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# An Analysis of Arbitrary Housing in Post-War Iraq Housing Experience

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## Abstract

In the post war societies, everyday lifestyle of the ordinary people can provide ideals for the ongoing reconstruction process. In Iraq, Arbitrary Housing (AH) is the most dominant phenomena within the post-war housing experience. It is a direct result for the changes in post-war Iraqi society. Moreover, it provides a good example for a built environment that reflects everyday lifestyle of the inhabitants. Based on the above, we developed the idea of Ethno-Typed Built Environment to describe that interaction between the social facts of the ordinary people and the architectural properties for their housing products. This paper is devoted to discuss the outcomes of the field work survey to the selected AH gatherings in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. We extracted the social patterns of the inhabitants ethno-environment by documentary method analysis and relate them to the features of the architectural type hidden within these AH gatherings.

## Introduction

Iraq is in the focus of the drastic developments of the contemporary history of Middle East. Developments that are greatly affected the political and social structure of Iraqi society. And, Built environment is one of the most important sectors that reflect this change. Housing situation in post war Iraq was a subject of investigation in our previous work (Alimardan, MORI, 2010a, b). Depending on the traditions of the Japanese architectural planning research, especially its social approach, we identified two important features in post-war situation. Firstly, change is the main feature for post-war societies; especially those were under long period of conservation and isolation. Secondly, studying the everyday life of the ordinary people will provide the ideals for the reconstruction process especially for the built environment far from the floundering attempts or the standardization of the few public housing and problems of adaptation.

Generally, change can be defined as succession of events which produce over time a modification or replacement of particular patterns or units by other novel ones (Smith, 1976). This definition is useful in describing the Iraqi case, which characterized by this succession of events, which can be expressed in terms of war periods, that greatly modified the state order or the relation between individual and the state. A relation that is radically shifted from a traditional dictatorial one, where the individual had been oppressed by a surveillance state, to a new democratic one, where individuals still have undefined degrees of freedom. So, this shifting of power from the state to the individual that associated with the lacking of clear understanding of the relation between them produced diverse forms of social phenomena like explosions in the relations among racial and ethical groups that breeds the social disintegration and escalating violence among individuals which inflamed large scale cultural cleansing. The combined effects of those social phenomena reflected in the built environment experience in the form of AH, which becomes a dominant and distinguish feature within this experience. In the AH, the focus of this paper analysis, individuals obtained more freedom in overriding governmental lands and building their own society according to their inherent thoughts, far from governmental legislations or devalued architectural intellectual theories.

**Keywords:**  
Social change,  
Arbitrary  
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Ethnomethod-  
ology,  
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method, and  
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type

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In the remainder of this paper, we clarify the meaning of AH in details in connection with the specialties of the Iraqi case. Then, we discuss the theoretical and practical justification for proposing Ethno-Typed Built Environment to describe people housing products that capture the complex interaction between the social and the built environment. After that, we briefly clarify the backgrounds of documentary method of interpretation in ethnomethodology, the adopted analysis approach in this paper. In the final section we discuss the outcomes of the field work survey tour to a selected AH gatherings in Iraqi capital, Baghdad. We describe the features of the architectural type hidden within this AH environment. Then, report a narrative interview with one of the families living there. Finally, we discuss the results using deduced social facts and observed architectural features, both as documents of the ethno-typed built environment.

## **Arbitrary housing in Iraq**

In order to clarify the meaning and specialty of the AH situation in Iraq, AH is discussed and differentiated in this section by comparing it with the notion of slums as clarified in (UNHSP, 2003).

So, slum, as a term, is used in a general context to describe a wide range of low-income settlements with poor humanitarian living conditions. Slums are a heavily populated urban area characterized by substandard, squalor housing, structured from neglected material (UNHSP, 2003). However, AH in Iraq are gathering of low income houses, not as heavily populated settlements, and constructed by cheap and used building materials. Actually, it is observed from the field work survey to selected AH gatherings that the inhabitants are mainly came from the already known heavily crowded public housing in pre-war era like Al Sader city in the eastern part of Baghdad, which has a high booming population density. They resorted to the open areas to build their own houses from affordable materials. So, AH in itself represents an improvised solution by the inhabitants to the problem of crowdedness and housing shortage that it is prevalent in the existed public housing, which become feasible under the new situations of post-war Iraq.

