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Cultural Preservation in a Saudi Domestic Environment in the Eastern Province

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Cultural Preservation in a Saudi Domestic Environment in the Eastern Province

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This thesis is dedicated to my beloved children, Salma, Lama and Yousuf

Abstract

This study constructs new understandings regarding the impact of the transformations that have taken place in the domestic environment of Saudi Arabia following the discovery of oil. While most previous research in this area has highlighted the loss of identity caused by this transformation, my research reveals how these developments have also resulted in new modes of cultural preservation in a domestic environment. It also explores the significant role of private museum making as a network of cultural practices that reflect and preserve Saudi culture for future generations.

Despite the high price of land for housing and construction materials, some individuals in Saudi society have invested their savings to collect and preserve traditional artefacts in private museums in their homes. Through analysis of a number of such examples in the Eastern Province, with an in-depth study of one, this research explores the relationship between cultural practice, cultural preservation and resilience, and interprets this from an architecture perspective. Framed by a set of key theoretical concepts (cultural trauma, cultural resilience and cultural preservation), this study aims to highlight the positive cultural adaptation of domestic environments after the rapid transformation brought about by the discovery of oil. An in-depth qualitative case study provides an example of how a resident transformed an imported, villa style residence to reflect her identity, religion, culture, and past experience and how, through a practice of museum making in her home, not only translated her memories, identity, tangible and intangible heritage into a museum, but also gave herself new agency in public life. This research offers fresh perspective and insight into the role of women as social influencers and explores their creative ability in cultural preservation.

These findings fill a knowledge gap in the study of home interiors and cultural preservation, explained with reference to two intersecting perspectives: the transformation of the national discourse on heritage and the transformation of the role of women on Saudi society. It also shows evidence of the shift that occurred from the oil boom in 1938 to the museum boom in 2014. This research explores and identifies the Private Museum Movement (PMM), defining it as: an individual's attempt to preserve Saudi cultural heritage through the practice of museum-making within their private home.

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I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.
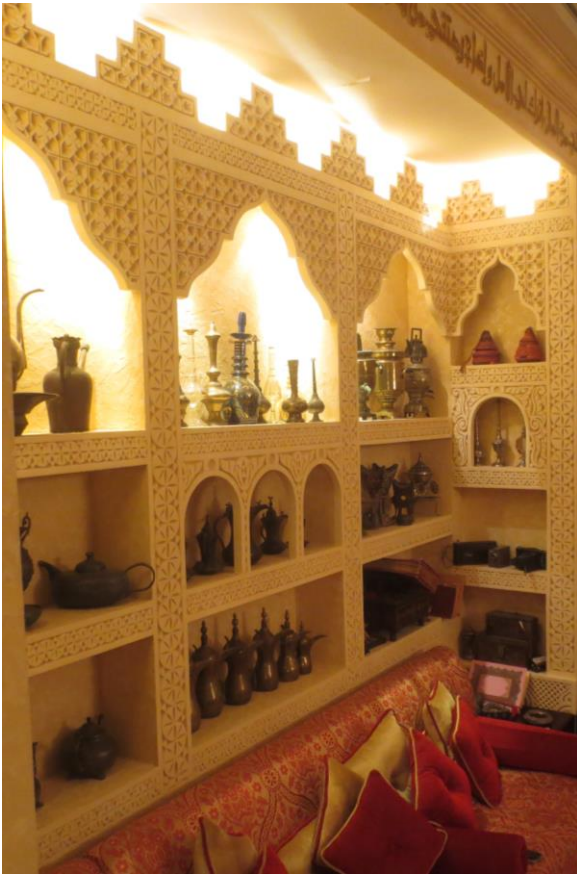
Introduction

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Contents

1.1 Research significance

Saudi Arabia had a unique and distinguished vernacular architecture. The traditional built environment has largely disappeared in the modern context, having transformed as a result of the pressure associated with the radical development following the discovery of oil. However, the image of the traditional environment has not been forgotten by its inhabitants.

This research constructs new understandings regarding the impact of these changes to the domestic environment. While most previous research in this field highlights the loss of identity caused by this transformation, this study reveals how it also resulted in new modes of cultural preservation. It explores the emergence of private museums to reflect and preserve Saudi culture for future generations. It also highlights the occurrence of positive adaptation in a contemporary domestic environment and explores the relationships between cultural practice, cultural preservation and cultural resilience, and interprets these from an architectural perspective. This fills a knowledge gap in the study of home interiors and cultural preservation.

The close association between architectural development and cultural decline has been widely recognised in the literature. For example, Asheliby (2015) argues that the economic boom in Saudi Arabia has negatively affected its construction heritage, resulting in the built environment losing its traditional identity over the past four decades. It has been argued that this transformation of traditional architectural structures has damaged national culture, leading to cultural conflicts (Al Atni, 2015). This can be seen in the urban development of the Dammam Metropolitan region, the centre city in the Eastern Province, where oil was first discovered in the Kingdom. The corresponding changes brought about by this discovery have resulted in the natives of Dammam experiencing an ongoing identity crisis in the built environment (Al-Naim, 2013). In effect, the rapid growth in Dammam is acknowledged as contributing to image instability, which "weakened the sense of urban memory. This is what has led to continuous tension between historical collective memory in Saudi Arabia and the pressure to adopt a more modern image" (ibid, p.72). When discussing the confusion that appeared in the built environment cities of the Eastern Province, in a study of Northern Khobar, Alamdar (2003) notes that the tension between the adoption of a modern image into the built environment and the specific socio-cultural and socio-economic factors guiding this change have resulted in a corresponding loss of identity. This created a gap between what the built environment offered and the

needs of its inhabitants. Overall, the study showed that rapid, disorganised modernisation had caused the architecture of Northern Khobar to lose its identity, disrupting the ability of the people to interact with their environment and therefore diminishing their ability to self-express (Alamdar, 2003).

Prior to the discovery of oil, each region of Saudi Arabia was distinguished by a distinct architectural identity, reflected in the construction and character of each traditional house, to the extent that the façade of a building would indicate its location. Structurally rectangular courtyard houses were located in the middle of the Kingdom, whereas cylindrical tower houses were characteristic of the south. Houses with *mashrabiyah* (wooden windows) were found in the west, while courtyard houses with wind catchers were located in the Eastern Province. Classically, even the design of the interior space and characteristics differed according to the geographical location of the building. However, a study on the development of the domestic interior of houses in Makkah city underlined the loss of domestic identity resulting from the trend of ignoring traditional approaches to interior spaces in modern Makkah houses. These serious effects on the residential environment, as well as on the social-cultural values, were attributed to the introduction of modern western architectural forms (Al Wafi, 2006). The cost of rapid development in the years after the discovery of oil has been highlighted by many earlier studies. For example, Al-Naim (1998) argues that rapid changes that occurred in the 1970s created an entirely different home environment, resulting in people increasingly feeling a sense of not belonging. Ben Saleh (1980) also observed the loss of traditional identity in the Saudi built environment, stating that, "Recent buildings have lost their traditional identities and have become hybrids of exotic character in their architectural form, main concepts, arrangement of spaces, organisation of elements, and building techniques employed" (cited in Al-Gabbain, 1984, p.272). Others have claimed that modern architecture in Saudi Arabia is often culturally destructive (Abu-Ghazzeh, 1997). In addition, research on the link between the conservative Islamic culture of Saudi Arabia and the design of housing has shown that the current housing supply is often inadequate to meet the specific cultural needs of Saudi families (Al-Surf, Susilawati and Trigunarsayah, 2012).

In the face of this loss of identity, Alawad (2015) surveyed a sample of 330 females in Saudi Arabia to investigate the motive for natives to keep heritage artefacts in their homes. She found that the heritage artefacts were used to create social identity, the importance of which was evidenced by the link between heritage objects and the display

location inside the home. Those participants who used heritage artefacts for social identity display were found to situate those items in larger, more prestigious places than individuals using the artefacts for other purposes (Alawad, 2015). This study is tremendously important as previous research had not examined the field of interior design in relation to the underlying motives for possessing items (ibid).

The current thesis provides a detailed examination of the evolution in the display of artefacts from merely being distributed inside rooms in homes into the practice of museum making for public consumption. This study explores a set of questions regarding the Saudi domestic environment, investigating the existence of a new space (museum) inside a contemporary Saudi home and examining the topic of cultural preservation from the perspective of cultural resilience. In this way, the research seeks to better understand new trends of cultural preservation in Saudi houses and to learn how the residents have used both tangible and intangible heritage to reflect their identity and culture within their homes.

Another important aspect of this research is to investigate the ability of women to change their domestic environment in response to the development of external factors. Other academics in the field of the Saudi domestic environment have noted that cultural obstacles have limited the participation of women in research fieldwork, such as interviews. For example, Alsheliby (2015) argues that his research was limited by the low response rate of females, due to cultural and regional issues that prevent male non-relatives from communicating with females. In an earlier study on the use and meaning of domestic space, Akbar (1998) noted his inability to conduct interviews with adult women outside of his kinship group, necessitating the involvement of his wife as a fieldwork assistant who would be able to conduct those interviews on his behalf. In the current research, the cooperation of the female participant during the fieldwork phase was invaluable in facilitating the collection of data and the acquisition of photographs of the exterior and interior of the house, which added substantial value to this research. The significance of this research shows a high participation of woman in research work and explores their creative ability with regards to cultural preservation through the practice of museum making.

1.2. Research aims, objectives and questions

1.2.1 Research aims

This research aims to investigate new forms of cultural preservation emerging in a contemporary domestic environment in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia.

Secondary aims of the research were as following:

It reveals new understandings of the impact of industrialisation and rapid change to the built environment in Saudi Arabia through an examination of the transformation of a domestic environment and in a particular the emergence of the practice of private museum making as an act of cultural preservation. This research highlights the positive aspects of the cultural adaptation of domestic environments after socio-economic transformation. It utilises an architectural perspective to explore the relationship between cultural practices, cultural resilience, and cultural preservation in a Saudi home.

The study examines the emergence of the practice of museum making in a domestic environment as a new form of cultural preservation, examining the ways in which a resident has translated her memories, identity, and her tangible and intangible heritage into the museum space inside her private home. Another important aspect of this study is to address the cultural significance of the new phenomenon of private museum making, looking at its role as a network of cultural practices that potentially reflect and preserve Saudi culture for the next generation.

1.2.2 Research objectives

- To investigate the theoretical basis in this study by examining the meaning of a set of concepts: cultural trauma, cultural resilience and cultural preservation.
- To study the impact of the transformation of a domestic environment on the organisation of the physical space of the home and of the social life of the resident.
- To study the role of the resident's religion, identity, past experience and collective memory in shaping the domestic environment.
- To investigate the existence of a new space (museum) in a domestic environment and use a set of theoretical concepts, such as memory, identity, and creativity, to understand the creation of a private museum in a Saudi home.
- To trace the existence of private museums in different parts of Saudi Arabia.

1.2.3 Research questions

- How did a resident respond to the socio-economic and cultural transformation of her domestic environment?

- To what extent has the resident translated her memories, identity, and her tangible and intangible heritage in her home?

- How has cultural preservation extended and evolved to produce new forms of cultural practice?

1.3. Research setting

1.3.1 Why the Eastern Province?

The Eastern Province was chosen for this research for several reasons. Perhaps most importantly, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia is where the discovery of oil occurred, which changed the of the Kingdom economy and shaped its future. For this reason, the houses in this area of Saudi Arabia were the first to be exposed to the various emergent factors being discussed in this research. The second reason is associated with this factor, namely the existence of Aramco Oil Company in the area, which played a significant role in the development of the built environment in general, particularly in terms of the domestic environment. Aramco directly introduced the first modern concept of homes to Saudi Arabia and undertook a massive housing project to provide accommodation to its Saudi employees through the launch of its Home Ownership Programme.

The final reason for deciding to focus on studying building in this area is that I have lived in the Eastern Province for over thirty years and would like to highlight the role of women in the domestic environment in this region. As a female researcher, I am keen to illustrate the capability and creativity of a Saudi female in ensuring cultural preservation in this geographical area.

1.3.2 The significance of the Saudi domestic environment

The home can be interpreted as "a microcosm of culture and civilization" (Omer, 2010, p.50), representing and reflecting the intangible knowledge of a resident, such as their memories, history, religion, and tradition. In the context of religion, he explains that,

> "Islamic housing is a blend of the belief system, teachings and values of Islam on one hand, and the prerequisites and influences of indigenous cultures, climate, topographies, building materials, talents, technologies and economies, on the other" (ibid, 2010, p.338).

Homes can be extremely significant to identity, serving as the basis upon which individual and community identity is constructed. In this way, a home does not only serve as a dwelling place, "that can be anywhere, that can be exchanged, but an irreplaceable centre of significance" (Relph, 1976, p. 39).

I chose to study a domestic environment within the context of Saudi culture as it offers a distinctive perspective on the ways in which privacy requirements can differ between countries. In fact, the concept of privacy in relation to guest hospitality has a significant role in the design of a Saudi home. Therefore, the examination of a contemporary domestic environment offers an example of how strongly encoded cultural values can survive and reappear in new formats through the transformation in the organisation of the home.

Investigating a domestic environment offers an excellent research opportunity to examine the interaction between physical form and the intangible cultural needs of residents. It also enables an exploration of the residents' ability to reorganise, adapt and adjust their environment to more accurately reflect their religion, identity, past experience and memories. In this way, it may become possible to understand how residents can establish a connection to their local tradition domestic environment and a sense of belonging to the surrounding contemporary environment. Lastly, as mentioned in the research significance, investigating a domestic environment fills a knowledge gap in the study of home interiors and cultural preservation, as no research to date has focused on the issue of cultural preservation in Saudi contemporary homes. Additionally, the research topic of the relationship between cultural practices, cultural preservation and resilience in a domestic environment is not well represented in the context of studies on Saudi culture.

1.4. Original contribution to knowledge

- This research constructs new understandings about the impact of the dramatic transformation of the domestic environment in Saudi Arabia after the discovery of oil in the Eastern province. It highlights positive cultural adaptation and explores the relationships between cultural practice, cultural resilience, and cultural preservation the Saudi home.

- The study examines the emergence of a new form of cultural preservation in domestic environment, as manifested through the practice of museum making. In this investigation, the discovery of the existence of a museum inside a home added a new dimension to the understanding of museum making within the structure of a domestic environment. Ordinarily, homes can be transformed into museum buildings for specific reasons, usually after they are no longer inhabited, as was covered in the example of the *Bayt Al-Baiah* museum in chapter three. In these contexts, available times for museum visitors, presentation techniques, maintenance, and financial support are all controlled by the institutional regulations that preserve the house. In contrast, in this investigation, the private museum's approach to artefact display, visitors programme, available information and hospitality were selected and managed by an individual homeowner.

- The research examines new relationships between two different functional spaces (the home and museum) in a domestic environment within the context of Saudi culture. This enables analysis of the balance between the practice of museum making and the Saudi cultural emphasis on privacy in a domestic environment. The research explains how the home became a part of the museum and how, conversely, the museum also became part of the home.

- The research also illustrates how the practice of museum making constitutes a new form of cultural practice and how that produced new identities for its owner. The research gives an example of how social change and the transformation of the domestic environment generate motivation for the creation of a museum, in turn resulting in social change in the life of the resident of the building.

- The investigation traces the existence of private museums across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, illustrating how museum making has developed in accordance with the capabilities and capacities of individuals in Saudi society. The emergence of the Private Museum Movement (PMM) demonstrates the range of individual attempts to preserve Saudi cultural heritage.

- To date, only limited studies have been conducted into women's changing position within the Saudi environment. This research offers fresh perspective and insight into their roles as both women and social influencers. This research therefore presents a unique case of the role played by a woman in changing and shaping a home environment, examining how this endeavour gave her a new public profile and extended her social network.

1.5. Research organisation

This thesis is structured into seven chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1: The introductory chapter presents the research significance, aims, objectives and questions. It also introduces the setting and explains the specific reasons for choosing to focus the study on the domestic environment of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The last part of the chapter outlines the organisation of the research and discusses its substantial contribution to original knowledge.

Chapter 2: This chapter covers the research methodology utilised in the thesis. It explains the selection of an in-depth qualitative case study approach, detailing the qualitative mixed methods techniques employed to collect diverse types of data, including illustrations, photos, interviews, field notes, and text documents. The chapter concludes by explaining the analytical framework and data analysis methods, including material cultural, spatial and visual analysis, that have been utilised to establish the research findings in this investigation.

Chapter 3: This chapter introduces the traditional domestic environment in the Eastern Province and highlights the particular role played by the oil company Aramco in the transformation of the built environment. This presents a historical review which provides an important foundation and overall orienting frame for this thesis. The examples, images and archival material in this chapter serve provide valuable insights into the transformation and development of the domestic environment in the Eastern province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 4: This chapter provides the theoretical perspective that links all the main concepts in this thesis together: cultural trauma, cultural resilience and cultural preservation. This discussion is divided into two main sections, beginning by examining the importance of studying cultural trauma as a concept in the domestic environment,

clarifying how to expand the concept of trauma to highlight positive changes, development, and adaptation after exposure to an experience of dramatic transformation.

In order to explain the transformation of the domestic environment, as well as to clarify the background and shaping forces that led to the occurrence of the experience of cultural trauma in the Eastern Province, I develop a timeline that maps the significant events supporting the investigation. This is explained through two overlapping perspectives: the transformation of the national discourse on heritage and the transformation of the role of women in Saudi society. The second section explains the concept of cultural resilience, presenting and discussing its definitions in different disciplines. An explanation is then provided for cultural preservation from the perspective of cultural resilience.

Chapter 5: This chapter presents the in-depth qualitative case study in relation to the theoretical framework. The case study examines one of the early house designs, imported around 1975. It is an American home style, with an open plan layout and a distinct lack of privacy. The case study conducts a detailed examination of the creative modifications of this home that the resident has undertaken, in line with Saudi privacy requirements and the practice of guest hospitality.

Additionally, the case study reveals how the resident expresses strong inherited identities that reflect her Islamic religion and Saudi culture in her home. These co-exist with the expression of other more global and cosmopolitan identities, perhaps as the result of the exposure of the individuals living in these homes to different cultures, new experiences and new images. This chapter also presents a discussion of the development of complex identities as a positive resilient adjustment to the transformation of a domestic environment.

Chapter 6: This chapter deals with the creation of a museum built in a private garden as part of contemporary home. It examines this action as a new form of cultural preservation and explores the roles of identity, memory, and creativity played in the production of a museum. It highlights the creative ability of an individual Saudi woman in the practice of museum making and cultural preservation. It also clearly demonstrates the way that the function of the museum transcended the storage, display, and organisation of artefacts inside a physical building, instead creating new social networks identities and cultural practices.

The chapter also examines and discusses the classification of home museums, drawing upon real examples from the Eastern Provinces. Finally, the chapter provides a discussion of the emergence of the Private Museum Movement (PMM) in Saudi Arabia and interprets the implications of this movement from an architectural perspective. Finally, chapter six examines the role currently being played by private museums in the tourism industry, as well as the function that they fulfil as a network of cultural practices that reflect and preserve the culture of Saudi Arabia for future generations.

Chapter 7: The concluding chapter links together all of the themes of this investigation and summarises the findings of the research in terms of the aforementioned aims and objectives. It endeavours to highlight the original contributions of this research to knowledge and suggests further research that could be undertaken in this field.

METHODOLOGY

QUALITATIVE APPROACH

DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

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Contents

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology utilised in this thesis. It clarifies the nature of the research and highlights the qualitative techniques employed to collect the diverse range of data utilised in the current study, including drawings, photos, notes from the interview and field observation, documents and interpretation. Finally, it details the chosen analytical methods that were used to establish the research findings.

In order to comprehensively achieve the research aims and address the research questions, this investigation has followed four phases. First, I sought to construct new understandings of the impact of dramatic transformations in a domestic environment, particularly with regards to positive adaptation. I therefore conducted an intensive literature review to understand the background of this transformation in Saudi Arabia, examining issues such as the factors causing it to occur at a particular location and time, looking at the specific economic, cultural, and social impacts on the domestic environment in the Eastern Province. The outcomes of the review are presented in chapter three of this thesis. The chapter describes the typologies of traditional houses and then outlines the transformation of the domestic environment after the discovery of oil. It highlights the major role of the oil company, Aramco, in the transformation of the built environment across the Kingdom in general and the domestic environment in the Eastern Province in particular. The significance of this historical review is that it constructs a foundation for the study and provides an overall orienting lens for the thesis, offering salient examples, images and archived material.

The second phase was the development of a theoretical perspective that sought to link all of the main concepts of the thesis together. This involved the synthesis of the key theoretical concepts: cultural trauma, cultural preservation, and cultural resilience. In chapter four of this thesis, these concepts are explained in detail, the link between them is clarified, and an explanation is provided for how each concept has been used in the examination of a domestic environment.

The third phase of this study was the collection of all visual and written data in line with the adopted research methods. The written data was collected from fieldwork notes, interviews, and reports from the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, while the visual data was collected from fieldwork, oil company publications, newspapers, and website images. The data collected in the pilot-study is discussed in detail in section 2.3.1,

while section 2.3.2 provides a detailed explanation of the in-depth case study data methods.

The last phase was data analysis, involving comprehensive assessment of the collected data to link the theoretical framework to the fieldwork material in order to establish the research findings. The three types of data analysis material (culture analysis, spatial analysis, and visual analysis) are explained in detail in section 2.5 of this chapter.

2.2 Qualitative approach

Research can be defined as the formation of new knowledge and the use of present knowledge in a new and innovative way that enables the creation of new understandings, methodology and ideas (Gilles and Felix, 2002). A qualitative mixed methods approach was selected in order to achieve in-depth understanding of the subject matter. A qualitative methodology demands close attention to historical detail in order to form new understandings of culturally or historically important phenomena (Ragin, 1994). In other words, "qualitative research is a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand" (Creswell, 2011, p.176).

This study examines the positive adaptation and adjustment of a domestic environment. In this way, it seeks to develop a new understanding of how residents of Saudi Arabia dealt with the rapid transformation of their domestic environments. This research discovered a new mode of cultural preservation that has emerged and continued to develop in this context, in the form of individual private museums being created and operated within contemporary homes. An in-depth qualitative study of one single case study was used in this investigation, given that the target is to reach an extremely high degree of data richness. This approach has been recognised in qualitative methodology, as "sometimes the emphasis of the qualitative approach in-depth knowledge means the research examines only a single case. For example, the life history of a single individual or the history of a single organization" (Ragin and Amoroso, 2010, p.112).

In this investigation, a case study was conducted of a specific resident in a particular location in order to examine the specific transformation of a real domestic environment. In adopting this approach, I was able to understand how the resident dealt with home transformation, enabling a profound exploration of the role of cultural resilience and cultural practices in shaping a Saudi home. This also enabled me to examine how the resident translated her memories, identity, and her tangible and intangible heritage in a

museum building inside the home. In other words, this approach enabled the study of how her engagement with cultural preservation evolved to transcend the practice of museum making and display of artefacts to create new forms of cultural practices. In line with the above questions, this study attempts to discern the extent to which we are able to understand the balance and combination between the practice of private museum-making and the Saudi cultural need for privacy in a domestic environment.

This single case study approach enabled the exploration of a number of cases in different locations. The practice of museum making discovered in the case study opened new avenues for research. I discovered that the museum was not a unique case, but rather a new phenomenon emerging all around Saudi Arabia, according to the capabilities and capacities of individuals in Saudi society. The findings address the cultural significance of this new cultural preservation phenomenon in contemporary Saudi society.

This methodology allowed me to develop a deeper understating and interpretation of the transformation of a home environment, as manifested through physical modifications, cultural practices and the meaning ascribed to artefacts as material culture. A key factor in this investigation was the focus on not only examining physical changes, but also to investigate the underlying intangible cultural values that directly impact on spatial organisation and the social life of the resident. Through these perspectives, I began to better understand the behaviour of residents in their home in the context of their cultural background, enabling a more effective exploration of the relationship between cultural practice, cultural preservation and cultural resilience.

The uniqueness and complexity of the investigation therefore required the design of a methodological approach that would enable and support a comprehensive, flexible investigation of the diverse issues involved. The chosen qualitative approach and data collecting methods will be outlined below.

2.3 Qualitative mixed methods

The study has utilised a mixed methods approach to qualitative research in order to explore the research findings in multiple ways. The fieldwork in this study utilised a variety of qualitative data collection tools and methods in order to obtain a rich array of data. The data collection methods chosen include interviews, observations, field notes, drawings, mapping, and photography. All of these research techniques are explained in

detail in the following sections, with particular attention given to their application within both the pilot study and the in-depth case study fieldwork.

2.4 Qualitative case study

I chose to undertake an in-depth case study within the Eastern Province area for several reasons, all of which were discussed in the introduction chapter. The case study home is located inside the (A-A) neighbourhood in Dhahran city of the Eastern Province. This neighbourhood is considered to be the first phase of the 28-structure housing project that was undertaken in 1975 by a company for their employees. The design of the residential project is based around a suburban model type imported from America, comprising one single detached house with a sloped roof. The investigation represents a Saudi family[1], who have been living in an American home model for over 30 years. Fortunately, it is still possible to record their interactions with the house and observe how it has been transformed into their current home environment. The house consists of a two-story building with a swimming pool, a garden, a garage and a fence that surrounds the perimeter of the house.

The significance of the case study in this thesis is that it examines one of the early imported design concepts, namely an open layout American home, organised with a distinct lack of privacy. It therefore offers an in-depth and excellent perspective on the impact of the transformation of a domestic environment on the organisation of the physical space, as well as the social life of the residents. The value of this case study is that it provides a valuable opportunity to examine cultural preservation in contemporary home design in a completely different culture. It also gives evidence for an exploration of how strongly encoded cultural values can survive and reappear in new formats in the domestic environment.

2.4.1 The pilot study

A key goal in this research was to carry out a pilot study that tested the research methods, giving a clear perspective on the availability of data and the most effective of the possible methods to enable data collection. Therefore, an initial pilot study was undertaken of the house and its Saudi residents in July 2014, comprising the foundation stage for the subsequent in-depth case study. The preparation for the pilot study took place in London, England, prior to the fieldwork, in order to maximise the use

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[1] Saudi family of six members (two parents and four children, two girls and two boys).

of the time at the case study site in Saudi Arabia. The planning phase included contacting the participants and arranging suitable appointment times, completing authoritative documents (such as the consent of research participant form), and obtaining data collection permission (e.g. requests to photograph the exterior and interior). The data collection methods that were used in the fieldwork were as follows:

Drawing: As the original house was designed around 1975 and the plans are no longer available, drawing the plans was essential to understand the changes that had been made to the house design. In the drawings, it was important to clarify the location and type of changes, such as extensions, attached or detached mass. Additionally, in order to understand the previous house design concept, a site plan, ground floor plan and first floor plan were drawn. The current ground floor and first floor plans with the modifications were then drawn. This enabled a comprehensive comparison of the house designs, allowing me to examine the ways in which the structure has been developed and expanded.

Collecting visual data (photography): I was given permission to take photographs of the exterior and interior of the house, creating a solid data reference that records the spaces of the house. This enabled me to undertake the visual data analysis process outlined in section 2.5.3.

Interview: I conducted an interview with Mrs. Munira Al-Ashgar, the creator of the museum and the mother in the family. She is very socially active within her community, serving as a member of several organisations and participating in numerous charity events. Upon meeting Mrs. Munira, her remarkable awareness of her culture preservation was evident. Her creative ability was evident throughout the many details of the house. Her cooperation and participation during this research was invaluable and facilitated the collection of data. The interview with Mrs. Munira was a rich source of information, offering insights that may not otherwise have been easily learned, such as the problems that the family faced with the design of the house and how they attempted to find solutions. The interview helped to address gaps in knowledge regarding the intangible cultural value behind the physical modification and reorganisation of space in the building.

The field notes contained my personal written comments on the important observations that I made during the fieldwork. These served as a form of written data and a record of

important details that can only be identified through my tangible experiences. The perspectives in these written data provide evidence to support the research findings.

Pilot-study findings:

The results of the pilot study provided the opportunity to reflect on the theoretical work that had been previously undertaken. It not only provided real, verifiable evidence of positive cultural adaptation in a foreign domestic environment, but the outcomes actually reshaped the whole study around the ways in which new forms of cultural preservation were being undertaken. The following discussion summarises the key findings from the pilot study.

After being imported from a different culture and geographical region, the American home model was subjected to substantial transformation in order to conform to specific Saudi social and cultural needs. The pilot study highlighted the significant role played by local privacy requirements and guest hospitality practices in the design of a Saudi home. In particular, it illustrated that the modifications that had been undertaken to meet visual, acoustic and olfactory privacy requirements had increased the overall size of the home by approximately 50%. The modifications in the home also provided examples of problem solving, showcasing creative solutions to enable the presentation of culture.

The outcomes of the pilot study suggested that complex identities can develop as a positive adaptation resulting from socio-economic transformation. In particular, it clearly shows the ways in which a resident was able to express a strong inherited identity that reflects her Islamic religion and Saudi culture in her home. Furthermore, this identity co-exists with the expression of other more global and cosmopolitan identities, perhaps as the result of the exposure of a resident to different cultures, experiences, and images.

Perhaps the most important finding of this pilot study was the discovery of a museum in the home. This redirected the whole research to focus not only on the physical transformation and modification of the home, but more on the practice of cultural preservation that I had witnessed.

2.4.2 In-depth qualitative case study:

In July and August 2015, I conducted an in-depth case study of the same property, focusing on the museum and an exploration of the roles of identity, memory, and

creativity in cultural preservation. The following data collection methods were utilised in this fieldwork:

Drawing: This provided a clear layout of the spatial organization (zoning) of the museum, as well as the classification of the items on display there. A three-dimensional model was drawn of the museum to illustrate the arrangement of geographical regions representing the whole kingdom on a micro-scale. A floor plan of the house was then prepared in order to determine the relationship between the home and the museum, as well as to clarify the movement of visitors inside the home before entering the museum and while on the tour.

Collecting visual data (photography): Exterior photos were taken of the museum, recording the façade design, elements and materials in detail. Additionally, photos were taken of the museum entrance, focusing on the corridor design, staircase, and entrance gate. These photos show the interior design of the museum and construction materials. Finally, photographic records were taken of the methods utilised to display artefacts in order to understand the presentation techniques and classification system utilized inside the museum.

Interview: Another interview was conducted with the museum curator's Mrs. Munira Al-Ashgar. Example questions included: How did she start the museum? What resources were used in the design process of the museum building? How does she maintain balance between the need for privacy in her home within the context of Saudi culture, while also maintaining the function of the museum as a place to display objects to visitors?

Field notes: Intensive observation notes were written during the field-work, such as about the tour steps taken by visitors inside the home before entering the museum,[2] comments about construction materials, and notes regarding circulation and representation techniques. Interpretation notes were also taken of the meaning of artefacts and the classification of objects.

2.5 Traditional domestic environment site visits

On the basis of case-study field-work, I found it necessary to visit the remains of the traditional domestic environment in the Eastern province in an attempt to acquire first-

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[2] This tour is discussed in greater detail in section 6.3: Museum, home and culture.

hand experience and a deeper understanding of the built environment before the transformation that occurred after the discovery of oil.

I undertook two site visits to Al-Hofuf, the city in which the first traditional settlement in the Eastern Province was established. Al-Kut and Al-Naathil are two traditional and former residential areas in Hofuf. In Al-Naathil, I found remains of a traditional neighbourhood that had been demolished, while in Al-Kut, I examined a preserved courtyard house that had become a museum under the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage. In chapter three of this thesis, the site visits to Al-Kut and Al-Naathil are presented under the discussion of the history of domestic environment in the Eastern province (see section 3.2). The third site visit carried out in Al-Hofuf was to the private home museum of Al-Naathil. This museum exists in a contemporary neighbourhood and carries the name and façade design of the now demolished traditional Al-Naathil neighbourhood in Al-Hofuf. Detailed information about the Al-Naathil museum will be discussed in chapter six.

In order to access the specific fieldwork locations, I made arrangements with Mr. Al-Kuwaiti, a tour guide who lived in Al-Ahsa and works with the *Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage*. The data collection methods for the site visits were principally handwritten notes and photographic recordings which I made of the exterior and interior of the domestic environment in order to create a solid visual data reference. The tour guide was also a useful data source. In addition, I was able to conduct an informal interview with Sheikh Al-Majid, an expert on Al-Hofuf history, who lived in the Al-Naathil traditional neighbourhood. Mr. Al-Majid is also the creator of the Al-Naathil museum, which is situated inside his home property.

The goal of the site visits was to enable me to acquire a deeper understanding of the traditional domestic environment, through the opportunities to examine other real examples of home museums from the Eastern Provinces. This allows me to draw a comparison of the different home museums, in terms of their creators, artefact displays, presentation methods, and other manifestations of creativity.

The findings of the field-work illustrate the positive adaptation that this research perspective interprets as the cultural resilience manner. Detailed analysis and supporting images are employed in chapter six to discuss the new cultural preservation phenomenon that has emerged in the form of the practice of creating and operating private museums.

2.6 Data analysis methods

Data were collected from a wealth of fieldwork resources, including drawings, photos, and interviews, field notes. These resources were supplemented with secondary documentary data resources, such as newspapers, magazines, books, websites and annual reports from *Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage* through the director of museum department in CTNH. This created a rich archive that required processing, which was carried out by means of careful spatial, visual and material culture analysis. These analyses were framed by the key theoretical concepts of cultural trauma, cultural resilience and cultural preservation, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four, the theoretical chapter.

2.6.1 Material culture analysis

The importance of material culture analysis as a practical approach in qualitative methodology has been widely recognised in the literature. For example, Secondulfo (2011) argues that the analysis of material culture is an extremely useful, versatile qualitative research technique that should therefore be more widely utilised in research. This kind of analysis is based on the study of the artefacts of a given group of people at a particular point at time, with these objects offering unique insights into ideas, values and beliefs (Prown, 1982, p.1).

This thesis utilises a material cultural analytical approach in order to understand and interpret how the resident transformed her home to generate meaning and reflect her cultural identity. Material cultural analysis is conducted by the examination of culture as something that is created through objects or lived through objects, which "have the ability to signify things - or establish social meaning - on behalf of people, or do social work" (Woodward, 2007, p.4). In material culture analysis, the focus is not only on the objects, but also on the meaning that they hold to people and how this meaning is transmitted. Objects have a capacity for cultural communication that is only understood within the specific cultural context in which they exist. In line with the continuity and progressive changes of the Saudi lifestyle, some objects in the current study were deemed to be redundant and therefore a part of history (i.e. artefacts), while other objects were recognised as still holding influence and remaining part of culture, such as some traditional costumes.

"Material culture is, chiefly, something portable and perceptible by touch and therefore has a physical, material existence that is one component of human cultural practice" (Woodward, 2007, p.14) Objects in material culture can be considered as tools to transmit culture, to help convey information about earlier times. Through the spatial relations among objects, the ways in which furniture and other objects are organised and displayed, which enables space to acquire its meaning. This provides evidence about the cultural values of the residents (Secondulfo, 2011), as well as their identities, memories, and religions.

Scholars use the term "material culture" to refer to any material object or network of material objects" (Woodward, 2007, p.14). In this investigation, the network of material objects is the museum as well as the home, although in this context, artefacts in both locations (home and museum) can be considered as an example of material objects. For instance, the significance of guest hospitality practices in the traditional culture of Saudi Arabia generated a network of cultural material, such as the specific area where coffee was prepared and served. In courtyard houses, this area was considered to be the most important part in the *majlis* (guest room), as it is a symbolic place that reflected guest hospitality. The coffee making area in the *majlis* was called *wijaq*, which is a built-in rectangular place to cook and heat the coffee over the coals, while the coffee shelf displays all types of coffee pots and tools called *kamar*. The coffee pots and shelf are considered to be material culture. The reason for publically displaying these items was to convey a message of hospitality to the guest, demonstrating that the house owner is prepared to receive many guests at the same time. The *majlis* as a place allocated to the practice of guest hospitality can be considered to be a network of material culture, markers of value and identity as indicators of cultural and political power. Examples of these issues are discussed in the case study analysis discussed in chapter 5 and 6. These chapters will examine all of the above capacities of objects as signifiers of culture, in an attempt to understand the relationships between objects and people, as well as how material objects transfer and translate information within the specific context of Saudi culture. The key idea is to realise, observe and then interpret the relationship between people and objects as a significant way in which culture can be communicated, obtained and created (Woodward, 2007). Another important aspect of material cultural analysis is concerned with the object setting. This means that the location of an artefact within a network of other material objects might collectively represent a cultural practice, as seen in the location of a coffee corner in the guest room in traditional houses.

In order to refer objects to their cultural settings and be able to read them as material culture, I adopted an approach of perceiving objects as signs that carry meanings. Proper understanding and analysis of the significance held by objects within a specific culture requires an intimate understanding of that culture. This is important, because objects can often become a signifier or symbols of religion, identity, gender, or social statuses. For instance, in Saudi culture, certain costumes, called *bisht*, are worn by ordinary men on special occasions, such as Eid or weddings. However, people of high social status, such as princes or family leaders (*Sheiks*), often wear the *bisht* at all times. This illustrates that it can potentially be problematic to conduct a material culture analysis approach without the required cultural knowledge required to properly relate objects to their significance within a wider cultural context. In the current study, my background and intimate personal knowledge of this cultural environment enabled me to analyse and interpret the meaning of the material artefacts, in accordance with the adopted approach.

Photography and drawings provide visual evidence to record reality and conduct spatial analysis. These types of methods are often the optimal strategies to understand and analyse the diverse, complex nature of material culture (Secondulfo, 2011). The next two sections discuss in detail spatial and visual analyses that together with material cultural analysis enable the study to draw a new perspective on positive adaptation and cultural preservation of a domestic environment.

2.6.2 Spatial analysis

Spatial analysis was an important method for the transferral of the raw material gathered during the fieldwork phase into visual data. In this way, spatial analysis described the imported American home model and the physical development by its Saudi residents. Two-dimensional plans were drawn in order to show the spatial organisation (zoning) of the American home model, which comprised a design with an open layout concept. Using the plans enabled me to analyse in detail the main problem facing the residents, namely that of ensuring visual, acoustic and olfactory privacy from the Saudi cultural perspective.

