flows of people living in their city? What have been the consequences on the city? With its long history and large numbers of urban refugees Amman is the chosen city to answer these questions in order to understand the impact of housing urban refugees and the relationship between government and refugee. The answers to these and more questions will be given in this chapter.
The numbers indicate the year when refugees flee to Jordan.

1. 1800-1900
2. 1948
3. 1967
4. 1990-1991
5. 1997
6. 2003-2012
7. 2010-2012

The size of the lines indicate the number of refugees that flee to Jordan.

- 500-1000
- 600,000-700,000
- 1000-1500

Map of conflict
Regional identity

The identity of Amman is explored through a series of models. Each model represents a different characteristic of the city changing from regional scale to human scale. This is the first model depicting the unique position of Amman and Jordan, in the region.
Development of Amman
a young body with an old soul

Jordan is a country that has tried to develop over history in a rational way, while it was being build on memories and emotions that derived from irrational conflicts. While there are strong historical relationships between different countries in the Middle East, Jordan has found its way to create its own identity.

The current border of Jordan has been drawn in 1921 after World War I by the League of Nation (UN) and European Colonial Power. In 1946 the first official King that is appointed by the British Mandate was Abdullah I bin al-Hussein who is the first offical King that is appointed by the British. The Hashemite Emirate was nor through formal representation and committees, nor through neagotions over public space and facades, but rather by strategizing to lay claims on privatized spaces. Informal settlements and occupation of private land have mainly been realized by Palestinian refugees in the 50’s and 60’s. They created their own neighborhoods in which they could have an equal say. The Neo-liberal charater of the state and not having a masterplan or structured organization, made it harder for the state to block the initiatives.

Nevertheless the fact that Jordan might seem as a typical Arab country lead by a prominet King, the capital Amman is far from a typical Islamic City. Islamic cities can mainly be divided into two types, the historic city or the very modern city. Amman is neither of both. It houses very old structures which are not integrated in the gradually development over time, neither has recent planning been able to turn it into an modern city that contains all aspect of a dynamic city with a stable economy. One of the reasons herefor is that the city has been host to refugees and immigrants for almost 40 years Jordan has been led as an absolute monarchy. This changed in 1989 when the first parliamentary elections were held. Although Jordan is described as a constitutional monarchy it can be considered as a semi-constitutional monarchy since the King kept most of the power by appointing the Prime Minister and the Upper House. However the Arab spring has put a lot of pressure on the power of the King. The people want a reformation in which they elect the Prime Minister and indirectly the Upper house. In January 2013 the first independant and free election will be held, giving the power to the people to elect their own representatives.

Over the past deacdes the influence of Amman’s inhabitants on politics has been quite limitted. In ‘Amman is Not a City’ Seteney Shami describes that the role of the citizens was nor through formal representation and committees, nor through neagotions over public space and facades, but rather by strategizing to lay claims on privatized spaces. Informal settlements and occupation of private land have mainly been realized by Palestinian refugees in the 50’s and 60’s. They created their own neighborhoods in which they could have an equal say. The Neo-liberal charater of the state and not having a masterplan or structured organization, made it harder for the state to block the initiatives.

Jordan has no special department to run refugee affair. This results in the lack of uniform and adequate policies regarding refugees. The UNHCR works with different ministries to provide protection and assistance to rural and urban refugees.
Politics of refuge

The power of Aid

from different origins that all had their own traditional urban reality and architecture. Moreover, it did not have a gradual growth because of the different flows of refugees. This has led to a notion that Amman has an identity crisis. Rami Daher, a well known architect and urban activist claims the opposite. Daher describes the identity of Amman as the city of many Hats:

‘A common scene in the downtown during the 1930s would be men with different head-dresses – the Circassian kalbaq, the Lebanese and Syrian tarboosh, the Palestinian and Jordanian hatta or kofiah – climbing Amman’s steps to reach the residences on the slopes of the seven hills flanking the downtown.’

Ever since the 1930 the city has not been stopped housing people from different origins. Moreover, the housing of refugees has been an asset to the country’s economic development. Jordan has received a large amount of development assistance through financial support from the international community. With a lack of natural resources Jordan has never been reticent in asking for more aid as the number of refugees were increasing. The support is mainly provided to help the nation’s poor, young people and underprivileged people. With no direct focus on refugees, the financial support was invested to provide indirect support to refugees for example through improving school, increasing the capacities of schools, providing enough clean water, improving the electricity network, etc.

A question that comes to mind is, what would happen if Amman would not receive new refugees and the current refugees would all return/settle/migrate to other countries, what would happen to the economy of Jordan? How dependent is Jordan on the international support and the labour power of refugees?

