

**Bedouin Homes in Migration:
Memories of Saudi Hejazi Built Heritage**

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Abstract

This paper is part of a broader research inquiry which examines built heritage of the Hejazi region in Saudi Arabia. The examination concentrates on the urbanised historic and traditional residential city centres in Makkah and Jeddah. After Saudi Arabia's unification in the early 1930s, formal sedentarisation, urbanisation and modernisation efforts paved the way for decades of official relocation schemes and rural-urban migration of desert populations. Dira (ancestral rural homeland of nomads) left behind, Bedouins reshaped their new geography within urban city centres building on inherited knowledge passed on through generations. Utilising local material resources, collaborative neighbourhood support, and traditional building know-how, allowed spaces of 'home' to be temporarily erected, later modified to create established permanent structures. Engaging relevant literature, oral history, site surveys, and material evidence provided by private archives in the case study exploration; this paper probes Bedouin memories of 'home' in situ, following migration, during transition by means of evolution, and in its current culmination. It is through informants' voices that this paper will discuss forces which influence the evolution of home and housing in Saudi Arabia. Informants' narratives illustrate social, economic and cultural stimuli encouraging the short-lived success of traditional housing in Saudi Arabia and the conversation to reproductions of Western modern architecture styles. More importantly, these renderings expose contrasting and contradicting reflections of home and housing proposed by several generations of inhabitants. It is in this setting and in comparison with contemporary interpretations of 'home' in Saudi Arabia that this paper locates its considerations of 'home' within the context of memory, migration, transition, transmission and progression.

Keywords: migration, memory, Bedouin, nomad, home, oral history, built heritage, traditional, architecture.