Plans were then drawn of both floors to show the modifications undertaken to provide Saudi privacy requirements. It was necessary for the drawings to clarify the location and type of changes, such as extensions, attached or detached mass. Spatial analysis showed examples of the significant role of requirements associated with cultural practices in the Saudi home design, such as the need for privacy and guest hospitality. In this way, it became clear how these particular cultural practice requirements increased the overall

scale of the home. A two-dimensional plan was then drawn to facilitate analysis of the relationship between the home and museum. The plan maps the movements of visitors within the house before entering the museum and shows the progression of the tour, according to the programme designed by Mrs. Munira Al-Ashgar. A three-dimensional model of the museum was drawn, and spatial analysis of the model was then used to illustrate Mrs. Munira's geographical and social classification scheme.

2.6.3 Visual analysis

Having taken detailed photographic records of the museum, I analysed this visual evidence and linked the findings to my theoretical base in order to explore the various ways in which objects and material culture have contributed to the positive adaptation of the domestic environment. Visual analysis of images began in the pilot-study fieldwork, as soon as I had created a solid body of data reference by comprehensively photographing the exterior and interior of the house. Analysing the photographs helped to determine how and why elements and artefacts had been used to understand the meanings behind their presence in the home.

Although a single image can be ambiguous or express many meanings, comprehensively comparison of a large number of different photographs helped to objectively map, classify and interpret what appeared and occurred in the domestic environment. Specific classification methods were utilised to analyse the visual images taken inside the home. For example, in order to understand the complex combinations of identities that became evident during the pilot study, elements in each photo were associated with different cultural identities: whether they had Islamic identity, Saudi identity, or cosmopolitan identity. This associative process and analysis are explained in more detail in chapter five.

Two approaches to visual data analysis were also used to enable me to deepen my understanding of the museum building. The first approach investigated the underlying design concept of the museum through analysis of the photographs of the façade, entrance, and interior the building. The second focused on photographs of the interior space of the museum and its displays. This comparison and analysis enabled me to better understand Mrs. Munira's presentation techniques and gave a valuable insight into the way that she had translated tangible and intangible material culture inside the walls of the museum.

2.7 Research challenges and limitations

A number of challenges were encountered during this investigation. Initially, I was limited by the scarcity of materials and research on cultural preservation in the contemporary Saudi Arabia domestic environment. Although the majority of the extant research on architectural transformation in this context highlights the loss of identity, my aim was to construct an understanding of the impact of this transformation in order to highlight better understand the resultant positive cultural adaptation.[3] During my research, a paper was published entitled *Researching the Motives Behind the Acquisition, Possession and Application of Heritage Collectible in Home Interiors*, in which Alawad (2015), with specific reference to the Saudi context, argues that the main reason that women in Saudi Arabia acquire and possess items of cultural heritage is to create social identity. These conclusions were derived from analysis of a sample of 330 women from central Saudi Arabia. She also confirms that no earlier research has investigated the domestic interior from this perspective, which underlines the significance of my research in contributing to addressing this gap.

Once I undertook the process of attempting to gather comprehensive statistics regarding the number of museums that had been created by individuals in their own private places of residence. The Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage was the only resource from which to obtain information, reports and statistics on private museums across the Kingdom. The commission was very accommodating and compliant in providing the required data to support the research. However, the available data were limited to registered museums, whose owners had been able to obtain an official license and meet the ten license requirements required to operate a private museum in the Kingdom. It could therefore be possible that a greater number of private museum exist but are not officially registered because of an inability to meet the official license requirements or even because their owners do not need technical or financial support. For research purposes, if another option was implemented to register a private museum as a non-licensed museum with SCTH, this would enable access to more comprehensive data regarding the number and locations of both licensed and non-licensed private museums, and a clearer platform for future research. Having outlined the methodological approach

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[3] The literature consists of broadly negative analyses of the impact that the oil industry has had on Saudi culture, as highlighted in this research (see p.3 and p.4).

utilised in the data collection phase of the current study, the next chapter will now provide a clear discussion of the history of the domestic environment transformation in the Eastern Province.

The History of the Eastern Province
Domestic Environment

The traditional domestic environment of the
Eastern Province prior to the discovery of oil

The period of oil discovery

The role of the oil company in the
transformation of the Eastern Province's
domestic environment

3

Contents

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the outcomes of an extensive review of the history of the domestic environment of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, before the discovery of oil and its corresponding transformation. This discussion also highlights the major role played by the oil company, Aramco, in the transformation of the built environment in the Kingdom, with particular reference to the changes wrought upon the domestic environment of the Eastern Province. The significance of this historical review is that it constructs a foundation for the study, and provides an overall orienting lens for the transformations, utilising examples, images and archival material.

The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first of these provides a summary of the traditional dwelling types that were previously commonplace in the Eastern Province, including Bedouin tents, *barasti* dwellings and courtyard houses. Through the use of historical photographs and archived documentation, I provide a description of each dwelling and attempt to trace its changing role in the Saudi context, with specific reference to their use for workers during early oil exploration. In order to acquire first-hand evidence of what remains of the traditional domestic environment, I undertook a two-site visit to Al-Hofuf, a city that saw the establishment of the first traditional settlement in the Eastern Province. In Hofuf, I visited Al-Kut and Al-Naathil, two traditional residential areas: In Al-Kut, I examined a preserved traditional house, after which I investigated the remains of a demolished neighbourhood in Al-Naathil. The first section of the chapter presents the images and field-note observations collected from the Al Hofuf traditional environment.

In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the history of oil discovery in Saudi Arabia and examine the remarkable socio-economic impact that this period has had on the Kingdom. Fundamental data is provided in order to understand and illustrate the major role of the oil company in the rapid transformations of the built environment. I then highlight certain key aspects of the transformations: the establishment of the oil company residential camps, the launch of the Home Ownership Program, the emergence of new technology and construction materials in the local market, the introduction of the first modern city in Saudi Arabia, the importation of the American suburban houses model, and the increased exposure of Saudi locals to other cultures.

3.2 The traditional domestic environment of the Eastern Province prior to the discovery of oil

Prior to the discovery of oil in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, the inhabitants of the region were primarily dependent on agriculture, fishing and pearl diving. As a consequence, many of the original settlements could be static or mobile, according to the nature of their livelihoods. Indeed, the majority of the population of the Eastern Province historically comprised travelling Bedouin communities or settled agricultural populations, with the remaining third being composed of more conventional urban settlements (Fancy, 1994).

The inhabitants of the Eastern Province created their dwellings based on adaptation and the utilisation of local resources from the surrounding environment. Three main types of dwelling existed in this area: the *bayt shahe*r, a tent that was woven from goat's hair or sheep's wool; *barasti* houses, which were built from palm fronds and poles; and courtyard houses built from sundried mud brick. As this illustrates, the building practices used in the construction of traditional towns in Saudi Arabia were largely based on the fusion of accumulated skills and the particular natural materials available in the local environment (Al-Mubarak, 1999). In large part, the inhabitants of the Eastern Province created their dwellings through the use of the adopted knowledge and practice of previous generations.

The following sections will provide a description of each type of dwelling and trace their existence as worker houses during the early exploration of oil resources.

3.2.1 Bedouin Tents

Traditional tents in Saudi Arabia are called *bayt shahe*r. The word *bayt* in the Arabic language refers to a home, while *shaher* means the hair of a goat or camel, which served as the material for the tent construction. Tents were considered practical and functional dwellings capable of resisting all types of weather conditions in the harsh desert, such as wind, sun and sandstorms. The lightweight construction materials also made tents malleable and easy to fix on to structures, which suited the nomadic Bedouin way of life. When a Bedouin family decided to move to another location, the tent could be rolled up and put on the backs of camels. The images below provide an example of a Bedouin tent (Fig. 3.1) and Saudi Bedouins drinking Arabic coffee inside the tent (Fig. 3.2).

The interior of Bedouin tents strongly reflected the most vital traditions of their culture, which are guest hospitality and privacy. In order to ensure the provision of the required

levels of privacy the exposed side of the tent, which always faced away from the wind, was partitioned into multiple sections through the use of vertical curtains. These sections would provide a separate, discrete space for men, for women, and for guests. A model of a Bedouin tent (*bayt shar*) is displayed in the northern section of the case study museum in chapter six (see section 6.1.2.3).
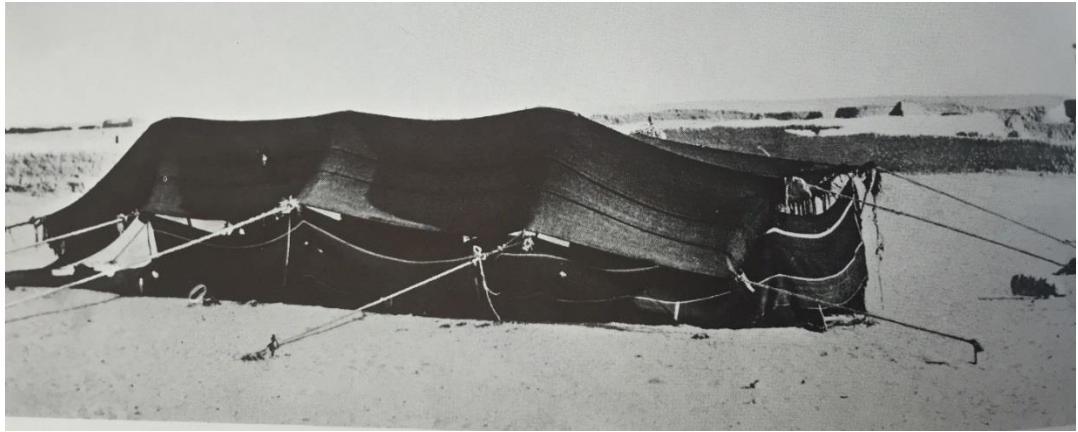
Figure 3.1: Bedouin tent made of goat or camel hair (Lebkicher, Rentz, and Steineke, 1960, p.246).

Figure 3.2: Saudi *Bedouins* inside the tent drinking Arabic coffee (Lebkicher, Rentz, and Steineke, 1960, p.247).

Traditionally, these tents would be clustered close to each other around a source of water, thereby forming impromptu communities of nomadic Bedouins. These tents appeared in many photos of the first oil exploration sites in the desert of the Eastern Province in the 1930s, as they were used to accommodate Saudi and non-Saudi employees during the oil exploration process. Tents in the desert began to cluster around oil exploration wells, rather than water sources. The historical photograph below (Fig. 3.3) depicts a temporary tent city that was constructed close to Abu Hadriya in north Dhahran. At its peak, this city served as the temporary home of approximately 2000 people. The photograph was taken in 1939, around the visit of King Abdu Al-Aziz to the exploration site established by Casco, which he carried out to commemorate the loading of the very first Saudi oil tanker (McMurry, 2011).[4]

Today, tents are used during camping excursions into the desert, which is still a commonplace activity in Saudi society. Tents have also recently become a significant material artefact in the gardens of some contemporary Saudi homes, although different designs, forms and materials are used. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

Figure 3.3: Tents were commonly utilised as employee accommodation during the initial oil exploration sites in the deserts of the Eastern Province (Sources: McMurray, 2011a, p.8)

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[4] This was the California Arabian Oil Company (CASCO) its name to ARAMCO in 1944 (Pakka, 2006, p.24).

3.2.2 Barasti dwellings

Barasti dwellings are traditional huts that were constructed by the agriculturalists, fishermen and pearl divers living in the coastal areas of the Arabian Gulf. This form of dwelling has now almost completely disappeared (Majed, 1987). The simple construction methods used by the inhabitants were the outcome of developed past experiences in how to utilise natural materials, with the majority having been constructed from local resources that were available from the surrounding environment, such as date palm fronds. Each of these structures delineated the area allocated for the family. The interior space was then subdivided and *barasti* dwellings built on each parcel of land. These rectangular structures had a pitched roof and were primarily constructed from palm fronds ('*jareed*') or tamarisk ('*i'thil*'), while the inside is insulated with a layer of mud (Alamdar, 2003, p.52). Each *barasti* dwelling normally took approximately three to five days to construct. A traditional *barasti* dwelling in the Eastern Province is depicted below (Fig. 3.4).

Figure 3.4: A *barasti* dwelling in Eastern province (Source: Fancy, 1994, p.70).

In his account of the early history of the Eastern Province, McMurry (2011) describes the city now called Al-Khobar. This settlement was originally a small pearling and fishing village that was formed by the Al-Dawasir tribe in the 1920s, who had come to the area from Bahrain in order to flee a political dispute. The Al-Dawasir lived along the Arabian Gulf coast to the north of Ugayrin, where they constructed *barastis* using local date palm leaves that they secured to frameworks comprising wooden posts. The Al-Dawasir tribe originally hailed from Bahrain and settled in the coastal area of the Eastern Province, where they organised their first settlements with the construction of their *barasti* dwellings in the manner to which they were accustomed in their homeland. In 1919, when Bahrain was still a British colony, the British consulate imposed a punishing set of laws, taxes, and other practices to govern trading and diving. This had a direct impact on the livelihoods and businesses of the Al-Dawaser tribe (Alamdar, 2003). As a consequence, the tribe decided to leave the country and to found a new community in the eastern coastal region of Saudi Arabia.

Barasti dwellings existed in the Dhahran area into the late 1930s, where they served as homes for Saudi employees outside the oil company camp, as illustrated by the photograph below of the housing built from date palm fronds near the mosque in Dhahran (Fig. 3.5). However, neither the government nor the oil company were happy with the *barasti* dwellings and so made provision for their replacement by better housing conditions. Another historical image from 1946 shows the traditional dwellings, *barastis*, being used as homes for workers during the oil company drilling activity that took place in Abqaiq (Fig. 3.6).

More historical photos show the evolution of *barasti* use and design, and its integration into the education and training programmes offered by the oil company. However, the function of *barastis* changed, as can be seen by their use as a school in a Saudi camp in 1941 (Fig. 3.7). It is clear from the photo that wooden doors and windows were utilised, unlike the design of more traditional versions of the structure, which allowed the building to function as a more effective school for Saudi employees (Fig.3.8) (Dialdin and Tahlawi, 1998).
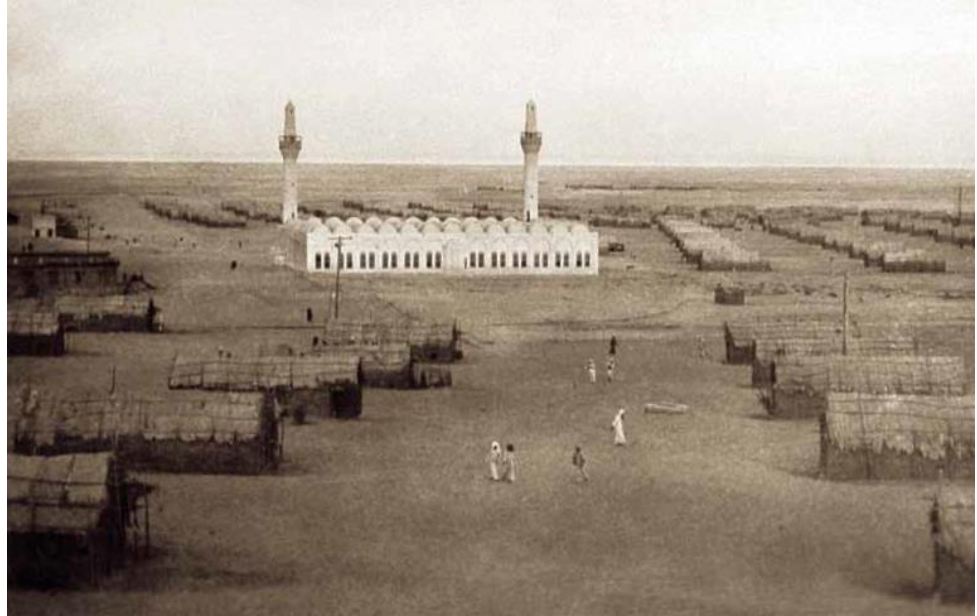
Figure 3.5: *Barasti* dwellings occupied by Saudis in late 1930s in Dhahran area
(Source: McMurray, 2011a, p.88).

Figure 3.6: *Barasti* dwellings used as workers' houses during the oil company drilling activity
in Abqaiq in 1946 (Source: Clark and Tahlawi, 2006, p.40).

Figure 3.7: *Barasti* school in Saudi camp, 1941 (Source: Dialdin and Tahlawi, 1998, p.13)

Figure 3.8: Intermediate class of Saudi employees in front of their *barasti* school
(Dialdin and Tahlawi, 1998, p.14)

3.2.3 Courtyard houses

The third type of dwelling in the Eastern Province was the courtyard house, which was typically built from sun-dried mud brick. These structures effectively exemplify how the traditional domestic environment was built and designed in accordance with the needs of its users, as well as how the built environment can reflect the identity, culture and religion of residents. In this sense, "the courtyard house as a type was compatible with the social values of life and was a mirror of the culture in addition to its efficiency in responding to the harsh climate" (Dayaratne, 2013, p.3). Courtyard houses represent a unique architectural and environmental means by which to understand the rich cultural heritage of the vernacular architectural style of the Eastern Province. They are usually two storeys high and are divided into three sections: the front (guest zone), middle (family zone), and back (service zone). There would also be a number of courtyards, with owners of higher social status having more courtyards, and some houses even having discrete courtyards for guests, families, and animals.

Before the discovery of oil, traditional societies across the whole of Saudi Arabia enjoyed a harmonious relationship within their home environment. The design of Saudi houses differed, to reflecting the identity and resources of the region in which they were built. It is even possible to determine the location of a house by looking at its traditional façade. Those that are rectangular in shape, with courtyards and a flat roof, are located in the middle part of the Kingdom; cylindrical tower houses are from the south; houses with a *mashrabiyah* (wooden window) are located in the west; and buildings with flat roofs and wind catchers are characteristic of the Eastern Province. However, privacy was a shared concept that played an integral role in determining the organisation of space and the design of the façade in all of the traditional homes in Saudi Arabia.

In the case of the Eastern Province, prior to the discovery of oil, Al-Hofuf was the most important town in the area, due in large part to its location at the south-western corner of Al-Ahsa oasis. People originally settled in this area due to the ready availability of water, which enabled and supported agriculture and therefore commerce. Al-Ahsa oasis remains the largest date producer in the world, with over one and a half million date palm trees. This makes the oasis exceptionally beautiful and has led to its nomination for consideration as a World Wonder (Da Cruz, 2016). Al Hofuf is the most strategically valuable and therefore the most important town in the Eastern Province until 1953. At that time, the complex and far-reaching economic and demographic developments that took place due to the oil boom shifted the title of preeminent settlement to Dammam

(Fancy, 2000), which became the new centre of the Eastern Province. The historical map below clearly illustrates the town of Hofuf and its three residential districts: Kut, Rifa'ah and Na'athil (Fig. 3.9). The middle of the map shows the vertical path of *Suq Al-Khamis* (Thursday market), which was the 'nerve-centre' of commercial life in the Eastern Province (Fig.3.10). This discussion touches upon these topics in more detail later in the chapter (see section 3.2.3.1& 3.2.3.2), with specific reference to the site visits made to Al Kut and Na'athil, which were undertaken to provide first-hand experience of a traditionally constructed domestic environment.
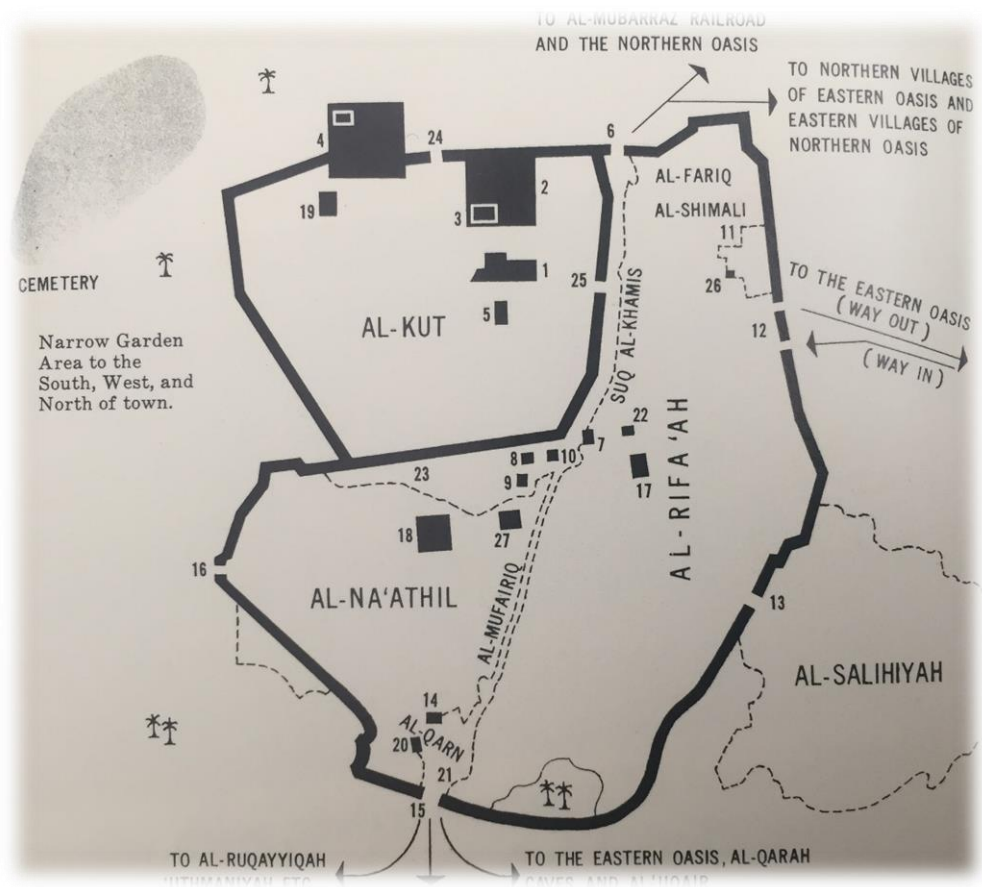
Figure 3.9: The town of Hofuf and its three residential districts
(Source: Fancy, 2000, p.72).

Figure 3.10: Suq Al-khamis (Thursday Market) located in the main street of old Hofuf
(Source: Fancy, 2000, p.72).

The organisation of the traditional neighbourhoods in Al Hofuf has been described very effectively by Al-Naim (1998). As he explained each neighbourhood "*fereej*" usually carried the name of the extended family inhabiting the district. A special technique was used in the creation of these districts, enabling homes to be clustered and attached together, effectively framing a distinctive system of networked outdoor circulation. In each *fereej* the main network path was called the "*sikka*". The branches of the circulation network where the *sikka* narrowed and led to the house door was effectively a 'cul-de-sac' that provided a private space for the inhabitant of that house. In addition to its role as a semi-private space, each *sikka* created an open court area "*baraha*", which was a safe space for children to play and social activities to be arranged. For example, *baraha* were often used to hold marriage celebrations. These open spaces also facilitated air circulation, helping to alleviate the high temperatures of the region and the *fereej* itself (AL-Naim, 1998).

In traditional neighbourhoods, transitional zones inside and between the courtyard houses played an important environmental role in the provision of privacy and shade, in response to the hot and harsh climate. The open courtyards (*baraha*) between the attached houses were another important feature, as they provided a place for private social interaction to take place between neighbours (Fig. 3.12). Meanwhile, family gatherings were held in the courtyards inside the houses, ensuring that Saudi privacy needs were respected.
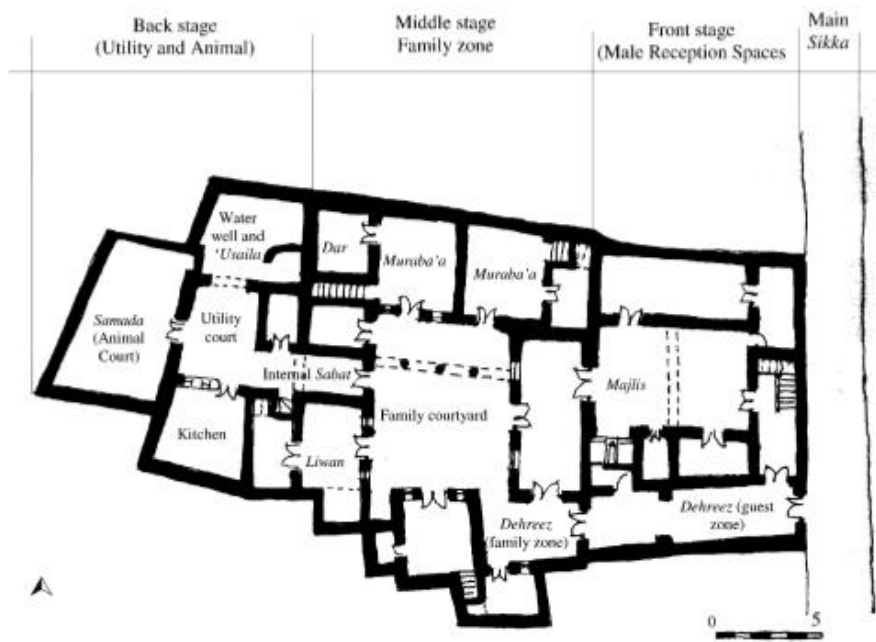
Figure 3.11: Courtyard house plan showing the three parts of the house
(Source: Al-Naim, 1998, p.229)

Figure 3.12: Example of the organisation of a traditional neighbourhood with courtyard
houses in Saudi Arabia (Source: Al Surf, Susilawait, Trigunarsyah, 2012 p.10)

Another element that was characteristic of the domestic environment in Al Hofuf was the bridge that connected courtyard houses across the *sikkas*. These bridges, called *sabat,* enabled women to move between the roofs of houses, while ensuring that their privacy was protected. The *sabat* also provided shade from the sun for individuals in the *sikkas* and thereby enriched the *fereej* by creating cooler, darker areas that starkly contrasted with the intense heat and light of the region (AL-Naim, 1998, p.202). The presence of these bridges reinforced the importance of the roof spaces in the courtyard houses of old Hofuf. Roofs played an important role in providing privacy among family members, as it was common that multiple extended families lived within the same house. For example, privacy was typically ensured by dividing the roof space into distinct zones, with each family having one area to themselves that they accessed by a separate door and staircase, and the third zone being allocated to the children. On warm summer nights, which is the majority of the year in this region, each of the families would sleep on their part of the roof. The adults of each family would then sleep in their designated area with their infants, while older boys and girls sleeping in zones that were separate from the adults (AL-Naim, 1998, p.295).

Perhaps the most important area in the traditional houses of this area was the central courtyard, which was the family space. The location of the courtyard in the centre of the home created a safe, private space for the family, as well as acting a point of convergence in the house. Many essential activities would occur in this space, such as eating, relaxation or celebration. The importance of this area was also reflected in the arrangement of the rooms, with the kitchen and storage areas being situated around the courtyard, and corridors and stairwells converging on the space (Bahammam, 2006, p.81).

In July 2016, in order to acquire a first-hand experience and understanding of the remnants of a traditional domestic environment, I undertook a site visit to Al-Kut and Al-Naathil, two former traditional residential areas in Al Hofuf. In Al-Kut, I visited a preserved courtyard house, while my visit to Al-Naathil was to the remains of a demolished neighbourhood.

The site visit required a 125 km journey by car to Al Hofuf from Dammam, the centre of the Eastern Province centre. In order to gain access to the specific fieldwork locations, I enlisted the assistance of Mr. Al-Kuwaiti, a tour guide who lived in Al-Ahsa Oasis and who works for the *Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage* (SCTH). The

data collection methods that I utilised during the fieldwork site visits were field notes and photographic recordings of the exterior and interior of the domestic environment, through which I sought to create a clear and coherent visual data reference. The tour guide was also a useful data source, as was Sheikh Al-Majid, an expert on Hofuf history who lives in the Al-Naathil traditional neighbourhood. Mr. Al-Majid has also created a museum inside his home, called the Al-Naathil museum, which is discussed in depth in chapter six.

Figure 3.13: Remains of demolished Al-Naathil neighbourhood, reached with the assistance of Mr Al-Kuwaiti, a tour guide from the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage
(Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

3.2.3.1 Al-Naathil site visit

In Al Hofuf, I found the remains of a traditional neighbourhood that had been demolished. A strong identity was reflected in this area: from the name it carried to the manner of its organisation, all of which demonstrated the social and cultural condition of its residents. Al-Naathil was the name of the most important family living in the neighbourhood; although they no longer live in the area, their name is still used for identification.

During the visit, it was possible to record the façade design, structural system, and the circulation network between the courtyard houses. However, it was not safe to enter the interiors of these houses, due to the risk of collapse. The *sikka*, the main network path through the neighbourhood and the *baraha* in the end of the *sikka* can be seen in the fieldwork photos (Fig.3.14). The *baraha* in this picture was being used as a car park.

The next picture (Fig. 3.15) shows the *sabat,* the bridge area that connects the two courtyard houses facing each other across the same *sikkas*.

Figure 3.14: Sekka in Al-Naathil neighbourhood. At the far end, it is possible to see the *baraha*, an open courtyard (Source: Al-Jamea,2016)

Figure 3.15: A *sabat* bridge area connecting two courtyard houses facing each other
(Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

During the fieldwork in Al-Naathil neighbourhood, I took extensive notes regarding the degree to which privacy, identity and other cultural aspects had been achieved in the design and arrangement of the domestic environment. As mentioned previously, there are fundamental privacy requirements in the domestic environments of Saudi Arabia. Traditionally, extended families lived together in a formation of attached houses (*fereej*), which created a private domestic zone that was exclusively used by the family members (more explanation of this is available on p.41). Members of the same neighbourhood also had their own recreational and gathering outdoor spaces, with strangers being forbidden from passing through the neighbourhood. This intimate, secure outdoor network allowed children to move safely between the attached courtyard houses (AL-Naim, 1998).

These transitional zones between homes also provided a well-shaded area for outdoor gatherings. These areas were especially valuable given that local temperatures often exceed 40°C. The outdoor zones had a significant role in the daily social interaction between neighbours, whilst also providing a safe place for children to entertain themselves. The fact that families lived close to one another meant that women were not isolated from their relatives or social groups, because the bridge area (*sabat*) that connected houses enabled them to move easily and privately by means of indoor transitional spaces (ibid). The internal courtyards in traditional houses were also considered to be suitable private places for women to gather.

This need for privacy was also evident in the design of the façades of these traditional houses. The façade is a high, rectangular wall that was intentionally built in order to not expose the courtyard of the neighbouring building. Windows in the façade were only located in the upper level, thereby ensuring that people passing the façade would not be able to see into the internal spaces. Arches were the most prominent feature in the architecture of the Eastern province, as they were used in different part of the façade and in the transitional zones between houses. The artwork and ornamentation of each façade created a unique architectural identity, with most of the ornamentation having been inspired by the surrounding environment, such as palm tree motifs.

I observed examples of self-expression in the attention given to the main entrance area. In most courtyard houses, the main entrance of the façade was the most important element of the house's exterior, with decoration on or above the gate door providing the first indication of the status of the inhabitants. Wealthy residents often installed expensive carved wooden gates for their houses. These could be elaborately decorated with floral

motifs over the main gate area, which would often be repeated over the arches in the facade. Surviving examples of these motifs are displayed below (Fig.3.16; Fig.3.17).[5]

Figure 3.16: Rectangular façade form with arched windows

(Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

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[5] During my field visit, the openings inside the arches were closed and the inhabitants had added a modern air-conditioning appliance to the façade.

Figure 3.17: Floral motif ornamentation over the main gate
(Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

3.2.3.2 Al-Kut site visit

My second site visit to the Hofuf area was to the Al-Kut neighbourhood, where I visited a preserved courtyard house called Bayt Al-Baiah. This building was constructed in 1788 for Sheikh Bin Omer Al-Mullah, who was responsible for the execution of local administration and law in the area at that time (Saudi tourism, 2016). After being purchased, the building became state property (ibid) and eventually became one of the most important tourist sites in the Eastern Province (Fig. 3.18). The historical significance of the house, and a major reason for it being preserved, is linked to the fact that King Abdul Aziz, who united the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, stayed as a guest in this house when he visited Al-Ahsa. Critically, it was during this night that he stayed as a guest in this house that he was recognised as the King by the residents of Al Ahsa, giving the residence tremendous cultural significance. As a consequence, the house became a museum under the SCTH, reflecting official tourism and heritage policy in cultural preservation. A detailed discussion is provided of the role of this building as a museum in chapter six; in this section, I explain the structure from the perspective of a traditional domestic environment. During the renovation process, which sought to ensure the provision of tourist facilities inside the house, the ground floor was paved with tiles, lighting was added, and bathrooms spaces were installed for the museum's visitors.

Figure 3.18: The house became a museum under the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

The site visit to the house provided a valuable insight into the organisation, design and decoration of traditional courtyard houses in Hofuf. In particular, it illustrated how the design of traditional houses reflected the identity and culture of the inhabitants, using the available materials from the surrounding environment. An excellent example of this is the mud construction utilised in the lower part of the house's façade (Fig. 3.19; 3.20).

Figure 3.19: The tour guide explains the construction materials (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

Figure 3.20: Mud construction appears in the lower part of the façade (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

In line with the respect to the privacy requirements and the significance of guest hospitality in Saudi culture, the courtyard house contained two main areas: a family zone and a guest zone. The ground floor was comprised of the guest zone (*majlis*/guest room, courtyard, corridor and staircase), along with a transitional corridor and water well, family zone (courtyard, cooking area, date room, four bedrooms and staircase). The first floor included four bedrooms and two separate roof areas. During my fieldwork, I highlighted a selection of specific interior spaces as identity characteristic in Hofuf's traditional houses, which had been designed in response to the needs of residents living in this geographical area, such as the date room, the water well area and the courtyard.

The significance of dates as food, served daily with coffee to both family members and visitors, resulted in the creation of an internal space in the courtyard houses called the date room. This space was used exclusively for the storage of dates and molasses for syrup, enabling them to be kept readily available throughout the year (Fig. 3.22). In the house that I visited, this room was located on the ground floor, with the door opening to the family courtyard. Another important area that was found in most courtyard houses was the water well (Fig. 3.21). As in many countries and regions, the well became an important design element in the traditional domestic environment of the Eastern Province, due to the dependence of residents on access to a natural water resource. A typical water well was around 20 metres deep and was located in the transitional corridor between the guest zone and the family zone; the room containing the well was typically locked for safety. Inside this house, a small area was allocated for cooking, with built-in shelves for the storage of cooking tools. This room was commonly located in the corner of the family courtyard and attached to the staircase (Fig. 3.23). Courtyards are perhaps the most typical feature of traditional houses in the Hofuf area. These are open spaces in the centre of the house, usually in the shape of a square. All the bedroom doors and windows on the ground and first floor opened on this courtyard, the main function of which was to provide natural light and ventilation to the home (Fig. 3.24). Courtyards enabled the interior spaces of the house to be opened to the inside rather than the outside, offering increased privacy to the residents and protecting them from any visual exposure to the street. Transitional corridors and private courtyards created a domestic environment that respected the need for privacy that is integral to Saudi culture, ensuring total privacy and discretion for family members and guests. The importance of privacy among family members in Saudi culture is explained in more detail in section 3.2.3, page 43.

Figure 3.21: Water well located in the transitional corridor between the guest zone and the family zone
(Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

Figure 3.22: Date storage room and the open circular
hole in the floor for the collection of date syrup
(Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

Figure 3.23: Cooking area attached to the staircase of
the family courtyard (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

Figure 3.24: The family courtyard. All the bedroom doors and windows on the ground and first floor open onto the courtyard, with the far-left door leading to the kitchen (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

The location, size and design of the date room, the water well area and the courtyard signify the socio-cultural impacts of the residents on the design of their houses, demonstrating the successful relationship and integration between the traditional domestic environment and its users.

I was aware of the impact of guest hospitality as soon as I entered the highly-decorated guest room ('*majlis*'). This space was decorated by thirty-four arches of different types and sizes. The most important area of this *majlis* was the coffee corner ('*wijaq*'), which was the symbolic place for entertaining guests. The *wijaq* was the area where the coffee was prepared and served, and therefore contains a built-in rectangular space on the ground for the coals that are used to cook and heat the coffee (Fig.3.28). The coffee corner shelf ('*kamar*') housed all kinds of coffee pots and tools associated with the preparation of coffee. The shape of the arch over the *kamar* was decorated with different ornamentations to the other arches in the *majlis*.

Above this area, a large arch connected the two elevated walls in the majlis. There were sixteen identical arches on the top level of the *majlis* walls, some of which were used as window openings on the house façade. The guest *majlis* was the only room in the house to open onto the street, as customarily the sound of men gathering and preparing coffee is an audible invitation from the men inside the house to invite those outside to join them (Figure 3.26). Another sixteen identical arches were built around the *majlis* walls, serving as built-in shelves above the seating area. The seating place was on the floor, forming a continuous U-shape around the walls, with long rectangular mattresses ('*duwasheg*') placed to support the backs of those sitting. This design enabled guests to sit next to each other without feeling separated, emphasising the importance of intimacy, warmth and increased interaction between the guests that is stressed in Saudi culture (Figure 3.27).

The design of the *majlis* signifies many different things. The intensive use of arches is the most common feature of vernacular architecture in the Eastern Province. The importance of the coffee ritual in Saudi culture is illustrated by the allocation of a specific area for its preparation, following a certain prescribed design. Furthermore, the range of decorated arches in the coffee area provides an excellent example of how the intangible cultural tradition of guest hospitality was reflected inside the physical space of the *majlis*.

Figure 3.25: *Majlis* guest room corridor
(Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

Figure 3.26: Different types and sizes of arches in
this *majlis* (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

Figure 3.27: Seating area on the floor, with *duwasheg* attached to the walls (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

Figure 3.28: The coffee corner (*wijaq*) in traditional houses, which is considered to be the most important part of the majlis. The fan is not part of the coffee corner, having been added solely to provide air for museum visitors (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016).

In this traditional house, another bedroom was located in the family zone, in the corner of the ground floor. This room contained a sitting area and a more conventional bedroom space, which reflected the high status of the residents, as illustrated by the fact that it is elaborately decorated. A gypsum decoration in the wall of the bedroom entrance shows motifs of the local traditional ornamentation, such as geometric shapes and images of botanical plants. A thick ornamental border continued around the walls of the sitting area. The walls of the two rooms are connected by a large arch, which superficially resembles that of the coffee area in the *majlis*, above (Fig. 3.29). The entrance area to the bedroom utilised by King Abdul-Aziz during his visit to Al-Ahsa is also shown below (Fig. 3.30; Fig. 3.31).

Figure 3.29: Heavy gypsum decoration shows the local traditional ornamentation motifs
(Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

Figure 3.30: Gypsum decoration around the bedroom entrance (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016).