The financial aid is partially used to support Royal NGO’s that organize activities for the urban poor (Jordanians and refugees). The term Royal NGO is used to refer to NGO’s that are financially supported by the royal family. This leaves us with the question: how can an organization that is supported by the Royal family be an NGO (non-govermental organization).

Most of the direct effective urban projects for its citizens and refugees have been funded through foreign aid, channeled and implemented through NGO’s. The NGO plays an important role in the political and urban organization in Amman.

Most of the urban projects in Amman are funded through foreign aid, channeled and implemented through NGOs. While these are important projects shaping Amman, they do not generate an Ammani narrative.

Shami, S., Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City, Amman is not a City.
There is a permanent group of people that live in temporary circumstances and have a temporary identity.
The birth and growth of Amman

Amman was not much considered as a city until the Ottoman Sultan decided to build the Hejaz Railway station in 1903. This was a huge leap in the transition from village to town. It put Amman in an important spot in the region, between Damascus and Medina. However it took Amman 25 years to be announced as the official capital of Jordan.

Throughout history there has been a close relationship between the growth of Amman and conflicts in the Middle East. Although the first refugees came in the late 19th century, the impact of refugees on the physical growth of the city did not come before the first Arab-Israeli war in 1946. This diagrams shows the relation between the physical growth, population and regional conflicts.

The recent history of Amman doesn't get enough attention. People and tourists focus more on the ancient history. However the ancient history does not have much influence on how the city functions now. Ahmad Humeid, architect and CEO of design company Syntax

Amman population

Arab-Israeli war 100.000 refugees
Independence of Jordan
Six-Day war Israel 140.000
Gaza refugees 240.000
West bank refugees

Gulf war 300.000 refugees
Introduction travel cards for Jordanians of Palestinian origin

opponents of Iraqi regime 200.000-300.000 refugees
Iraq war 500.000 refugees
Syria Civil War 200.000 refugees
Prime Minister Bakhit is dismissed
restriction entry of Iraqi people
Prime Minister Rifai is dismissed
Temporary nationality
Green/yellow card

1946 1951 1956 2000 2010
1.000.000 1.400.000 1.200.000 1.600.000 1.800.000 2.000.000 2.200.000 2.400.000 2.600.000 2.800.000 3.000.000
1946 1951 1956 2000 2010
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Le Royal

Prince mohammed street

Roman theater

source: http://www.bing.com/maps/
Organization of the city

The unplanned inflow of refugees has caused and unplanned growth of the city. While the rich refugees were taking over the West side of Amman, the East was being dominated by the poor/middle class refugees. The steep slopes in the east were cheaper and easier to buy/occupy by the refugees that were comming in. The government was less strict on this area's since they would not be little desire for people to invest here. The more fertile and therefore expensive land was bought by the rich refugee/immigrants mainly after 1990, when the Palestinian Jordans living in Kuwait returned to Jordan and in 2003 when the wealthy Iraqis started to come in. Currently the West and East division of the city is kept intact. The West has a relative low density. The plot are bigger then in east and there are still alot of empty plots. You see more cars then people in the neighbourhood. Moreover, in the last 5-10 years there has been a lot of foreign business investment in West Amman. This has even more increased the gap between West and East. There has been a lot of criticism towards the new developments in the West from activist and intellects. They argue that the identity of Amman with its human scale and modest architecture is being ruined by the new high rise buildings.

When one observes the East part you see smaller plots, high density of people, little shops, use of public space, old cars. These are all facts that makes it attractive for refugees to live there. There is a stronger social network and more chance to find a illegal job in the neighbourhood. Within East Amman there are two official Palestinian refugee camps, Al-Wahdat and Al-Hussein camp. The first phase of growth happend on the peripheri of the adjacent neighbourhoods of the camps. Informal settlements were build by Palestinians. Now there neighbourhoods house the highest number of urban poor including refugees from different countries.
A lot of people are using the city as a choice of convenience. This has always been the case for Amman. Amman has no sense of belonging, no awareness by the general citizens. It does have an identity though. I just wish people could understand the identity better.

Rami Daher, Architect

People from outside the neighbourhood have a very bad image of this place, but for the people living here the image of the has changed a lot the last four years. Now there are even students going to university, they are the first generation in this neighbourhood going to University.

Batool, Community servant Ruwwad
Amman is a safe home. It is a city of resilience and self initiatives. This can be considered at the soul of the city. The body would be more the physical landscape. Like the hills and the stairs. Together they shape the identity of the city.

