

Abstract:

This study is based upon the notion of disruption to place attachment (Devine-Wight, 2009, Devine-Wight and Howes, 2010) with a focus upon the symbolic meanings associated with urban change and the historic city centre of Sulaimaniyah affected by it. It builds upon the model of Devine-Wright's stages of psychological response to environmental change, to understand impacts of urban change on place attachment and social life of local residents, focusing particularly on issues of cultural built heritage. More specifically, the important part of this research is to consider what is learned from this empirical study to be a benefit for appropriate policy responses to issues raised in this empirical research. This is due to the historic city centre of Sulaimaniyah faced an urban change in the sense of demolition of its heritage in spite of the existence of urban conservation policy. Therefore, a reaction to place disruption is identified by "serious of stages involving identification, interpretation, evaluation and forms of coping response" (Devine-Wright and Howes, 2010, p.277), but focuses on place definition, place identification and place dependency as constructs of place attachment. It focuses on "the place related dimensions of the disruption and factors that shape the response process" (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2014).

Deepening understanding of community responses to the demolition of the historic built environment of Sulaimaniyah city centre provides opportunities for understanding the implications of urban change on place attachment in historic environments and for given policies lessons for future regulation dealing with urban change. A study of disruptions in psychological processes can provide a unique insight into the disruption and their consequences as it starts with an understanding of place attachment (Brown and Perkins, 1992). Further, in this research, semi-structured interview as the main method of data collection is conducted. In this sense, the form of responses of local residents to the urban change is based on their acceptance and adaptation, and opposition to the urban change. From this perspective, the response to the urban change as acceptance and opposition to the urban change is based on various place related cognitions, including place definition, place identification, place dependency, and place identity. Thus, this study contributes to the study of environmental disruption in relations to urban change in historic environments.

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