Figure 3.31: The bedroom design (Source: Al-Jamea, 2016).

during the fieldwork, I made an important fieldwork observation in the entrance to the guest zone. Upon entering through the main door of the traditional house, I noticed a collection of advertising brochures on display. These had been published by the *Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage* (SCTH) about a range of topics relating to the Al-Ahsa historical area, including the house I was visiting (see Appendix B). One of the brochures was entitled *The Private Museum in Al-Ahsa* and contained numerous illustrated photos of museums in the area, along with the names, contact numbers and locations of their owners (Fig. 3.32). A detailed discussion is provided of this observation and the information provided about the private museum phenomenon in the Eastern Province in chapter six.

Overall, the site visits exemplified the various ways in which the traditional domestic environment was designed and built, and how these choices reflected the specific, characteristic vernacular architecture identity of the Eastern Province. It provided a valuable insight into the ways that the crucial aspects of privacy and guest hospitality had informed and shaped the organisation and ornamentation of space.

Figure 3.32: Advertising corner displaying brochures published
by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage
(Source: Al-Jamea, 2016)

3.3. The period of oil discovery

Oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia in 1938, six years after having been found in the nearby country of Bahrain. The process of searching for oil in the harsh conditions of the Saudi desert had been incredibly taxing on the American prospectors. This led to prolonged conflict and indecision among the board of the Standard Oil of California Company regarding whether to continue exploration or to avoid further waste of valuable time and resources during the search (Barger, 1984). However, oil was eventually found in Saudi Arabia, with the chief geologist of California-Arabian Standard Oil Company, Max Steineke, being generally acknowledged as the most influential person in the discovery (Pakka, 2006, p.14).

Initially, during the early oil exploration phase in the Saudi Arabia desert, the Americans worked with the help of native Saudis. One example of these collaborations is illustrated below. An American oil expert, Les Hilyard, is depicted posing with his local Saudi drilling team (Fig. 3.33) (Pakka, 2006, p.24). As noted above, oil was eventually found in 1938, when the American geologists made the decision that Well No. 7 should be drilled deeper than previous attempts. This unearthed an unprecedented quantity of oil, which began a new area of prosperity for Saudi Arabia and the Eastern Province in particular (Fancy, 1994).
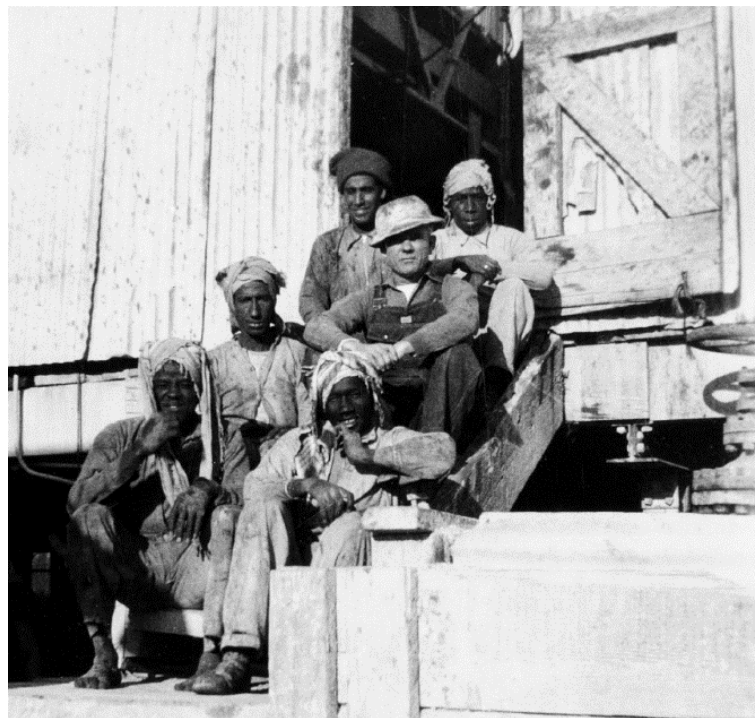
Figure 3.33: Saudi drilling crew with an American driller on steps of No.7 in 1937
(Source: Pakka, 2006).

Dammam Well No. 7 was located in the Dhahran area of the Eastern Province and irrevocably changed the course of the kingdom and its economy. For this reason, it was named 'the Prosperity Well' by King Abdullah. This well was more productive than any of the individuals involved could have imagined, far exceeding the most optimistic predictions, which suggested that it would be viable for several months. In fact, Well No. 7 produced a total of 32 million barrels of oil over a period of 45 years, until it was eventually taken offline in 1982. By that time, it had changed the face of Saudi Arabia forever (AL-Sughair, 2015). The Eastern Province underwent a period of incredibly rapid change in the wake of this discovery, witnessing unprecedented levels of industrial development, based on historic agreements. The discovery of oil under the desert effectively funded the transition of Saudi Arabia to independent statehood. The oil company also changed from CASOC in 1936, becoming ARAMCO in 1944 (Fancy, 1994) and relocating its headquarters to New York in 1949, where it took over prestigious, opulent facilities to reflect its newfound wealth and influence (Aramco, 2013b). The headquarters moved again in 1952, from the luxurious and fashionable Park Avenue building in New York to Dhahran in Saudi Arabia, at the heart of its ongoing oil discovery operations. Figure 3.34 and Figure 3.35 shows the locations of the Aramco headquarters in New York in 1949 and then in Dhahran in 1952.

Figure 3.34: In 1949, Aramco moved its headquarters from San Francisco to a luxurious building located at the corner of Park Avenue and 59th street in New York (Source: Aramco, 2013b)
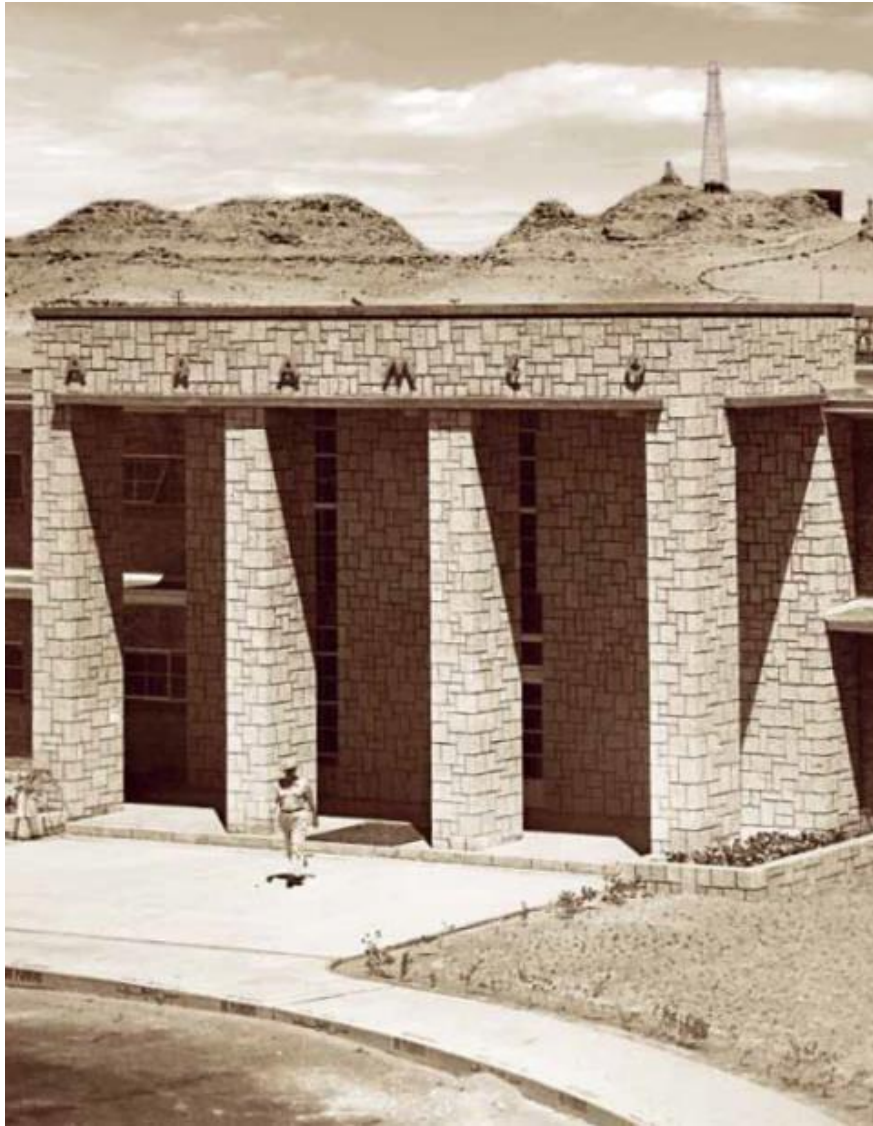
Figure 3.35: Aramco headquarters location moved from New York to Dhahran
in Saudi Arabia in 1952 (Source: Aramco, 2013b)

Aramco rapidly became the largest oil producer in the world, growing from 7.79 million barrels per day in 1944 to a gargantuan 301.9 barrels per day in 1952. The number of employees also rose exponentially, increasing from 2,800 to 24,120 during this same period (Clark and Tahlawi, 2006). Many Saudis from the Eastern Province towns and across the kingdom were trained and employed within the company. The first oil well discovered by an all-Saudi crew was found near Ain Dar in 1953 (Figure 3.36).

Figure 3.36: The first oil well brought in by an all-Saudi crew, near Ain Dar, 1953
(Source: Pakka, 2006)

With the discovery of oil at Well No. 7, Saudi Arabia experienced an unprecedented oil boom that began a period of profound social change (Al-Naimi, 2016), eventually affecting every aspect of Saudi Arabia and its peoples. The transformation was both greater and more rapid than all expectations at the time. Perhaps the most visible example of this development can be seen in the example of Ali Al-Naimi, an individual Saudi Bedouin who held the most powerful post in the energy sector, as both the Saudi oil minister (1995-2016) and an influential leader in OPEC (Fig. 3.37). At a London Chatham House event in November 2016, Al-Naimi released an autobiographical book entitled *Out of the Desert, My Journey from Nomadic Bedouin to the Heart of Global Oil*.

Having been born in the desert of eastern Arabia, Al-Naimi began his life travelling with his extended family. Many years later, he transcended these humble beginnings, eventually becoming the first native president of Aramco. Later, after the company was rebranded as 'Saudi Aramco', he became its first Saudi CEO (Al-Naimi, 2016). Al-Naimi witnessed the rapid, dramatic changes of Saudi Arabia first-hand, during which the discovery of oil changed the Kingdom beyond all recognition. From a fledgling state, Saudi Arabia has evolved into a modern country, a member of the G20, with increasing quality of education, health, and infrastructure (Al-Naimi, 2016).

Despite his high standing in the international community, Al-Naimi reflects a deep connection that many Saudi Arabians feel with their traditional heritage. Al-Naimi believes his life in the desert taught him many lessons.

> "Resources are scarce, and conditions can change dramatically in a very short time. Survival requires preparedness. Although at the time I was far too young to fully imagine what might lay ahead for me, my Bedu background had already taught me the value of preparation and resilience" (Al-Naimi, 2016, p.31).

These words highlight the importance of heritage and the resilience of the Saudi people to dramatic changes, such as the profound economic developments that came with the discovery of oil. Bedouins are defined by their strong cultural values and their wisdom, which is gained from their experience as travellers in the open desert.[6] Although oil changed Saudi Arabia and its people into an industrialised society, it can be argued that the distinctive qualities of the Saudi Bedouin helped to facilitate the change (Kaakli, 2016). These characteristics made the Saudi people into economic leaders, while helping them to retain their strong cultural identity during the adaptation to the new industrial society.[7]
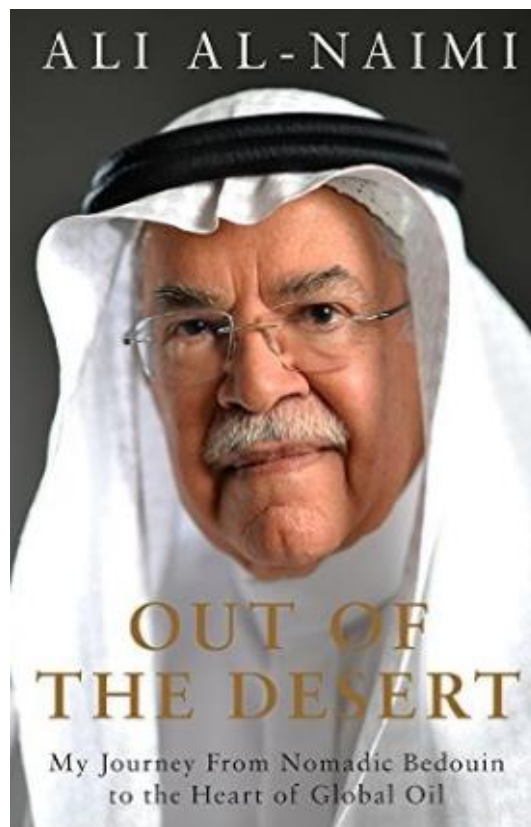
Figure 3.37: Ali Al-Naimi, the first Saudi president of Aramco, former Saudi oil minister, and OPEC kingpin. (Source: Al-Naimi, 2016).

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[6] It is important to clarify that the culture of the Bedouins predates Saudi culture and is also considered to be a part of the modern Saudi culture. The Bedouins lived in the deserts of Arabia and are the successors of the old Bedouin tribes that roamed the peninsula even before the beginning of Islam until "the creation of the modern state known as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1923" (Cole, 1981, pp.128-149). The culture and distinguished characteristics of the Bedouins continued with the establishment of the Saudi state.

[7] There is extensive literature demonstrating that "the Bedouins make a substantial contribution to the economic welfare of Saudi Arabia, supporting themselves and producing a surplus of animal products for the use of the settled people. The life of the nomad is celebrated in Arabic prose and poetry as one of dignity and nobility, and Arabs proudly trace their genealogies back to nomadic ancestors" (Lebkicher, Rentz, & Steineke, 1960, p.247). These tribesmen also played an instrumental role in oil company activities, having been involved in the sector from the initial period of exploration and development (Fancy, 1994). "Although most of Aramco's employees are town and oasis dwellers, many are Bedouins. Some Bedouins have become expert technicians and occupy responsible positions" (Lebkicher, Rentz, & Steineke, 1960, p.247).

3.3.1 The role of the oil company in the transformation of the Eastern Province's domestic environment

It has been argued that "Oil exploration, production and exporting constituted the backbone of the urbanization of Saudi Arabia" (Al-Mubarak, 1999, p.31). In order to properly understand the background of the dramatic transformation that took place in the years after the unexpected oil boom, it is important to focus on the role of the company that discovered the oil. Aramco Oil Company profoundly shaped the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, affecting many aspects of local life, including urban planning:

> "Aramco's oil operations have resulted in profound changes on the traditional Saudi society and its settlements and physical organisation. The contemporary metropolis is a result of the pressures of rapid urbanization, reliance on Western models of architecture and planning, the economic peculiarities of oil and the Kingdom's political system" (Al-Mubarak, 1999, p.49).

In order to prepare their American employees for adaptation to work in Saudi Arabia, the Aramco Oil Company published its first guide, the *Aramco Handbook,* in 1950. The guide was intended to help American employees better understand the history, background and culture of Saudi Arabia, as well as to outline the industrial achievements of the company. The handbook spoke of these achievements, claiming to have transformed the open desert into a modern developed landscape, including many modern amenities like "houses, streets, shops, office building, restaurants, hospitals, schools, recreational facilities, lawns, gardens and trees" (Lebkicher et al., 1960, p.5). This outline emphasises the process of the formation of the existing environment in line with a completely new vision, thereby creating a new network of resources and systems. In order to achieve this aim, the traditional mode of construction, old cities and camel caravans were replaced by modern infrastructure and cities that were supplied by a sophisticated system of cars, trucks, trains and airplanes (Lebkicher et al, 1960, p.6). The practice of rebuilding old cities in a modern style served to profoundly alter the relationship between local people and their traditional environment.

The discovery of oil in the Eastern Province brought about a rapid transformation in the built environment, particularly in terms of the domestic environment. These changes are considered one of the most significant causes of the ongoing changes that appeared later in the Saudi architectural environment (AL-Naim, 1998). It is important to note that the development was neither gradual nor stable, providing little opportunity for local people

to adapt. Instead, the transformation was driven under the enormous pressure of massive oil operations and developments. The changes that utterly transformed life in the Eastern Province were broadly representative of the wave of developments that swept across the Kingdom as a whole, which changed society and infrastructure at an unprecedented and almost incomprehensible speed. "The changes taking place in the eastern province, the area along the Arabian Gulf cost in which Aramco operates, represent in microcosm what is happening throughout the Kingdom" (Nawwab at el., 1980, p.239). Visitors to the Eastern province during this era are recorded as being almost unable to believe the speed at which incredible changes had been wrought upon the traditional settlements in the region:

> "The contrast between the tiny fishing villages of Dammam and Khobar-which I first visited in 1931- where limited gardens provided dates for trading, and the present thriving cities with estimated populations of 20,000 each is almost miraculous" (cited in Al-Mubarak, 1999, 31-51).

Frank Jungers, a mechanical engineer who became the president, chairman and CEO of Aramco uses the expression "growing up together" (Jungers, 2013) to reflect the parallel, closely intertwined growth of Aramco as an oil company and the entirety of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its people, as the environment that hosted the company (ibid). Jungers argued that from the 1930s to today, a period of 75 years, Saudis have come face to face with remarkable changes that have transformed their lifestyle and challenged their culture (Jungers, 2013). In order to transform a traditional society into an industrialised one, Saudi society underwent rapid development in numerous major areas, including education, health, business, and infrastructure. The transformation affected almost every aspect of the lives of the Saudi people, quickly making them more industrialised and business-minded. In this section, I will focus on the impact of the transformation of the Saudi domestic environment.

In the beginning of this chapter, I explained the three types of dwelling that were traditionally built by inhabitants of the Eastern Province: Bedouin tents, *barasti* dwellings and courtyard houses. These were the predominant Saudi residences until June 1936, when the first air-conditioned portables were shipped from California to Dhahran, in a shipment that contained six family portables and several bachelor bunkhouses (Fig. 3.38). Family housing needs were met in shipments that began in June 1936, when Californian-style, portable, two-bedroom bungalows were transported to Saudi Arabia (Pakka, 2006). These portable American-style dwellings changed the ideas of home, introducing the

traditional Saudi people to a different way of living, which included lighting, water and air-conditioning that offered respite from the harsh heat of the desert.

The families of senior US staff arrived in Dhahran in the following year, with the wives of two company employees moving into two-bedroom, air-conditioned homes that had been placed directly on the sand. Four more families arrived a few months later (Fig. 3.39) (Clark et al., 2006). The significant contrasts between the US and Saudi Arabia constituted a profound lifestyle change for the American families. Although they were given the opportunity to ship their personal belongings over, this process often took months, making the adjustment difficult for many (Kimball, 1956).
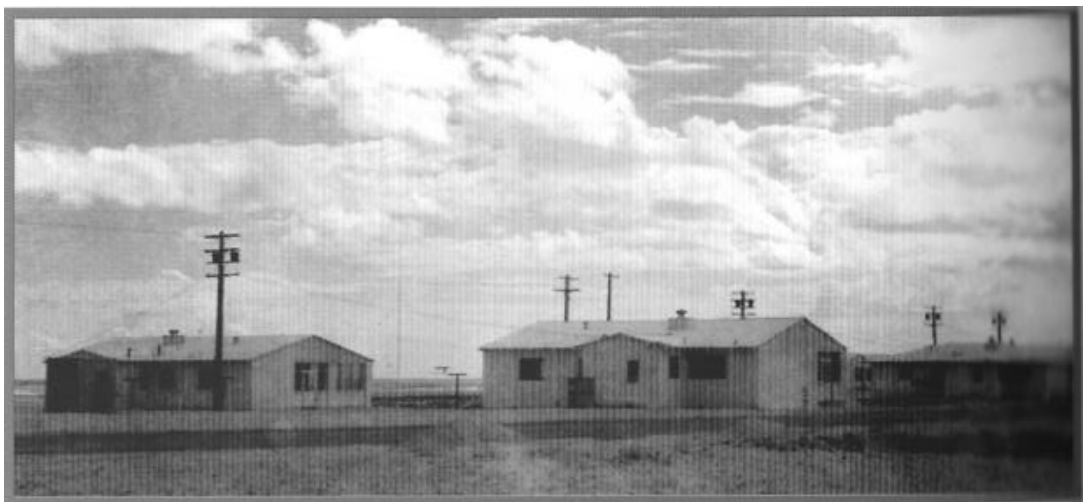
Figure 3.38: The first air-conditioned, two-bedroom portables were shipped to Saudi Arabia in June 1936
(Source: Pakka, 2006, p.18)

Figure 3.39: The first American families to arrive in the Eastern Province
(Source: Pakka, 2006, p. 18)

3.3.1.1 The establishment of oil company residential camps

With the different locations of oil operation activities in the Eastern Province, Aramco established its expatriate oil field camps in three areas: the first was built in 1938 in Dhahran (18km south of Dammam); the second was built in 1939 in Ras Tanura (60km north of Dammam); and the third was built in 1944 in Abqaiq (65km southwest of Dammam) (Alamdar, 2003). Two historical images of the same location of Dhahran oil camp enable comparison of the number of buildings in the camp and the state of its expansion. The first image taken in 1936 shows a small number of buildings (Fig. 3.40), while by the time the second image was taken in 1949 the camp had grown considerably in size (Figure 3.41), with further construction evidently underway.

The word 'camp' is typically defined as: "a place with temporary accommodation of huts, tents, or other structures, typically used by soldiers, refugees, or travelling people" (Oxford dictionaries, 2016). Camp was an appropriate term to describe the Aramco oil company community in the 1930s, when compared with the surrounding area and the local structure of the Eastern Province. Despite having expanded substantially, with the surrounding areas being transformed beyond recognition, the Aramco communities are still referred to as camps. Despite the fact that this word is normally used to describe temporary settlements, in the context of the settled residential community established in the 1930s, the word camp was retained to refer to a community that was fundamentally organised like a normal suburb.

Figure 3.40: Dhahran oil camp in 1936 with a few buildings
(Source: McMurray, 2011a, p.59).
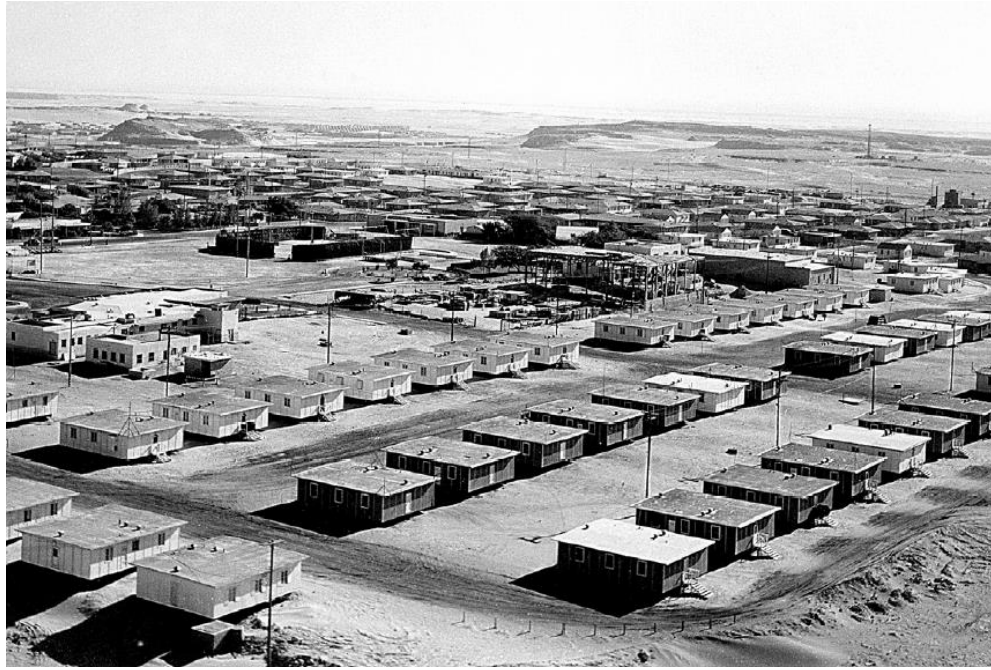
Figure 3.41: The growing numbers of housing in Aramco Dhahran oil camp in 1949
(Source: Pakka, 2006, p.37)

During the establishment of Aramco communities, there was a distinct lack of infrastructure that was capable of supporting the immense industrial oil operations. When combined with the constantly increasing number of international and Saudi employees, this lack of infrastructure made it extremely difficult to provide basic accommodation to employees and became a serious problem for the company. During the 1940s, this reached the stage where some Americans could not bring their families across to live with them, as there was little to no provision for single or married men. Many Americans and Italians lived in tents in temporary camps, while Saudi employees lived in hastily built concrete-block structures (Jungers, 2013). As evident from this description, there were important design differences in the earliest camps, depending on the origins, cultures, religions and education of the employees (Kimball, 1956). The buildings constructed from concrete were highly inappropriate for the local climate, were poorly built, and did not accommodate the needs of Saudi culture. These temporary structures were also clearly built without due consideration of the required architectural features, instead seeking to respond to continually growing number of employees and operational requirements within the shortest time possible (Jungers, 2013).

Because of the shortage of family type houses during this early stage, family housing in American camps in Dhahran was typically allocated according to a seniority system (Kimball, 1956): senior, intermediate, general, and traditional settlement (ibid). The

senior staff camps were particularly obvious, with grass yards growing around American style, single-story homes (ibid). A historical image of the Ras Tannura camp in the early 1950s shows a typical American sloped roof house, surrounded by a small grassed yard (Fig. 3.42) (Kimball, 1956). The second image (Fig. 3.43) was also taken in Ras Tannura camp, although in 1947, showing an insight into the lives of the 43 American children who lived there (Pakka, 2006). As Aramco grew after World War 2, the housing conditions for foreign workers improved considerably, with further provisions being implemented through the 1950s (McMurray, 2011).

Figure 3.42: American houses surrounded by a small grass yard in 1950
(Source: McMurray, 2011a, p.136).

Figure 3.43: American children in the residential section in Saudi Arabia 1947
(Source: Pakka, 2006, p.41)

In Dhahran, local Saudi employees began to create their own residential neighbourhood outside the oil company camp using locally sourced materials and traditional building practices. They used palm-leaves and scrap metal to construct *barasti* dwellings to form this settlement and create a familiar type of community life. As illustrated below, this settlement included a version of a traditional market ('*suq*'), places for the employees or their families to tether their camels, near the *barastis* (Fig. 3.45) (Kimball, 1956), and collections of *barastis* around the Dharan mosque (Fig. 4.46). This traditional settlement made of local and salvaged materials was unacceptable for Aramco and the government, especially given insufficient safety provision. Therefore, subsidiaries and other policies were utilised to encourage the residents to settle elsewhere (ibid, p. 482).
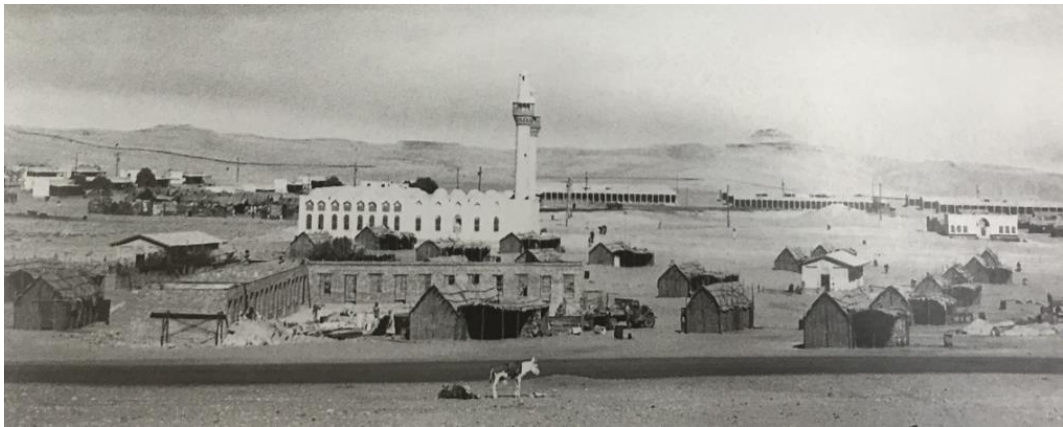
Figure 3.44: Traditional *barasti* dwellings created by Saudi employees using palm-leaves
(Source: Pakka, 2006. p.33).

Figure 3.45: Local *suq* (market) in the Saudi residential area built from scrap materials
(Source: McMurray, 2011a, p.185).

Figure 3.46: First Saudi residential area near the American residential camp
(Source: McMurray, 2011a, p.78).

Aramco and the government collaborated from the 1930s, to directly develop these communities through a process of rapid urbanisation unlike more traditional patterns of urban growth. The growth followed three main stages: firstly, planned towns for American oil communities; then planned communities for Saudi workers; and then a comprehensive phase in the 1970s, where these changes were rolled out on a larger scale (Al-Mubarak, 1999). These planned cities in Dammam and Al-Khobar arose in recognition of the need for provision to be made for the rapidly growing population, and the desire to avoid the construction of impromptu settlements, as people flooded to the Eastern Province from all around the Kingdom (Al Naim, 2013). Therefore, grid iron patterns were used to give structure to new developments, dividing these new cities into blocks of 40-60 metres squared. This approach subsequently spread to other parts of the Kingdom.

> "Both the new street pattern and structures built on them were totally new, and as such they shocked local people; yet at the same time it started a transformative urban era which led in time to complete urban and social change" (Al-Naim, 2013, p.61).

Despite this 'shock' in response to the new concept of urban planning and building structures, this introduction can be interpreted as an unavoidable phase of the modern era in the built environment, while simultaneously resulting in the disappearance of traditional structures.

3.3.1.2 The launch of the Home Ownership Program

Housing that was deemed acceptable for all employees became a problem for the management of Aramco. The provision of training and educational programmes had enabled employees to develop their skills and move to higher positions within the company hierarchy, giving them the right to request houses in the residential camp. However, family houses available to all employee categories remained a problem (Jungers, 2013). Through the company training programs, many Saudi employees developed important skills and expertise. This led to increased numbers of Saudis being employed and a corresponding decline in other nationalities in the Eastern Province, as can be seen in the falling number of Italians employed at the Saudi Aramco sites, which dropped from 1,200 in 1950 to 110 by the start of 1958 (Pakka, 2006, p.33).

In the 1950s, the company implemented a policy of creating residential divisions on the basis of the job level of employees, rather than on the basis of their nationality: a general camp for lower-level employees, an intermediate camp for semi-skilled labourers, and a senior staff camp for expert employees. However, despite all of the policies implemented to provide for their employees, the continued growth of Aramco posed a continuing challenge in the provision of housing. The company offered housing for approximately 17,500 employees by the end of 1950, 3,000 of whom were American and nearly 10,000 were Saudis. Nevertheless, there were shortages in housing in all Aramco communities throughout this decade (McMurray, 2011, p142). The Home Ownership Program was launched in 1951 to address this difficulty. This housing policy exclusively offered loans to Saudi employees for the purchase of homes, with the company managing all associated infrastructure, while the government provided the necessary land (ibid).

This programme offered a unique opportunity for Saudi employees to own their home, rather than renting or living in permanent housing. It also created a long-term, stable relationship between the company and its employees, with the loan being deducted from the employee salaries and 16% of the loan being forgiven. This system proved to be extremely cost effective and superior to scenarios in which the company acts as a landlord. As a consequence, the programme is still running 60 years later (Jungers, 2013, p.77). To qualify for a loan, an employee had to submit a design for the house, which then has to be built without any significant changes according to the company policy (Al-Hathloul, 1981).

Initially, the Home Ownership Program was limited by a lack of Saudi architecture experts who had the cultural background necessary to provide suitable designs that accommodated Saudi culture.[8] During the early years of the Home Ownership Program, and given the absence of Saudi architects, Saudi employees were particularly reliant on foreign engineers and architects in the design and construction of their housing (Al-Hathloul, 1981, p167).

In order to encourage and accelerate the Home Ownership Program, the company prepared several house designs by company architects. However, these architects came from different backgrounds and cultures to the Saudis who would be living in the properties. The kinds of house designs that were provided to the Saudi employees of

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[8] The first Saudi School of Architecture was established at King Saud University in 1968. However, their architectural education focused on modern architecture and concepts of design, with the extensive use of glass and steel (Abu-Ghazzeh, 1997). This symbolised the rapid and continuing development of Saudi Arabia, in both economic and technological terms (ibid, 1997, p.30).

Aramco tended to adopt the layout of conventional, detached houses designed in a Mediterranean style, rather than in the style of local homes (Al-Hathloul, 1981). In effect, the Home Ownership Program at Aramco can be "considered the origin of the physical contradiction that appeared later in the Saudi home environment" (Al-Naim, 1998, p.46).

This new housing concept, commonly referred to as a villa, transformed the local domestic environment. An example of a common villa type that the Home Ownership Program brought to the Eastern Province is presented below (Figure 3.47). This photograph was taken at the end of 1961 and shows the finishing touches being put on a villa type house that had been built for Aramco employee through the company Home Ownership Program.

The design of the villa façade is extremely different to that of the traditional domestic environment discussed earlier.[9] For instance, this house includes three balconies: a large balcony on the corner of the house and another two similar balconies on the main elevation. This contravenes the requirements of Saudi culture, in which the design of the house must emphasise and ensure the privacy needs of the family. The concept of balconies was contrary to the local need for privacy; Saudi people would not sit or stand on any balcony that is directly visible from the street or even from neighbouring houses. In addition, balconies are unsuitable in the hot, sandy, dusty climatic conditions of the Eastern Province. The design of the early villas was not appropriate to either weather conditions or the cultural needs of the users, as they were designed for the weather of Mediterranean countries rather than the hot and harsh climate of the Eastern Province.

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[9] It is important to clarify that the majority of people accepted the urban development because it was synonymous with progress and they therefore perceived these changes as an opportunity to modernise the country. However, it is important to state that this acceptance of the need for change and development does not mean that it occurred without cultural disorder or trauma to the domestic environment.

Figure 3.47: Finishing touches being put on a villa type house for an Aramco employee who had become the owner through the company Home Ownership Program in 1961 (Source: Pakka, 2006)

Figure 3.48: An Aramco Saudi employee with a contractor checking the progress of a villa under construction in the 1950s (Source: Lebkicher *et al.*, 1960).

The Aramco Home Ownership Program had a profound impact on the formation of the domestic environment of the entire Eastern Province and eventually influenced architecture across the entire Kingdom. The villa style home introduced in the 1950s became the most common house design for all Saudis, irrespective of whether or not they were Aramco employees. Its prominence was further cemented by the enforcement of building regulations, which continued the pre-eminence of this style until the 1970s (Al-Naim, 1998, p.45).

Two historical photos in Aramco's handbook provide an excellent insight into the uniform houses being built in the area in the 1950s. These cubed villas were built in accordance with the Home Ownership Program to provide a residential area for Saudi Aramco employees; the organisation of the residential neighbourhoods shows systematic house designs that were similar in size, form and layout. The first image depicts Rahimah, an Aramco-sponsored residential community constructed in the desert near Ras Tanura (Fig. 3.49). The other photograph illustrates the residential area built in Dammam for Saudi Aramco employees, clearly showing the organisation of the residential neighbourhoods (Fig. 3.50).

The new key design concepts that were introduced by Aramco had a significant impact on the fabric of the domestic environment. The most influential of these were villa style houses and the formation of street patterns as grids (Hathloul, 1981). Aramco "urban practices left indelible marks on the Eastern Province urban landscape, both positive (e.g. the construction of modern fully equipped, [model] planned communities) and negative (less attentive to the local culture or urban heritage)" (Al-Mubarak, 1999, p.45).

Overall, this programme was extremely successful and profoundly affected the residential environment in the Eastern Province. As a consequence of the interest-free loans offered by Aramco, an unusual perk for an international company to offer, these neighbourhoods continue to thrive decades later (Pakka, 2006).

Figure 3.49: An Aramco sponsored residential area for Saudi employees from the Aramco handbook (Source: Lebkicher *et al.*, 1960).
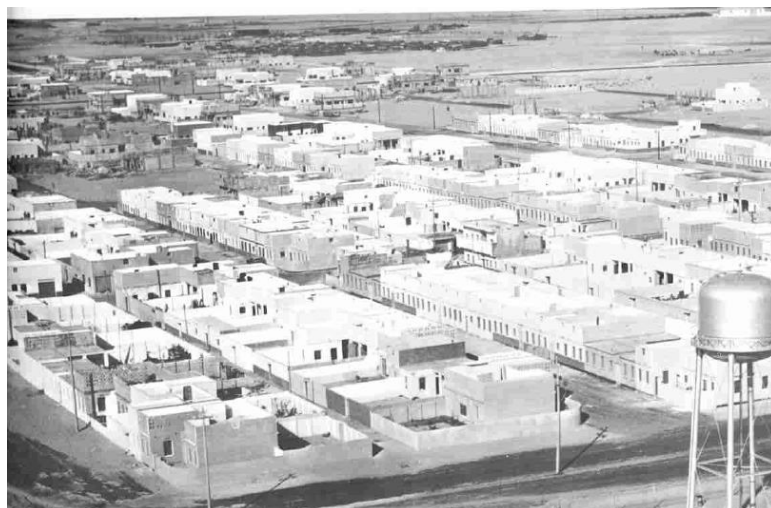
Figure 3.50: The residential houses for Saudi employees in the Dammam area, which were built under Aramco's Home loan plan (Source: Lebkicher *et al.,* 1960)

3.3.1.3 The emergence of new technology and construction materials in the local market

As well as creating new concepts and approaches to house design, the Home Ownership Program also offered new opportunities to the local mining industry, due to the need for construction materials that had not been used prior. This market for furnishing and other building materials had an extremely positive impact on the local economy (Nawwab et al., 1980). Aramco obtained much of the construction materials that it required for its massive housing projects from local markets. Furthermore, other locals began to follow the new, imported styles of construction in the 1960s, in response to the introduction of new building materials and techniques, like concrete building systems. This can be seen in the current residential buildings in Al-Khobar (Al-Dossary, 2000).

Some shrewd Saudi individuals benefited from the house construction opportunity, by establishing their own businesses to support and supply the construction sector. An example of this entrepreneurialism is Yousuf Al-Zawawi, who began a masonry business in the Eastern Province in the 1950s to supply building blocks (Fig. 3.51) (McMurray, 2011). A photograph below shows the masonry construction utilised for Saudi housing in Dhahran in 1952 (Fig. 3.52). It is also important to highlight the role of the training programme offered by Aramco, which educated local people in new construction methods and building skills, as illustrated by the picture of local people learning such techniques through the use of scale models (Fig. 3.53).