Ahmad Humeid, architect and CEO of design company Syntax

Where we live, our neighbours are Jordanian and the people living in front of us are Egyptian. See, we all have different cultures. It took us long time to get along. Now my wife teaches my neighbours wife how to make Iraqi dolma, and she teaches my wife how to make mansaf.

Gazwan, Iraqi refugee
Physical identity

The hills of Amman is really what defines the city. It is apparent in almost every aspect of the city. From technical organization to spatial experience. It is an generic element, it is an unifying element, one that everyone can relate to. In the model the hills are shown schematically. They are the base of the physical identity of the city. But the hills are not the only generic element that shape the physical identity. Two other main elements are the stairs and the walls. The stairs are a consequence of the hilly landscape of Amman, sometimes build by the people itself, sometimes by the government. They are one of the few places of Amman that are car free and offer a shadowed walking space. Especially in historical and poorer areas (mainly hilly areas) you find a lot of stairs. The wall on the other side are a product of a long cultural and islamic history. There has always been a strong seperation between public an private. Social activities took place within private realm. Women and children could have a save and protected life within the built walls without view from outsiders. On the other hand is has also been said that it is not to provoke jealousy among neighbours. In the present day we still see a lot of wall, whether from the houses of from the gardens in front of the houses. In Amman these walls do not only function as a seperation between public and private, but they are also a platform for people to express their individual presence/emotions. The walls are often daubed by colours and words.

In stead of public spaces Amman has walls. People show their appearance in the city through walls.

The stairs are a consequence of the hilly landscape of Amman, sometimes built by the people them self, sometimes by the government.

Unity

Amman has a strong cityscape that creates a generic identity for everyone in the city. This model shows three physical element that creates unity in the city. The elements are to be found in all the area's in the city. Although the elements are generic, they might function specificity according to the area in which it is located.
Useful steps

Walls of expression
Amman has many roundabouts. Most of them function as a public square. Since the Arab spring some of them are fenced against public protests.

The square in front of the mosque is often used for people to gather. It is a landmark in Downtown. On Friday people even pray on the square. It is also being used as an starting or ending point for protests.

Paris Square - Jabal Weibdeh
source: http://gnowjordan.com/parissquare/

El Hussein Mosque - old Downtown
source: http://olbigjimsplace.blogspot.nl/2011/02/will-jordan-show-way-to-real-reform.html
Future perspectives

In 2010 an master plan was designed for Amman. The expected growth for 2025 was population growth from 2.6 million to 6.5 million. The 2.5 times growth of the city in 15 years was calculated due migration from rural areas to urban areas and to immigration from surrounding countries. Within this growth an unplanned war has been taken into account.

Conclusion

This chapter has emphasized the identity and the organization of Amman from political and physical point of view. The questions that are addressed were: How is the city/country politically organized? How has the city developed over time? What is the identity of the city? What has been the role of refugees in the development of the identity and organization? What will be the role of refugees in the future? In the next chapter the identity of the (hidden) people will be further explored.

- In the political system seats are reserved for minorities living in the country like Circassian and Christians, which also have a history of seeking refuge in the country.
- A unique city in the Middle East neither being an ancient city nor a modern city. Little attention for the recent history.
- A city that is mainly built by the people themselves.
- For new arrivals it is a place of convenience not a city of choice. There is a lack of a sense of belonging.
- However the city seems to be divided in East and West the hills, stairs and walls are keeping the city together.
- Urban refugees are incorporated in the future development of the city, both in economical and physical context.

Research

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Design

The city has a multi-layered identity that is deeply rooted with spontaneous historical and political development. It is not obvious to understand an identity that struggles between temporality and permanence. The city houses a large group of people that live in temporary circumstances and have a political temporary identity. It seems that a design that is aimed to give a permanent place to temporality could celebrate the identity and the recent history of the city. Permanent places could be combined with physical elements that are generic and are part of the existing urban fabric. Moreover, it is important that the design holds and generates narratives and creates a sense of belonging. Therefor the input of the people in the process of creating the design is indispensable. They should contribute and claims the space in their city, not the NGO’s that operate on foreign aid and royal money.
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The hidden people
Mr. Mahmood is living in a tiny room in a building that appears as if it should be condemned. Many of the rooms are without doors and are filled with refuse. Here are two other men living in the building, too. Men who also, because they are alone and without income.

Sasha Crow - Collateral Repair Project

In the case of Iraqi refugees the UNHCR is planning on providing services to 30,000 registered refugees, there are clearly more in the country. The Government of Jordan estimates another 400,000 reside there. Where are those people which the government thinks that they are in the country?