Considering the social conduct or way of living AH has probably a different and in a better position when compared with the common perceived notion of social conditions in slums. AH in Iraq is inhabited by large extended families that are usually consisting of 3 to 7 children with grandparents living together. Most of the families have the same origin from the view that they represent different waves of immigrants from the countryside and less developed parts in the southern part of Iraq to the capital, Baghdad. Therefore, they belong to definitive religious or tribal ethnical groups. This social coherence has its advantages for inhabitants since it acts as a fence that provides a higher degree of protection and safety against instable situations in post-war Iraq. However, such ethnic separation also has its negative impacts on the long term Iraqi society integration.

The origin of the slums, according to (UNHSP, 2003), can be attributed to the housing areas that were once respectable and desirable but deteriorated after their original dwellers moved to another part of the city. Later on, the houses declined and the units progressively subdivided and rented to low-income groups. In contrast, AH in Iraq developed in a different manner, since they appeared in post-war Iraq as a result of people overriding on governmental land which was originally planned as farms or industrial area. They built their own houses according to their economic situation as most of them are from the poor workers, unemployed or displaced who lost their previous living status.

Finally, slums can be generally classified into two distinct types which are slums of hope and slums of despair (UNHSP, 2003). Slums of hope indicate progressing housing situation which characterized by new normally self-built structure. In contrast, slums of despair indicate declining neighborhoods situations. Considering the Iraq case, AH are built by the people themselves, who assigned expressive titles and names for the accompanied roads and open spaces. Most of the houses were built using concrete blocks, used doors and windows frames, and simplified primitive way of roofing. There are signs of progress and improvements, since the government is currently prepare necessary

steps to legitimize the situation of the inhabitants by granting them the land they are currently settling on. It is also handle early attempts to provide basic services to these areas in more planned methods. So, we believe that the AH in Iraq is nearer to slums of hope position.

## **Theoretical and practical observations of the Ethno-Typed Built Environment**

In this section, we argue the possibility of identifying Ethno-Typed Built Environment (ETBE) within Iraqi AH experience. The term intended to describe a built environment governed by its surroundings, where the last bestowed typical similarities upon the first. By the surroundings or the circumstances, we refer to the way of living, way of spaces arrangements and even way of building. Circumstances here gives the distinction to AH built environment and contains its ethno-characters as it's collectively decided by people. It is more than participation in design where the final decision is in collaboration between the professionals and the people. From one side or another, it is nearer to Rudofsky's notion of (architecture without architect). According to which, Rudofsky described the vernacular architecture (Lejeune, Sabatino, 2010). The process and the product of building in the ETBE are more pragmatic, rational, humanitarian and collaborative, whatever the final product was adequate or not from our agreed architectural standards. Giving the title (Ethno) to describe the context of housing production in the AH can be justified from two sides.

Firstly, the justification for the ethno-environment comes from the social structures embedded within these AH gatherings. According to Schegloff, social structure is referred as "the parties in the talk"; group affiliation between people displayed by their ethnic membership attributes social structure to the participants, (Psathas, 1995). Actually, such relation is so readable in the AH at least because of their ethnic membership. It is easy to notice that the people connected with each other by relative relationships. Their class is unique within the society and plays an increasing role in post war Iraq due to their demographic weight in the newly initiated democratic process. Most of the inhabitants understand each other as they belong to the same ethnic membership to a degree that they developed their own social institutions that replaces or lessens the role of the usual governmental intuitions (like courts or police stations) in resolving their problems or in managing their daily affairs (like marriage).

Secondly, the justification for the ethno- environment also comes from the fact that the societies within AH gatherings developed their unique practical activities, practical circumstance, and practical sociological reasoning. Therefore, they are a good candidate for the ethnomethodological investigation (Garfinkel, 1984). It is noticeable from the survey that the people within the AH share methods, procedures and behavior in managing their everyday life. So, they are active ethno-characters who follow unique practical activities (like housing), produce unique practical circumstance (like the context of built environment) and develop their social reasoning (the method of decision making). On the other hand, the justification for using type in our (ETBE) comes from the field work investigation of the physical structure within AH gatherings, which exhibit the features of architectural type. According to Giulio Carlo Argan the presence of a type can be deduced from a series of similar instances (Argan, 1995). Similarity of instances is somehow evident within the AH which consists from units that are mostly similar to each others in the form, function, building martial and building techniques.