The availability of new construction materials in the local market was supported by the Aramco Oil Company. The success of the Saudi businessmen who contracted with Aramco was due to this support. A sizeable proportion (40%) of the loans that Aramco provided to its employees went to local contractors. This proportion is especially impressive given that Aramco had provided individual loans to more than 10,000 employees by 1980, investing over $370 million in the Home Ownership Program (Nawwab at el., 1980, p.239). This contribution was so significant that some have argued that the transformation of traditional Saudi society to an industrialised nation was heavily influenced by the encouragement given by Aramco to local businesses and first wave contractors (Kaaki, 2016). By encouraging the development of businesses in the construction sector and its reliance on local resources, Aramco directly contributed to massive job growth in the Eastern Province.

Figure 3.51: A new business supplying concrete masonry blocks in the Eastern Province in 1950s
(Source: McMurray, 2011a)

Fig. 3.52: Masonry construction was used for Saudi camp housing in Dhahran, 1952
(Source: Dialdin and Tahlawi, 1998, p.28)

Figure 3.53: Working with a scale model to learn new construction techniques in 1950
(Source: Dialdin and Tahlawi, 1998, p.44)

One of the most ubiquitous and visible signs of the technological changes brought to Saudi Arabia by Aramco is the air-conditioner. This device profoundly changed the form and design of the buildings in Saudi Arabia (Nawwab at el., 1980), with air-conditioner units appearing in the windows of most building and homes. The manufacture of these devices became incredibly lucrative in the Saudi market. This innovation not only impacted the design and operation of buildings, changing designs from open models to closed models, it also changed the behaviour and lifestyles of local people, shifting society from one that focused on indoor activities rather than outdoors.

Much of the new building material and technology was transferred from the Eastern Province (Dammam) to Riyadh through Al-Hassa (Hofuf) by the railway, which opened in 1951. This brought extensive development and corresponding alteration of the appearance of both Riyadh and Hofuf, due to the new availability of materials like steel and concrete (Fancy, 1994, p.100). This railway also supported major demographic changes in the Eastern Province, enabling people to easily move from the central part of the Kingdom to the under populated Eastern Province to work and establish their own businesses (Al-Naim, 2013, p.58). The railway that was opened in 1951 to link the Eastern Province to the central part of the Kingdom is shown below (Fig. 3.54).

Figure 3.54: The newly established railway system transferring building (Source: Aramco, 2013a, p.13)

3.3.1.4 Introduction of the first modern city in Saudi Arabia

Al-Khobar, located in the Eastern Province, is generally perceived to be the first modern city in Saudi Arabia. It was the first to have an overall grid-plan and to replace streets named after people with the use of a numerical system; it acted as a model that guided the development of other cities through the 1950s, 60s and 70s (Al-Hathloul, 1981). This practice signifies how an American approach replaced even the traditional Saudi system, in which the names of families are used to designate streets.

People came from different parts of the Kingdom and other countries to live and work in Al-Khobar city because of the opportunities to work in the oil industry. Al-Khobar transformed into a modern multicultural retail centre as a result of population growth, and the wealth gained from jobs and business opportunities. A photo of Al-Khobar city in 1956 (Fig. 3.55) shows the modern image of the city reflected in the multi-story building design with balconies, shops with English signs, modern cars and people wearing forms of clothing that differ from traditional Saudi dress. This image shows that Al-Khobar did not differ greatly from other international cities that had existed in that form for decades, providing a clear illustration of the extent to which local people were being exposed to different multicultural lifestyles in Saudi Arabia.

This modern lifestyle in Al-Khobar city directly changed the way that local people lived, with many internationally imported products becoming available in the markets used by both locals and foreigners. Many new services also opened in Al-Khobar city, such as motels, hotels and furnished apartments to serve the influx of migrants and the corresponding growth in local population. This resulted in Al-Khobar itself growing larger and more modern, with a Western atmosphere that made the city extremely popular (Alsolaiman, 2002). The abundance of work and business opportunities caused the population growth and expansion of Al-Khobar, Dammam and Dharan, and the resultant demographic shift moved the regional emphasis away from more traditional towns, like Al-Hasa and Qatif (Fancy, 1994).

However, these demographic changes also dramatically increased land value and land price in the Eastern Province, sometimes by as much as 10 to 100 times its original value. This development encouraged many farm owners to invest their land in industrial and residential projects, which resulted in a corresponding drop in the level of farming in the Eastern Province (Al-Shabat, 1999, cited in Alamdar, 2003).

Figure 3.55: Al-Khobar in 1956, a modern and multicultural retail centre.
(Source: McMurray, 2011a, p.187)

3.3.1.5 The creation of the American suburban model in the Eastern Province

The influence of external culture and norms was evident in the Aramco communities that were established in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia:

> "Visitors to Dhahran and the other largely American expatriate communities during the 1950s were invariably struck by the degree to which they [Aramco] replicated the look and feel of small-town America" (McMurray, 2011, p168).

Many Americans who worked in Saudi Arabia and lived in Aramco camps with their families wrote about their experiences and described the incredible transformation of the land and their communities to resemble the American suburban model. These changes were associated with massive improvements to the standard of living, with improved access to housing, schools, hospitals, recreation, security, gardens, outdoor and indoor activity areas. In effect, the oil company not only managed to replicate the American suburbs for its employees, but also managed to create the intimate feeling of their home country.

This had the effect of promoting and perpetuating American culture and lifestyle, leading many American employees and observers to comment on the way that the Aramco residential communities reminded "them of quiet suburbs in the U.S. Southwest: trim one- and two-story houses surrounded by well-watered lawns set off with hedges, trees, and flowers, and curving streets with cars parked by curbs" (Nawwab, 1980, p.244). This created the sense of arriving in a different country, from the first moment of entering the Aramco residential camp communities. The design of the American suburban plan, including curved streets, houses, lawns and trees, and the successful creation of green areas in the neighbourhood, transformed each of these communities into a green oasis, in stark contrast with the surrounding desert. An example of one such residential area, in Dhahran in 1960, is shown below (Fig. 3.56) (Lebkicher, Rentz, and Steineke, 1960). The same American suburban plan, featuring curved street, green areas and houses with sloped roofs can be seen in a Dhahran residential area in 1980 (Fig. 3.57).
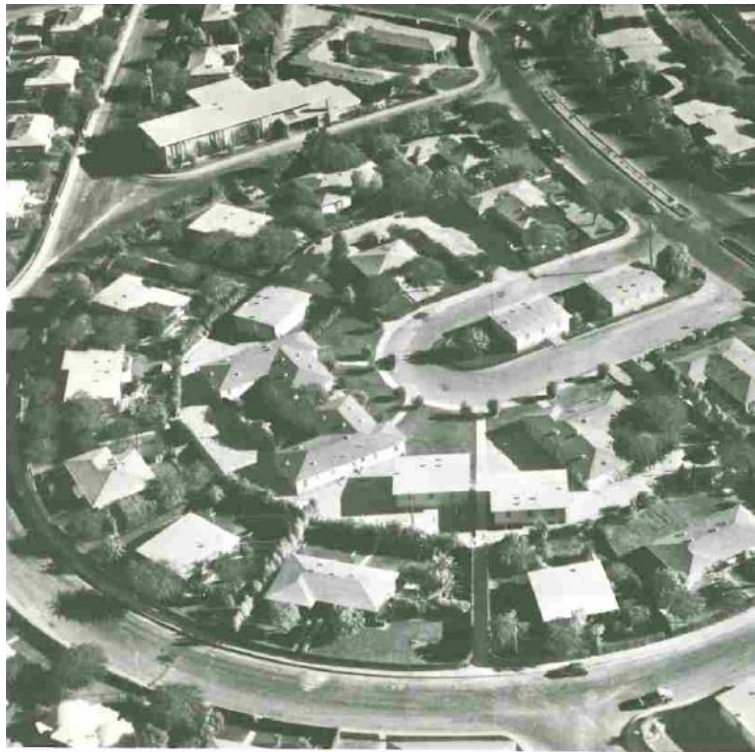
Figure 3.56: The desert was transformed in Aramco's residential areas, as seen this section of Dhahran (Lebkicher *et al*., 1960)

Figure 3.57: The successful creation of the green areas in the neighbourhood landscape design has transformed the neighbourhood into a green area. This is a complete contrast to the sandy environment outside the neighbourhood (Source: McMurray, 2011b)

High quality entertainment and recreational facilities were integrated into each Aramco residential community, including golf courses, horse stables, football fields, tennis courts and swimming pools (Clark and Tahlawi, 2006). This can be seen in the picture of the largest compound in Dharan, which has a huge green sports stadium for its 11,300 residents (Fig. 3.58) (Business Insider, 2011). The image also illustrates the effective duplication of an American suburban environment, which totally contrasted with the desert surroundings[10]. The following image shows a golf course in the hills of Dhahran (Fig. 3.59), which uses recycled water to transform the formerly sandy and barren landscape.[11] This constitutes evidence of the use of resources to change the nature of the land. In other words, the transformation was not limited to the physical houses modal, streets, and suburban plan, but also extended to the modification of the topography of the surrounding region.

This type of practice regarding the urban environment of the Eastern Province was highlighted in the early Aramco handbook, from soon after the discovery of oil. These changes were described in terms of the introduction of "American flavour… into Saudi Arabia" (Lebkicher *et al*., 1960, p.1). The integration of imported American culture into the domestic environment of the Eastern Province, specifically in the areas that were also used by local Saudi employees, resulted in the introduction of new forms, styles and ways of living that differed from the traditional local cultural environment.

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[11] New tertiary wastewater treatment facilities were opened in January 2008 to recycle water. Now, almost three quarters (72%) of all sanitary wastewater is recycled (McMurray, 2011 b)

Figure 3.58: The expanded compound for Dhahran's residents is the largest of the Saudi Aramco communities. It features substantial green landscapes and sprawling sports facilities (Source: Business Insider, 2011)

Figure 3.59: Green golf course in Dhahran's rolling hills (Source: McMurray, 2011b)

3.3.1.6 Increased exposure to other cultures

In this section, I discuss how the discovery of oil caused a massive exposure of the local Saudi context to a range of different cultures, which can be interpreted through many overlapping perspectives, such as education, training, media, and travel. The major role played by Aramco Oil Company in the transformation of Saudi society through education and training cannot be underestimated. This role arose as a result of the agreement made between Aramco and King Abdul Al-Aziz, the monarch who united the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Their promise was essentially the trade of access to one of the greatest sources of oil in the world in return for the obligation of the company to extensively train, develop and educate its Saudi employees to the highest international standards (Aramco, 2013b). Ultimately, this agreement sought to ensure the fulfilment of the long term vision in which Saudis were prepared to run the company.

As a consequence of this agreement, Aramco opened its first school in 1940, in the Eastern Province. English was the language of the oil company and any Saudi who knew a few words of English had a good chance of gaining employment. The company later constructed its first public school in 1954, in Dammam, after which it opened the first training centre for Saudis a year later in 1955. Although this training was conducted in accordance with the aforementioned agreement, it was also hugely beneficial for Aramco, which grew quickly on the basis of its increasingly well-trained and competent employees (Dialdin and Tahlawi, 1998). This can be seen through the profound social and economic developments experienced by the company between 1949 and 1954, based upon the growing competence of the Saudi work force (ibid, p.41). These experiences led Aramco to establish a five-year training programme, in an attempt to meet its growing needs, which provided training through four phases: "pre-job training, general industrial training, job skills training and advanced trade training" (ibid, p.43). The first female teacher in Saudi employed by Aramco, Helen Stanwood, is shown teaching Saudi employees on the advanced training programme in Dhahran in 1952 (Fig. 3.60). This focus on training and education created the backbone of the company, facilitating its continued rapid development, and illustrates the direct exposure of local Saudis to different culture. This exposure impacted on Saudi lifestyles, although many employees sought a balance between their traditions and the new practices. For example, although safety rules required employees to wear western forms of clothing, the majority of workers changed back into traditional styles of clothing after they had finished the work at the end of the day (ibid, p. 14).
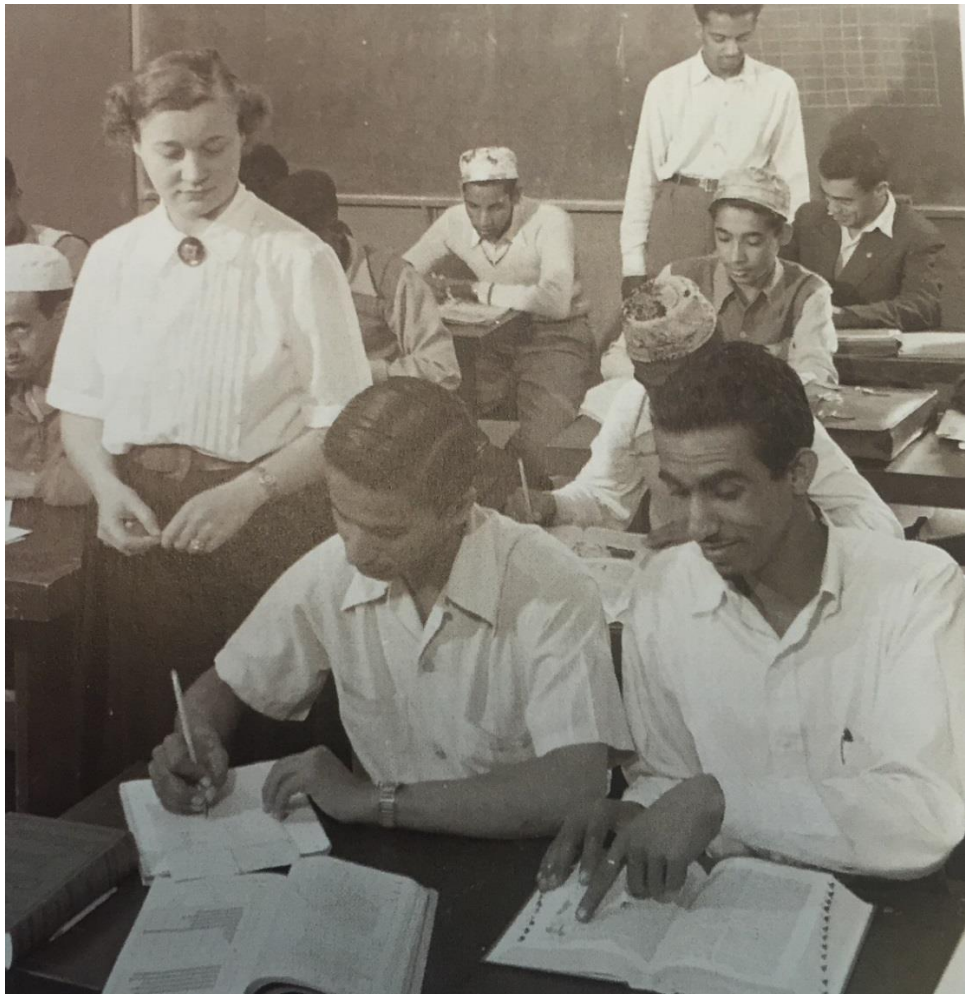
Fig. 3.60: Helen Stanwood in Dhahran in 1952, teaching Saudi employees on the advanced training programme (Source: Dialdin and Tahlawi,1998, p.45)

The education and training programmes available to Saudi employees reached higher levels when they were transferred outside the Kingdom in the late 1950s, with a small number of hand-picked students having earned college degrees from the American University of Beirut by 1959. After this time, some Aramco employees even earned the chance to study on university courses in the US (Lebkicher *et al*., 1960, p.204). Those Saudi Aramco employees who studied or trained abroad returned home with different experiences and expectations, with their exposure to different cultures, lifestyles and living conditions contributing to changing the contemporary domestic environment. A picture below shows the first Saudi employees in 1953, who were on a scholarship programme in the American University in Beirut (Fig. 3.61).

Fig. 3.61: **The first Saudi employees on the scholarship programme in 1953, in the** camp of American university in Beirut (Source: Dialdin and Tahlawi, 1998, p.46)

Aramco launched the second Arabic language television station in the Middle East, launching the station on 17th September 1957 (McMurray, 2011a). This was a highly influential decision, especially for young Saudis and women, who were given insights into cultures and lifestyles from other countries. In addition, these groups also gained the opportunity to learn at home through the medium of educational programmes, enabling women and children to study science or mathematics (ibid), as well as introducing new images, ideas and concepts to local people. Because public education was still in its

formative stages, this made the television stage particularly influential. By 1965, the Aramco Arabic language television channel had an estimated 350,000 viewers (McMurray, 2011a).

In 1961, Aramco opened the first airport in Saudi Arabia, Dhahran International Airport, which operated international flights to Europe and America. The airport building was designed by Minoru Yamasaki, as an amalgamation of traditional Islamic forms with modern technology. This airport gave locals the opportunity to travel and discover the world, whilst also enabling international goods to be brought into the Eastern Province. The launch of the airport also had a massive impact on increasing businesses and the population of foreigners in the area, effectively providing a platform to foster multicultural exposure that influenced the lifestyle of local people.

A few years later, in 1963, the government of Saudi Arabia opened the College of Petroleum and Minerals, which was constructed by Aramco. This college was renamed the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in 1975, becoming one of the leading universities in the world in engineering and scientific disciplines. This university was intended to prepare more Saudis for the oil industry and increase the number of work opportunities available to locals in the administration of the oil company, in fulfilment of the company's vision of 'Saudization'. This policy involved the training of Saudi individuals to fill key management positions, which were tracked by green boxes, leading to the policy being nicknamed the "greening of Aramco" (Al-Naimi, 2016, p.110). As a consequence of this policy, Saudi employees comprised 34,226 of the 55,819 employees of Aramco by 1984. Local workers comprised over half (62%) of senior positions, with 3,343 supervisor positions being held by Saudi workers (Aramco2013 b, p.72).

In an extremely short period of time, Saudi society had been industrialised, with profound changes being exerted through most major sectors across Saudi Arabia, including education, training, and transportation. Local society had been modernised through exposure to different cultures, directly impacting on the lifestyles and aspirations of the local people. This influenced the Saudi way of life and necessitated flexibility in terms of the adaptation to changes in the domestic environment. The next theoretical chapter of this research interprets the positive adaptation of the contemporary Saudi domestic environment. I show evidence of cultural resilience through cultural preservation, which occurred as a result of the rapid transformation of Saudi Arabia that took place after the discovery of oil in the Eastern province.

3.4 Conclusion

This historical review chapter is significant in that it presents a foundation for my study and provides an overall orienting frame for the thesis as a whole. The examples, images and archival material included in this discussion serve to facilitate understanding of the transformation and development of the domestic environment in the Eastern province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

During the first part of this chapter, I discussed the traditional dwelling types that existed in the Eastern region before the discovery of oil. As part of this examination, a wealth of documentary and pictorial evidence was provided of the time before and during the period of oil exploration in the desert of the Eastern Province. Each dwelling type was explained in terms of its building materials and design, in order to illustrate and exemplify how the practice of traditional building arose from experience, utilising the available natural resources in the surrounding environment. These discussions were supported with images and field note observations taken during my site visits to Al-Hofuf, during which I acquired a deep understanding of the remaining traditional domestic environment. Important empirical materials were collected from site visits to significant sites in Al-Kut and Al-Naathil, two former residential areas in Hofuf, the city that saw the establishment of the first traditional settlement in the Eastern Province.

During the Al-Naathil site visit, I examined the remains of a demolished neighbourhood and looked at the way that its characteristics reflected a strong identity. This included such considerations as its name and the organisation of the neighbourhood, which I argued demonstrated the social and cultural condition of the residents. The design of the courtyard houses, with transitional zones and interconnected circulation networks, using traditional structures like *sikka* and *sabat* signifies the important role of privacy in the neighbourhood organisation. The use of arches in different locations also highlighted the importance of this feature in the vernacular architecture of the Eastern province. Furthermore, decoration of the façade and ornamentation on top of the main doors to courtyard houses indicate the impact of guest hospitality on design decisions. In this way, the entrance is the first thing that a visitor sees and indicates the status of the house owner, making it the most important part of the façade.

The second site visit in Al Hofuf was to a preserved traditional house called *Bayt Al-Baiah*. While the Al-Naathil visit provided me with an image of a traditional neighbourhood, the second site visit allowed me to enter an excellent example of a

surviving courtyard house. This offered a unique example of the organisation and decoration of homes in Hofuf, in addition to illustrating how the design of traditional houses was informed and shaped by the identity and cultural values of the users. For example specific interior spaces in Hofuf's traditional houses existed as identity characteristics, reflecting the needs and cultures of the locals in this geographical area. These identifying spaces included the date room, the water well area and the courtyard. The location and organisation of the spaces demonstrate the successful integration of the residents with their traditional domestic environment, as well as showing how the house was designed in line with the Saudi culture privacy requirements through such aspects as window location and transition corridors. In addition, the importance of the coffee ritual in Saudi culture was signified by the guest *majlis,* the design of the coffee making area (*wijaq*) and the coffee corner shelf (*kamar*), which housed all kinds of coffee pots and tools. Furthermore, the arch decoration in the *majlis* provides an example of how the intangible cultural tradition of guest hospitality was reflected inside the physical space of the *majlis.* Both site visit provided real examples of how the construction of the traditional domestic environment reflected the cultural identity of the vernacular architecture of the Eastern Province. In particular, it showed how privacy and guest hospitality shaped organisation and ornamentation of internal and external space.

The second part of the chapter discusses the remarkable socio-economic developments that took place in Saudi Arabia after the discovery of oil. This shift from the traditional Saudi environment to a modern industrial nation took place very quickly. In this chapter, I presented fundamental data to understand the major role played by the oil company, Aramco, in the rapid transformations of the built environment. These roles include the establishment of residential camps, the launch of the Home Ownership Program, the emergence of new technology and construction materials in the local market, the introduction of the first modern city to Saudi Arabia, the importation of the model of American suburban houses, and increased exposure to other cultures.

The transformation of the built environment in Saudi Arabia can be characterised as sudden, dramatic and rapid. The development of Aramco occurred in parallel to the development of Saudi Arabia, with profound changes across all aspects of its society, such as education, business, health, and the built environment. The resulting radical change in national economic status drove the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to become the world leader in oil exportation and a member of the G20.

Regarding the impact of the oil company on the design of domestic environments, I showed that Aramco introduced new modern concepts to Saudi Arabia: most importantly, the urban plan (grid pattern) and home design (villa). It also established the first model of a modern Saudi city, Al-Khobar, which eventually became a multicultural retail centre. In fact, the launch of the Home Ownership Program had a significant impact on the appearance of residential neighbourhoods in the Eastern province. As stated above, Aramco also played a significant role in the emergence of new construction materials and technology in local markets, as well as the provision of training programmes on modern building methods. For example, the air-conditioning that arrived in the local market helped to transform buildings from open design to a closed form, shifting many social activities from outdoors to indoors. In addition, the company supported local businessmen to work as contractors in housing projects, which provided job opportunities and wealth, as well as increasing the demand for residential land. That directly increased the size of the population, the value of the land, and major changes to the demographics of the Eastern Province.

Through education programmes, training, TV stations, and even the construction of the first airport in Saudi Arabia, Aramco played a huge role in increasing the exposure of local people to diverse cultures. This exposure played a part in creating new images, ideas and perspectives about the home environment. In particular, American culture can be felt in the creation of an American suburban model for residential communities constructed for Aramco employees in the Eastern Province. This American suburban urban plan, with curved streets, American style houses, lawns, recreational centres, schools and sports facilities, all contributed to promote American culture and enable the lifestyle.

Overall, this chapter has outlined the shift that occurred in the modernisation of the Saudi environment through oil industry operations. I have clarified the forces that prompted this experience, looking at the impact of the oil boom, the speed of transformation, exposure to external cultures, and the emergence of new concepts, construction materials and technology in the domestic environment. However, the resilience of the Saudi society to industrialisation has resulted in ongoing changes in the domestic environment. The following chapters of my research interpret the positive cultural adaptation that has occurred as a result of the rapid transformation of a contemporary Saudi environment.

From Rapid Transformation of a Domestic
Environment to Cultural Preservation:
A Theoretical Perspective

Cultural Trauma

Cultural
Resilience

Cultural
Preservation

4

Contents

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the three main theoretical concepts underpinning the discussion in this thesis, namely cultural trauma, cultural resilience and cultural preservation. The first part deals with the meaning of cultural trauma, looking critically at the ways in which different authors have discussed and developed this concept. Through a review of the concept of trauma in different fields (medical, psychological, economic and cultural), a comprehensive understanding is provided of this core term, with the aim of providing a solid theoretical underpinning of the thesis. Furthermore, this review clarifies how it is possible to expand the concept and apply it to the current investigation. This section seeks to highlight the potential for positive changes, development, and adaptation to occur after exposure to trauma.

From this position, I develop a new understanding of the impact that wide-scale transformation may have had on the domestic built environment of Saudi Arabia. In order to explain the transformation of the domestic environment and clarify the background and shaping forces that prompted the occurrence of the experience of cultural trauma in the Eastern Province, I develop a timeline that maps the significant events supporting the investigation. This is explained through two overlapping perspectives: the transformation of the national discourse on heritage and the transformation of the role of women on Saudi society.

The second part of this chapter defines the concept of cultural resilience, with particular reference to the way that it is identified in this thesis. The section also discusses cultural resilience in the built environment and highlights a significant need to investigate this concept in the design and construction of cities in the rapidly developing oil countries of the Gulf. Here, the chapter explores the meaning of creative resilience and argues for the role of creativity as an inherent characteristic of this concept.

The final section of this chapter takes the perspective of cultural trauma and resilience to discuss the specific topic of cultural preservation in the domestic environment. It proposes that cultural preservation can be a positive adaptation to the transformation of the domestic environment and, in so doing, attempts to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between cultural practice, cultural preservation and cultural resilience.

4.2 Cultural Trauma

This thesis aims to develop a new understanding of the impact of the rapid transformation of the domestic environment in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. In this first part of the chapter, two key aspects will be addressed: the experience of cultural trauma from a positive perspective; and the concept of cultural trauma as a tool for the study of the domestic environment. This latter detail highlights the positive adaptation of the domestic environment and its users, as an outcome of the socio-economic transformation of the country. In this investigation, the concept of cultural trauma is used to interpret the practices observed in the case study house. This is discussed in the chapters that follow and in relation to the time-line of Saudi Arabia's transformation after the discovery of oil (Fig 4.4).

This discussion begins with the presentation of a literature review of the concept of trauma, with particular reference to the work of two influential research groups. The studies of each group recognise different outcomes of traumatic experience, offering valuable insights to inform and guide the current study. This review seeks to understand the meaning of this key term and to expand its applicability in the investigation conducted in this specific geographical location.

4.2.1 Cultural trauma - a positive (constructive) view

In most extant research, the concept of trauma is intimately linked to the negative and harmful impacts that occur after the exposure to traumatic experiences or events. However, the current study seeks to expand the concept of trauma to include and highlight positive change. As part of this aim, I introduce the concept of cultural trauma to the study of the domestic environment. The challenge involved in this is to investigate the positive outcomes, in other words the impact of the transformation, occurring in the context of the domestic environment and its users.

Joseph and Linley (2008) argue that it is misleading to focus exclusively on the negative perspective. Instead, they stress the importance of having a comprehensive vision that holds both negative and positive aspects of an event or issue. It has been argued in the available literature on post-traumatic growth that the possibility exists for a great deal to be learned from the positive aspects of the human experience of traumatic events (Joseph and Linley, 2008; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). An increasing amount of data is available with which to examine the positive psychological changes that are a consequence of the struggle of individuals with traumatic events (Joseph and Linley,

2008). These data are normally predicated upon the idea that traumatic events ultimately lead to alteration and development, in turn creating new opportunities for individuals to change (Neal, 1998). Positive changes have been reported in response to a wide range of stressful and traumatic experiences, leading some psychologists to focus on alleviating the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, as well as facilitating personal growth and positive change (Joseph et al., 2004; Calhoun and Tedeschi, 1999; Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2004b). In the financial business context, measurements were taken of the symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress and the related changes to financial planning perspectives during the financial crisis in early 2008. Despite the seriousness of many of the negative symptoms, some evidence was found of positive psychological change resulting from the crisis, including heightened ability to evaluate personal roles and duties, to recognise different options, to re-evaluate customer relations, and the ability to focus more effectively on healthy work habits and spiritual practices (Klontz and Britt, 2012). These findings have been supported by research based on various theoretical and empirical traditions that investigated positive change following trauma and adversity, although there are variations in the terminology used in these studies (Joseph et al., 2004).

In light of the above literature, these preliminary remarks propose to explore the impacts of culturally traumatic experiences on the domestic environment. The next section has outlined relevant research conducted into the application of the concept of trauma to cultural change. The literature reviewed for this study suggests that trauma can have both positive and negative effects, and can therefore potentially be seen as being partially or wholly constructive, in the sense that growth occurring as a result of cultural trauma can potentially have culturally empowering side effects.

4.2.2. The meaning of cultural trauma

In the search for the meaning of cultural trauma, it is first necessary to understand the term 'trauma' before it can be linked with culture as a compound concept: 'cultural trauma'. Analysing and understanding trauma as a stand-alone concept is intended to give insights into how to expand its meaning in conjunction with culture as it is applied in the context of the domestic environment in this investigation.

Trauma is typically defined as "a powerful shock that may have long-lasting effects" (Collins Dictionary 2012) or as "a deeply distressing or disturbing experience" (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). Ordinarily, the term is used to explain what happens to people, their organisations or societies when they suffer a loss that will mark them and often stay in

their memories forever, serving to fundamentally change their future (Alexander, 2004). Researchers from different fields and with different interests have adopted the use of trauma from medical settings and modified the term for use in a range of different academic fields (ibid). In the field of medicine, trauma describes the long-term adverse effects on the body that arise in response to an unexpected experience. This concept has been appropriated by social science to describe traumatic events or circumstances that transpire as a consequence of a considerable social change (Sztompka, 2000). Trauma can also be described as an unexpected experience of loss, shock and abruptness. The impact of loss can have long-lasting repercussions that can manifest in different forms, even after a particular traumatic experience has ended.

As a concept, trauma has transcended its original hospital or psychiatric contexts, now being increasingly used to describe disturbing experiences beyond the boundaries of the medical field. Sztompka (2000) found that the term has become increasingly common in the field of economics, where it is utilised to express an unexpected radical change of economic status, whether from a collapse or a dramatic growth. In the field of finance, trauma has been theorised as a common psychological struggle (Klontz and Britt, 2012) and has been widely discussed in the media (Holmes, 2012; Rogoff, 2012; Silver, 2008).

The specific focus of this research is the trauma or shock that arose as a consequence of unexpected economic growth and was accompanied by a sense of culture loss in Saudi Arabia after the 1938s. The close association between economic growth and cultural decline has been widely recognised in the literature (Asheliby 2015, Aldossery 2013). In line with research in this area, this study argues that economic growth and loss co-exist, and are in fact inextricably intertwined, within this specific geographical context. "Over the last four decades, the built environment in Saudi has lost its traditional identity, as a result of the economic boom. The characteristics of construction heritage in Saudi cities have been affected and exposed to a lot of harm" (Asheliby, 2015, p.1). In Saudi Arabia, the evidence suggests that the impact of oil, and especially various geopolitical factors that caused oil prices to rise, were instrumental in the development of Saudi society. This economic growth "led to increases in government spending, particularly on development projects. However, such abrupt development at a rapid pace had a traumatic effect on society and problems on all levels needed to be considered" (Aldossery, 2013, p.46).

The shift in economic status of countries after the discovery of natural wealth, like oil, has the power to shape an experience of trauma, and to lead to dramatic transformation of the built environment. Examining the role of unexpected change in economic status in

facilitating an experience of trauma, Crosthwaite (2012) questions whether a financial crisis might actually constitute a form of trauma. From this perspective, a sudden change in financial status and the correspondingly rapid transformation of people and their environment, in this case intimately linked with oil wealth, might produce the experience of traumatic loss. In emphasising the role that rapid transformation of an environment in producing a trauma situation, Alexander (2004) explains that individuals or societies identify themselves as traumatised when their surroundings change and transform in a way that is especially quick, even if undesirable. However, trauma can occur whenever there is a break, a shift or some disorder in the orderly environment (Sztompka, 2000). For the purposes of this thesis, the experience of cultural trauma or shock in the domestic environment resulted from an era of rapid transformation of the general built environment associated with economic growth and cultural loss.

In relation to the concept of trauma, it is first necessary to understand the potentially powerful aftermath of these experiences and the way that people respond to them, especially in terms of the way that they deal with long-term effects. Arguably, these might include negative or positive impacts, depending on the way that people perceive or respond to a particular trauma. The importance of perception and response has been recognised by researchers, who state that "the objects or events that trigger trauma are perceived clearly by actors, their responses are lucid, and the effects of these responses are problem solving and progressive" (Alexander, 2004, p.3). In other words, the process of dealing with the consequences of trauma can involve people creating, inventing or otherwise finding solutions to resolve the problem of loss and change by searching for effective positive outcomes.

The difficulty in discussing the application of the concept of trauma emerges when linking the term to other complex variables, such as in the compound concept of cultural trauma (Stamm et al., 2004). The concept of 'culture' refers to the art, beliefs, religions, traditions and practices that are stored and passed from one generation to another. This investigation is informed by a working understanding of culture informed by extant literature, particularly the work of Williams (1958, cited in McGuigan, 2018), who writes that "A culture has two aspects: the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested" (ibid, p.3). It is important to understand that these are the typical operations and processes of humanity, whether at an individual or societal level. They manifest through human culture, producing creative, traditional outcomes that can produce generic meanings or

highly specific individual interpretations (ibid). As a consequence of this, culture can be an extremely broad term. This investigation therefore links the meaning specifically to the context of the domestic environment in Saudi Arabia, in order to obtain an understanding of how the traditions of society can be practised and, at the same time, to test the new meaning that they create.

In this context, trauma describes the moment in which a culture experiences a dramatic and unexpected breakdown, disorder and discontinuity. "This phenomenon (cultural trauma) has a historical past, a geo-sociopolitical present, and an uncertain future" (ibid, p.90). This means that cultural trauma results from a past experience that has an impact on the present, and will continue to produce unknown changes in the future. It is important to understand the impact of cultural trauma, the extent to which it has agency to influence, and the ways that it can be interpreted to produce a positive outcome.

In order to comprehensively understand and show the experience of trauma on a culture, this study makes particular reference to the extensive research work of two groups of researchers. The first of these, Hudnall-Stamm, Stamm, Hudnall and Higson-Smith, has proposed a model based on the idea of cultural clash and revitalisation. Their Cultural Challenge Model (CCM) (Hudnall-Stamm et al., 2010, p. 99) (see Fig 4.1 below) theorises that 'original' cultures have distinguishable, sustainable social, political, economic and religious systems in the pre-contact period, and that exposure to an external culture can drastically change the nature and sustainability of those cultures, wherein a stage of restructuring and recovery can occur (ibid).
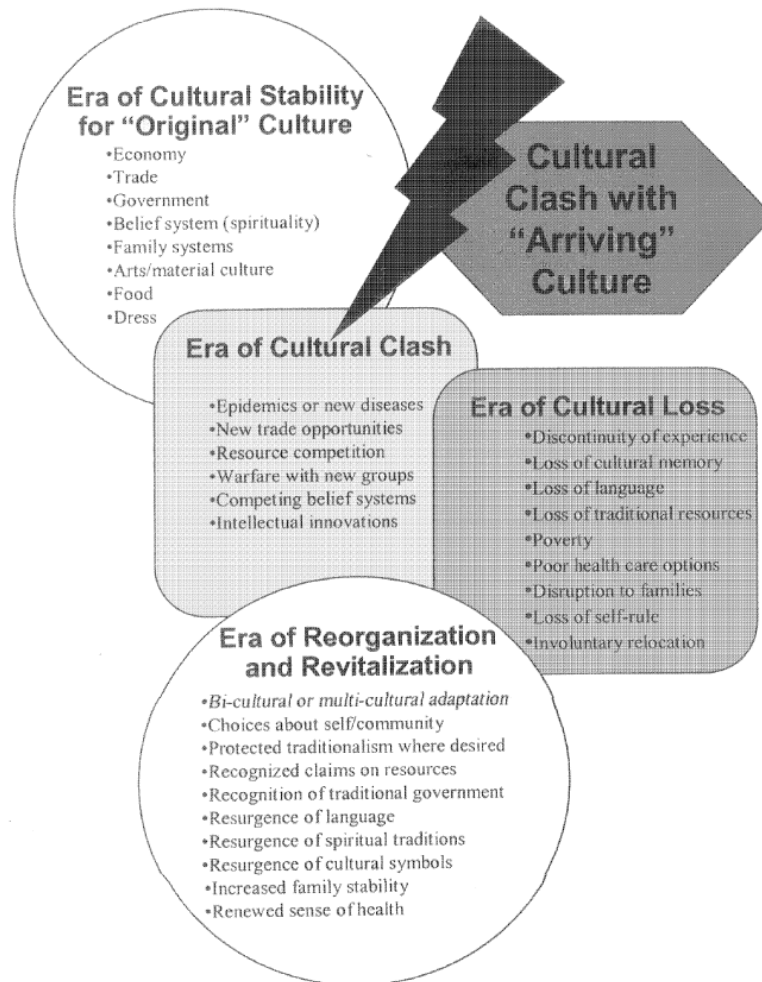
Fig 4.1: Cultural Challenge Model

(Source: Hudnall-Stamm, Stamm, Hudnall, and Higson-Smith, 2010, p.99).

The Cultural Challenge Model (CCM) (2010) suggests that the result of cultural interaction from the exposure of an original culture to an arriving culture may produce long-lasting effects, ranging from cultural extinction to positive adaptation. This period of adaptation is referred to as the cultural challenge. The importance of the CCM is that it emphasises the era of revitalisation and reorganisation as a period that follows the loss of a culture. This process refers to the ways that people recover from the experience of cultural loss, as a positive adaptation to reconstruct culture and identity. The way that they assess their options and solve the problems of their original culture is largely dependent on the past experiences, backgrounds and knowledge of the people involved, with each traumatised community or individual dealing with revitalisation in different ways. In the context of the current study, a timeline is presented later in this chapter that highlights the significant impact of events for the generation under investigation.

Hudnall-Stamm et al. (2010) have highlighted the importance of preservation, which is applied to cultural heritage through human infrastructure after the experience of cultural trauma and loss. They argue that when the focus is solely on rebuilding physical infrastructure rather than repairing the cultural infrastructure, this causes the cultural heritage of people to be neglected, with the result that the final product is unlikely to either meet their needs or stand the test of time. "We believe it is through the preservation of a culture's strengths and the flexibility and adaptability of its people that a new middle ground will emerge that incorporates the strengths of the past, the lessons of the struggle, and hope for the future" (ibid, p.107). Another key aspect highlighted in this work is related to the flexibility and adaptability of individuals and populations in response to traumatic experiences.