Davis, R., Associate Professor of Anthropology

The hidden people

With more than 5 million urban refugees worldwide, one in two refugees live in urban centers.¹ There are many prejudices about urban refugees living in one city. But what is actually the difference between urban refugees and other people living in Amman? How is it represented in the city? However, what is often forgotten is that there are also a lot of similarities. In this chapter the differences and similarities will be looked upon from juridical, social and cultural point of view. Moreover, in order to understand the problem of livelihood of urban refugees, the individual lives of urban refugees are analysed. Where do they come from? Where do they live in Amman? What are their daily activities? These and more questions are answered in this chapter to give a better understanding of the position of urban refugees in the city.
The people and Politics

In the first chapter the policies regarding refugees from an international point of view has been brought to attention. Besides international policies, which are not considered to be very strict especially for countries who did not sign the 1951 Refugee Convention, every country has its own policies regarding refugees. In the case of Jordan, there is no specific department that deals with refugee issues. There are different ministries that are involved and responsible for foreign people entering Jordan, including refugees. No exception is made specially for refugees. Starting with the ministry of foreign affairs, which controls the entry of people into Jordan and the Ministry of Interior which facilitates arrival and residency of Arab and foreign investors in the Kingdom, (sometimes refugees come with a huge bag of money) every ministry touches upon different aspects that have an influence on the livelihood of refugees in Jordan.

A refugee can be an immigrant and a tourist but an immigrant and immigrant can't be a refugee. This shows that being a immigrant an tourist is something that can happen by choice and being a refugee is something that is beyond control.

Due to lack of accurate statistics, the numbers that are used are based on estimations. Different resources are used to derive possible numbers residents in Amman. For example the Government of Jordan has an estimated population of 2.36 million for 2010. Wikipedia talks about a population of 2.84 million in 2010. This number is for the governorate Amman and not for the city. Besides it is not stated who is included in this numbers. The same goes for refugees and immigrants. There are huge ranges in the numbers that are found through different sources. Herefor the numbers that are used here may be different from reality but reflect a realistic percentage.

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Social layers

This model represents the different layers of social classes in relationship with their reason of being in the country. The division is based on the three-stratum model. The lower class in Amman mainly consists out of refugees, immigrants and a small number of Jordanians. The middle class mainly consists out of original Jordanians and Palestine-Jordanians. The wealthy refugees and Jordanians mostly shape the upper class in Jordanian society. Besides these three groups, the tourist are an important part of the present population in the city. They are seen as important economical drivers with their own specific influence on the Amman identity.

You see the refugees from the lower class appear in many newspapers and research. There is a lot to write and a lot to tell about them. Besides they are on many old and new pictures which describes the development of the city. Their presence in the city however, is not much visible.

They drive in expensive cars, go to malls, own houses and if lucky, have the right to vote. They are the intellects that know the city from their car windows.
Population groups

To get a clear overview of who the people are, this diagram illustrates the different populations groups. Their political status is taken as starting point to divide the different groups. Additionally for the refugees, their time of arrival over history has specified them into more detailed groups.
Cultural layers

With the different population groups all coming from different origins, the cultural layer of Amman can be considered to be quite rich. This model is made to get a better understanding of the different backgrounds of people and what the similarities and differences are between the different cultures. Each layer represents an element that is a very basic and clear representation of a culture. The elements chosen are, flag (history), food (ground), architecture (technique), public space (social life). Additionally, the location and size of the country on the map is a schematic indication of the location and numbers of these people in the city.

It appears that due to common (political) history in the Middle East the differences are very subtle and more regional than National. However in the perception of local people there is a clear difference between a Jordanian, Jordanian from Palestinian origin and a non-Jordanian. It is evident that this perception is more based on political division than cultural division.

Islamic architecture promotes unity in diversity, that is, the unity of message and purpose, and the diversity of styles, methods and solutions. Certainly, this renders Islamic architecture so relevant and dynamic, and so consistent and adaptable.

Dr. Spahic Omer Kulliyah, towards and understanding of Islamic Architecture

When the street produces common sense, the public space becomes political; when a work of art meets a crucial moment of the collective awareness, it becomes its messenger; and the image becomes a symbol.