So, ETBE represents an important quality in the housing that can be used to relate the architectural type, as redundancy of a form and similarity in function and techniques, with the pattern or common knowledge embedded within the ethno-environment of the AH. Moreover, employing ethnomethodolgy, as a qualitative approach, in explaining and understanding this architectural type is an advantage in itself. Since, it represents a flexible and feasible approach that can overcome the complicated situations in the AH that contains many explicit and implicit sides, which make others analysis approaches, turn to be inadequate.

## **Method of Analysis**

Documentary method of interpretation, one of the available methods within ethnomethodology, is the adopted qualitative approach for investigating the life-style of the surveyed AH inhabitants under the proposed ETBE qualities. In this section and due to the limitation of the papers, only the general aspects that go in the line of our research are discussed.

### **Backgrounds of Ethnomethodology**

The term Ethnomethodology (EM) was coined in the 1950s, by Harold Garfinkel to describe a distinctive orientation to the production of social order. His major works (studies in ethnomethodology) in 1967 helped establish EM as a sub field of sociology. Harvey Sacks, along with Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, later on developed a line of ethnomethodological research, later known as conversation analysis CA (Kuper, 2005). The word EM in Oxford English Dictionary literally means people's method. In any case ethnomethodologists study commonplace activities in their native societies (Kuper, 2005). "Ethno" seemed to refer, somehow or another, to the availability to a member of common-sense knowledge of his society as a common-sense knowledge of the "whatever", while the word methodology refers to the member understanding. EM means that they delve into the issue of how practical methodological accounts (descriptions, prescriptions, rules and evaluations) arise from and reflexively feedback into organization of conduct they make accountable (Garfinkel, 1984).

Later on, EM became the study of the method which members use in their daily lives that enable them to live together and to govern their social relationships whether conflictual or harmonious. EM contains specific vocabularies (which are mostly not new and borrowed from other fields) like: - indexicality, reflexivity, the notion of member. EM also gives special meaning to terms taken from common language, like the notion of practice and accountability (Coulon, 1995). Psthas explicitly view different types of analysis in the EM/CA tradition, from which the Documentary Method of Interpretation; the study of the organization of practical actions and practical reasoning to discover their structures (Psthas, 1995).

### **Backgrounds of Documentary Method**

In this paper we want to show the objectivity of what we called ETBE, either as thoughts or as products, by investigating people conducts according to two types of knowledge, which are the implicit knowledge (ethno part) and explicit knowledge (architectural type part). So, we want to prove the last by ascertaining the existence of the first using documentary method. These two types of knowledge had been extensively discussed by Karl Mannheim, who was the first to originate the term of DM (Bohnsack, 2010), and Garfinkel, who was the first to use DM as distinctive analysis method in his ethnomethodology (Coulon, 1995).

Documentary method defined as the process of reconstructing the implicit knowledge that underlies every day practice and gives an orientation to habitualized actions independent of individual intentions and motives. DM reconstructs social structures and the pattern of orientation in everyday practice, using data material such as interviews, group discussions, pictures or films (Bohnsack, 2010).

The main features of such analysis according to Arnd-Michael Nohl, are the formulating interpretation which summarizes topics or decides what Garfinkel called schemes of interpretation, and the reflecting interpretation of the framework of orientation in which topics are elaborated and thirdly the empirical results acquired by applying documentary method are formulated as types (Bohnsack, 2010). In this paper, we use documentary interpretation by relating housing description with the analysis of social life by narrative interview with one of the families, who are living in the visited AH gathering.

### **Field Work Survey Tour**

In this section, we report and analyze the outcomes of a survey tour to the three of AH gatherings in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. The visited AH gatherings are Hay<sup>1</sup> Al Jukuk, Hay Al Keber wa Al Gizlan, and Hay Al Safer or Al Hamza. An extensive part of the tour, which extended from September 9th to October 1st of 2010, had been devoted to inspect largest part of these gatherings as much as possible. Many parts had been visited by car sometimes and by walk other times. Short interviews were held whenever necessary with kiosk owners or passers-by to clarify different aspects related to these houses. Photos for exterior views were taken whenever possible after taking the permission from the inhabitants. However, most of them refused taking photos for the house interiors expressing privacy and security concerns.

In the first part of this section, we describe the housing gathering and a typical housing unit within these AH gatherings. Since most of these houses are built by the inhabitants themselves it was not possible to obtain adequate certificated plans. So, the description is aided by a plan (figure 1) which was drawn based on personal inspection for many houses within these gatherings. It should be noted that this plan is hypothetical, since the plan exemplifies the architectural type hidden within the surveyed AH units. In fact, the actual implementation of these units can differ in many fine details, however it is quite reasonable to assume after the survey that the majority of them share the qualities exemplified by these plans.