The second group of researchers dealing with the experience of trauma on a culture is Alexander, Eyerman, Giezen, Smelser and Sztompka (2004), who explored the sociological concept of cultural trauma, focusing on its role in the structures and processes of contemporary community. Having studied the growing humanities literature on trauma, then analysing its contribution to psychological thought and using these discussions to study social phenomena, the researchers demonstrated the empirical power of the concept (ibid), leading to its adoption in the current study.

In fact, the association between traumatic events and the conservation of identity has been recognised in their literature. For example, Alexander et al. (2004) argue that collective identity will tend to undergo significant revision after a painful trauma experience. However, memory is not just communal and flexible, but also profoundly linked to the contemporary sense of self. "Identities are continuously constructed and secured not only by facing the present and future but also by reconstructing the collective's earlier life" (Alexander, 2004, p.22). The statement on identity revision and the reconstruction of earlier life after trauma can be interpreted as cultural preservation. As an example of this, one positive aspect of the impact of a culturally traumatic experience may be the effective reconstruction of past images, memories, and identity in contemporary environments.

From the insights of the cultural trauma working team, Sztompka (2000) presented another model to depict traumatic occurrences. The Traumatic Sequence Model (TSM) describes the conditions under which trauma evolves (see Fig. 4.2). Sztompka defines cultural trauma as shock to the cultural tissue of a society. He raises crucial questions about the factors that lead to the experience of trauma, as well as regarding the types of change that are traumatogenic. Cultural trauma is constructed by external factors, and

results from certain conditions and circumstances. However, it should be noted that traumatic events can vary in strength, duration or impact, as their shaping forces differ from case to case. For instance, trauma may result variously from war, terrorism, migration, revolution, radical economic reform, or the death of a leader (ibid).

Given that each cause of cultural trauma is recognised as being potentially different in terms of its duration, impact and responses of those affected, four main characteristics of a potentially traumatising social change have been suggested (Sztompka, 2000): the first characteristic is that it is sudden and may be extremely rapid; it is radical, comprehensive and deep; it generally has a specific origin and can therefore be perceived as being imposed and external; and finally the social change is met by a mental frame that perceives it as unexpected and shocking. Given that every case of trauma is unique in its shaping force, its environment and the responses of the people involved, it is not possible for a single, uniform description or definition to be applied for factors that produce cultural trauma. Furthermore, the outcome of the experience of cultural trauma can differ profoundly from culture to culture.
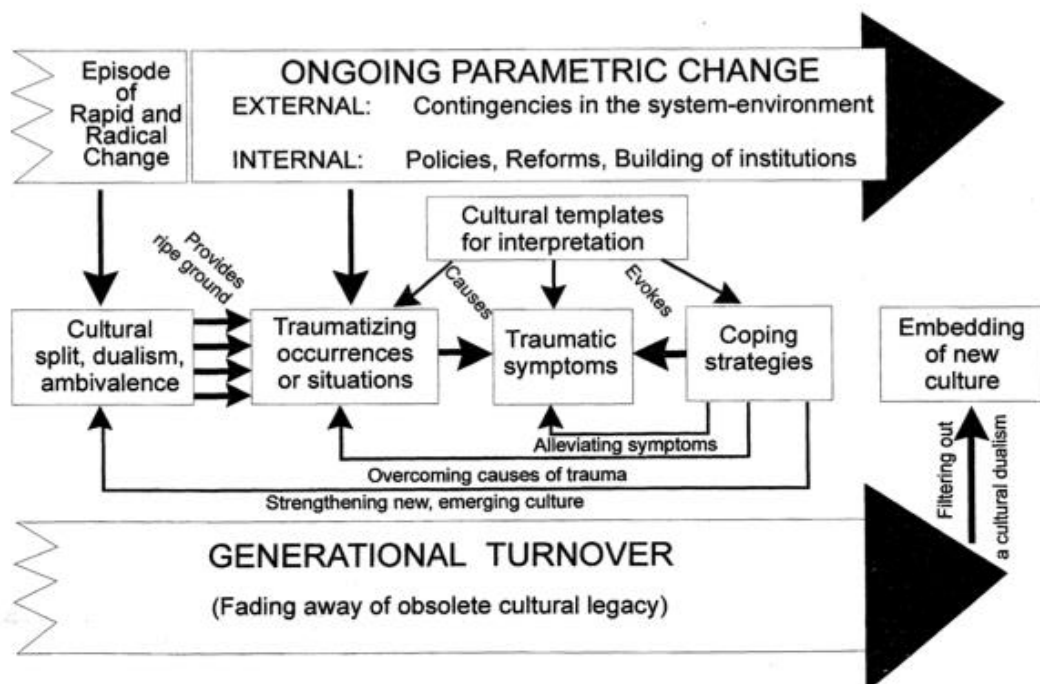
Fig 4.2: Traumatic Sequence Model (Source: Sztompka, 2000, p.426)

Alexander et al. (2004) define trauma as "the gap between event and representation" (p.11). Periods of profound social change have been closely associated with events that cause cultural trauma that manifests in terms of various long-term side effects, such as post-traumatic stress (Sztompka, 2000, p.456). However, the degree of trauma manifested is closely related to the way that people respond to these experiences, and how they deal with its long-term impact. Regardless of the direct harmful results of cultural trauma, it can also be viewed as a seed of new cultural structures for positive cultural construction and an inspiration for social becoming (ibid).

A comparison of the two models, namely the Cultural Challenge Model (CCM) and Traumatic Sequence Model (TSM), illustrates that the CCM is primarily focused on explaining the background of the experience of cultural trauma and highlights the crucial role of the impact of external culture on the local culture. In contrast, the TSM emphasises the aftermath of cultural trauma, through a detailed discussion of the sequences involved. Nevertheless, both models highlight the process of coping and reorganisation that occurs after the experience of cultural trauma, demonstrating that this stage is heavily influenced by the ways in which traumatised people respond to the experience of the trauma and how they deal with its long-term impact.

In relation to the two models, the ideas that I drew upon to extend my work in this thesis are related to the flexibility and adaptability of individuals in response to traumatic experiences. I have used the idea of cultural trauma to be applied in the field of domestic environment in relation to the dramatic transformation that had happened on the built environment after the discovery of oil in 1938 in the Eastern Province. With similar background factors that was mentioned in the Cultural Challenge Model and the conditions that was describes which trauma evolves under in Traumatic Sequence Model (TSM). My model of the Domestic Environment Transformation (DET) suggests that society with stable original cultures, social systems, inherited building practice and natural construction materials experienced sudden exposure to certain conditions, such as the oil boom, the influence of external culture, the emergence of new construction materials, developments in technology, and the adoption of new concepts in home design. These factors all contributed to create the experience of trauma to the culture of the domestic environment. In relation to this analysis, the emergence of cultural preservation in contemporary environments constitutes an example of positive cultural resilience of the society against the transformation of the domestic environment. Fig (4.3)

In this investigation, I seek to explore the positive adaptation that can emerge as a result of these kinds of experiences, with particular focus on the emergence of the practice of museum making in domestic spaces, through the examination of the dramatic transformation of the domestic environment. It contributes new content to original knowledge through the interpretation of cultural reconstruction and preservation in terms of the transformation of domestic environments.

In order to explain the transformation of the domestic environment and clarify the background and shaping forces that prompted the occurrence of the experience of cultural trauma in the Eastern Province, I develop a timeline with mapping the significant events that support the investigation[12] Fig (4.4). Through this approach, I link the previous cultural trauma research to the investigation on a particular geographical location (Eastern province), with specific reference to the context of the domestic environment. This is also examined and explained through two overlapping perspectives: the transformation of the national discourse on heritage and the transformation of the role of women in Saudi society.
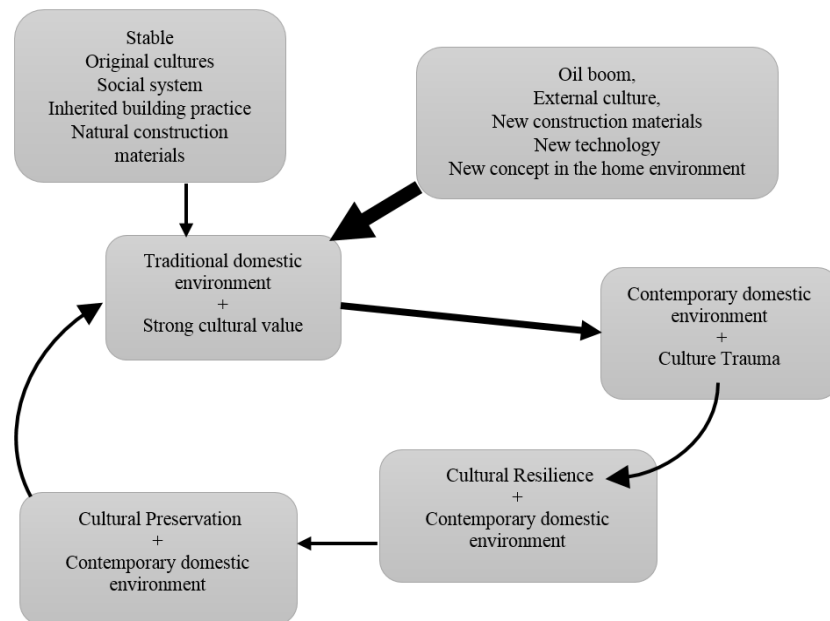
Fig 4.3: Domestic Environment Transformation (DET) Model

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[12] Detailed information on this topic can be found in chapter three, which discusses the transformation of the built environment, particularly in terms of the domestic environment.
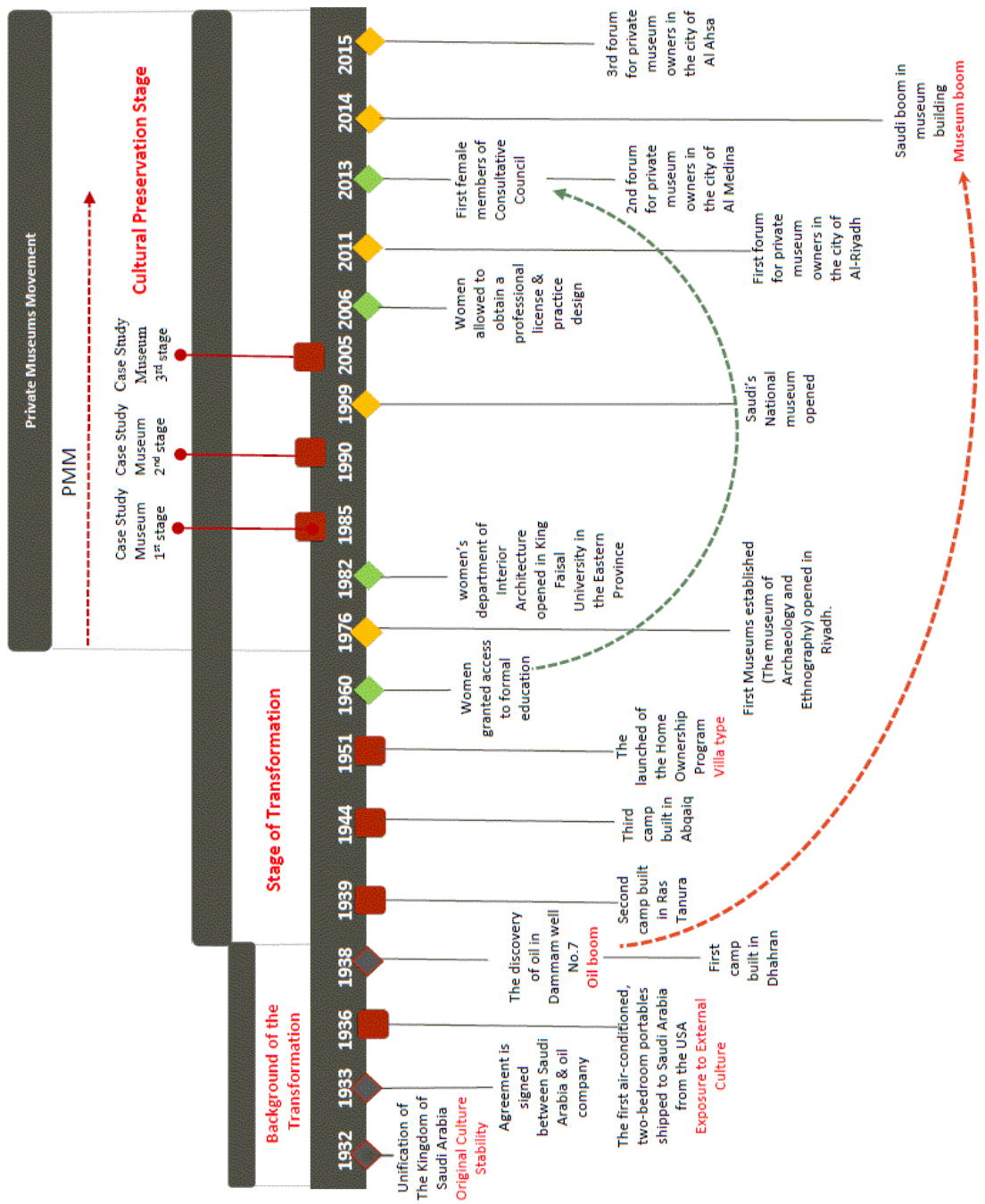
Fig 4.4: Timeline mapping the background of the domestic environment transformation from two overlapping perspectives: the transformation of the national discourse on heritage and the transformation of the role of women in Saudi society (Source: Al-JAMEA, 2018).

4.2.2.1 Domestic environment transformation:

Background of the Transformation:

As explained earlier in this thesis, several characteristics can be identified with cultural changes that facilitate the experience of trauma, such as sudden, rapid, radical, imposed, unexpected, surprising, and shocking (Sztompka, 2000). In the case of the domestic environment of the Eastern Province, the background factors contributing to the significant and rapid transformation can be summarised as follows: the oil boom, speed of transformation, exposure to external cultures, the emergence of a new concept in the home environment, and construction materials and technology. These factors are outlined in the notes on the *'Background of the Transformation'* stage on the timeline (see Fig. 4.4).

The timeline of this study begins in 1932, the time of the unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the period that I refer to as the stable original culture. One year later, a formal agreement was signed between the Kingdom and the Oil Company. In 1938, the discovery of massive and unexpected quantities of oil in Well No7 changed the history of the kingdom. This period also began the exposure of Saudi Arabia to external culture. In the context of the current study, this started with the exposure to the new form of home, in the form of air-conditioned, two-bedroom portables shipped to Saudi Arabia from the USA.

Many scholars, researchers, governmental experts, and American oil company representatives have highlighted the remarkable transformation experienced in the Saudi built environment and society in the 1930s, in the wake of the oil boom. For example, the Saudi Minister for Oil recently stated that, "The success of Well No7 sparked both an oil boom and the beginning of remarkable social change in Saudi Arabia" (Al-Naimi, 2016, p.22). As a result of the dramatic growth in the Saudi economy resulting from its abundant oil resources, major industrial work began on all levels, starting from the production process to the exportation abroad. The rapidity of this industrial and commercial action was described as transforming the quiet agrarian and pastoral communities of the Eastern Province to busy and important industrial areas (Al-Mubarak, 1999). In essence, the Eastern Province oil industry drove the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to become a rapidly developing country and the first world leader in oil exportation

In describing the impact of the dramatic transformation on the local culture, an American president of Aramco argued that "In a period of 75 plus years, from the 1930 to today, the people of Saudi Arabia in particular have been confronted with tremendous changes

that have challenged their culture and altered their lifestyle and aspirations" (Jungers, 2013, p.15). In reference to the link between radical change and cultural confusion in the context of traditional society, Sztompka (2000) argues that the cause of disorientation in the cultural context is typically attributed to the clash between traditional culture and new, diverse, unexpected patterns of behaviour that arise in response to numerous societal developments. These can include economic, political and technological changes to society (Sztompka, 2000, p.454).

In the case of the Eastern Province, the cultural clash between local people and the new form of the domestic environment can be examined through the aforementioned CCM Cultural Challenge Model. This clash also predicated a period of positive adaptation through the reconstruction of culture and identity, as people recovered from the experience of societal transformation and cultural challenge. Before I explain the stage of culture reorganisation, the following section explains the nature of this transformation, which is integral to an understanding of the current investigation.

Transformation Stage:

Beginning in 1938, the *'Transformation Stage'* described a series of ongoing changes to the built environment. In order to cover in detail this transformation of the domestic environment, chapter three presented a historical review in order to provide an overall orienting lens for understanding and examining the transformations, utilising examples, images and archival material.

In fact, the most significant characteristic in the experience of cultural trauma evoked by the alteration of the domestic environment was the speed of transformation. The development did not occur in a gradual or stable manner, allowing the changes to limit their impact and facilitate absorption by the local people. To the contrary, the transformation of the built environment occurred at a dramatic speed, under the pressure of massive oil operations and developments. In describing the change that started in the Eastern Province, but rapidly exerted a profound effect across the whole Kingdom, it has been stated that the transformation happened, "at such a rate and on such a scale that it is difficult to take in and grasp as a whole. The changes taking place in the eastern province, the area along the Arabian Gulf cost in which Aramco operates, represent in microcosm what is happening throughout the Kingdom" (Nawwab at el., 1980, p.239).

Another important witness to the rapid transformation of the country was the first Saudi president of Aramco Company, who explained that,

"I joined Aramco as an office boy in 1947. It was a very different world and the company, and Saudi nation, have come a long way since then. From grinding poverty of the past, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is now a member of the G20. Life expectancy, education standards, healthcare and infrastructure are unrecognizable compared to the situation I knew as boy" (Al-Naimi, 2016, p.290).

In this argument the expression unrecognizable support the perspective of complete change and transformation. The discovery of oil changed the Kingdom beyond all recognition, it fast shift Saudi Arabia and its people into an industrialised society to be one of the top word country.

As shown on the timeline, the discovery of oil led to massive investment in the provision of residential communities for the oil company employees. In 1938, the first camp was built in Dhahran, with the second camp in Ras Tanura following in 1939, and the third camp being constructed in Abqaiq in 1944. It is vital to note that the urban planning and the houses of the residential communities of oil company employees followed American culture and supported their lifestyle. For example, "visitors to Dhahran and the other largely American expatriate communities during the 1950s were invariably struck by the degree to which they [Aramco] replicated the look and feel of small-town America" (McMurray, 2011, p168). Visitors recounted feeling a sense of arriving into a different place from the first moment they entered the Aramco residential communities.

In the context of what happened to the local domestic environment, "Air conditioning is perhaps one of the most visible and pervasive symbols of the changes that have already occurred, since the coming of the oil industry, in the life of the Eastern Province" (Nawwab at el., 1980, p.239). Air-conditioning was an important innovation that not only affected building design, but also had an impact on the lifestyles and social activity of people. Air-conditioning has changed the majority of social activities from outdoors to indoors and transformed Saudi building designs from an open model to a closed one.

A significant period in this study occurred in 1951, with the introduction of the villa style as the new standard of homes for local people, as indicated, on the timeline (Fig. 4.4). This was through the launched of Home Ownership Program at Aramco company and can be "considered the origin of the physical contradiction that appeared later in the Saudi home environment" (Al-Naim, 1998, p.46). The new key design concepts that were introduced by Aramco had a significant impact on the fabric of the domestic environment. The most influential of these changes were the adoption of villa style houses and the

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formation of street patterns as grids (Hathloul, 1981). These concepts had a profound cultural and architectural impact on Saudi Arabia: "both the new street pattern and structures built on them were totally new, and as such they shocked local people; yet at the same time it started a transformative urban era which led in time to complete urban and social change" (Al-Naim, 2013, p.61). The use of the word 'shocked' when describing the reaction of the populace to the new domestic environment in comparison to their local traditional environment is crucially important, as cultural trauma is defined as shock to the cultural tissue of a society (Stampa, 2000). The findings of the study entitled *The Saudi house in the past, present and future (a study of changes)* states that, "The link between the past and present is completely broken" (Alafghani, 1990, p.4). The researcher adds that, "The traditional houses and neighbourhoods became a victim of ignorance and idealized condition of the past" (ibid, p.iv). However, the individual response towards cultural preservation of their tradition environment after the experiences of dramatic transformation is interpreted on the next stage[13].

Cultural preservation stage:

The *'Cultural preservation stage'* focuses on the awareness and reorganisation of culture, as shown on the timeline (see Fig 4.4). It is important to clarify that the people examined in this study, who are involved in the emergence of cultural preservation, such as the practice of private museum making, are the generation who directly witnessed the transformation stage. This population has specific experience of living in both domestic environments, namely the traditional courtyard houses in which they lived as children and in imported villa style houses when they were adults. This enables them to retain their memories of living in traditional neighbourhoods and gives them the ability to translate these memories into a completely different contemporary environment.

In describing the experiences of this generation, Al-Naim argues that, "as a result of the rapid change in the 1970s, a sense of not belonging became the main issue in the home environment in Saudi Arabia, since people suddenly found themselves in a completely different physical environment" (Al-Naim, 1998, p. 12). An important study was conducted by Fadan (1983) into contemporary housing in Saudi Arabia (1950-1983). This research, entitled *The Development of Contemporary Housing in Saudi Arabia: A Study*

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[13] It is important to note that despite the international focus on the oil potential of Saudi Arabia since 1973, there has been relatively little consideration from commentators about the other potential outcomes of the economic transformation of the country, such as the impact on its culture or people. "Unfortunately, one consequence of the curiosity generated by the nation's increasingly secure economic status has been a lack of interest or academic emphasis on its vast human and cultural potential. This has resulted in a neglect of the arts and other aspects of Saudi culture by scholars and researchers" (Althaqeel, 2017, p.23).

in Cross-Cultural Influence under Conditions of Rapid Change, argues that, "Today many people are confused, and lack a feeling of belonging. People need a sense of place – connections to a place they know and where they sense they belong" (Fadan, 1983, p.345). Expressions like 'not belonging' highlight the break and discontinuity between people and their surrounding domestic environment. In return, their resilient response to this break was to develop a strong cultural preservation as positive adaptation. It can be argued that attempts to ensure cultural preservation in the Saudi contemporary home are likely to differ in approach and form, according to the capability and ability (financial status, and creativity) of a particular homeowner. Cultural preservation can be understood as a manifestation of residents' attempts to record their culture, traditions, identity and memories, which enables history to be documented and passed to future generations. Cultural preservation also denotes the attempts of residents to generate meaning in their current domestic environment and create a link to their previous traditional environment.

In this investigation, I identify the new trend of cultural preservation of the domestic environment, which is termed the Private Museum Movement (PMM). This form of cultural preservation specifically takes the form of individual practices of 'museum making' in private domestic spaces. This movement is outlined on the timeline in the stage of cultural preservation and was explained in detail in chapter 6 (see section 6.6 and 6.7). The change in the national discourse on this subject is explained in more detail below. This research proposes a new understanding of the impact of socio-economic transformation on the domestic environment. It contributes new content to original knowledge through the interpretation of cultural preservation in terms of the development of domestic environments.

4.2.2.2 Transformation of the national discourse on heritage:

The timeline explore the shift from the 'oil boom' in 1938 to the 'museum boom' in 2014. Importantly, it shows an absence of any interest in the culture of museums from the 1930s to the late 1970s, when the first museum, the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, was established in Riyadh. Six other museums of archaeology and ethnography then opened in different cities (AL-Rawaf, 2016). While the opening of the Saudi national museum in Riyadh, which took place in 1999, 67 years after unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Michael Rice and Co, 1980, cited in Al-Rawaf, 2016). Despite the neglect of heritage during the 1970s and relatively late adoption of positive attitudes and policies towards the preservation of its traditional culture, Saudi Arabia has managed to successfully restore and protect numerous valued heritage sites, some of which have been

nominated for inclusion on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) (Bagader, 2016, p.23). This change has been accompanied by a shift from preservation to the integration of cultural heritage into the national push to increase tourism[14], as evident in the renaming of the responsible government department to the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) in 2008 (ibid, p.90).

During this investigation, I identify a significant link between the chronology of domestic museum formation in Saudi Arabia and the changes occurring in the national discourse on heritage. A detailed discussion of this association is presented in chapter six, section (6.7). In brief, it is important to note that the cultural significance and historical heritage value of artefactual collections in private museum in Saudi Arabia have been officially recognised and prized by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH).

The first forum for private museum owners in the city of Al-Riyadh was opened in 2011 by the president of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH), His Royal Highness, Prince Sultan Bin Salman Al-Saud. Recommendations were then given for this forum to be held every two years in a different city. In 2013, the forum was held in Al Medinah Al-Munawwarah, which was followed by a forum in the Al-Ahsa area of the Eastern Province in 2015. The number of licensed private museums has since increased from 132 (2015) to 160 (2016), according to Dr. Awad Al-Zhrani, the general manager of museums at the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH, 2016).

In 2014, denoted as the 'museums boom' on the timeline, HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud made an official announcement regarding the Saudi boom in museum building at a conference in Oxford in April 2014. He stated that, "the government of Saudi Arabia is spending more than $1.7bn on building 230 new museums as part of a programme to promote the country culture" (The Art Newspaper, 2014).[15] These kinds of statements and the recent Saudi boom in museum building can be interpreted as evidence that links have been established between the emergence of domestic museum

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[14] Further discussion is provided of this in chapter six of this thesis (see section 6.7).

[15] Milner, C. (2014) 'The Kingdom to spend $1.7bn on building 230 museums', *The Art Newspaper,* 19 May (Online) Available at: http://ec2-79-125-124-178.eu-west-1.compute.amazonaws.com/articles/The-Kingdom-to-spend-bn-on-building--museums/32466 (accessed 20 September 2017)

formation in Saudi Arabia and the changes in the national discourse on heritage. However, it should be noted that the PMM started before the boom in museum building in Saudi Arabia, although these private museums have been quickly integrated into the Saudi vision for the development of the national tourism industry.

4.2.2.3 Transformation of the role of women on Saudi society:

The role of women in Saudi society has passed through a number of different stages, although the speed of change and scope of female involvement has increased dramatically in recent years, towards an important role in the new vision of the kingdom in 2030. This section provides a brief history of the changing role of women in Saudi culture and public life, explaining how this role has also shaped the domestic environment.

In the past, the domestic environment of Saudi Arabia was designed to ensure the privacy of women and limit any exposure or interaction with the public, as women must ensure that their bodies are not seen in public. In recognition of the importance of these strictures, the "behaviour is also reflected in the Saudi traditional built environment. The architectural form of the house is totally veiled from the outside, giving complete privacy to its components and spaces whilst also providing protection to its inhabitants against outsiders" (Bahammam, 2006, p.79).

In the specific context of the culture of the Eastern Province, homes in Hofuf were explicitly influenced by the position of women in society, which necessitated the construction of discrete areas inside houses that enabled the segregation of men and women (AL-Naim, 1998, p.174). The result of this is that the home environment of women in the Eastern Province were extremely private, with a number of architectural innovations being implemented to ensure privacy and minimise interactions with the outside world, such as "separated from outside by a very complicated circulation network starting from the bent entrance in the house to the opening in the roof parapets (ibid, p.202). Further explanations and photos of these architectural features are provided in chapter three, section 3.2.3.

Indeed, as evident on the timeline, the interaction and participation of women in society began to change from the limitations to the borders of her house, family and neighbours in the 1960s (see Fig 4.4). These years denoted the entry of women into education in Saudi Arabia, with women entering schools, being introduced to the education environment, and interacting with teachers and cultures from different Arab counties. These shifts gave women the opportunity to practise teaching and working outside the

home, with many schools and colleges opening for women and businesses being established for women only.

Following the development of women's education in Saudi Arabia, the involvement of women in home design has increased, enabling greater expression of female identity in the domestic environment. In 1982, the women's department of Interior Architecture opened in King Faisal University in the Eastern Province. Since 2006, women have been able to obtain a professional license to open offices and practice design. As a consequence of these changes, the knowledge, education, job, identity and position of women in the community have therefore begun to be better reflected in the design of homes.[16] This is particularly true in the case of the guest zone spaces, where the *majlis* guest sitting area remains the symbolic place for guest hospitality. In the *majlis*, the choice in interior design, furniture style, finishing materials and accessories are often an expression of a woman's preference, personality and the social standing of her family.

In 2005, female education developed further, with the establishment of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP), which enables many Saudi women receive a scholarship to study degree programs in different areas of specialisation at leading universities around the world. The education of women has changed the perspective of society regarding female interaction in public life, with women becoming an important human resource at the national level. For example, "the Saudi American Bank (SAMBA) estimates that 70% of all bank assets belong to women. Women's financial power is an issue that frequently appears in the printed media, at times with complete media supplements dedicated to elaborating on Saudi businesswomen and their financial holdings" (Aldossery, 2013, p.55).

These changes have also become evident in terms of the role of women in Saudi society. Traditionally, women in Saudi Arabia would have been restricted to family activities, whereas modern Saudi women are playing an increasingly important role in the wider community (ibid). This shift in the society of Saudi society was also illustrated by a historical shift that occurred in 2013, with the with the issuance of a royal order that mandated that the official Consultative Council (*Majlis Al-Shura*) would be comprise of a minimum of 20% of the 150 members being female. This was brought into effect with

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[16] As noted in the conclusion chapter, further research could be conducted to better understand the changing role of women in shaping architectural and design decisions in Saudi Arabia, as well as to investigate how their identities and positions are influencing the design of contemporary Saudi homes.

the appointment of 30 members, who would enjoy full rights and responsibilities.

The important role of women in cultural preservation was announced by HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud in the Oxford conference of 2014, in which he highlighted the role of women in the new vision and museum culture of Saudi Arabia. He stressed that many museums would be run by women, noting that women in Saudi Arabia "carried a lot of the history of Saudi Arabia on their shoulders. If you look throughout history, Bedouin women were the backbone of life."[17] That argument is evidence of the importance given to the participation of Saudi women in cultural preservation, as this role was explicitly recognised by the highest institution for this area in Saudi Arabia, the SCTH Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage.

My research offers fresh perspectives and insights into the role of women as social influencers. This is primarily conducted through an examination of Mrs. Munira Al Ashgar and the role that she and her museum play in cultural preservation. Mrs. Munira Al Ashgar strongly believes in the preservation of Saudi culture for future generations, as reflected creatively through the practice of museum making (see chapter six for more details). She is an example of the active role played by women in the preservation and display of heritage artefacts in domestic settings in Saudi Arabia. As examined in chapter five of the thesis, the case study illustrates how the identity, culture, religion and memories of women can be mirrored through the shaping of the spatial layout of her home, even when the design of the original structure was imported from a completely different culture.

4.2.3 Cultural trauma and domestic environment

The house is a fundamental element of society and is largely organised by householders in order to reflect their identity, culture and tradition. In this sense, it can be argued that, "the house is a microcosm of culture and civilization" (Omer 2010, p.50). Rather than being merely a physical structural residence, it is also possible to see a home as an irreplaceable centre of importance that forms the core of individuals' identities, as well as those of collective identities within the larger community (Al-Naim, 1998). Intangible culture can be a key factor in determining and influencing the physical house design. The significance of culture in relation to house design has been stressed widely in past

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[17] Milner, C. (2014) 'The Kingdom to spend $1.7bn on building 230 museums', *The Art Newspaper,* 19 May (Online) Available at: http://ec2-79-125-124-178.eu-west-1.compute.amazonaws.com/articles/The-Kingdom-to-spend-bn-on-building--museums/32466 (accessed 20 September 2017)

research, highlighting the importance of culturally specific housing (Rapoport, 1998). Nevertheless, it has been argued that, "there is a danger in applying Western concepts which represent only one choice among the many possible, to the problems of other areas, instead looking at terms of local way of life, specific needs, and ways of doing things" (Rapoport, 1969, p.30).

Every society has its own unique culture that should be respected during the process of designing residential projects. For instance, Muslim society is strongly influenced by religion and is therefore governed by the two main references of Islam: the holy Qur'an and the Hadith (the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him). In line with these strictures, Islamic culture requires housing to be designed with particular regard for principles that are fundamentally important to Islam. One of the most important of these is a particular approach to privacy within the home. In Islamic law, the home is considered to be a secure, private, and serene place for its inhabitants. All Muslims are required to respect the rights of the inhabitants to privacy. Islam is a religion that encompasses faith, knowledge and practice (Omer, 2010).

Here, the word 'practice', identifies the ways in which Muslims translate their religious beliefs into physical practice, with their spiritual knowledge manifesting as specific actions or behaviours in the physical environment. Realising the value of Islamic practice is absolutely fundamental to the design of homes for Muslims. However, although Islamic communities will share the same broad belief in the importance of ensuring privacy in the home, specific interpretations regarding these requirements may differ from one location to another, in accordance with the cultural variations that exist between Muslim countries. The topic of privacy differs from one culture to another and the form of the houses constructed in those cultures will tend to correspond accordingly. For example, cultural variations can result in houses from some Muslim cultures being open, while houses from other Muslim cultures may be partitioned or closed (Al-Naim, 1998).

Therefore, it is fundamentally important to understand the specific cultures to which each Muslim community belongs, in order to determine and ensure the delivery of the appropriate privacy requirements in their homes. Saudi society is highly conservative and strongly emphasises the importance of individual and familial privacy, particularly in terms of the segregation of female and family members from males from outside the family. "Such a strong cultural value influences people to arrange their houses in order to maintain a certain level of privacy" (Fadan, 1983.p.309).

In providing an example of the role played by Islamic teaching in the organisation of interior of domestic spaces, Al-Wafi, (2006) clarifies:

"Historically most Makkah people hold fast to religious teaching on how to live their lives, concerning issues such as privacy, the design of traditional internal spaces which were built to the requirements of the residents were influenced by religion, custom, and culture hence the two zones in the traditional houses of Makkah (family zone and guest zone)" (Al-Wafi, 2006, p.11).

Guest hospitality is another practice that is strongly emphasised in the Islamic religion, meaning that this is also typically an important practice in the design of dwellings for Muslims. There is a strong connection between guest hospitality and privacy requirements in the design of these homes, as Islamic dwelling designs are organised to ensure full separation between the spaces for guests and those for the family. For example, privacy and guest hospitality have shaped the organisation of space and façade design in traditional Saudi domestic environments as explained in part one, chapter three (see section 3.1). Since the discovery of oil and correspondingly rapid transformation of the Saudi domestic environment, the lack of cultural characteristics in the design of local domestic environment has been highlighted by many scholars. For example, Ghazzeh (1997) argues that the adoption of 'modern' architectural structures during the growth in demand associated with the development of Saudi Arabia has not been universally successfully. In many of these imported buildings "the results have been technical, aesthetic and social failures" (ibid, p.30). With specific reference to socio-cultural rule, he adds that the failure: "The contemporary built environment is failing to respect the inherited socio-cultural norms of the Islamic society of Saudi Arabia" (ibid, p.235). This position has been supported by other researchers, who argue that "the contemporary built environment created a privacy problem that the people could not accept" (Alafghani, 1990, p.336). This can be interpreted as identifying the existence of the culturally traumatic experience that has been observed in the context of the contemporary domestic environments in Saudi Arabia, which took place after the discovery of oil.

The definition of heritage in the context of this research is the historically significant culture of a particular society, such as buildings, artefacts, languages or traditions (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017). 'Belonging to the culture' is an essential factor in ensuring the applicability of heritage in relation to specific cultures. For example, the organisation of space, the architectural features, and the continuation of certain cultural practices in

traditional domestic environments in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia can be considered to be heritage belonging to that particular area.

The question directing my research was the investigation of how residents in Saudi Arabia have created a sense of belonging in their homes, through their memories, past experiences, and the reworking of their cultural practices. I was keen to understand the role that religion and culture play in shaping these new domestic environments. The answers to these questions are intended to offer a valuable contribution to the knowledge in this field; they will be informed by an empirical investigation of how cultural preservation was developed in response to rapid, dramatic transformation of the domestic environment. This research uses the discourse around cultural trauma to open an area of potential dialogue that explores the specific impacts of the transformation of a domestic environment.

The survival of Saudi culture and heritage in contemporary domestic environments demonstrates how cultural resilience has developed through a process of cultural preservation. Positive adaptation, adjustment and cultural preservation can also be observed in the ongoing physical changes that residents have made to their homes, in order to ensure privacy and guest hospitality, as well as to express cultural identity. The next part of this chapter discusses the concept of resilience in relation to the domestic environment after transformation.

4.3 Cultural resilience

This second part of this chapter is divided into three sections: the first deals with the meaning of cultural resilience as a concept, presenting and discussing these definitions in different disciplines and attempting to explain how cultural resilience may constitute a positive response that mitigates against an experience of loss or transformation. The second section discusses cultural resilience in the built environment, highlighting a significant need to investigate the concept of cultural resilience in the design and construction of cities in the rapidly developing oil countries of the Gulf.

This section of the chapter then concludes by demonstrating the potential role of creativity in producing culturally resilient actions and how this can actually be an inherent characteristic of resilience. In addition, it also explores the meaning of creative resilience utilised in this thesis as an ongoing, dynamic process of the positive adaptation and adjustment that occurs in opposition to the dramatic transformation of the domestic environment, enabling individuals to find creative ways to preserve culture.

4.3.1 The meaning of resilience

Resilience is an umbrella term, with different disciplines having attached their own meanings and measurements to it (Brown and Williams, 2015). As outlined in the previous literature review, this thesis defines cultural resilience as the capacity to recover and reorganise culture in response to externally induced changes in a domestic environment. "Resilience is often framed around the context of how well communities respond to external shocks" (Beel, et al., 2015, p.2). Another explanation of resilient action refers to the ability to move between "the twin poles of continuity/repetition and discontinuity/trauma" (Lahoud, et al., 2010, p.19). In essence, cultural resilience describes the ways in which culture survives and reappears in new formats and environments. This is highly relevant in the context of the current thesis, which seeks to investigate the survival of Saudi culture and heritage after the transformation of its domestic environment.

Resilience can be understood as positive adaptation in face of the experience of loss or change. For example, in the medical context, resilience is defined as "an outcome of positive adaptation during and after exposure to significant adversity. In other words, resilience is viewed as a specific type of adaptation" (Metzl and Morrell, 2008, p.307). Everall et al. (2006) define resilience as: an enduring personality characteristic that shields an individual from harm or difficulty; as good mental health and a lack of psychopathology, despite contact with risk; and as an active process that depends on the interaction between individuals and the shifting variables in their surroundings(ibid). According to these definitions, resilience can be understood as a dynamic process that can produce ongoing positive changes in a domestic environment, while also protecting the residents and their surroundings from the negative aspects of exposure to dramatic change.