Claudine Dussollier, geographer
Memories of Architecture

The architecture of a country represents a lot of its culture. There is always an image in mind that makes one think back of a place or an event. There is always one typology of a house people always understand in that country, a technique everybody knows and a brick they always use. By setting different typologies on a row and looking which countries use the same typologies, similarities between culture and people can be withdrawn. For example a tent is a housing typology that has been used very often in the history of countries in the Middle East. Nowadays tents are still used as temporary shelter for events, whether it as a marriage or a funeral. It is an place where people come together with family and friends. In western countries a tent often brings up the memory of a holiday somewhere far from home. However the typology might be the same, but the memory is very different.
Stories in public domain

Public space is often a reflection of the society in a country. Countries with a lot of small-scale public spaces are often more outgoing and social. Countries with very large-scale public spaces could be considered as more authoritarian and introvert. And then there are all these kind of places where public activities take place. As much as the architecture, the use of different places for public activities also represents a common culture and lifestyle between different countries. For example an roundabout in the Middle East is more likely to be occupied by people whether it is designed to be a public space or not. People relate to a roundabout not merely as a functional traffic element but as an open space in a dense place which is good accessible. A park however is less likely to be used because it is more isolated and not always good accessible by car.
Cultural representation

The generic architectural and spatial characteristics that are present in the city are easy to relate to by the different population groups in Amman. However, along with the generic there are also specific elements that are unique to a culture. These represent the collective identity of the country of origin which are not obvious to found in a different city. When they are, they surprise people with a memory of home. Despite the variety of identities in Amman the specific elements of a different culture are very rare to be found in the built environment. The Abu Darweesh Mosque built as an identity statement of Circassians in Amman, is one of the few strong expressions of diversity in the city. This building has been accepted because of the long history with Circassians in the country. The few other buildings that represent a different culture, are embassies. They are sometimes built as a mix between Jordanian culture and culture of country of origin, and sometimes they are purely own culture. The problem is that such statements are often thought of as large in scale and not realistic to realize for different cultural people that are often in Amman for a temporary period.
Individual lives

In the previous parts we have looked upon a refugee as part of a population group. However, every refugee has its own narrative. ‘The’ refugee does not exist. Some of them were very rich, some of them very poor. Some hold a university degree, some have not even finished secondary school. Some have lost their whole family and some have lost a leg. But what all binds them is their struggle to survive in a society which sees them as the outsiders. Many people who flee to Amman soon or later end up living in one of the marginalized neighbourhoods. Sometimes it is because the truck driver took them there, sometimes it is because they know someone who lives in one of these neighbourhoods. They look for a temporary house, and often end up living in a half constructed or half demolished shelters. The first thing they will do is look for work which often turn into a disappointment. They will end up looking for help, starting from people with the same country of origin. This is how different network based hidden communities are shaped. This is how refugees start living a hidden live.

Since 6 months I live in a small house together with 12 other relatives. We just wait untill the civil war is over so we can return home.
42 year old Syrian refugee

My Father has been kidnapped and tortured in Iraq because we owned a juwelry shop and were of religious minority. Now I haven't been to school for two years. I want to be a football player, but when I play on the street they puncture my football.
10 year old Iraqi refugee

I used to work as an accountant in Iraq. I was shot three time because I worked with an American aid organization. I flee to Jordan, but my family in Iraq have to support me. I live with relatives here.
37 year old Iraqi refugee
Communities

Every human being looks for a community at some point in their lives where they can share their interest and develop themselves together with other people who share the common values. A refugee is in need of a community that understands them and helps them provide different kind of needs. This can be financial assistance but also social and intellectual needs. The communities refugees make use of can be divided in two groups, network-based communities and neighbourhood based communities. Both groups have different values to the living condition of urban refugees. A network-based community does not have a specific physical location, there are individuals who know each other because they are from the same country, religion or face the same problems. They give each other advises and inform each other about new developments. A neighbourhood-based community is a community often for people from the same country, religion or neighbourhood. It has a specific physical location but does not specifically serve the neighbourhood it is located in. These communities often fulfil the social needs of refugees and strengthen the contacts within network-based communities. However it does have a physical location, neighbourhood-based communities still can keep refugees hidden from the Jordanian society because it only serves a limited group of people. There are different assisting bodies for urban refugees that function as a neighbourhood-based community. A couple of them are explained below.

Assisting bodies

UNHCR

The Jordan Office of UNHCR is located in a one of the ‘high class’ neighbourhoods of Amman. Every refugee has to go and apply personally at the office for a refugee status. A refugee status gives them access to (limited) free education and health care. The UNHCR also gives very single person an amount of 75 JD a month and every family gets 150 JD. The rent of an one-room apartment is between the 150 and 200 JD. But the most important reason why people register themselves at the UNHCR is that it helps people resettle in different countries where they can get citizenship.

International non-governmental organizations

Over the years a lot of private organizations have dedicated themselves to assist refugees over the world. They often work in the field of education, emergency assistance, healthcare and livelihood activities and have community buildings close to/in neighbourhoods with a high density of refugees. Refugees from other neighbourhoods come to visit the organization to make use of their services. International NGO’s can be divided in general NGO’s which assist all kind of refugees and specific NGO’s which focuses on a group of people for example from one country or religion.