The second part reports narrative description for a scene in the life of one of the families living in Hay Al Safer (Al Hamza) to exemplify the life-style of the inhabitants. While in the third part, we employ documentary interpretation techniques to conduct an objective evaluation to grasp the context of their living by analyzing every detail, hints and special phrases in the narrative interview. We discuss how the concluded ethno-environment from the narrative interview has a direct reflection onto the housing experience in the AH of post-war Iraq.

### **Housing (gathering)**

As you first enter (the Hay), you don't see that usual grid, liner or even organic arrangement for the houses and spaces. But there is a continuous sense of surprise and manipulation between housing gathering and the open spaces. Roads in general are a narrow with rows of houses on the both sides of them. The road widths differs and depends on the inhabitants whether they are relative belong to same family or not, or they share the same water and electrical supply resources. Unstraightened roads are usually used for both cars and as walkways. However, it is common to see a lot of people commute among houses by walk and a little movements of cars, as most of the inhabitant from the poor and don't have cars. It is noticeable that there are open spaces scattered along the sides and at ends of the roads. Most of the time children play in these open spaces. However, after investigation by interviews with inhabitants, it is found that the original purpose for these open spaces is for people gathering during religious events. This arrangement is repeated but with different sizes for the roads and different sizes and the locations for the open spaces.

So, housing gathering within AH is not random or spontaneous. In contrast, houses are arranged in planned way that satisfies the specific reasons, purposes and requirements of the inhabitants.

### **Housing spaces**

From the outside, most of the houses are one story, with no explicit stair case on the roof, however some of the houses have one room on the roof. The houses characterized with High fences and roof parapets. From the outside also there is no exterior finishing material but only raw face of concrete blocks. In spite of that, there are some attempts of ornament the house by putting religious symbols and flags. Sometimes you surprise with extreme and primitive attempts in the house finishing, like painting the whole house with pink, may

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<sup>1</sup> The word Hay correspond to the word neighborhood in its definition as a geographically localised community within a larger city, town or suburb.

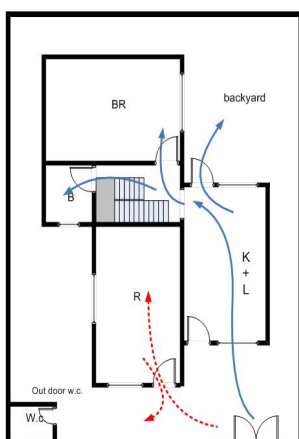


figure 1  
proposed plan  
for a house  
unit  
family movement  
guests movement

be to get the sense of difference and separation from the other houses. The doors and window frames are usually from second hand ones that had been adapted to fit the openings of the house.

**The entrances;** from the inside, the house has two entrances. The main entrance is for the reception room and the other for the kitchen.

**The reception room;** it is not so big in size. It is usually used for receiving guests. It has a longitude shape and isolated from the whole house but connected with outdoor small toilet.

**The kitchen,** the kitchen is consisting from both cooking utility and family sitting. It is furnished with mattress and simple sofa. The kitchen is opened on a big backyard and connected directly or indirectly to the bedrooms. At the same time it has no direct connection with the reception room.

**The open spaces,** house has two open spaces. The front one which is usually small that occupies gas tanks and old things. At the backyard, there is a big space connected directly to the kitchen. It is used for putting the Tenure<sup>2</sup>.

Sometimes, it contains a space for chicken and a small garden.

**The bath;** the house contains one bath that occupies the family toilet. Moreover, there is a small outdoor toilet for the guests.

**The bed rooms;** There are one or two bedrooms with windows opened on the backyard.

**The Finishing;** from the inside the rooms finished with cement mortar for the kitchen and the baths and white mortar for the reception and bedroom.

### Narrative Interview

In this subsection, a narrative interview with one of the families, who reside in Hay Alhamza or Alsafeer in the eastern side of Baghdad, is reported. In the report, A refers to the main character in the interview, while B refers to the interviewer. In addition, this report is the English translation for the original interview which was done in Arabic.