Discussions of resilience in recent literature (Abramson, et al., 2015) have tended to shift away from viewing this characteristic as an outcome. Instead, resilience is more commonly being framed as a process, which measures the ability of a system which can refer to anything from "be an individual, a household, a community, an institution, or a nation-state" to endure, respond and recuperate from external influence and the corresponding disruption to function or developmental capacity (ibid, 2015, p.3). In other words, the characteristics of resilience in the previous literature describe the ability of a system to retain viability in the face of disruption through its inherent economic, human, political or social attributes that exist at both collective and individual levels. "For

example, an individual with good health (a human capital), adequate insurance and savings (economic capital), and a strong social network (social capital) will be able to call upon all of these resources to help buffer the effects of a catastrophic event" (ibid, 2015, p.3)

In the specific context of this investigation, Mrs. Munira's personal capacity, ability, and social networks were all resources that enabled her to develop cultural resilience. This resilience was subsequently reflected in her home and the practice of private museum making. Other individuals in Saudi society have also become part of the private museum movement, meaning that they can collectively serve as an example of community resilience.

In the introduction to *The Resilience Architecture Framework (RAF),* Limnios et al. (2014) explained the types of manifestations of resilience, by differentiating the two opposing manifestations of resilience as either offence (adaptation) or defence (resistance to internal or external disturbance) (p.106). This thesis focuses on the first direction, namely adaptation. With reference to selected positive definitions that was cited from (Limnios et al., 2014), resilience can denote the ability to adapt and become stronger in the face of trauma or pressure (Gallos, 2008), "the capacity to be robust under conditions of enormous stress and change" (Coutu, 2002), or the ability to ensure positive adaptability in challenging situations (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011).

4.3.2 Cultural resilience in the built environment

The concept of resilience has been applied in order to investigate the urbanisation of the cities of Sharjah and Dubai; the former has evolved into a cosmopolitan international city, while the latter has endeavoured to preserve its cultural image (Radoine, 2013). In studying cultural heritage, which he refers to as "resilient culturally dynamic impetus" (p.214), Radoine argues that the resilience of heritage in Sharjah enhances the urban sustainability of the UAE (ibid). He recommends further research investigation of the concept of resilience in relation to the built environment in the Gulf countries, where a vast gap exists between the new built environment and the traditional culture of the native inhabitants. In case of Sharjah, he concludes that, "The urban morphology of the city has presented the resilience of cultural patterns, amidst fast-changing urbanisation. This resilience reveals the limits of physical planning, and exposes the potential of human and cultural values in generating future sustainable urban spaces" (Radoine, 2013, p. 259). He argues that a link can be identified between the dramatic speed of urban transformation

and the manifestation of cultural resilience (ibid). His study therefore provides a valuable perspective, which is highly applicable to the study of cultural resilience and the transformation of the Saudi domestic environment in this thesis.

A disconnect exists between the modern built environment in industrialised Gulf countries and traditional society. This disconnect is causing a struggle for traditional society. However, this struggle has the capacity to bring about acts and forms of resilience as positive adaptations to the transformations that occur. This is evident in discussions of the dramatic changes to the fortunes and characteristics of the Gulf countries, as photographs of the built environment in Gulf cities during the early 1930's are almost incomparable with those taken in the Middle East as a whole during the same period. Cities such as Cairo in Egypt are very clearly different from Gulf cities in terms of their advancement in terms of building materials and construction methods. In contrast, the environmental infrastructure and the cosmopolitan image of modern Gulf cities tend to reflect the pace of modern development, which far exceeds that of any other city in the Middle East. The cosmopolitan image of a city like Dubai is not dissimilar to other international cities, like New York, despite the huge gap between the cities in terms of history and the relative pace of their introduction into the modern era.

It may be possible to link the transformation of city image with the rapidly growing built environment and population fabric in response to the sudden shift in the Gulf countries' economies following the discovery of oil. Radoine (2013, p.7) argues that the rapid urbanisation and modernisation of the United Arab Emirates is effectively 'erasing' the remarkable culture of the local fishermen, traders and pearl divers who have traditionally been integral to its geopolitical situation. Instead, these cultures have now been superseded by non-natives, who have typically come to the new urban environment seeking economic opportunities. Here, the word 'erasing' refers to the disappearance of traditional culture in the urban fabric of the United Arab Emirates, which has occurred as a result of the rapid urbanisation. In this thesis, I refer to this process as the experience of cultural loss and trauma in the built environment. However, the positive adjustment after the exposure to loss and transformation is what I refer to as resilience.

This chapter describes how to view the impact of the experience of loss from different perspectives, as well as how to gain a better understanding of how cultural resilience emerges in response to this stimulus. Furthermore, in the case of post-trauma in urbanism, Lahoud et al. (2010) highlight the creative approach to the expression of resilience and argue that, "after absorbing a shock, the resilient system creatively explores and trials

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new forms of stability… a resilient city is one that has evolved in an unstable environment and developed adaptations to deal with uncertainty" (ibid, p.19). This raises the question of the ways in which it may be possible to evoke cultural resilience through creativity in the environment after a period of transformation and how the concept of cultural resilience might be applied in the domestic environment to instigate positive adaptation.

4.3.3 Cultural resilience by means of creativity

Creativity refers to the act of making something through original thought or imagination (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). Effectively, creativity is a thought or action that innovatively changes a domain, creates an entirely new one (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), or which can be developed through problem solving (Kirton, 1994). In simple terms, creativity denotes the human ability to find original solutions to problems or to create products in a manner that is acceptable in a given culture (Gardner, 1982). Creativity does not occur in a vacuum, instead arising in a particular context (Meneely and Portillo, 2005).

In other words, creativity is strongly related to environment and can be understood through the different experiences to which people have been exposed, which may have direct or indirect effects on their way of thinking and acting (Joseph and Linley, 2008). The role of positive emotion after a traumatic experience has been shown to make individuals more creative, flexible, and have more highly rated problem solving skills (ibid). Transforming trauma into creative self-expression can be one of the most effective means of healing, with survivors of distressing events often benefitting from painting their memories or expressing their pain in creative outlets, such as dance or music. As witnesses to their own trauma, people can take something shocking or disturbing and transform it into something definable with meaningful narratives (Richman, 2013). It will be argued in this thesis that the impact of rapid and dramatic transformation in the domestic environments has sparked creativity among the residents, with that creativity leading to cultural resilience.

Important links have been made between the concepts of resilience and creativity, as it is possible to argue that, "creativity could be an inherent predictor and facilitator of resilience" (Metzl and Morrell, 2008, p.315). They recognise the need for further study to be conducted into the ability of creativity to increase resilient adaptation in response to adverse situations, as the majority of research to date has neglected this role of creativity. Nevertheless, creative resilience generated in accordance with the inherent capability and personality of an individual was a distinguishing feature of some traditional societies

(ibid). Arguably, in order for individuals to recognise the options that are available to them under the circumstances of transformation, they must be resilient and adaptable. In other words, they must be adaptable, clear, and able to set new goals as the situation demands, as "flexibility and the ability to withstand ambiguity and create alternative goals to set path seem to be inherent characteristics of resilience if one is required to adapt and re-bound" (ibid, 2008, p.311). The concept of creative adaptation can be theoretically close to resilience, or in other words, a type of resilience. In light of the above, this thesis uses creative resilience as a combined concept that refers to the positive adaptations and adjustments that occur in response to dramatic transformations, such as the changes that occurred in the domestic environment of Saudi Arabia.

4.4 Cultural preservation

This chapter on the theoretical framework of this thesis seeks to develop a discussion around cultural preservation in the domestic environment from two overlapping perspectives. The first of these relates to cultural trauma, examining how cultural preservation can develop as a consequence of changes to the domestic environment. The second perspective then examines how cultural preservation can be understood as an act that produces cultural resilience.

This fourth and final part of the chapter draws out the relationship between cultural practice, cultural preservation and cultural resilience. In so doing, it also looks at a specific example of cultural preservation after the socio-economic transformation of the domestic environment in the Eastern Province.

4.4.1 Cultural preservation after dramatic transformation of domestic environment

In this thesis, I argue that conditions that create the experience of cultural trauma in a domestic environment can yield positive outcomes. In effect, it can be argued that despite the inherent negativity of trauma, it may also enable a cultural growth (Sztompka, 2000). By visualising trauma in the long term, it is clear that these experiences can serve to create or merge cultures into new forms and contexts (ibid). (Fig 4.5)
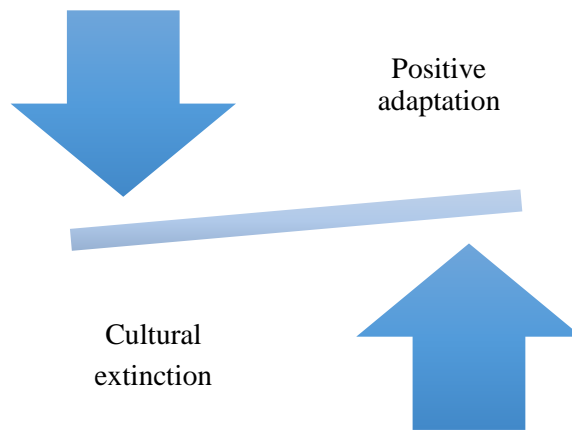
Fig. 4.5.: Suggested outcome of cultural trauma

This thesis seeks to answer how a rapid transformation can be seen as culturally constructive in the Saudi domestic environment and how this change had a positive outcome on Saudi culture. In fulfilment of these aims, the research proposes a new understanding of the impact of socio-economic transformation on the domestic environment. It contributes new content to original knowledge through the interpretation of cultural preservation in terms of the development of domestic environments.

The continuity of the culture is in accordance with the ability of a society, as "the cultural core will find one way or another to continue in contemporary societies. The strength of these values depends on the degree of resistance by society towards change and the ability of its members to preserve their cultural core" (Al-Naim, 1998, p.18). However, it is vital to note that 'resistance' is not equivalent to 'refusal'. Instead, it means adapting and containing these new images, linking them with existing images (ibid, 1998).

In terms of the typical modern home in Saudi Arabia, attempts to preserve culture are likely to occur in myriad different ways, depending on the particular ability, financial situation and preferences of the residents of each home. In this way, it may be useful to consider cultural preservation in terms of the approaches utilised by homeowners to recall or reconstruct memories of society that existed in the traditional domestic environment. These architectural strategies provide a valid and potentially enduring way to record and convey these culture images from one generation to the next.

4.4.2 Resilience through cultural preservation

This section seeks to highlight the relationship between resilience and cultural practice, as this has not been widely covered. Researchers in cultural resilience have recently tended to hold that "within the social sciences the concept of resilience has not engaged with thinking about the ways cultural activity produces resilient behaviour through practice" (Beel et. al., 2015, pp.1-10). This research examines cultural resilience through the occurrence of cultural preservation in multiple directions, including through the practice of museum making, and by ensuring the continuation of the cultural practices of guest hospitality and privacy.

In general terms, the structure of the domestic environment can be considered as a smaller part of the organisation of the urban built environment. When examining the question of how the urban scale helps us to understand heritage, it may be useful to consider resilience at an urban scale, in order to better understand resilience in relation to heritage and cultural preservation. Radoine (2013) clarifies that, from the perspective of cultural heritage, resilience describes the ability to give context to modern urban environments by restoring an inert cultural resource. In other words, resilience describes the process of a community taking steps to awaken their dormant cultural memory to refresh the cultural image of a city (Radoine, 2013).

Although the investigation in this thesis focuses on the domestic environment, the same principle applies. Cultural resilience is highly dependent on a society's participation as a group, including when individuals live in the same environment and therefore share the same social and cultural values. A crucial factor here is that cultural resilience through cultural preservation and heritage can only be produced from the local society, as this is the only legitimate source of the appropriate cultural background, rather than being imposed from an external or foreign source. Past memories will not be refreshed or activated by people who have never had the personal experience of living in an area or community. In other words, the sense of belonging to a place is created by inherited aspects from within a group of residents who are able to reflect it in a resilient way under specific circumstances, such as in the aftermath of dramatic architectural transformation.

Radoine (2013) argues that it is the inhabitants of a city that make it sustainable, rather than its buildings or high-tech networks. Residents are attached to the environment via memory and the sense of belonging, which is fundamentally important because cultural

resilience effectively describes their ability to reorganise, adapt and adjust their environment to reflect their religion, culture, past experience and collective memory. Therefore, cultural preservation in the Saudi context occurs in the on-going physical modifications that individuals make to their own homes in order to practice privacy, guest hospitality, and the expression of their identity. In chapter five, a detailed discussion is provided of the modifications that a resident made of her home in an attempt to generate meaning in her current domestic environment and create a link to her previous traditional environment that reflects her religion, culture, identity and memories.

The survival of Saudi culture and heritage in an imported home design clearly illustrates the development of cultural resilience through a process of cultural preservation. Chapter six will present specific attempts by individuals to preserve their Saudi cultural heritage through the practice of museum making within their private homes. Firstly, the next section briefly focuses on the way in which tents were adapted and incorporated into residential homes, demonstrated how they can therefore comprise an example of cultural preservation in the contemporary environment.

4.4.3 Cultural preservation in the Eastern Provinces domestic environment

This section presents the tents that were preserved and adapted for incorporation into the structure of Saudi homes. In Saudi Arabia, may be found in a number of different forms, materials and designs. Although tents were originally used in the desert rather than in the urban environment, this section explains how they have become commonplace in the context of contemporary villas.

Historically, one third of the population of the Eastern Province were town dwellers, whilst the remaining two thirds were settled cultivators and Bedouin tribes who lived in tents (Facey, 1994). The black tent (*bayt alsha'r*) was one of the most dominant dwellings in the Eastern Provinces, where it was woven simply from goat's hair or sheep's wool and divided by a number of vertical curtains that separated men and guests from the quarters of the women.

After the transformation in the domestic environment, traditional Saudi tents were considered to be a significant material artefact. Therefore, people placed these structures inside their homes to create a stronger link between the imagined traditional environment and their contemporary existence, thereby enhancing the feeling of attachment and belonging to the surrounding region. This shows how tents can constitute an example of positive adjustment, adaptation and cultural preservation, looking at the domestic

environment in the Eastern Province after the transformation brought about by the discovery of oil.

In discussing the gap between a traditional dwelling and contemporary villa design, Bahammam (1998) argues that, "the experience of living in the 'villa' represents a quantum leap from living in the traditional dwelling; therefore, many residents add elements such as the Bedouin's black tent and/or the fire hearth room in the yard in order to satisfy their need for a traditional way of living" (ibid, p.567). New lifestyles emerged from the alteration in the ways that people lived, as changing conditions encouraged people to practice their traditions in a completely different environment. This illustrates the flexibility demonstrated by the Saudis in accepting the transformation, while simultaneously showing that they took steps to preserve their heritage.

Despite its traditional roots, the simple tent has evolved in response to the emergence of new technology, designs, and construction materials. For example, the gardens of some villas incorporate modern spaces built with materials like glass and bricks, but designed to resemble traditional tents (*bayt alsha'r*) (Alsheliby, 2015, p.279). It can also be argued that the passion of the Saudi peoples for traditional tents in the gardens of their contemporary villas has influenced the design of these tents, encouraging them to evolve in forms and designs (Fig 4.6).

In the modern context, many of these tents require a large budget to decorate, as well as the assistance of a specialist interior designer. Many tent spaces now incorporate modern technology, such as lighting, insulation, air-conditioning systems, and high-tech entertainment devices with large TV screens. The furniture will also tend to be luxurious, including Arabic sitting areas made from carved wood, complete with embroidered cushions. The tent curtain might be made from delicate silk or velvet, while the tent floor will typically be carpeted or covered in ceramic tiles, and the tent ceiling is often uniquely designed with ornaments and expensive chandeliers. Despite the luxurious atmosphere, the space is still called 'the tent' by residents. Nevertheless, these tents are now symbolic places that reflect the status of the house owners, as expressed through the interior design, accessories, and furniture.

In the past, the function of a tent was to provide shelter against harsh desert conditions. The modern iterations of these tents have instead become main guest reception spaces in many homes, especially on important traditional occasions, such as the gatherings at Eid or Ramadan. In this way, the tents become private domains that provide guest privacy

and enable traditional hospitality to be practised. The tent as a space provides a relaxed atmosphere and reminds the people of an open desert life, but within the boundary of a contemporary villa style home. In many cases, tents have become the preferred place for residents to spend their time when at home.

The existence of "tents" in contemporary Saudi homes provides a clear example of cultural adaptation that has arisen from the socio-economic transformation in the domestic environment. These structures represent an attempt to reconnect the residents with their traditional environments, while simultaneously creating a sense of belonging to the surrounding contemporary environment. Although the existence of an adapted tent has become common in Saudi homes, one of the significant findings in my thesis is that there are other architectural developments that are also gaining popularity in the Kingdom, such as the incorporation of private museums into residential homes, which can be considered to be a new form of cultural preservation. Chapter six examines and explains the cultural significance of this new phenomenon (private museum making), with particular emphasis on its role as a cultural practice that reflects and preserves Saudi culture for the next generation.

Fig 4.6: Example of a luxury tent in the garden of a contemporary villa located in the Eastern Province. Tent design by May Al-Jamea (2010).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has covered the theoretical notions linking the main concepts in this thesis together: cultural trauma, cultural preservation and cultural resilience. The meaning of each concept has been clarified, enabling their application to a domestic environment and providing a better understanding of how cultural resilience was produced in response to the transformation of the domestic environment in Saudi Arabia. In this chapter, I have sought to expand the concept of trauma to highlight the possibility for positive changes, development and adaptation after the exposure to a transformative experience. In so doing, it has been argued that long-lasting changes can continue in different formats, even after a particular traumatic experience has ended. This means that cultural trauma may be an event or stimulus in the past, but which continues to have an impact in the present and may continue to yield unknown developments in the future.

From this position, this research seeks to develop a better understanding of the various ways in which the domestic built environment of Saudi Arabia has been shaped by this wide-scale transformation, with the most significant events in the investigation being presented in a timeline. This study seeks to provide a background of the changes in the domestic built environment, looking at the forces that evoked the experience of cultural trauma, then the transformation stage and finally the cultural preservation stage. This explanation is provided with reference to two intersecting perspectives: the transformation of the national discourse on heritage and the transformation of the role of women on Saudi society. As can be seen in Fig 4.4, the timeline shows evidence of the shift that occurred from the oil boom in 1938 to the museum boom in 2014. The private museum movement (PMM) emerged during the period that I refer to as cultural preservation stage, which I have interpreted in this research as attempts to manifest individual cultural resilience before the museum boom period.

In the context of this thesis, cultural resilience enables the examination of the ways in which Saudi culture has survived and reappeared in new formats and environments. In summary, this chapter has drawn out the relationship between cultural practice, cultural preservation and cultural resilience, an example has been presented of the development of an adapted traditional form, which was incorporated into residential homes in the Eastern province for cultural reasons. The following chapter presents the case study investigation, offering an in-depth insight into the impact of the transformation of a domestic environment on the organisation of physical space and the social life of the resident.

Cultural resilience, cultural practices, and complex identities in a domestic environment

The practice of privacy and its significance in Saudi homes

Cultural resilience via cultural practices in a domestic environment

Cultural resilience and the development of complex identities

5

Contents

Introduction

This chapter explores the overlapping relationships between cultural practices, cultural resilience, and cultural preservation in a contemporary Saudi home, offering an in-depth analysis into the preservation of Saudi culture in an American styled villa.

The first part of this chapter is divided into three sections: I begin by highlighting the significant role that the practice of privacy plays in the design of Muslim homes. In the second section, the concept of privacy is highlighted in the context of Saudi culture, after which I present the fundamental arguments drawn from several important studies on the importance of privacy requirements in the design of Saudi homes. Finally, I attempt to elucidate the significant role of Saudi guest hospitality practices in relation to privacy in domestic environments.

In the second part of this chapter, the case study investigates the on-going physical changes that the resident has made to the interior of her home, in order to ensure its suitability for local cultural norms, especially privacy and guest hospitality. A detailed overview is then provided of the creative modifications that the resident has made to her home, in line with visual, acoustic and olfactory privacy requirements. Through the examples in this section, I explore the key relationships between cultural practices and cultural resilience, as well as identifying an additional link between cultural resilience and the development of complex identities in a domestic environment.

This last area of focus, namely the development of complex identities as a positive consequence of socio-economic transformation, is presented in the final section of this chapter. The findings demonstrate the various ways in which the resident expresses strong inherited identities in her home that reflect her Islamic religion and Saudi culture. These co-exist with the expression of other more global and cosmopolitan identities, which result from the resident's exposure to different cultures, new experiences and images from other locations around the world. The examples in this section illustrate the extent to which the resident has been able to generate meaning in her home to reflect a diverse range of factors, including her religion, culture, identity, memories, and past experiences.

5.1 The practice of privacy and its significance in Saudi homes

This section of the chapter begins by providing an explanation of the establishment of privacy rules in the designs of Muslim homes in general, after which I offer a specific interpretation of the concept of privacy in the context of Saudi culture. Finally, I provide a coherent discussion of the significant role of guest hospitality in the design of Saudi homes. In so doing, I highlight the role of privacy and the practice of guest hospitality in shaping the domestic environments in Saudi Arabia, as well as the specific ways that an imported house design was modified to better comply with requirements of Saudi cultural practices, all of which are integral to understand within the context of my thesis.

5.1.1 The establishment of privacy rules in the design of a Muslim home

Islam is a religion that encompasses knowledge, faith and practice (Omer, 2010). Muslims translate their religious beliefs into real practices that manifest through their surrounding physical environments. The consequence of this is that understanding the value of Islamic practices is essential in the design of Muslims' homes. For example, the Islamic tenet of privacy is a major determinant in how Muslims plan, construct and utilise their domestic spaces (Othman et al 2015), influencing both the physical design of the house and the human behaviour that takes place inside the building. Privacy issues also affect the boundaries of the home design, determining the home orientation, the neighbourhood network circulation, and potentially even the entire urban plan.

The principles of privacy in the Islamic religion derive from two main sources: the holy Quran and the Hadith (the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him). In Islamic law, the home should be a secure, private, and quiet place for its inhabitants, and therefore Muslims are required to respect the inhabitant's rights to privacy. A number of Islamic teachings relating to behaviour and privacy in the domestic environment are laid out in the Quran, explaining that privacy behaviour starts from the exterior entrance in the home to the private bedroom area of the parents. For example, the entrance of the home is considered to be an important transition point between public and private spaces. The earliest rule in the Islamic religion that respects residents' privacy is actually one that governs entering the home. The holy Quran, in the text of Surat Al-Noor, verse 21, states that a person must ask permission and then wait for a response before entering the home of another person.

In their study of the privacy of houses in Islamic culture, Memarian, Oljerdi, and Ranjbar-Kermani (2011) summarised the core Islamic privacy principles and the role of privacy in the design of domestic environments. They showed that a number of architectural patterns exist to ensure privacy inside Islamic houses, such as the separation between the spaces in line with the gender, age, and intended functions of the users.

The Quran addresses the significance of privacy within specific places inside the home, with particular emphasis on the sanctity of the parents' room, which is to be outlined during three times of the day, in line with the Muslim culture's resting time (ibid). The times are: before sunset (the morning prayer), in the middle of the day after the noon prayer, and after the evening prayer. It should be stated that while the Quran specifically stipulates the importance of children obtaining permission before entering their parents' bedroom, many other important religious texts do not, including the Bible, the Torah, or the Avesta (Memarian et al., 2011).

Another important Islamic principle for the design of domestic environments is the importance of visual privacy. Islam encourages modesty in appearance and stresses the importance of restricting sight from strangers. For example, in the design of traditional courtyard houses, protection from the visual contact of strangers is achieved through the inward design, façade orientation, and the location and size of the openings. Meanwhile, visual access inside the house is controlled by the organisation of space and the allocation of translation zones between family and guest spaces, with the aim of ensuring privacy for the residents and preventing unwanted visual exposure from either inside or outside the home.

The system of entering others' houses	1- Announcing the entrance and uttering a kind saying by which the home owner could be notified. 2- Saying hello to home members whose reply could be a sign of an initial agreement and safety. 3- The necessity of asking for permission and the dependence of our arrival on their agreement.	
Entering parents' rooms	Before puberty	Permission three times
	After puberty	Permission every time
Architectural patterns	Home entrance, division of spaces, variety of rooms, separation of children's rooms from those of parents, separation of children's rooms after certain ages	

Table 5.1: examples of Islamic privacy principles and its role in domestic environments
(Memarian et al., 2011, p71)

Furthermore, Islamic law prohibits one from eavesdropping on conversations, which is known as the acoustic privacy rule. As a result, home design must achieve acoustic privacy through space organisation and transition zones. With respect to guest hospitality, the sounds of family members must not be transmitted into the guest zones and vice versa. On the link between the design of Muslim homes and Islamic principles, especially those governing privacy, it is generally agreed that Islamic traditions and teachings include a number of rules and practices that pertain to domestic life, at the core of which are rules and procedures governing modesty, privacy and hospitality. It is essential to understand these principles, as each of them has the potential to profoundly influence the design and organisation of the home, as well as the behaviour that occurs within them (Othman et al., 2015).

In addition to ensuring acoustic and visual privacy in Muslim dwellings, recent studies have highlighted the importance of olfactory privacy. In other words, privacy should include control of smells inside the home, especially in the guest zone. Sobh and Belk (2011) argue that this type of privacy can be managed through a well-designed location of the kitchen, which prevents the odours of cooking from spreading inside the home (cited in, Othman et al., 2015). To counter this, many Muslims use traditional incense sticks to perfume the home and remove unwanted smells. In Saudi culture, it is also considered an important part of guest hospitality to permeate the home with the incense of the expensive *oud* stick.

The significance of privacy and the strong influence of Islamic architecture can be traced to the spread of Islam in the seventh century. In the Middle East, as Islam began to thrive, its growth led Muslims to adopt a new lifestyle, with the Quran offering guidance on how the faithful should conduct their lives, as well as the design of physical environments and their behaviour in social contexts (Shabani et al, 2011). Despite Islamic communities sharing the same belief regarding the importance of privacy in domestic environments, interpretations of privacy requirements differ from one location to another, as well as between cultures.

5.1.2 Privacy in domestic environments in Saudi culture

In Saudi culture, the practice of privacy is crucial in the design and spatial organisation of houses. As an example of this, Bahammam (2006) explains the significant role of privacy in shaping the design of the courtyard houses, noting that it creates a distinguished Saudi architectural vernacular. The respect for both cultural and religious values has

resulted in Saudi architecture having its own unique style and characteristics (ibid). To understand privacy in the context of Saudi culture, it is crucial to first clarify the factors that have helped to interpret the way in which the privacy requirements in Saudi Arabia differ from other Islamic regions. Privacy requirements are influenced by many factors: some have existed for a very long time but still have an effect on the modern context, such as religion, culture, and tradition; and other factors arose more recently, especially after the discovery of oil, such as economic advancement, access to modern technology, and modernisation.

Levels of privacy in Saudi culture depend to a large extent on whether the space is a guest zone, a family zone, or a service zone. Privacy required in a space is also affected by the gender and role of those using the space, with different standards required for females, males, guests, family, or domestic workers. Privacy is created through the use of transition zones and physical boundaries, such as walls, screens and partitions. After analysing the different definitions for the concept of privacy, Abu-Gazzeh (1995) argues that "privacy serves three main functions, the limiting of social interaction, the establishment of plans and strategies for managing interaction, and developments of self-identity" (p.271). With this definition of privacy, he highlights an important matter regarding the developments of identity. This chapter of my thesis takes up this argument and investigates the link between the cultural practice of privacy and the development of identity. Examples are given of the modification of interior spaces, as well as how these alterations create opportunities for residents to express their identities through their homes.

With their vernacular architecture and design for privacy, Saudi courtyard houses disappeared with the rapid transformation of the built environment that took place after the discovery of oil. The massive surge in wealth led to economic development, modernisation and new technologies, all of which influenced the design of Saudi homes. Abu-Gazzeh (1995) highlights the connection between privacy and the extensive utilisation of clearly delineated boundaries in the Saudi built environment. Importantly, he adds that a direct link seems to exist between urbanisation and the increased utilisation of measures to divide and control space, such as partitions and other spatial separation techniques. Interior and external partitions in the contemporary Saudi built environment are considered to be both practical and symbolic features of privacy. For example, all Saudi homes are surrounded by a high fence that isolates the building from any visual contact with the street or neighbours. It is even common to find an aluminium screen placed above the fence or attached to the wall of the neighbouring house, effectively

creating an extra-high partition that prevents any visual contact between first floor windows, as well as providing more privacy for the garden.

Abu-Gazzeh (1995) argues that privacy problems tend to occur concerning the modern concept house designs imported during the oil boom. The loss of privacy in the domestic environment can be attributed to the adoption of house design concepts that are either not properly integrated or are generally unsuitable for use in the local culture and environment. This failure to adapt to the host culture is a major concern in Saudi Arabia, especially with regards to the concept of privacy, and has therefore become a focus for all parties involved in development projects, including architects, social scientists and the local population in general (Ibid, 1995). The case study in my thesis examines a house with an imported American design and a corresponding lack of privacy, showing how the resident transformed the building, over a period of 32 years, in accordance with her Saudi culture. In this way, the case study offers an in-depth insight into the situation in which the original design was physically reorganised and the impact of this transformation on the resident's social life.

The price of privacy loss in contemporary Saudi home design was identified by Eben Saleh (1997), who links this problem to the ongoing physical modification that many residents are making to their homes. In fact, he argues that this issue is likely to become more pronounced in future development projects, as concerns about privacy are not being given sufficient attention during the design phase, necessitating retroactive action to be taken to make physical spaces suitable (Eben Saleh, 1997). The continuing modification of homes can be seen as the residents attempting to find functional solutions to meet privacy requirements, as well as to reflect their cultural identity.

An additional effect of privacy loss was observed by Bahammam's (1998) research who notes that contemporary Saudi villas are larger than any other standard dwelling in either the industrial or developing world. The specific design and large size of many modern Saudi homes can be attributed to the impact of a number of factors, including numerous socio-cultural changes to Saudi society, the availability of new methods and materials for construction, and the continuing rapid growth in national wealth (Bahammam, 1998). The attitudes of residents towards privacy have also profoundly influenced the shape and size of houses in Saudi Arabia (ibid). For example, social changes and a new lifestyle in Saudi society created the need for the majority of households to hire a driver and housemaids. This had the consequence of requiring homeowners to add servants' zones in an appropriate location in the home, while still maintaining the privacy of the family.

Ordinarily, in the design of Saudi homes, the driver's quarters have a private entrance and bathroom located in the corner of the garden next to the garage. Meanwhile, the rooms and attached bathrooms for housemaids are commonly located near the main kitchen, on an additional floor in the roof of the house, or in the basement level.

Another example of the development of new privacy requirements for Saudi homes due to lifestyle changes is the incorporation of swimming pools into domestic environments. Great care is given to the location and design of a swimming pool, in order to ensure that the Saudi culture's privacy rules are given due respect. The pool will commonly be located in the rear garden of the house, surrounded by high fences and plants to protect it from visual exposure to the neighbourhood. In some cases, the swimming pool may even be located in the centre of the house. This design replaces the traditional courtyard as a closed private place, with all the windows of the rooms in the family zone having a view of the pool. These are examples of how socio-economic changes in Saudi society have led to the inclusion of new users and spaces that necessitate the adaptation of the home to ensure compliance with the cultural practice of privacy.

Although Saudi domestic environments have witnessed continual development and transformation, the issue of achieving and maintaining sufficient levels of privacy is generally recognised as one of the most important social challenges facing the development of sustainable housing in the kingdom (Al Surf et al, 2013). In Saudi Arabia, despite cities and societies continuing to develop, privacy has stayed a fundamental cultural requirement. Having influenced the design of Saudi houses in the past, privacy continues to be an important issue in the present.

Researchers in other Gulf countries have also found powerful intangible culture Islamic influences on the design of houses. As an example of this, Sobh and Belk (2011) investigated what remains of former religious and cultural meanings in Qatar, focusing on what has been altered by the adoption of an increasingly transnational consumer culture in the domestic environment. They found that lavish home design and gender segregation in Qatar has resisted the influence of Westernisation, despite the noticeable and conspicuous indulgence in consumerism (ibid). The viability of this resistance has been largely attributed to the specific character of Arab-Islamic homes, which incorporate core values that have deep cultural significance to the residents and wider society in general (ibid). In this thesis, the strong survival of encoded cultural values and their reappearance in new formats and environments is what I refer to as cultural resilience.

An example of what I mean by this is the modification of a contemporary villa by its resident, in line with the requirements of the cultural practice of privacy. In my thesis, cultural resilience can therefore be understood as the ability of a resident to reorganise, adapt and adjust their environment to reflect their own individual religion, culture, experiences, and memories.

5.1.3 Privacy and guest hospitality practice

In the previous section, I referred to a number of researchers who have highlighted the significant role of the practice of privacy in the design of Muslim homes in general, and the context of Saudi Arabia culture specifically. The role of guest hospitality in the design of a Saudi home is no less important. Its significance is strongly emphasised in the Islamic religion. "The term hospitality in the Quran is rendered through related words, such as honoring guests, serving them generously. For example, the word Ikram appears in the verse 55:27 and 55:78 with the meaning of honor" (Kirillova, Gilmetdinova, and Lehto, 2014, p.27).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day (Judgment Day), let him honor his guest and recompense him" (Sahih Bukhari 5673, Sahih Muslim 48). Additionally, the Prophet (peace be upon him) identified the duration of hospitality, saying, "It is for a day and a night, as good hospitality is for three days and after that it is charity" (ibid). This was a message to all Muslims that guest hospitality is an important Islamic practice that must be followed. As in many religions, the practice of hospitality in Islam provides a code of behaviour that governs the protocol for welcoming others into one's home. This practice is typically understood as requiring modest, courteous and thoughtful behaviour from the guest, in return for host being obligated to deliver companionship, food and drink, and, if desired, somewhere for the guest to sleep in their home (Kirillova, Gilmetdinova, and Lehto, 2014). The focus in this section is on the domestic spaces used by guests and the cultural practices associated with them, because the strong connection between guest hospitality practices and privacy requirements are extremely influential in the design of Muslim homes. Islamic dwelling designs provide full hospitality to guests whilst at the same time respecting family privacy.

Throughout history, Saudi culture has been well known for its generosity and hospitality. For example, in Bedouin tent dwellings, strangers are welcome to enjoy three-days of hospitality (three nights rest and food). For privacy reasons, the tent is divided by a screen

or vertical curtains, which serve to divide the space and separate the women's quarters from the men's. In the design of courtyard houses, spaces in the front closest to the façade are allocated as semi-private guest zones. Owner hospitality is expressed by the quantity and style of artwork and décor in the guest zone, from the main gate to the coffee corner inside the guest sitting room, otherwise known as *majlis*. This emphasises the importance of the guest zone, as this area performs valuable social functions, as well as serving as a symbol of the generosity and wealth of the house owner. In addition to conveying status and cultural authenticity, these *majlis* are a source of pride for Arab people, as they represent honour and hospitality (Sobh and Belk, 2011). Research on traditional or contemporary domestic environments in Saudi Arabia or Gulf countries has typically associated the *majlis* with men, as this space reflects the social status of men in society and therefore, at least symbolically, belongs to them (Al-Naim, 1998). However, when the *majlis* is not being used by men, the women of a house are theoretically able to use the reception space to entertain their female guests (ibid).

Following the considerable development that Saudi Arabia has witnessed in terms of education, particularly the exponential growth in women's education, which has led to greater expression of female identity in the domestic environment due to their greater involvement in home design. Saudi women have been able to obtain qualifications in this field since 1982, when a department for women to study Interior Architecture was opened in King Faisal University, and professional licensing for women to practice design being available since 2006. This has meant that Saudi women, with the cultural knowledge required to understand the needs of clients in residential projects, are now able to work in the design field. In recent years, men have become increasingly dependent on women for home design, whether as wives, owners, or professional interior designers. The knowledge, education, job, identity and position of women in the community have therefore begun to be better reflected in the design of homes. This is especially evident in the context of guest zone spaces, as exemplified by the *majlis* guest sitting area, the decoration, furnishing and accessorising of which are often an expression of the preferences and social standing of a woman within her family.

The development of guest hospitality practices in contemporary villas in an attempt to achieve family privacy has led some men to make their daily gathering space outside the house, resulting in the growing popularity of a building called *diwaniyah*, which is typically situated in the corner of the garden next to the main gate. Sometimes this takes the form of a tent, as seen in the example in chapter four section 4.4.3. *Diwaniyah* are

widely used in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries, by male adults and adolescents, as a way to ensure male privacy. A *diwaniyah* is a place restricted for male use only and therefore men are able to enter the *diwaniyah* at any time, without giving prior notice. In this sense, a *diwaniyah* is the contemporary equivalent of the *majlis* (male guest zone) in courtyard houses. It is a place for everyday male gatherings, where men are able to invite their friends without impeding on the privacy of their family.

Thus, traditional practices of guest hospitality have continued into the modern era, taking a number of different forms in contemporary Saudi homes. In many senses, they have developed to become associated with luxurious lifestyles and, consequently, in many homes a large proportion of the family budget is allocated to the decoration, furniture, and accessories of these areas. The *majlis* serves a number of important functions in Saudi society. It not only serves as a space in which to entertain guests and to convey a sense of belonging to the wider community, but it's also a way for the family to demonstrate its status and wealth (Al Naim, 1998). This over-exaggeration of the cultural practice of guest hospitality has increased the size of the house. In recent years, guests zones may be allocated as much as half of the total house area and, in some homes, the guest zone may even be larger than the family zone. Although guest hospitality is not an everyday practice, the significant role that it plays in Saudi culture has led some residents to shift their attention away from the everyday family activity zone. In some luxury villas, the entire ground floor space is assigned as the guest zone, leaving the family members to share the first floor.

Overall, Saudi privacy requirements have resulted in guest hospitality practices in contemporary villas being accorded greater weight, leading to an increase in the guest zone spaces and subsequently the overall scale of homes. Guest hospitality practices have therefore played a significant role in shaping the design of the house and reflecting the social status of the residents. The next section of this chapter analyses how the resident in the case study modified her villa in order to practice a high degree of guest hospitality, while continuing to meet cultural privacy requirements.