Local non-governmental organizations

In recent years local NGO’s are set up in marginalized neighbourhoods. Their aim is to overcome marginalization and empower youth and families. They have a community building which serves as the gathering point for all social and educational activities. Local NGO’s serves mainly people from the situated neighbourhood; this includes people from all origins and classes. Refugees do use these local NGO’s however it takes more time for them to get accustomed and comfortable with them.
Daily activities of refugees

Every day is a new struggle for refugees who have to find ways to get through the day without much security they will have food or won’t be deported back to the war zone tomorrow. Men, women and children all have their own ways in getting through the day. Like in most of the Arab countries there is a gender based difference in daily activities. Women take care of the children and household, men make sure there is food at the table. Women are more active during the day, men are more during the evening and night. Men, women and children frequently use activities organized by NGO’s as an excuse to escape the house. To them it does not much matter what kind of activity there is, as long as they can meet other people and forget their own problems for a while.15

Iraqi men who don't work spend considerable amount of time behind the computer. Internet is very important to

Stay in touch!
Guilla El-Sheikley, PhD candidate Anthropology

Daily activities of refugees

The distance a refugee has to travel to an activity is often leading whether to go there or not. Public transport in Amman is very limited and often too expensive for refugees to use. Since refugees often do not own a car, they prefer to go to activities within 15 to 30 minutes walking distance. It seems that most of the daily needs of refugees are answered within 15 to 30 minutes walking distance from their houses. This is because most neighbourhoods are self-sufficient with a shopping street, market and often one ore more NGO’s.16 The result is that refugees live in a very limited scope and have very little connection with the city. Refugees do go to different neighbourhoods for very unique assistance or activities. However they state that they would like to go around the city more often if they would have the money to travel.

Activities VS Distance

SCHOOL
HOUSEKEEPING
EDUCATION
SHOPPING
ACTIVITIES
CULTURAL
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
WORK
WATCHING TV

10 min
5 min
2 min

travel distance by car

travel distance by foot

Surrounding neighborhoods
Royal Palace
Train station

Hospital
Restaurants
Cinema
Art gallery
City hall
Museums

10 min
5 min
2 min

Church
Work
Family
Doctor
Pharmacy
Commercial shops
NGO’s

10 min
5 min
2 min

School
Public parc
NGO’s
Shops
Main traffic nodes

Surrounding neighborhoods

City hall
Restaurants
Art gallery
Museums

10 min
5 min
2 min

Church
Work
Family
Doctor
Pharmacy
Commercial shops
NGO’s

10 min
5 min
2 min

Market
Neighbors
Mosque
Eatery

School
Public parc
NGO’s
Shops
Main traffic nodes

Church
Work
Family
Doctor
Pharmacy
Commercial shops
NGO’s

10 min
5 min
2 min

Museums
Drummond House Museum
House of Culture
National Museum

10 min
5 min
2 min

Surrounding neighborhoods
Royal Palace
Train station

Hospital
Restaurants
Cinema
Art gallery
City hall
Museums

10 min
5 min
2 min

Church
Work
Family
Doctor
Pharmacy
Commercial shops
NGO’s

10 min
5 min
2 min

Market
Neighbors
Mosque
Eatery

School
Public parc
NGO’s
Shops
Main traffic nodes

Church
Work
Family
Doctor
Pharmacy
Commercial shops
NGO’s

10 min
5 min
2 min

100
101
Conclusion

Research
When two elephants fight, the grass underneath their feet suffer the most, is an African proverb. In this case it is the people that suffer the most. They are the consequence of conditions that are far beyond their reach. This chapter looks at the conflict from the people’s point of view and their lives within the Jordanian society. Who can be considered a refugee in Jordan? What is the difference between a Jordanian and a refugee? What is their identity? How are refugees represented in the city? What are their needs? In order to understand the position of urban refugees within the city the conflict it approached from juridical, social, cultural and individual perspective.