*At September 15th, B asked the permission from A to visit A's house with B's father. A immediately responded: "you are welcomed, but if someone asked you in the street tell them that you are visiting your relatives. There is no stranger enter our -Hay- without being suspected".*

*The housing complex is known by the inhabitants as Hay Alhamza. When B and B's father reached A's house and knocked the door, a man, A's brother, opened the door and said: "A is not at home now, she will come later. Please come in and wait her in our house". When B and B's father entered the house, they separated. The father entered into an already opened door room connected with small outdoor toilet. This room has only one entrance and does not connected to the other parts of the house from the interior. Later, the brother brought tea from the kitchen through the outdoor.*

*On the other hand, a little girl came and took B to the kitchen. There was a young woman cooking, A's sister-in-law, and an old woman sitting on mattresses, A's mother. The mother said: "please don't worry. All the family living in the kitchen and the kitchen is like our home".*

*While B was sitting and waiting for A, suddenly a woman entered the kitchen without taking permission or knocking on the door. She was starting a discussion with the old women about the arrangements for a coming marriage event in the family. The woman said: "dear [A's mother] for the wedding ceremony we decided that the women will be gathered in your house, while, the men in ours. We can also put chairs in the street too". When the woman was about to leave, the mother said: "Dear B why don't you go with her, A is in their house".*

*While walking to the woman's house, B asked the woman: "are you from their relatives?" The woman replied: "I am their cousin's wife, and A is baking bread in our house because their Tenure is not working". B asked: "Who is getting marry whom". The woman replied: "my son to the daughter's of A's brother. We always marry from our relatives".*

<sup>2</sup> Outdoor Iraqi oven for making bread (Nan).

Reaching the woman's house, the exterior of the house resembles A's house. In addition, it is built from the same building material- raw concrete blocks and with no finishing. From the inside, it is possible to see the same reception room, but this time it was completely isolated from the house. Both B and the woman headed directly to the open backyard, where A was baking, by passing through the kitchen.

There were signs of ongoing construction work within the house. So, B asked A about it. A replied: "he is the bridegroom building his room in the second floor". B asked: "dose he built it by himself?" A replied: "yes, he and his friends. We build our houses by ourselves. He and my brothers built our house when we first came to live in this area. We were a big family of about 20 persons living in a small house of 100m<sup>2</sup> in size. So here, we finally able to be relaxed. Firstly, my cousin's family came to build their house in this area. Later on, we encouraged to follow them. My other brother is going to live in this area too; he will build his house with the help of his sons, brothers and friends".

When the baking finished, A and B entered the house. It was empty, so B asked: "where are the children?" A replied: "playing in the street, most of the children don't go to school because it is far". B asked: "don't you afraid from the cars?" A replied: "there are no many cars in our hay, and the children raise in the street to be strong".

From the inside, the house was so simple. It is consisting from kitchen, bath, and one sleeping room. Unlike A's house, there is a space that completely isolate the reception room from the house. A pointed to the reception and said: "This is the Mudhif or Diwaniya and it is used for the guests". B inquired: "why the reception room in your cousin's house is completely isolated, while, in your house it shares wall with the rest of the house?" A replied: "because they built their house before us".

Finally, A accompanied B when both returned to A's house, where the father was waiting. However, this time A wasn't wearing her complete veil which was wearing when B met A in the first time.

### **Analysis of Ethno-Typed Built Environment**

In this subsection, we employ DM techniques and terminologies quoted from Garfinkel explanations to decompose the above mentioned narrative interview into schemes of interpretation to deduce and analyze the social pattern according to which people developed their everyday process and story of living that made their life accountable. We relate these social facts with its projections on the built environment experience.

**Scheme no. 1. The influence of the religious doctrines on everyday behavior;** religious beliefs play an important role in the life of the people within AH and largely affect their daily behavior. For example, "*The housing complex is known by the inhabitants as Hay Alhamza.*" Here, the name of the Hay or housing gathering gives a direct indexical expression to a fact that most of the inhabitants are form the Shia<sup>3</sup>.

As followers of the Shia doctrine, the inhabitants of AH practice many religious rituals and events. That explains the importance of that large numbers of the open spaces with different sizes and locations scattered among the houses as a places for holding these events and rituals. It is right that the arrangement within the AH does not follow the regular planning examples. However, the distribution of houses and open space is not random rather it is reflexively tied to the religious needs of the inhabitants as socially organized occasions. Another example for the influence of the religious beliefs is the religious symbols and flags ornament as indexical expressions and indexical sentences which reflect the religious identity of the inhabitants.