5.2 Resilience via Cultural practices in a domestic environment

This section of the thesis explores the relationship between cultural practices and cultural resilience in a domestic environment. Here, a case study is employed to investigate and illustrate the transformation of an American home model in line with the Saudi cultural requirements of the resident. Section 5.2.1 outlines the role of the practice of guest hospitality in the modification of Saudi homes and then section 5.2.2 provides a detailed overview of the resident home modifications, according to Saudi privacy requirements.

Before this analysis, it is first necessary to introduce the case study. The house that is the focus of the case study is situated in "neighbourhood A-A" in Dhahran city, which is located in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This neighbourhood was created in 1975, as the first phase of a housing project, in which 28 houses were built for Saudi employees by their company. The investigation examines a Saudi family who have lived for over 30 years in a house designed with an American concept. Fortunately, it was still possible to record their interaction with the house and its transformation into their Saudi cultural environment. The family comprises six members: two parents and four children (two girls, and two boys). In addition, two domestic workers and a driver also live in the property. The parents are both originally from Saudi Arabia and highly educated, with the mother, Mrs. Munira Al-Ashgar, being a schoolteacher in one of the oldest girls' schools in the Eastern province.[18] Importantly, Mrs. Munira, is very socially active within her community. She is a member of several organisations and participates in numerous charity events. She has extensive awareness of cultural preservation and has created a private museum inside her home, containing a valuable and vintage artefact collection that is over 100 years old. Her cooperation and participation during this research was absolutely invaluable in the collection of data.

This upper middle -class house consists of a two-story building with a swimming pool, a garden, a garage, and a fence around the perimeter of the house. It is modelled on an open space concept, with a corresponding lack of privacy and visual access between spaces, which is in opposition to typical Saudi privacy requirements. The ground floor includes the following spaces: a guest sitting area (*majlis*), a dining room, an office, a kitchen with laundry area, a family living room with a fireplace and chimney, and one bathroom for the entire floor. The first floor consists of a master bedroom with an ensuite bathroom, a

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[18] More information about this school and its location can be found in the local newspaper article, *Alyaum,* 20th May 2014, http://www.alyaum.com/article/3140441 [Accessed 13th January 2015].

family living area with a large terrace, four bedrooms, and one shared bathroom (Fig. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3). "The house was built according to the design associated with the land that we selected, so there was no option to change it. The standard of the building construction was excellent and the finishing more than excellent. In fact, everything exceeded our expectations; we did not recognise the problems with the actual design of the house until later" (Int.1, 22 July 2014).

Although the American home model was imported from a different culture and geographical region, it has been subjected to substantial transformation in order to enable it to conform to Saudi family, social and cultural needs. In the case study, the family moved into the house on 1st April 1985, after the housing project finished. In the years since, the building has been subjected to many modifications, extensions and adaptations, which have ultimately increased the scale of the house by more than 50%. The list of home modifications, analysed during the fieldwork, is available on p.153. Figure 5.1 shows the extension of the house with the three buildings that were added to the original dwelling structure, which are labelled A, B, and C. Building A and B are attached to the house, whilst building C is a detached two story building, located in the garden in front of the swimming pool.

The complexity and the nature of the modification methods have resulted in a variety of spaces and structures, providing an abundance of useful data for this investigation. This house also includes a unique traditional museum,[19] distinguished interior design and cultural artefacts, making it especially valuable for study purposes. An investigation of the chosen house and its contents as material culture reveals the wider socio-cultural factors that have shaped its production, as well as providing ample evidence of the relationship between cultural practice, cultural preservation and resilience in a domestic environment. In the following section, visual, spatial and material cultural analysis is conducted in relation to the theoretical framework. I utilise the outcomes of these analyses to explain the guest hospitality practice and its role in the modifications of the house, then to describe the transformation of the house in line with the privacy requirements of the family. The data are presented with the mixed methods used in the investigation, including drawings, photos, interview notes, and field notes observation, as well as my interpretation of these.

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[19] The design of the museum building reflects traditional courtyard houses and displays traditional artefacts inside.
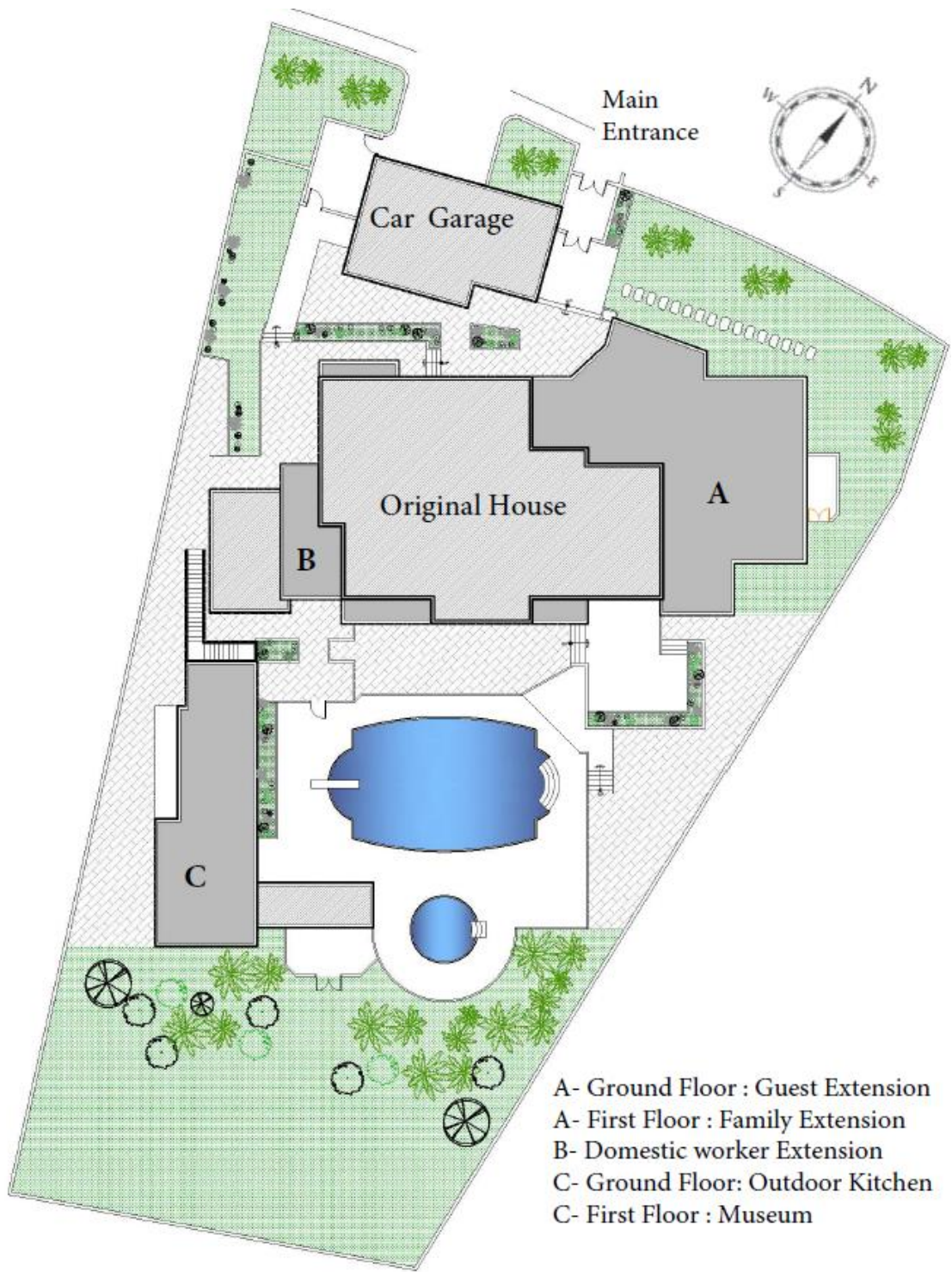
Fig. 5.1: The extension of the house, with the three additional buildings A, B, and C. Building A and B are attached to the house, whilst building C is a detached two story building located in the garden in front of the swimming pool.
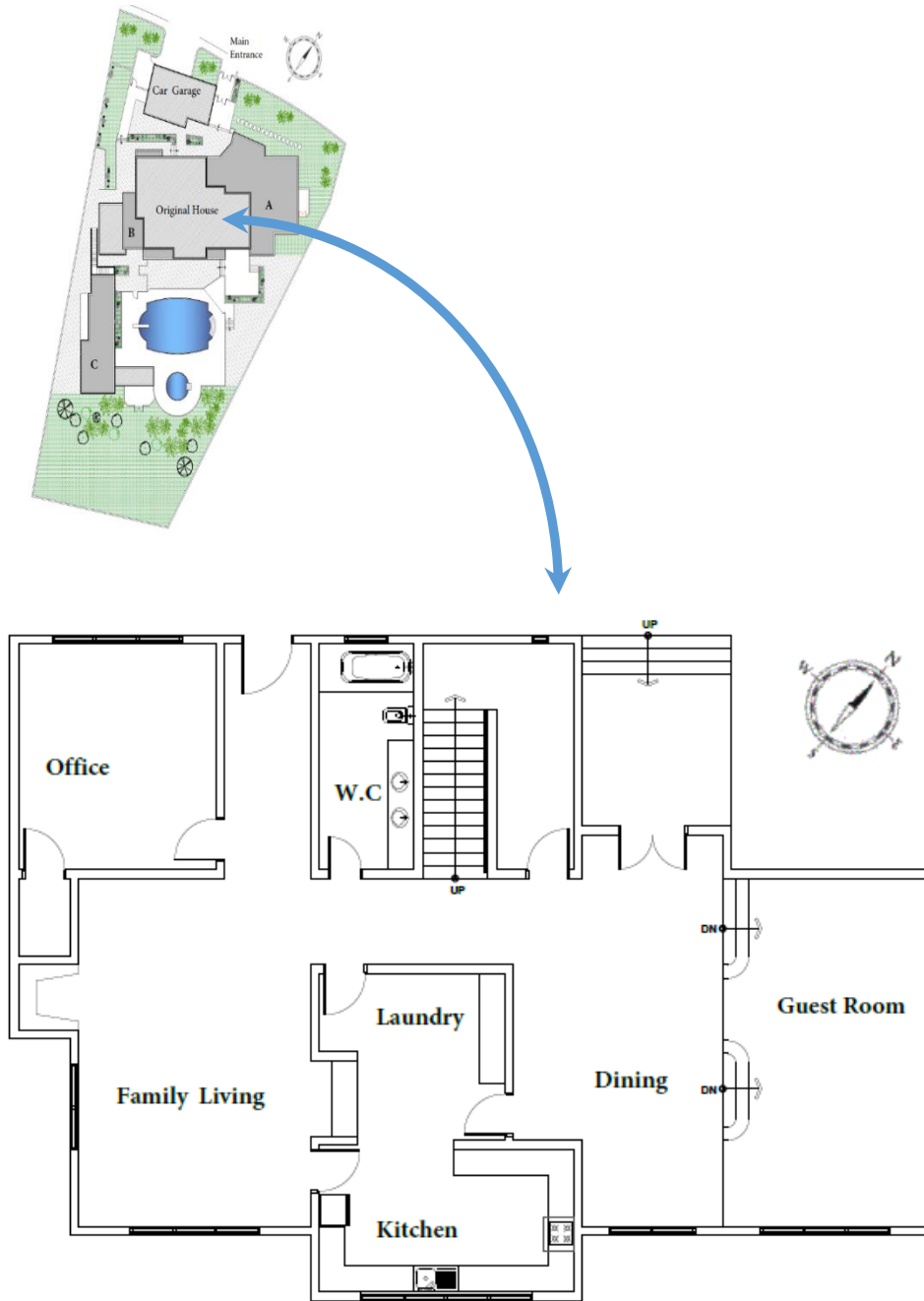
Fig. 5.2: The ground floor of the original house design
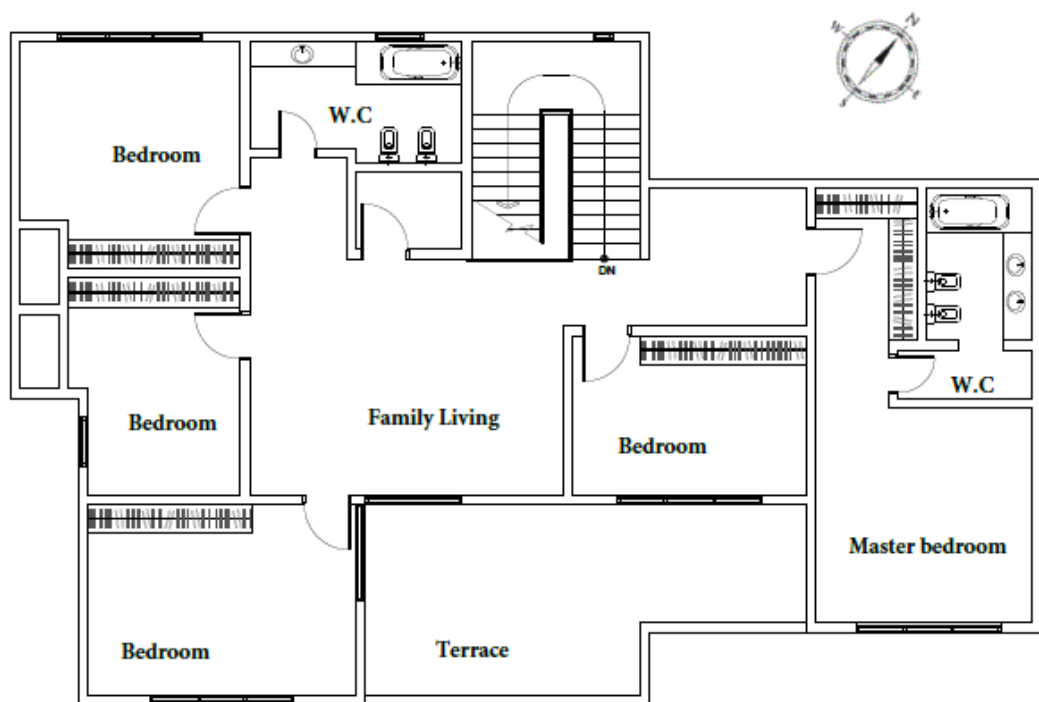
Fig. 5.3: The first floor of the original house design

Modifications made to the case study house:

- The resident added three additional buildings to her home: A, B, and C (see Fig. 5.1). Building sections (A) and (B) are attached to the house, while (C) is a detached two-storey building located in the garden, adjacent to the swimming pool.

- Extension (A) is the largest extension building to the house and contains a two-storey building. The ground floor contains guest spaces that incorporate: main entrance, reception area, guest sitting area and bathroom. Meanwhile, the first floor contains the girls' wing, with two bedrooms, a bathroom, a walk-in wardrobe and sitting area.

- Extension (B) is the smallest extension, comprising a single-level building attached to the family living room on the ground floor and is accessed via a corridor opening onto the living room. It contains a bedroom for the domestic workers, with an attached bathroom.

- Extension (C) is a separate detached building. It is a two-storey structure that faces the swimming pool area. The entire first floor area in building (C) was designed to function as an exhibition area for the museum. It also has a special separate entrance and staircase. On the ground floor of building (C), the area is divided into two sections: the first includes entrance, storage, and the main kitchen; and the second is designed for children's entertainment, so contains a game area, TV sitting area, a store, and a bathroom.

- The following existing spaces on the ground floor have been enlarged: the dining space, the office area, and the family living room.

- The open area between the dining area and the guest sitting area (*majlis*) has been closed off. In addition, the open counter area between the kitchen and the family room has been closed off (Fig. 5.5)

- The two kitchen doors that open into the family room and the dining room have been closed off. Conversely, a new kitchen door allows entry into the new dining extension area.

- The terrace area on the first floor was enclosed and the space that this provides has been added to the family room and the bedroom. The additional space in the bedroom is now employed as an office area.

5.2.1 Guest hospitality practice and its role in the modifications of the home

The significant role of guest hospitality as a practice in the Islamic religion and Saudi culture was discussed in the first part of this chapter. In this section, I will discuss how the resident of my case study adjusted and modified her home in order to enable the practice of guest hospitality in line with the privacy requirements of Saudi culture.

The first thing to note is that the American house design, with its open plan concept and lack of privacy, had a profound impact on the approach to guest hospitality, as the area was not practical for receiving either male or female guests. First, the guest sitting area (*majlis)* had been designed as one room, which was open to two spaces: the main corridor and the dining room. The corridor provided direct visual access between the guest room and the family living room, effectively meaning that guests could be easily exposed to the family sitting area. This clashed with the concept of visual and acoustic privacy required by Saudi culture and directly impacted on family privacy. The second visual privacy issue was in the design of the dining room, which opened directly to the guest sitting area and exposed the family at the dinner table to the guests sitting in the room. Olfactory privacy was also difficult to achieve, due to the central location of the kitchen and the fact that it opened directly onto the dining room, main corridor and living room. Privacy issues also existed regarding the lack of guest services that would normally be expected in a Saudi home. For example, the ground floor was designed with only one bathroom, which would be shared by all users.

When questioned about what she perceived to be the main problems in the design of the house, Mrs. Munira explained, "the main problem was that the house was designed in an American style, with no privacy between spaces. For example, there was no main guest area (*majlis*) and another for women. There was only a single bathroom on the ground floor, which family and guests were expected to share" (Int.1, 22 July 2014). In order to illustrate these problems, I have explained the arrangement using visual analysis, which shows the original house plan with an identification of its various privacy problems. The visual access between guest room and family room, in addition to the lack of visual, acoustic and olfactory privacy, is visible below (Fig. 5.4).
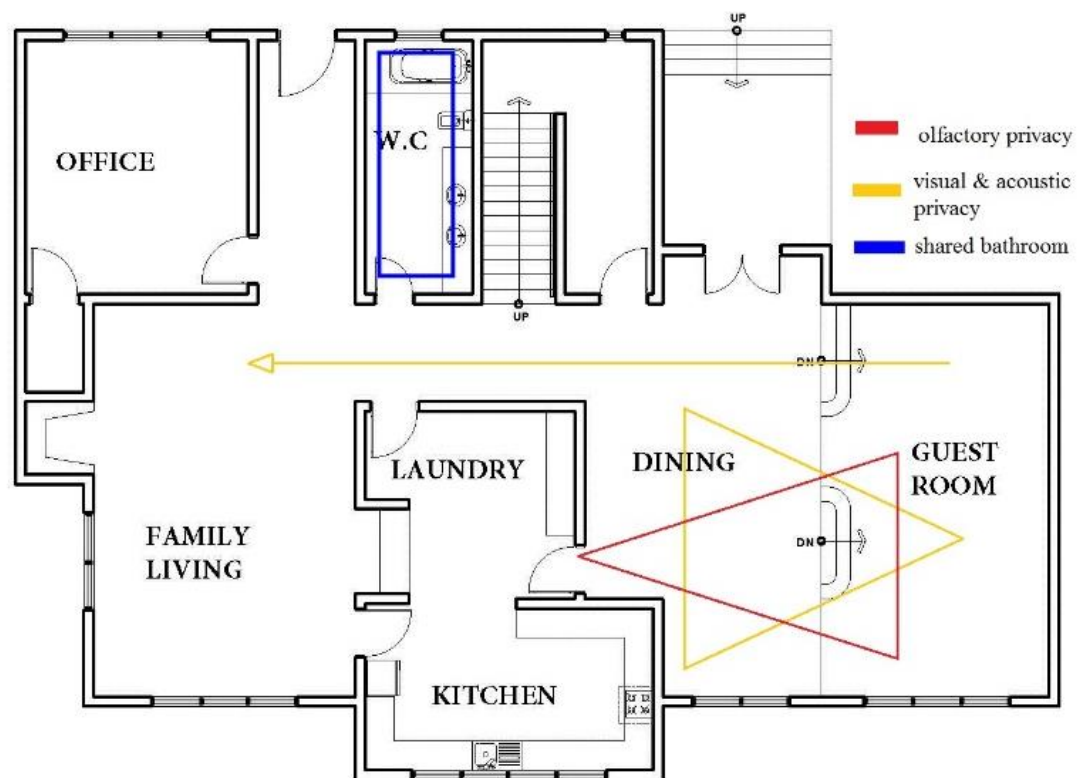
Fig. 5.4 Ground floor original house layout analysis shows: 1) the visual access between guest room and family room; 2) the lack of visual, acoustic and olfactory privacy; and 3) the location of the shared bathroom.

In order to solve the visual, acoustic and olfactory privacy problems on the ground floor and to provide complete privacy to guests, the resident built extension A on the house. The extension provides the building with new guest spaces, including a guest entrance with a reception area, sitting area (*majlis* 2), guest washbasins area, and guest bathroom (Fig. 5.5.). As noted by Mrs. Munira during the fieldwork, the size of the site prevented the construction of a further extension to be used as a guest dining room. "The dining room remains a problem. As we have not been able to add a guest dining room, it is not possible to invite male and female guests at the same time" (Int.1, 22 July 2014).

In the original house design, the dining room was utilised by both family members and guests. It has three openings: a door to the kitchen, an opening to the main corridor and a third opening with steps leading to the guest sitting area. Therefore, in order to provide the requisite degree of visual privacy in the dining room, enabling the preparation of food for guests and allowing the table to be set, Mrs. Munira sealed the opening between the guest sitting area and the dining room. The partition she selected was a mirror covered by Arabesque wooden carvings. Using a mirror as a physical boundary to divide the two spaces provided the required privacy and also added a spacious feeling to both spaces, whilst the vernacular wooden carving provided a visual aesthetic touch (seen Fig. 5.5, 5. 7, 5.8). The Arabesque decoration on the wall, which features curved wood carvings, that reflects the significance of the guest space, with the opulence of the decoration implicitly demonstrating the respect being accorded to visitors. As mentioned in the previous section, the quantity and style of ornamentations in guest zones is strongly associated with the cultural practice of guest hospitality.

The spatial organisation of the guest extension achieved full visual and acoustic privacy for guest and prevented any direct exposure to the family zone. In addition to this, the addition of guest services, such as the washbasins and bathroom, solved the privacy problem related to the shared bathroom on the ground floor. An important element of this extension was the inclusion of an *abaya* area. The function of the space is to provide privacy for a female during the removal of her outdoor garment, called the *abaya,* and to store it in a closet before entering the guest area (*majlis*). As a consequence of this role, it is traditionally located in the guest zone, near to the main entrance. In Saudi culture, the *abaya* is removed immediately when entering women's private indoor spaces, such as homes, universities, schools, banks, offices, gyms, and hotel celebration halls.

The women's *abaya* area may be a simple closet or, in luxurious homes, it tends to be a rectangular or square room with different closets and shelves, followed by an area with

mirrors for women to freshen up and fix their hair and makeup before entering the guest sitting room. In large receptions or parties, a worker will be hired to be responsible for *abaya* collection. In this villa, the *abaya* collection space is an (L) shaped corner with rectangular wooden closets, occupying the entrance that was the main door before building (A) was attached (Fig. 5.5).

As mentioned earlier, an important aspect of the guest hospitality ritual in Saudi culture is for the pleasant incense of the *oud* stick to be provided in the guest spaces. This can be associated with a significant olfactory privacy problem encountered by the family in the case study home. In other words, the residents faced the problem of preventing cooking smells from spreading inside the home, especially to the guest zone. However, the location of the kitchen in the centre of the house made it difficult to manage olfactory spread. In order to solve the problem of the kitchen's location and to prevent odours from spreading inside the house, the resident added extension building (C) in the garden. Building (C) contains a large kitchen area on the ground floor, including an entrance, storage space, and a large cooking area. By situating the main kitchen outside, it became possible to avoid the everyday cooking smells inside the house, with the kitchen space inside the house being confined to the preparation of light meals and snacks. Additionally, all of the first floor of extension C is used as the museum area.
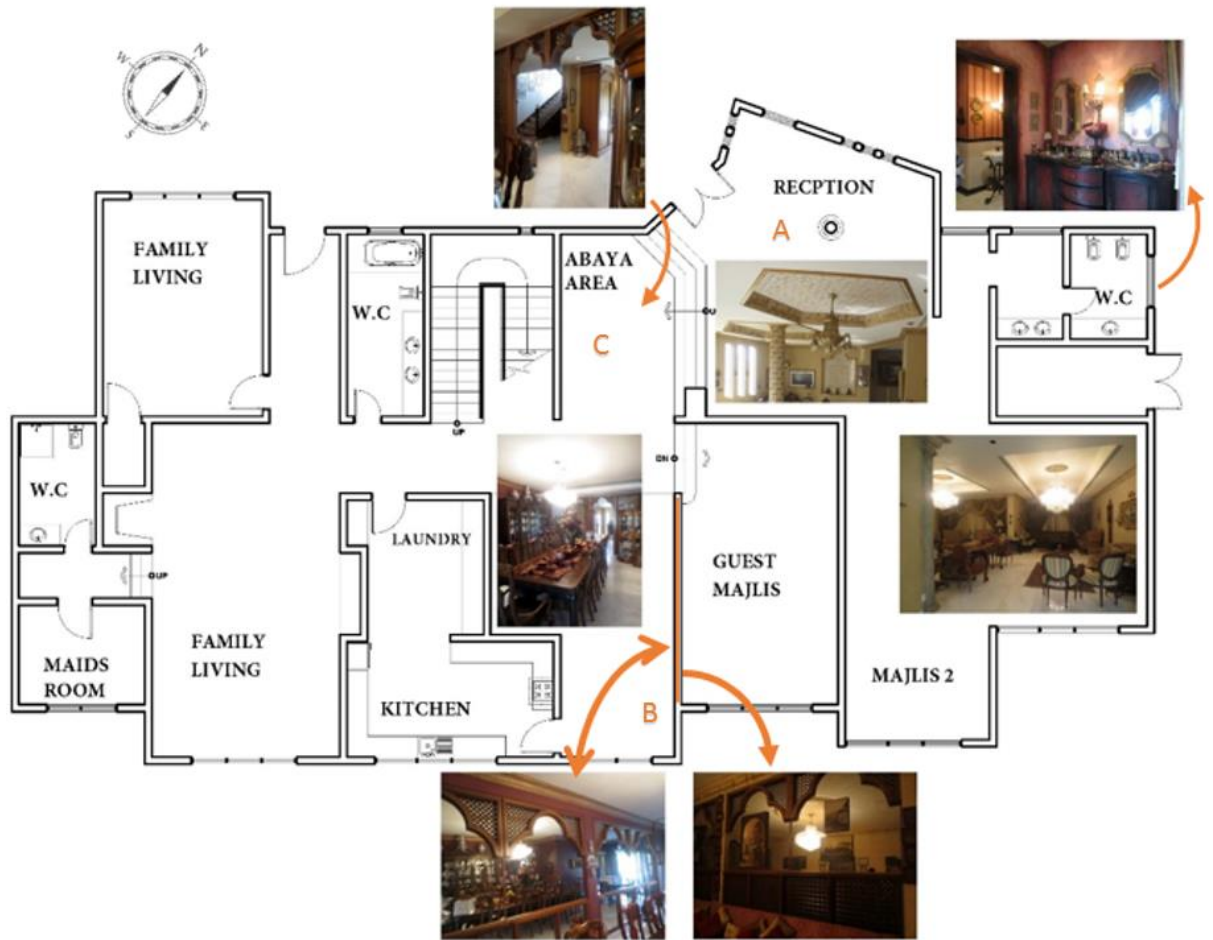
Fig. 5.5: Ground floor layout A) The new guest spaces containing the following: guest entrance with a reception area, sitting area (*majlis*) 2, guest washbasins area and guest bathroom; B) The mirror partition wall between the guest room and the dining room; and C) The *abaya* area with (L) shaped corner.

Fig. 5.6: Mirror covered by Arabesque wood to seal the opening between the guest sitting area and the dining room (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014).

Fig. 5.7: The new extension of guest sitting area (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

5.2.2 The house transformation in line with privacy requirements

Having discussed the significant role of guest hospitality in the villa modifications, this section will now examine the topic of family privacy. Here, I highlight a number of the resident modifications on both the first and ground floor, which were carried out in line with the practice of privacy requirements. In the original design of this villa, no distinction existed between the guest area and the family area on the ground floor, with a single area allocated for guest *majlis* being opened on the family dining room (Fig.5.8). All of the first-floor area was allocated for the family, comprising four bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room, a master bedroom with its private bathroom and closet area, and a large terrace. "The master bedroom has a bathroom. The design of the house intended the only other bathroom to be shared between the remaining four bedrooms and the living room, which causes privacy problems. So, we built a girls' wing, with two bedrooms, a bathroom, a walk-in wardrobe and a sitting area" (Int.1, 22 July 2014). The first-floor design offers reasonable privacy to the parents, due in large part to the corner location of the master bedroom and its own inclusive services, such as the closet area and bathroom. The original privacy problems caused by the design of the first floor are as follows: there is a large terrace area, which is almost as large as the family sitting area; the fact that a single bathroom, located close to the staircase, is shared between four bedrooms; and the family living room, which is considered problematic in Saudi culture given the explicit need for girls to be given a private bathroom (Fig. 5.8).

Regarding the large terrace, it is necessary to clarify that no one sits on an open terrace in Saudi Arabia due to the cultural concept of visual privacy. Additionally, throughout most of the year, the Eastern Province experiences harsh, hot, sandy weather, meaning that an open terrace is not a practical space in this region. During the fieldwork, Mrs. Munira told me that a terrace collects dust and sand, and requires extensive cleaning. "The terrace area on the first floor was huge. It collected dust and had to be cleaned continuously. Therefore, we enclosed the terrace space and added part of it to the family room, making it much larger and giving it a nice window view" (Int.1, 22 July 2014). She criticised the conflict between importing Western elements from different climatic regions, noting its unsuitability for the hot weather of the Eastern Province. In order to make use of the space, the terrace was closed off and divided into two parts: one section was added to the family living room, and the other was attached to the oldest son's room, for use as an office area (Fig. 5.9). This solution increases the space available for the family living room and provides it with windows directly facing the swimming pool.
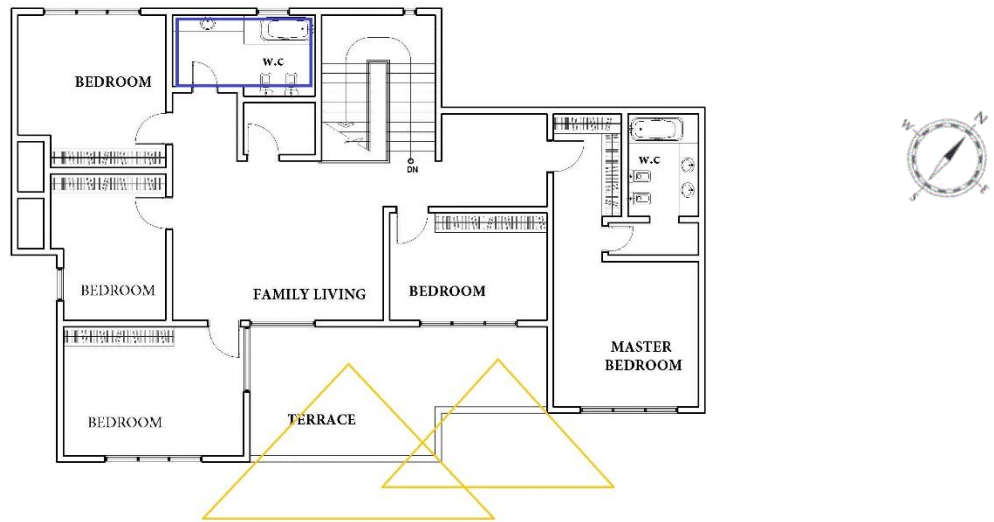
First floor layout
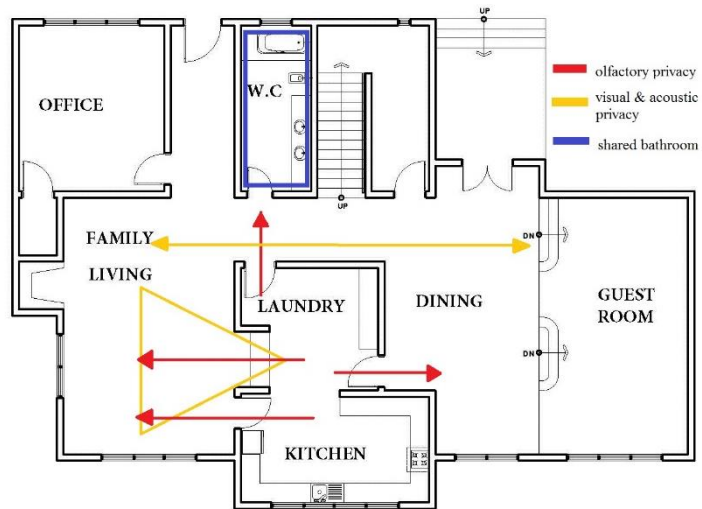
Ground floor layout

Fig. 5.8 Original house layout analysis shows the lack of family privacy. 1) Visual, acoustic and olfactory privacy problems. 2) The location of the shared bathrooms. 3) The large terrace area.

The second privacy problem in the design of the first floor was concerned with the privacy requirements of the girls. Customarily in Saudi culture, girls' rooms must be designed with an attached private bathroom, in a separate location to the bathroom used by boys. In order to fulfil these requirements, the family added a dedicated zone for the girls, which includes two bedrooms, walk-in closets, a bathroom and a sitting area. This area is situated in the upper floor of the guest extension (building A).
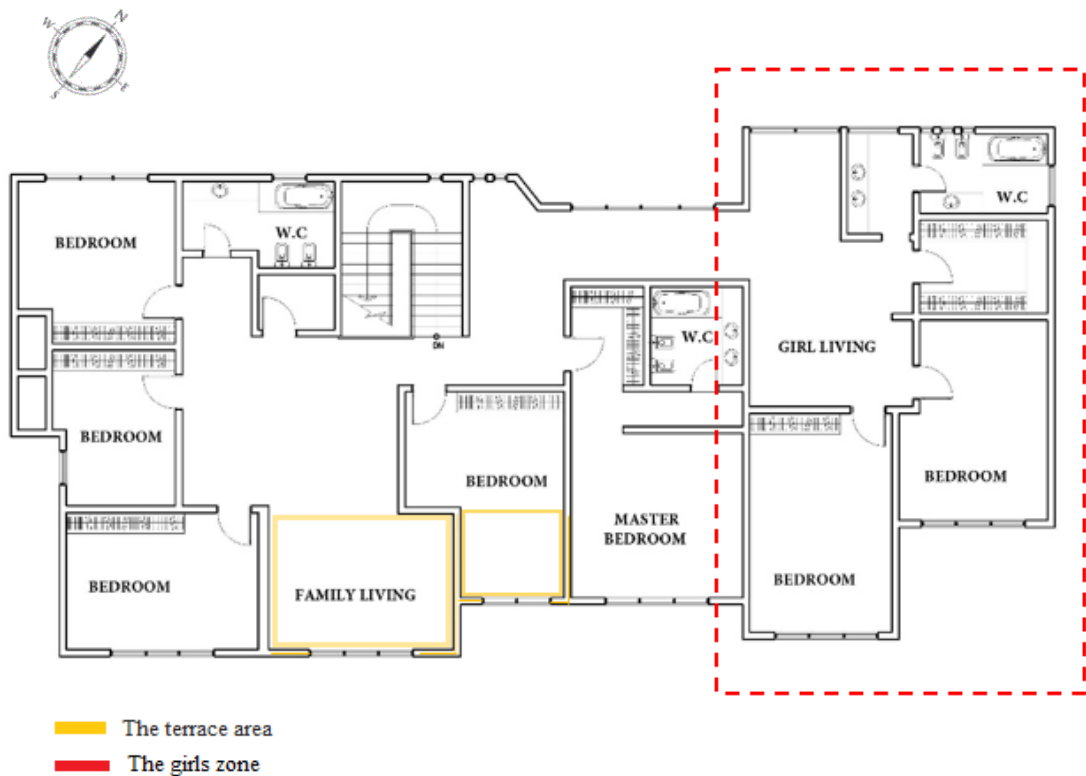
First floor layout

Fig. 5.9: The girl's zone includes two bedrooms, walk-in closets, a bathroom and a sitting area. The terrace area was closed and divided into two parts: one section was added to the family living room, and the other was attached to the elder boy's room to be used as an office area.

A major challenge that faced the family on the ground floor was the need for privacy between the family quarters and the space allocated for the domestic, because no area was allocated for accommodation of hired help in the original house design. Female domestic workers in Saudi homes are usually given their own private room with a bathroom in a separate zone, typically situated next to the main kitchen or in the roof space. In order to provide a private zone for the domestic workers, the resident added the single storey extension building (B), which includes a bedroom, bathroom and corridor. However, given that the original house design was not flexible enough to provide an alternative option for the location of the domestic workers zone, the extension was attached to the family living room on the ground floor. While this solution[20] provides privacy for the domestic workers, it does adversely affect the family's privacy, as the domestic workers access their quarters through the family living room (Fig. 5.10).

Another visual, acoustic and olfactory privacy problem that occurred in the family living room was the open counter window, situated between the original kitchen and the family room. This had the unintended effect of allowing the domestic workers to observe the family sitting area while they worked in the kitchen (Fig. 5.10). Therefore, in order to create privacy for the family living room and to manage the direct contact between the two spaces, Mrs. Munira closed the counter opening in the wall by placing a fish aquarium as a physical boundary (Fig. 5.11). The example of creating a physical boundary by using a fish aquarium is an unusual idea. However, this decision effectively closed the counter opening, thereby solving the privacy problem by preventing any visual, acoustic or olfactory access between the two spaces.[21] It also added a natural form of movement to the family living space. This addition was interpreted by the researcher as a reference to the sea, which is highly significant element in the history and identity of the Eastern Province.

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[20] Regarding the flexibility of the house design to modification, Mrs. Munira (2014) noted that, "the design of the house limited our options a lot. We made many changes, but we could not make all of the changes we wanted" (Int.1, 22 July 2014). Ultimately, those design limitations and the specific socio-cultural demands of Saudi society shaped the resident perspective and made alternative options impossible, not viable or simply less attractive to her preferences. This investigation describes the attempts by the resident to transfer and change the home in order to achieve privacy within the constraints of the household and house design at that time.