- Refugees are by local law seen as illegal immigrants, but are identified and protected by international law as refugees.
- The main difference between being a refugee and a foreign person is that, being a refugee is not something you chose to be. Moreover, often it is something you can’t control, since going back is not seen as an option.
- There is a lot of common ground between the different refugees and the locals. The similarities come from religious and historical background. Moreover there are similarities in lifestyle based on the climate, like the use of shadowed places.
- Specific differences that come from locational/regional background between cultures are not visible and not celebrated in the physical environment of the city. These are often very subtle differences, for example the use of different materials, based on available resources.
- The publicly visible presence of different identity is partially due to the lack of public spaces/buildings and partially due to the strongly indoor orientated public activities through NGOs.
- Communities which refugees are part of are often network-based communities, through social networks or NGO’s. There is a poor community bonding through the physical environment in the neighbourhood.
- Refugees are strongly neighbourhood orientated in the provision of their daily basic needs. There is a poor relationship between the city and the refugees, especially for women and children. This is due to the lack of public transport and the relatively high prices of cabs.

Design
As the presence of refugees is not visible, their problems get less urgent and the conflict less remembered. There are several benefits that can come from expressing the unique identities of refugees in the city and neighbourhood they live in. First of all it gives refugees a political position since being part of the build environment might be considered as being part of society. It is the same way the Circassian mosque is a symbol of their identity and them being part of the city. Secondly it gives refugee the freedom for self-actualization and a feeling of control over their own lives. Therefor the design proposal should incorporate the celebration of different identities. By juxtaposing the identities of the refugees and local people you emphasize and celebrate both identities. Furthermore, the design should have effect on both city and neighbourhood scale to connect the refugees to the city, the city to the refugees but also to get a more personal relationship and awareness among people. Finally the design should entail public activity in outdoor spaces, which triggers community bonding add to, or replacing the NGO’s indoor activities. It should be a visible celebration of individual qualities and cultures of people. Simultaneously this gives independence of activities to happen without being dependant on external organizations.
References

1 Urban refugees, Identity; Who are urban refugees?, 29 Nov. 2012, Available from: http://urban-refugees.org/identity/


9 Ibid.


The local environment
There are different neighbourhoods in Amman that house urban refugees. How did these neighbourhoods transform into refugee hubs? What attracts refugees to these places? The neighbourhoods that house urban refugees are characterized by its high densities, half built structures and services for basic needs. These all emphasize the temporariness of the people living in these neighbourhoods. However, every neighbourhood does have its own specific identity. Some have a high number of Palestinian refugees, some have a high number of Iraqi refugees and then there are neighbourhoods where there is an equal division between local people, Palestinian refugees and other refugee groups. Although every neighbourhood has its own identity, the situation in Al Hashimi al Shimahi has a lot of elements that are similar to other neighbourhoods that house refugees. Therefore, the situation in Al Hashimi al Shimahi will be explained according to elements that characterize these neighbourhoods. These elements are spatial development, infrastructure, functions and social organization.
Refugee neighbourhoods

This diagram shows the physical composition based on population and density, of three neighbourhoods which house urban refugees.
Spatial Analysis - Al Hashimi Al Shimali

Al Hashimi al Shimali is located on one of the hill of Amman, Northeast of the city. The neighbourhood has grown gradually over time. Palestinian refugees who flee the Arab-Israel war in 1948 and 1967 built the first settlements at the foot of the hill. These settlements still exist, however they have been transformed from temporary structures into permanent structures. The government was barely established in that time and had very little control over the built ground. Nowadays the government marked these areas as special zones, with specific regulations (read: no regulations). As the neighbourhood was expanding toward the north, the government set zoning regulations to control the growth and the land prices.

One can notice that urban refugees live near to the first settlements that have been built by Palestinian refugees. These areas have old structures with high density, besides people can relate more easily with people who have similar stories.

Infrastructure

Al Hashimi al Shimali borders on two sides with the ring road of Amman. The ring road has a direct connection with the city center and other neighborhoods in Amman. Moreover it connects the Amman with other cities in Jordan and with cities in neighboring countries. The remaining two sides of Al Hashimi al Shimali border roads that separate it from the adjacent neighborhoods. The main road through the neighborhood, cuts the neighborhood in two parts. The secondary roads are connected to the main road. On the secondary road most apartment buildings are located, single family houses are mostly situated on tertiary roads and alleys. The different levels of streets also have different sizes. On the main road cars are parked on double side and the width also allows cars to pass each other. This is also the case for secondary street however, cars have to lower their speed to pass each other. On tertiary streets cars cannot park along the road, and alleys are only accessible by foot.

Functions

The main traffic street of the neighborhood is simultaneously the main shopping street. There are a lot of commercial activities in this street changing from clothing stores to restaurants. Furthermore there are small-scale offices located on top of shops. In secondary and tertiary streets small-scale retail, like bakeries and markets are located on entrance level of houses or apartments. Push cars which sales candy or vegetables are often find in tertiary streets. These are informal and sometime illegals commercial activities that have been widely accepted by the public.

