

## Chapter 7

# Expanding Horizons for Interior Architecture: Accounting for Forced Migration

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter addresses the pressing issue of transnational forced migration around the world which has reached another level of urgency since 2015 when the countries in Europe began receiving migrants from Syria. As a result, providing housing solutions for temporary accommodation has been a significant concern and a variety of responses have been developed in and around Europe to facilitate temporary accommodation of forcibly displaced people. A significant part of these endeavours consists of efforts for developing universal solutions in the form of housing units which present a product-oriented approach and often fail to account for the complexities of dwelling. This chapter discusses the involvement of interior architects in the matters of forced migration in relevance of both their scale-focus and skillset, by critically examining the tools and methods they use and adopting the process-oriented and cross-disciplinary approaches which consider the social and cultural complexities of temporary living.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Interior architecture has been growing exponentially as a profession throughout the past few decades. Despite the various approaches of educational institutions and criteria sought by professional examination boards in different countries, interior architects hold significant skills that help shape the built environment. Despite its growth, however, the potential of interior architecture to tackle the contemporary issues around the world that result in social inequalities and marginalisation is yet to be explored. Endeavours to improve the responsiveness of interior architecture to such social issues require explorations of its engagement with inter/transdisciplinary approaches and methodologies to expand the educational and professional grounds of the discipline.

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## ***Expanding Horizons for Interior Architecture***

Critically examining the methodological tools used in interior architecture to tackle contemporary issues –especially those related to forced migration– within the premises outlined above, this chapter shall probe into the ways where interior architecture could expand its social responsiveness. It addresses the pressing issue of temporary housing in the cases of transnational forced migration which hit the countries in Europe especially after 2015, due to the mass-movement from Syria. As a result of the recent waves of forced migration, a variety of responses have been developed in and around Europe to facilitate a temporary accommodation for these forcibly displaced people. These responses range from strictly product-based approaches to more process-based and socially/culturally responsive approaches where establishing an inclusive sense of community has been at the forefront. Projects such as IKEA (Better Shelter) Housing Unit, which has received wide recognition and was distributed to various countries around the world, together with other temporary housing solutions which aimed at provision of ‘universal’ housing solutions, demonstrate a significant involvement of industrial designers and a prominent product-oriented approach for the problem of housing in the cases of forced migration (Dörries & Zahradnik, 2016). Process-oriented approaches, however, have the potential to allow more permeable structures where people with varied skillsets work collectively for more socially and culturally relevant solutions for accommodation, and where the disciplinary borders begin to disappear. As such, it becomes crucial to re-examine the methodological tools used by the interior architects in problem formulation and design processes related to forced migration.

This chapter addresses the pressing issue of transnational forced migration around the world and argues for the importance of the involvement of interior architecture<sup>1</sup> as a discipline in the matters of forced migration. To do this, the chapter first presents an overview of the emergence and evolution of interior architecture as a profession and a field of study to situate it in a historical context. Secondly, it reflects on the problems of temporary inhabitation which emerged after the waves of migratory flow to Europe started in 2015, and the solutions that have been developed to address these problems. Under the light of cross-disciplinary approaches, the chapter then points out the importance of critical examination of the tools and methods used by the interior architects and interior architecture students to take the social and cultural complexities into account. In this respect, it is argued that only by positioning itself as a socially responsive discipline and by tackling the contemporary issues faced by today’s societies, can the interior architecture claim itself as relevant in future.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **A Historical Context to Interior Architecture**

As a relatively new field in the built environment, interior architecture emerged from multiple roots to be situated differently within disciplines across contexts. Its emergence as a new profession can be traced back to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The developments in the field were influenced by the evolution of design thinking in Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Arts and Crafts movement, initiated in Britain, advocated an ‘honesty’ of the expression of design through the use of materials, techniques and production with an emphasis on craftsmanship; influencing the design thinking in other countries such as Germany, Austria and North America, and preparing the scene for the Modern Movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Meanwhile, the Art Nouveau style began to develop in Belgium and France to have an impact in Germany, Spain and Scandinavian countries (Pile, 2009). This movement was characterised

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