**Scheme no. 2. Group affiliation;** the similarity of educational, economical and social backgrounds for the inhabitants of AH contributes in creating a high sense of group affiliation within the inhabitants. The idea of group affiliation produced distinguished phenomena within the ethno-environment and has its reflexivity on the built housing environment. For example, the communities within AH is clearly characterized as have a large number of big extended families, this is clear from "*We were a big family of about 20 persons...*" The common religious beliefs and social customs greatly emphasized the role

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<sup>3</sup> Shia is one of the Islamic religious doctrines in Iraq.



of the grandparents or elderly people in general within the family. So, it is quite reasonable to understand the popularity of such idea within the inhabitants of the AH.

In fact, this phenomenon of big extended families is one of the important causes of crowdedness problem in the already established public housing projects from pre-war era. So, they created their own housing projects (AH) when they resorted to open governmental areas to gain large spaces. This is evident from "...So here, we finally able to be relaxed". This an indexical expression refers to the new situation of the wide roads, open spaces and the big family backyard. However, it should be noted the housing living spaces are narrow and longitudinal in shape, due to the primitive or simple ways of roofing i.e. using of steel and wooden barriers covered with mats and clay.

The idea of group affiliation is further enhanced by the tendency of these communities to maintain active inter-relatives relationships. This is clear from "...my son to the daughter's of A's brother. We always marry from our relatives". So, by encouraging this kind of marriages they keep a high degree of social coherence.

As a result, the parents encourage their sons or daughters to live with them after the marriage. This social fact has an important reflexivity on the organization of AH, which becomes affordable to expect additional construction like addition of new rooms, remove or extension of already existed rooms etc. So, the families of the AH, when they start the process of building, take into their account the affordability for their houses for such future changes. This is also evident from "...he is the bridegroom building his room in the second floor".

Finally, the idea of the group affiliation enhance the spirit of cooperation among the inhabitants, who know each other very well to a degree that they easily recognize and immediately suspect strangers, "... if someone asked you in the street tell them that you are visiting your relatives. There is no stranger enter our -hay- without being suspected". It also spreads the atmosphere of affinity among the inhabitants, that it is evident from "The father entered into an already opened door room ...", "... suddenly a woman entered the house without taking permission or knocking on the door." and "... this time A wasn't wearing her complete veil which was wearing when B met A in the first time."

So, this spirit of affinity and cooperation gives a different functionality for the streets, "... the children raise in the street to be strong". Unlike the commonly accepted notion of streets to be a dangerous place and specified basically for cars or other vehicles movement, streets here have the sense of an alley where people walk through them freely and impose their character on it. Even it is a safe place for children to play and to held family events, "...We can also put chairs in the street too".



Figure 2  
, high fence  
and parapet,  
even the swing  
is in the roof.

**Scheme no. 3. Separation of genders;** The segregation of people according to their gender is common phenomena within the Iraqi society. This practice has its roots in the conservative nature of Iraqi people in general and the religious doctrines which play a vital role in formation of people's belief. However, it is noticeable that the phenomena is magnified and the practice is strict within AH society, "...for the wedding ceremony we decided that the women will be gathered in your house, while, the men in ours". There are many sings within the narrative interview refer to the effect of this phenomenon on the space character.

For the reception room, separation of gender has its direct reflection on the functionality of the reception room. Here, we can refer to the "A pointed to the reception and said: "This is the **Mudhif** or **Diwaniya** and it is used for the guests"...". In fact, the name Mudhif has an indexical meaning. This word in Iraq is originally used to refer to a big space that acts as a meeting place for male only in the areas of marsh in the southern part of Iraq. There, Mudhif is usually built from reeds. That means, the Mudhif in AH like those in marshlands is used to accept male guests only, this is evident from "When B and her father entered the house, they separated. The father entered into an already opened door room ...". Actually, it is not allowed for women and children to enter these reception rooms, as what happen in "...a little girl came and took B to the kitchen" and "Both B and the woman headed directly to the open backyard, where A was baking, by passing through the kitchen". In addition, there is a strict restriction on the movement of

the men like "...the brother brought tea from the kitchen through the outdoor" and "...The father entered into an already opened door room connected with small outdoor toilet".