In the middle of the neighborhood one finds a public park that exists out of a playground and a small library. The park is surrounded by two-meter high walls and is only accessible during limited hours. Besides this park there are no designed public spaces in the neighborhood. The public services like a doctor and schools are mainly situated along secondary roads. They are good accessible for people within and people from outside the neighborhood.
Social organization

Non Governmental Organizations

There are different kinds of Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) located in the neighbourhood. One can think of a private organization that organizes activities for refugees but also a mosque or a church are considered to be a NGO. Like public services, these organizations are situated along secondary roads and are good accessible. These are the places where people from a specific group go to meet other people and find some privacy. Some NGO’s have high walls around their plots and are very introvert. Others NGO’s look like regular houses and have no intention of visibly showing their existence. The presence of NGO’s barley has influence on the social interaction between people from different background, living in the same neighbourhood. While NGO’s are providing private spaces for people from a specific community, it is isolating them from the broader public, causing further segregations and exclusion.

International

Local

Private
Public space: open plots

Due to the lack and the poor quality of public space, people have created their own places where public activities take place. The three main places people use for social contact and personal expression in public are open plots, stairs and walls.

Through the whole neighbourhood there are empty plots. These empty plots create a better overview and link between different streets of the neighbourhood. People stop and meet each other on these plots, children turn it into a football field, cars are parked on the plot, dustbins are places on the side of it and sometime informal settlements are built on it. There is a constant change of dynamics. Because there are no high walls around it, people occupy it in different ways. However, there is no organized temporary occupation that can permanently improve the role of the empty plot on its surroundings.
Public spaces and stairs

Al Hashimi al Shimali has a lot of stairs like many other neighbourhoods in Amman. However, stairs in very dense areas are often used differently. On the one side it is because the people themselves often build the stairs, on the other side it is because the stair is not just a functional transit place but it is the destiny itself. People have their front doors along the stair, hang their cloths above it, take off their shoes in front of it, they use the stair and they change the stair. Besides, someone speed and sight is very different on a stair, which makes him or her more aware of his or her surroundings. These elements give the stair a unique quality to be considered as a public space that adds value to the social interaction between inhabitants.

The house we live in is very tiny. We have 2 rooms including the living room. But it is not a bad place to live. I know everyone here.

We sit often with neighbours on the streets in the afternoon. But it is very tiny here and not always comfortable.

I started this shop 30 years ago. I am the only shop in this street. It is a very nice place to have a shop.

A - Functional stair

B - Functional stair

C - Social stair
Public space: walls

Besides from open plots and hidden stairs, people use walls as a tool to show their appearance in public. It is a safe way to express yourself and your thoughts without getting personal judgement. It shows the need of people to tell their story, show their territory and presence. The fact that in Amman, and in many other Arab cities, people use high walls to segregate their gardens and homes from the public eye, triggers people to use these walls as available surfaces. Words that are frequently seen on walls are; names, countries, quotes, poems and expression of love. Sometimes word are written on top of each other, sometimes it is half removed and new words are replaced by it. Layer over layer its shows the dissatisfaction of people about their ability to express themselves and their identity in public.
Conclusion

Research

The analysis of the neighbourhood is part of a better understanding of the problems and characteristics of the neighbourhood, which will help to develop the program for the design. How did the neighbourhood developed into a refugee hub? Do neighbourhoods that houses refugees have a specific characteristics? What is the neighbourhood structure? What are the spatial characteristics? Which elements affect the living conditions of the inhabitants?

- Neighbourhoods that currently house a large number of refugees are often related to informal settlements/camps that were build along roads and on steep surfaces.
- The development of the neighbourhood is visible through the spatial organization of the city. There are very little official documents that explain the history, but it is readable everywhere. Furthermore through the build environment you can also see political development of the country. From a place that was organized by the people to a city which is framed by regulations and policies.

Design

The open spaces that are often privately owned public spaces with temporary occupation by the cars of neighbourhood inhabitants. These open spaces have very little influence on the social organization of the city. The design should establish a close connection to public activities and the public use of open spaces in the physical environment of the neighbourhood and the city. Public activities should not be hidden from the public eye in secluded NGOs. Small-scale spaces that are created by the people are the places where informal social activities take place. These already nodes of social interaction hidden or unhidden, should be taken as a starting point for public activities. Locations with blind walls and alleys of stairs are the most suited to provoke interaction between people. Connecting these open spaces provides space for activities to happen on a neighbourhood scale.
Un-Hidden Urban Refugees

Representation and integration of urban refugees

Case study: Amman, Jordan

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Masterthesis Architecture
TU Delft
2012-2013