The separation of gender is also significantly affects the functionality of the kitchen within the AH. This is evident from "...All the family living in the kitchen and the kitchen is like our home". The kitchen is not regarded by the inhabitants as a place for cooking utilities only. In a nutshell the developing sequence for the kitchen space began with very small service space in the Iraqi traditional houses and was used only by the servants, then its space enlarged gradually to contain only the breakfast table, it was separated completely from the living as it is still only a service space. But in the AH it reached its climax when it turned into a new hybrid space (kitchen-living KL) instead of (living-dining LD). This new space contains eating, receiving guests from the women and sometimes for sleeping. In fact, such understanding for the new functionality of the kitchen is accountable by the people within AH, this fact is obvious from "...suddenly a woman entered the kitchen without taking permission or knocking on the door".

Moreover, Gender separation influences the size and distribution of the house open spaces. As a result, the gathering of the family members would be in the backyard not in the front space. The front space is usually neglected and occupies only small area, mostly used for storage or as a small entrance. However, the backyard can be regarded as the garden designated only for the family uses. It contains the Tenure where the children gather near their mother, while she is baking the bread as special events away from eyes of the strangers.

Finally, it is possible to find traces for the idea of separation of gender on the house organization which designed to ensure the necessary privacy for the family member, especially women. Therefore, the bedrooms are separated and isolated from the visitor's sight, usually one or two on the first floor and other rooms would be added in the second. While high fence and roof parapet is usually surrounds the house (figure 2).

**Scheme no. 4. Accumulation and sharing of experiences;** As an ethno-environment, the inhabitants of AH continuously share knowledge and experiences in managing their daily events. As a result, the accumulated knowledge has a significant role in improving the methods they adopt in dealing with their daily affairs. Therefore, building a house within AH is a good example for the accumulation and sharing of knowledge (Figure 3). This aspect is important in explaining how the process of house building becomes commonplace action among the inhabitants. It is also useful in understanding this sticking similarity exists among the units of the AH from the aspects of functions, building materials and building techniques, while the implementation of fine details are evolved from a house to another.



Figure 3  
Family member  
built their house  
by themselves.

It is possible to reach this conclusion from "...B inquired: "why the reception room in your cousin's house is completely isolated, while, in your house it shares wall with the rest of the house?" A replied: "because they built their house before us"...". It is clear from this example that the reflexivity for the idea of gender isolation was so extreme in the case of building the first house to the degree they completely isolate the reception room from the remaining parts of the house. Later on, the residents of this house realize that this kind of implementation has its practical drawbacks, like the severity of serving foods for the guests under bad weather conditions. Here, the residents transmit this knowledge to their relatives, A's family. So, they avoid this drawback by putting the reception connected with the remaining part of the house. The new implementation still respects the idea of separation of gender since the wall that connects the reception room with the house is not penetrating and the male using outdoor for serving guest.

## Conclusion and Future work

In this paper, we investigated AH as a direct result for the social changes within the Iraqi society in the post-war era. AH is a unique phenomenon in which people developed their built environment as direct presentation to their way of living and social organizations. Based on a field work investigation for the infrastructure and everyday lifestyles of the inhabitants in the selected AH gatherings in Baghdad, we developed the idea of Ethno-

Typed Built Environment to explain that special interference between social and built environment experiences. Employing the DM in the analysis of the narrative interview with one of the families in the visited gatherings, we have identified that the effect of religious doctrines, group affiliation, separation of the genders, accumulation and sharing of experiences are the social facts that pattern everyday life. In the discussion we explained how the agreement on these facts reflected on the organization of the AH built environment. The religious doctrines had reflexively influenced the indexical samples like AH complex name, housing symbols and ornaments and the distribution of open spaces among the house. While, the group affiliation gives a new character to the roads in the AH. They are more than abstracted streets for cars and the passerby, since they exhibit a greater flexibility towards social interactions and reflect people character. Group affiliation is also behind that continuous changes and adaptations in the house according to the extension in the families, or house affordability. Moreover, separation of the genders had been the decidable factor for many details in the house organization like the separated entrance, reception and toilet for male and female guests, the new position for the kitchen space to contain living and sleeping space, the small frontyard, the big backyard for the family, the sleeping room windows opened on the backyard, high fence and high roof parapet. Finally, the shared knowledge and experience is the driving force behind that evolutionary development in the housing environment such that the learned lessons from past experiences grasped and adapted to the original sociological reasoning and then turned to be a usual every day feature.

As a prospect for future work, the findings of this paper will represent the background for our investigation for the public housing in post-war Iraq taking into the consideration the principles of Japanese architectural planning.

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