[21] It is essential to clarify that, it is not possible to see through the aquarium to the other space. The placement of the aquarium was incorporated in order to block the vision from the kitchen area, meaning that it functions as a physical boundary to provide privacy.
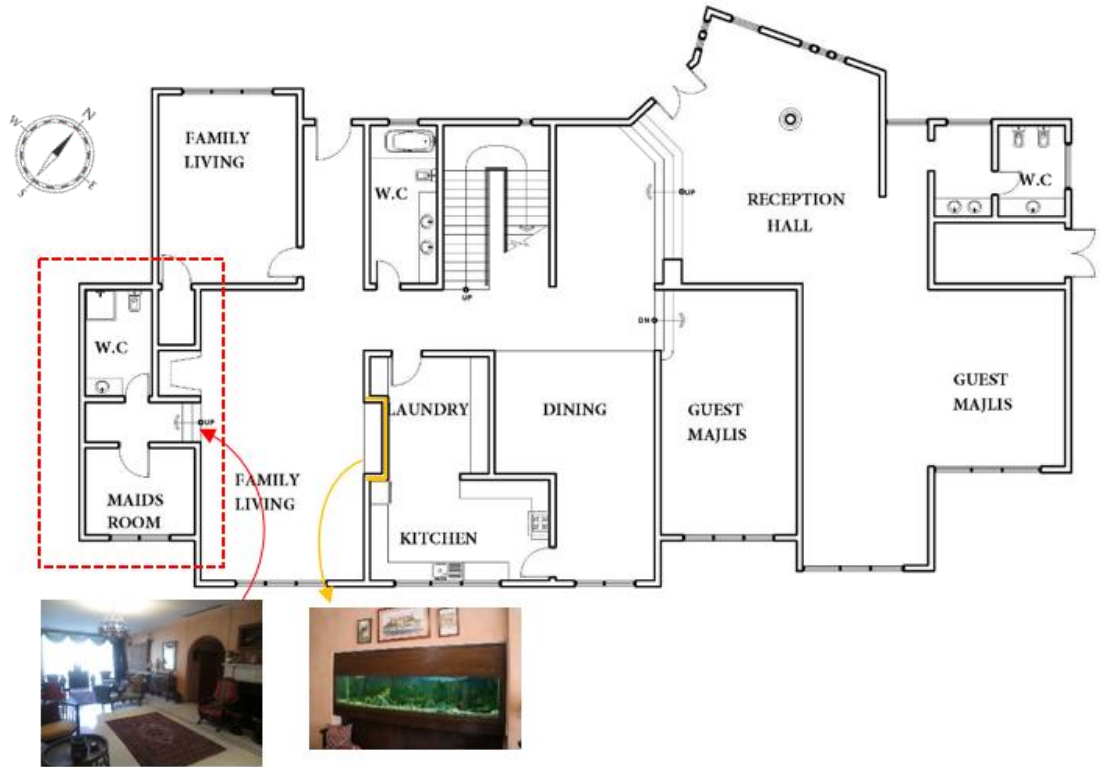
Ground floor layout

Fig. 5.10: The domestic workers zone and the physical boundary of an aquarium in the living room.

Fig. 5.11: An aquarium in the living room used as a physical boundary to close the open kitchen counter window and provide privacy. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5.12: The family living room (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014).

Additional privacy problems on the ground floor were related to the design of the kitchen space. The most important of these issues concerned its location, the number of openings onto the kitchen, and its size. In Saudi culture, the kitchen is considered to be a heavy-duty functional space and is typically used multiple times every day to prepare meals. However, the original kitchen space was too small to fit the required number of users or the necessary cooking equipment. It was designed with three door openings: one opening to the main corridor, one to the dining room, and the last to the living room. This resulted in a serious circulation problem inside the space and minimised the privacy of its users. In addition, the location of the kitchen in the centre of the house made it difficult to prevent the smells of cooking from spreading throughout the house.

In response to these numerous problems with the kitchen, which made it impractical for daily use, a large outdoor kitchen was built in the garden in the extension building (C). "We found many problems in the design of the house. For example, the kitchen was very small, so we had to build a large kitchen in the garden to meet the needs of the family[22]" (Int.1, 22 July 2014). The new kitchen is designed to suit heavy-duty use and therefore the remaining kitchen inside the home was designated for the preparation of light meals and snacks. In addition, the counter window and door opening to the living room were closed off in the internal kitchen, to ensure the required privacy for the family in the sitting area.

Overall, these modifications to the imported house design show evidence of the cultural resilience of the resident in this case study, who spent a considerable amount of income and effort to add 50% of the original floor area. This enabled her to modify the house in line with her Saudi cultural practice requirements of guest hospitality and privacy. The house modifications also signify the strong role of cultural practice in shaping a Saudi home. This case study examines the link between cultural resilience and cultural practice, not only focusing on examining physical changes that have appeared in a domestic environment after transformation, but also the intangible cultural practices behind these changes. This helped me to understand the behaviour of the resident inside her home, according to her cultural background.

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[22] Usually the typical Saudi family is larger and cooks more at home than typical American families, so the design of the American house would reflect those different needs/culture.

In this case study, new spaces emerge as the requirements of cultural practice developed in the contemporary domestic environment. One example is the *abaya* area, which is a space for female guest privacy. Another example is the outdoor kitchen, which was shifted to an external location to meet the need for olfactory privacy in the home. For this reason, I consider the outdoor kitchen to be an example of an adapted space in the structure of a contemporary home. These adaptations seem to be a positive result of cultural significance, which fulfils essential privacy requirements.

The modifications made to the case study house provide examples of creative problem solving, based on consideration of the inherited characteristics of cultural resilience, as explained in the theoretical chapter section. Examples of these modifications are the practical alteration of the terrace area on the first floor, the creation of a physical boundary by using a fish aquarium in the family living room, and the sealing of the opening between the guest sitting area and the dining room using a mirror covered by Arabesque wooden carvings. Having discussed these practical manifestations of cultural resilience, the next section of this chapter examines the emergence of complicated, diverse identities from the design decisions made in the evolution of a home to suit the needs of its residents.

5.3 Cultural resilience and the development of complex identities

This chapter now moves to a discussion of the development of complex identities as a result of socio-economic changes, bringing together strong inherited identities with other more global and cosmopolitan ones. In my case study, this involved the co-existence of Islamic and Saudi identity, alongside others from the exposure of the resident to different cultures and experiences. This section examines the extent to which the resident was able to create meaning in her home that reflected these multiple identities.

5.3.1 Expressing a strong inherited Islamic identity

In this investigation, it is important to discuss the relationship between Saudi culture and Islamic identity. The land of Saudi Arabia is the place where the Islamic religion was established centuries ago and is the location of the holiest mosque, in the city of Mecca. As a consequence, Saudi Arabia is the point from which Islam is spread all around the world. Crucially, the Islamic identity is considered to be a national identity for the whole country and permeates all aspects of the lifestyle of its people. The *Kaaba Al-Musharrafah* is the building located in the centre of the Holy Mosque, which is the direction that all Muslims face in prayer. Each year, the Saudi government and people in all sectors invest heavily in time and effort to organise, develop and secure the best services to countless Muslim visitors to the holiest mosque. Therefore, the Saudi Arabian Islamic identity should be understood as being the national identity, rather than one allocated to an individual or group in society. Indeed, it is the core identity in the context of Saudi culture.

In this section, I will examine the significant of the expression of strong inherited Islamic identity[23] in the reception hall through the use and location of calligraphy from the Qur'an, the display of the ninety-nine names of Allah, the symmetrical Islamic pattern ornamentations, and the placement of a symbolic Islamic showpiece (Fig. 5.13). The ninety-nine names of Allah have significant importance in Islam. The important benefits of understanding and believing in the holy names of Allah is emphasised in the Hadiths (sayings) of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who said, "Allah has ninety nine names (one hundred but one), whoever counted them (know their meaning and believe in them) will enter paradise" (The Hadith: Al-Bukhari, n.d. cited on Islamway,

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[23] In the sense of this investigation, the concept of inherited Islamic identity refers to the transmission of the national and religious identity of the Saudi people from one generation to the next, which profoundly shapes all aspects of life in the kingdom, including the home environment.

2012). The belief in the importance of remembering the holy names of Allah is reflected in the case study home by means of an aesthetic method, with the ninety-nine names of Allah being wrapped around a column in the centre of the reception space. The holy names of Allah were painted in golden paint and a beige colour was used as background for the floral pattern (Fig.5.14). The neatness and beauty of the artwork on the column attracts the eye immediately after one has entered the reception hall through the front door. The idea of transforming a structural column into a religious symbol indicates Mrs. Munira's strong identification with her Islamic religion and illustrates her desire to make this clear to visitors who enter the house. This comprises a clear investment in expressing a strong religious identity in a contemporary domestic environment.
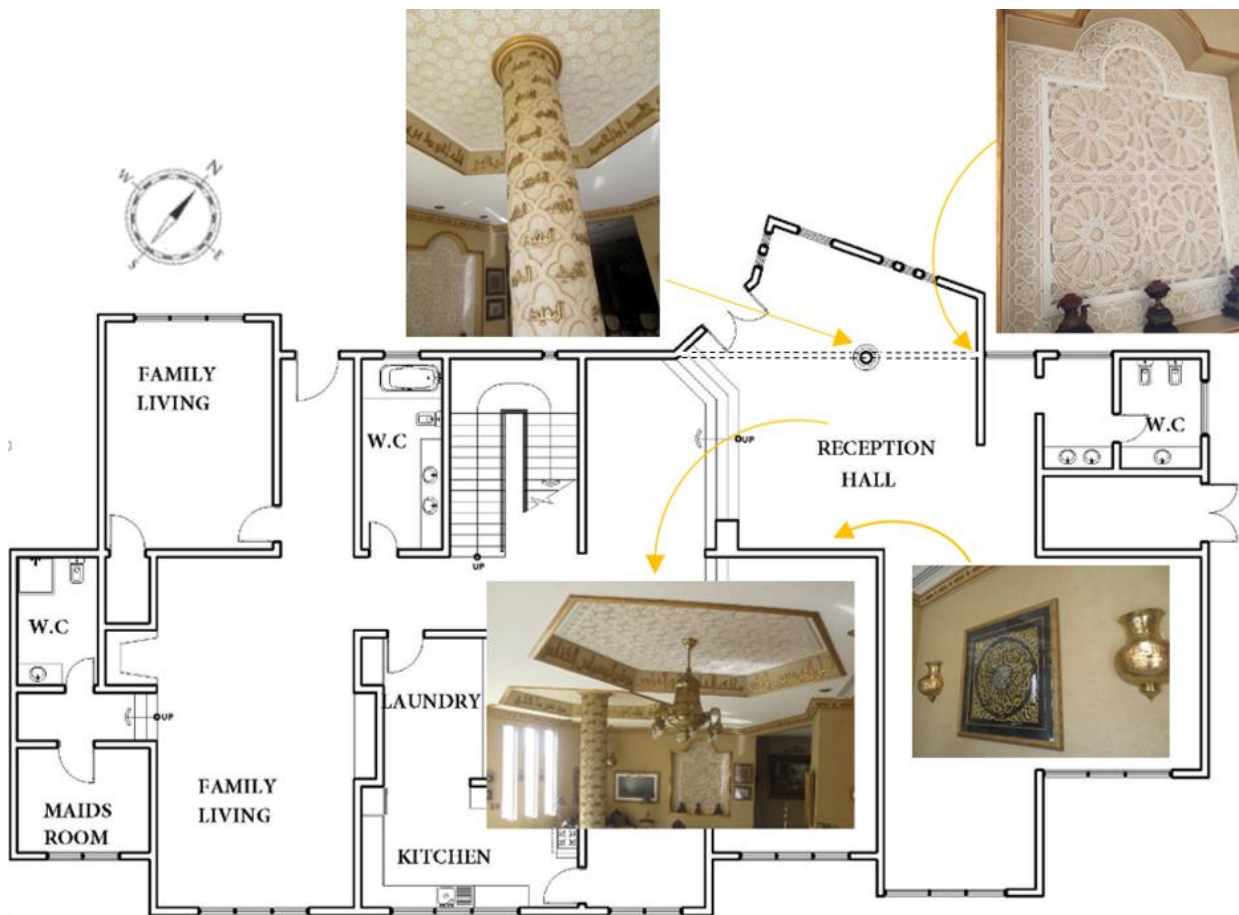
Ground floor layout

Fig. 5.13: The location of calligraphy from the Qur'an, the display of the ninety-nine names of Allah, the symmetrical Islamic pattern ornamentations, and symbolic Islamic elements.

Fig. 5.14: The holy names of Allah were projected out the column in the centre of the reception hall
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014).

The function of Islamic decoration transcends visual or aesthetic considerations to achieve the delivery of important religious messages. The use of calligraphic text from the Holy Quran in interior decoration is an example of a respected technique that delivers a powerful religious message through the meaning of the scripture. On the ceiling of the reception hall, calligraphy of the Quran words has been displayed to represent two Quran Surahs (verses) from the last page in the holy Quran, chapter 30, Surah Al-Falaq and Surah Al-Naas (Fig.5.15) and (Fig.5.16). Due to the meaning of the scripture of these Quran Surah, their incorporation in the reception hall is a plea to Allah for protection from evil. It is a strong reminder to anyone entering the home, to remember to ask Allah for protection. The texts of both *Surahs* are written in the same Arabic calligraphy style called *Koufi* font. This is the same font style as is used for the holy names of Allah on the column, but on a larger scale. The same metallic gold colour was also used to paint the words, against the same plain beige background. The display of both *Surahs* in the reception hall establishes a clear link between the physical location of the spaces and the spiritual meaning of the Quran text, which also serves to highlight the cultural and religious identity of the owner of the house.

Calligraphy is perhaps the most respected of all artistic crafts in Islamic decoration, because it is through this skill that the sacred words of the Quran may be represented. As a consequence of this ability to give a physical form to the word of Allah, calligraphy has been the leading style of Islamic art for centuries (Carey, 2012). The application of Islamic calligraphy is an important aspect of the global Islamic identity and can be identified in various types of buildings around the world. In fact, Islamic decoration links all manner of artefacts, with Islamic art being prevalent in objects and architecture from China all the way to Spain (Ghiasvand et al, 2008). For example, the calligraphy from the holy Quran that recorded the words of Allah in a decorative manner is immediately recognisable to Muslims in any country. It can be argued that the use of Islamic calligraphy in interior or exterior spaces unifies the building under the umbrella of Islamic identity, while also distinguishing the building with a unique identity. In my case study, the use of Quranic text serves to express the strong inherited identity of the Saudi resident, as well as relating the Saudi context to a wider global Islamic identity.

Fig. 5.15: The display of both Surah Al-Falaq and Surah Al-Naas in the reception hall
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5. 16: Quranic words on the ceiling of the reception hall written in Arabic calligraphy style
called *Koufi* font. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

A rare, precious example of the most significant symbolic Islamic showpiece is displayed in the centre of the main wall of the reception hall. This artefact is a piece of *Kiswa* (*Kaaba* cover), which is framed in gold and hangs on the wall (Fig. 5.17). The calligraphy on the *Kiswa* piece represents the third Surah from the last page in the Quran, chapter 30, Surah Al-Ikhlas. The *Kiswa* is a cloth that is used to cover the Kaaba Al-Musharrafah, the sacred object that is often referred to as the house of Allah and which serves as the very centre of Islam and the direction that all Muslims face during prayer, wherever they are in the world. Consequently, the *Kiswa* is magnificent and elegant, and its surface traced in the most intricate calligraphy (Vincent-Barwood, 1985).

Every year, a new *Kiswa* is made of pure silk, woven and embroidered in gold and silver threads at a cost of around 22,000,000 SR (around 6,000,000 USD) (Kanani, 2014). The older version of the *Kiswa* that is being replaced is then divided into pieces of various sizes, which are then given as gifts to individual and important organisations in Muslim countries. For example, pieces of the *Kiswa* are displayed in government buildings in Saudi Arabia and in many of its embassies worldwide (Vincent-Barwood, 1985). In 1983, part of the *Kiswa* was given as a gift from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations (ibid). In the case study in my research, Mrs. Munira's home was blessed to have received a piece of the *Kiswa*, and according to Mrs. Munira it was the inspiration for the design of the reception hall. In recognition of the religious value of the *Kiswa* piece, she displayed it in a strategic location in the centre wall of the hall, ensuring that it is the first thing to be seen when entering the home. This cloth is highly symbolic, being linked to not only the Islamic identity, but also to the holiest mosque in the world.

Fig. 5.17: The Kiswa piece on the reception wall.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

In all the Islamic art decorative elements in the reception hall symmetry is evident. The concept behind the specific symmetric design in art was driven by the distinctive ethics of Islam, which emphasise unity and harmony between all individuals. Pattern and symmetry have been important to almost all human cultures throughout history. However, the practice of incorporating these designs into art really began to flourish in the 10th century, with the flourishing of the Islamic civilization (Abas, 1995).

Symmetrical Islamic patterns come in three distinct geometrical types: calligraphic patterns, Arabesque patterns and polygons patterns. The calligraphic pattern is presented in the form of a short Quranic text, which creates a symmetrical geometrical arrangement (Abas, 2001), such as the calligraphy embroidered in the *Kiswa* pieces in the previous image (Fig 5.17). The second pattern type in symmetrical Islamic art is the Arabesque pattern, which is comprised of interwoven spirals, that ripple, intertwine and ultimately come together to create beautiful leaf and floral patterns (ibid). An example of this can be seen in the background pattern of the holy names of Allah, which creates a symmetrical

floral motive that encircles the column. The third type of symmetrical pattern employed in Islamic art is based on polygons, which have no clear focal point for the viewer and therefore encourages the eye to trace the lines continuously, rather than settling in one spot. As a consequence, this style of art can create a wide range of highly elaborate structures and relationships between shapes and colours (ibid). In the reception hall, the Islamic symmetrical polygon patterns exist within the decoration inside the built-in shelves. It projects neat artwork in a white colour and is framed in gold (Fig. 5.18). I identified the existence of all types of symmetrical ornamentation in this case study.

Fig. 5.18: Islamic geometrical form in the reception hall.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

In fact, the way that the resident applies visual Islamic art in the interior domestic space was not a traditional practice in the domestic environment of the Eastern Province, instead being more commonly found in mosque interiors. However, the use of calligraphy from Quranic text, the display of the ninety-nine names of Allah, the symmetrical Islamic patterned ornamentation, and symbolic Islamic showpiece in this case study shows an extraordinary example of a culturally resilient resident, who projects a strong inherent religious identity. In other words, this constitutes positive cultural adaptation in the contemporary domestic environment. Mrs. Munira's efforts to express Islamic identity in the entrance (reception hall) of her home reflects the considerable importance that she places on the Islamic religion, as well as demonstrating the primary identity that she wants to convey to visitors in her home.[24]

After the analysis of powerful aesthetic culture coupled to religious belief in this case study, it can be argued that the strong position of Islamic identity has been projected in a creative and unique way that reflects the individual, national and global Islamic identity. Detailed analysis in the next section, supported with images, provide a number of examples of the adapted practice that reflects Saudi cultural identity. I have drawn all of these examples from the traditional domestic environment.

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[24] The reception hall is considered a public space for all visitors, whether they are relatives, non-relative visitors, or even museum visitors. This makes the reception hall a highly unusual space in the context of a Saudi home. Given the role of this location, Mrs Munira decided to take the unusual step of applying Islamic art to her domestic environment, thereby signalling her devout adherence to her Islamic identity, as explained early in section 5.3.1.

5.3.2 Saudi cultural identity in a contemporary home

In this section, I will examine how Saudi identity is incorporated into the modifications of a contemporary home, which will be supported by a number of specific examples. In this way, I examine the creation and projection of Saudi cultural identity through different traditional symbolic features (Fig.5.19), such as the main outdoor gate, coffee shelves (*kamar*), the *majlis* sitting area, and the museum building. Given its importance to my study, a detailed discussion is provided of the private museum in the next chapter.

Ground floor layout

Fig. 5.19: Saudi culture identity expressed through the existence of different traditional symbolic features inside the villa, such as the main outdoor gate, coffee *kamar* and *majlis* sitting area.

In the case study house, Saudi cultural identity is palpable when one first approaches the home, due in large part to the traditional design of the outdoor gate. The significance of the gate in Saudi culture is mentioned frequently in the literature. Doors are highly significant symbolic components in architecture in general, expressing the idea of privacy and security, as well as literally signifying the location of the entrance to the building or room (Heathcote, 2012). The outdoor gate is the first interaction that a guest will have with a house, as well as serving as the threshold and passageway to explore the interior of a private house.

In the vernacular architecture in the Eastern Province, the gate door to every courtyard house was the most important element in the façade. It had a practical role in the provision of privacy and security to the residents through its distinguished design and location in the exterior of the building. Its significance was also closely intertwined with its role as a symbolic element that reflects the owner's economic social status and the practice of guest hospitality. This symbolism was achieved through the design and artwork of its wood carving and ornamentation patterns. The design of these doors includes two openings, as a smaller arched door can be located in the side of the door (this is known as the wicket opening or *kuka*). Classically, the small door was used on a regular basis, whilst the larger door was used on special occasions and when visitors arrived.

The door was usually one colour: the natural brown of the wood from which it was made. However, other colours could occasionally be included, especially in the ornamented semi-circular arches atop the doors, as was most common in the courtyard houses in the vernacular architecture of the Eastern Province (Al Naim, 1998, p.93). However, decoration using coloured glass was only found in the doors of wealthy family houses, and even then was only allocated to the internal doors and not the façade door, as mentioned during the site visit by Sheikh Al-Majid (2016), an expert in the history of the Eastern Province.

In the case study house, the main door of the house had been replaced by an old wooden gate, similar in design to an Eastern region courtyard house gate. It has a fake smaller door, two door knockers, a linear metal lock, and is decorated with a number of large metal studs and carved wooden patterns (Fig. 5.20, 5.21). The area around the gate door is decorated with coloured glass, similar in style, colour and location to the decoration above the internal doors in the courtyard houses. An additional feature was observed during the fieldwork: an image of a coffee pot on the left hand side of the gate door, carved in the centre of the figure that represented the small door opening (Fig. 5.20). The

use of the traditional symbol of a coffee pot in the main door symbolises guest hospitality, due to the ancient and highly significant ritual of serving Arabic coffee to guests. This trend has also been observed in contemporary Saudi domestic culture, with the main doors of some houses also typically being decorated with the image of a coffee pot. As this represents hospitality, the coffee pot therefore denotes the door through which guests should enter and serves as an invitation for guests to enter the building.

The carving of a coffee pot on the main door of the house was also observed by Al-Naim (1998) in his research *Continuity and Change of Identity in the Home Environment* in Hofuf in the 1980's. Its reappearance on the house door of the case study home signifies the continuity and resilience of the practice of guest hospitality, as well as supporting its significance to Saudi identity. All of the elements in the design of the gate also strongly reflect the commitment of the resident to cultural preservation, which she projected through the first feature to greet any visitor to the house.
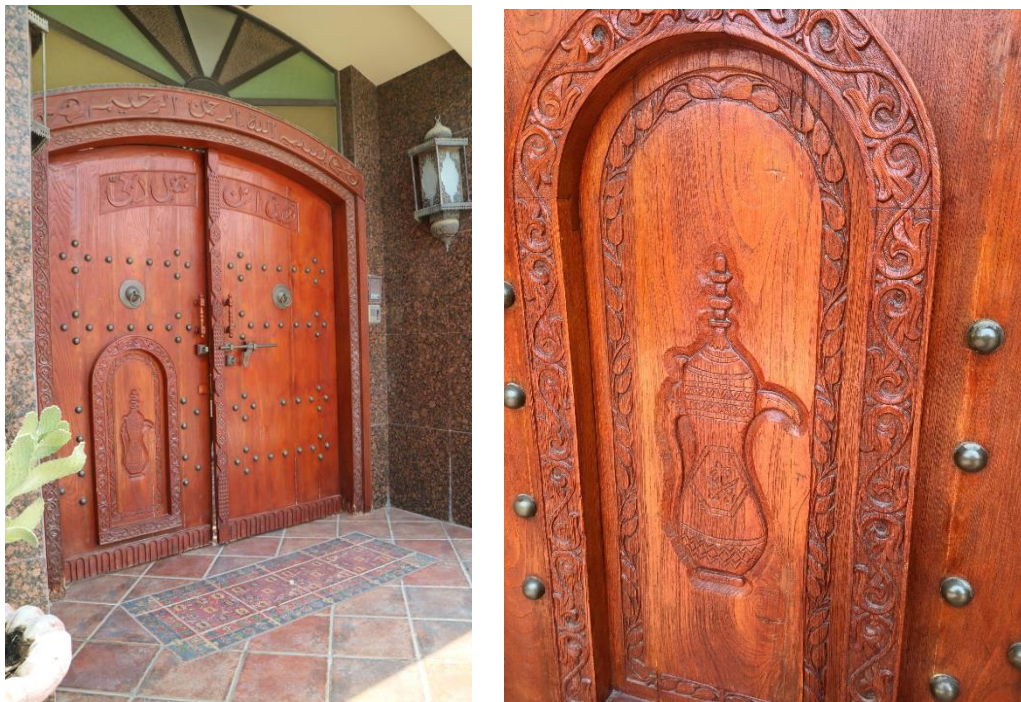
Fig. 5.20: The main door of the house in the design of a traditional gate and an image of a coffee pot on the left hand side. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5.21: The gate with two door knockers, a linear metal lock, decorated with a
number of large metal studs. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

In Saudi culture, serving coffee is a fundamentally important ritual in guest hospitality and so is allocated a special area inside the *majlis*. This ritual comes with traditional rules on how the drink should be served, as well as the special tools with which it is prepared. In the courtyard houses, the coffee corner is normally located at the front of the guest sitting room (*majlis*). This corner is a symbolic area that expresses the significance of guest hospitality in the house and, as a consequence, it is typically highly ornamented. This coffee making area in the *majlis* is called the *wijaq*, and it is here that the coffee is prepared in front of the guests and served to them in a *dalla* (coffeepot) and *fanajeel* (small cups). For this purpose, the *wijaq* includes a rectangular place to cook and heat the coffee over the coals on the floor. After serving the coffee to the guest, the coffeepot is placed on top of the coals to keep it warm. The pleasant smell of fresh coffee lingers in the room and stimulates the guest to drink more.

Traditionally, the *majlis kamar* was a rectangular alcove on the wall in the coffee area, where a collection of coffee pots and other everyday coffee items are stored and displayed. The significance of the *kamar* is its symbolic role, signifying guest hospitality and the social status of the house owner, primarily through the quality of decoration and the number of different coffee pots exhibited. In the traditional domestic environment of Hofuf, people rivalled one another through the display of coffee pots in the *majlis*. In essence, the display of coffee pots is still considered to be a message of hospitality, indicating that the house owner is prepared to receive a number of guests at the same time (Al-Nasser, 1999).

However, a new type of coffee pot emerged in the marketplace in the 1940's. The import of this device, based on the thermos flask and was referred to as '*termis*' by the locals, occurred in the same period as the arrival of the oil company, Aramco, and enables liquids to be kept at the same temperature for an extended period of time (Al Naim, 2006, p.128). As a result, the coffee preparation process has relocated to the kitchen area. Since then, Saudis have replaced the traditional *dalla* pots with the modern coffee *termis*, which is available in a number of different sizes, shapes and colours. However, despite the disappearance of the coffee *wijaq* in contemporary villas, the Saudi coffee serving ritual has retained its strong cultural position. Many of the traditional serving guidelines have continued, such as serving the oldest persons first, holding the *dalla* pot in the left hand whilst holding the coffee cup in the right hand, and not filling the *fanajeel* cups to the

brim with coffee, to ensure that guests are served more often in order to prolong the process of hospitality.

In the case study guest room *majlis*, Mrs. Munira's adherences to traditional rules were once again evident in the design of the built-in alcoves in the *majlis* wall, which resembled the coffee corner's *kamar* shelf in courtyard houses. The alcoves are of different sizes and shapes, in order to store and display guest hospitality items, such as antique *dalla* coffee pots and fragrance tools (incense burners). The detail of the carving patterns, alongside a modern lighting system and enhanced by the plain beige colour, illustrates the co-existence of material practices with modern technology found elsewhere in the house (Figure 5.22, 5.23, 5.24). This creates a very pleasing impression and attracts the attention of any visitors entering the guest room.

The design and ornamentation of the physical coffee alcoves in the guest *majlis* in this case study emphasises the ongoing significance of guest hospitality practice in Saudi culture. The use of new construction materials and lighting technology recreates traditional symbolic elements in order to maintain Saudi cultural identity. This is another illustration of the link that has been consciously created between cultural practice, cultural preservation, and resilience in the contemporary interior space. The *majlis* as a network of material and culture practice continues despite the transformation of the Saudi domestic environment. Indeed, the traditional term '*majlis*' from courtyard houses continues to be used, even though the guest sitting rooms may differ in number, interior design, furniture and service areas. A *majlis* can be classified as either being for men or women, small or large, outdoor or indoor. Depending on the house owner's financial status and plot size, it may even be possible for multiple *majlis* to exist in the same home.

Fig. 5. 22: The design of built-in alcoves in the *majlis* wall, similar to the coffee corner's
kamar shelf in courtyard houses. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5.23: The design and ornamentation of the physical coffee alcoves in the guest *majlis* in this
case study emphasises the significance of the guest hospitality practice in Saudi culture.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5.24: The use of new construction materials and lighting technology to create traditional symbolic designs.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

In traditional Eastern Province courtyard houses, the sitting area inside the *majlis* was arranged in a particular way. Long rectangular *duwasheg* (mattresses) were placed on the floor and around the walls, forming a continuous u-shape. Cushions were distributed around the *duwasheg,* in order to support the backs of those seated. Typical *majlis* cushions were white and embroidered with coloured floral motives. The u-shape sitting area enabled guests to sit next to one another without feeling separated, which emphasises intimacy, and warmth in Saudi culture, while also fostering increased interaction. This is illustrated in the images of the sitting area observed on the *majlis* in the Bayt Al-Baiah site visit, as recounted in chapter three of this thesis (Fig. 3.27).

The case study house utilises two different types of u-shaped *majlis*. The typical traditional u-shape *majlis* was located on the ground floor, next to the family living room. This room contains *duwasheg* on the floor, a large red Persian rug, and cushions around the wall. The walls are painted white on the top and dark blue on the bottom. Mrs. Munira explained that "these colours were used intentionally in courtyard houses, because the lowest area of the wall would typically have more contact with people, and especially children, so could be dirtied easily. Therefore, the bottom of each wall was painted dark and the top was painted white, in order to lighten the space" (Int.1, 22 July 2014). This bi-partite painting pattern was observed in the *majlis* in the case study house.

A number of different artefacts are on display inside the *majlis* to enhance the traditional appearance of the room, including old mirrors on the wall. A wooden shelf is used to display vintage fragrance accessories (Fig. 5.25) and under this shelf is an antique wooden box used as storage. Traditional handmade baskets, woven from palm leaves, are placed on top of the wooden boxes. These palm leave basket and antique wooden box are traditional ways to store objects in courtyard houses. Small metallic tables are distributed on the floor in front of the cushions, for the purpose of resting the *fanajeel* coffee cups. However, these were not traditionally used in a sitting area, as they signify the preparation of coffee for guests and a change in lifestyle as people have stopped placing coffee cups directly on the floor. The continued significance of the *majlis*, the use of its traditional name, typical u-shape arrangement of seating, the bi-partite painting pattern and guest hospitality practices inside it, combine to demonstrate a strong commitment to cultural preservation in recent contemporary Saudi villas.

Fig. 5.25: The u-shape *majlis* sitting style with *duwasheg* on the floor and cushions around the walls.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)
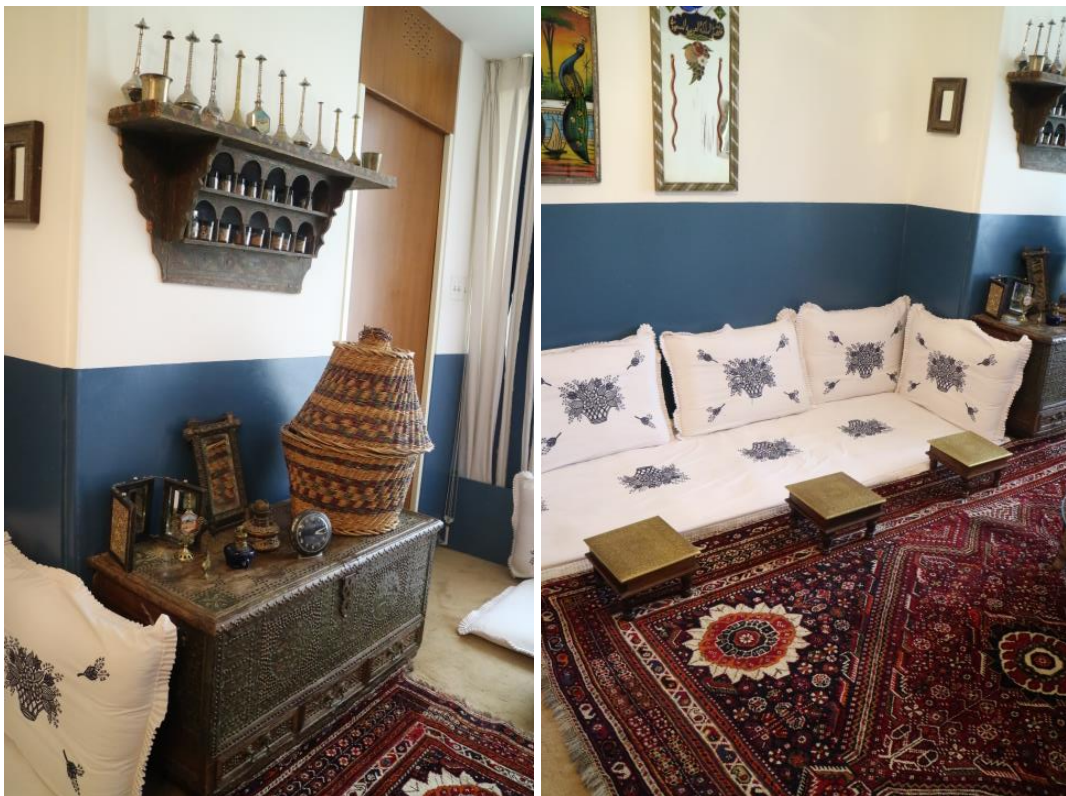
Fig. 5.26: A number of different artefacts were on display inside the room to enhance the traditional appearance of
the room, such as the old used mirrors, an antique wooden box and traditional handmade basket from palm leaves.

(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Another u-shape sitting area for use by guests was attached to the dining room. Although the original open plan organisation of the house did not allow for this U-shape sitting style, a wall of arabesque wood and mirror was used to close the open space between the dining room and the guest *majlis*. This effectively created a third wall in the guest room and allowed for the u-shape seating style (Fig.5.27). The traditional u-shape sitting style in this *majlis*, an example of Saudi cultural identity, is expressed after the modifications of the home to meet the privacy requirements of the residents more effectively. The height, material and furniture of the u-shape sitting area have been customised from the typical tradition *majlis* to suit the space-specific measurements in specialist furniture factories[25]. This demonstrates how the arrangement of the *majlis* has evolved in accordance to the changes to the Saudi lifestyles. Although they have retained the traditional U-shape arrangement, Saudi people now use new materials and designs.

The *majlis* incorporates numerous hexagonal, glass-topped tables. They are an imaginative and unique design that is both inspired and functional. Mrs. Munira used these tables as display features to exhibit traditional artefacts, such as old Saudi currencies, self-defence tools; hand watches; and containers for perfumes and trinkets (Fig.5.28). She had also framed an old original document about traditional trading methods and displayed it on the wall of the *majlis*, near to a collection of men and women's accessories from different parts of the Kingdom (Fig.5.29). In this *majlis* I examined cultural resilience through the manner of cultural preservation in the display of Saudi cultural artefacts of Saudi culture, as well as in the attempts to recreate traditional features, such the *kamar* alcove and the u-shape sitting area in the *majlis*.

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[25] Many furniture businesses have opened in Saudi Arabia to provide customised u-shape sitting areas using a variety of materials, size and heights to meet different tastes and requirements. The spread of this type of business might indicate a fairly widespread desire to live in traditional ways. This practice might therefore potentially be interpreted as occurrences of cultural preservation in the current domestic environment.

Fig. 5.27: The u-shape sitting style in the *majlis*, with a number of tables used as display features to exhibit traditional artefacts. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Old Saudi currency

Self-defence tools

Containers for perfumes and trinkets

Variety of old watches

Fig. 5.28: Hexagonal tables topped with clear glass used as display features for artefacts in the *majlis*.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

A
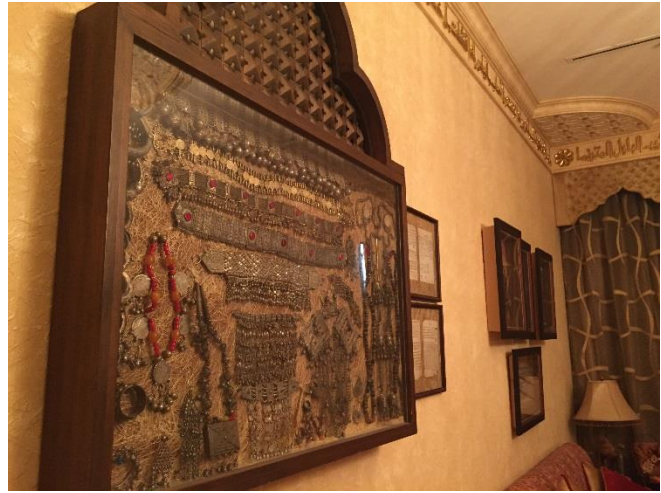
B

C

Fig. 5.29: A) An original document on traditional trading methods, B-C) accessories from different regions of the kingdom. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

In the case study investigation, this section focuses on the adapted practice that reflects Saudi cultural identity, with specific reference to the existence of local regional Eastern Province vernacular architecture practice in a contemporary home. In addition, I discuss the role that cultural resilience plays in the shaping of Saudi homes through the ways in which Saudi culture survives and reappears in new formats and environments. A number of examples are provided of the projection of Saudi cultural identity in a contemporary home. In recognition of the importance of the presence of Saudi cultural identity in the design of a contemporary homes, Mrs. Munira stated that, "I have always said that the house must be a combination of yesterday and today. We should not forget our past, while at the same time we should try to live in the future" (Int.1, 22 July 2014).[26] I refer to this combination of past and present in one domestic environment as the flexible adaptation or resilient manner. This describes the positive adaptation and adjustment of the resident's Saudi cultural identity.

This section examines the creation of Saudi cultural identity through the existence of different traditional symbolic features, such as the main outdoor gate, coffee shelf (*kamar*), and the u-shaped style sitting area in the *majlis*. The fieldwork observation and interpretation indicate that the resident's approach to practicing vernacular architecture in this case study is an imitative approach. In other words, the direct acquisition of form, motif, and detail from traditional domestic environments is repeated in a similar manner, albeit using modern construction materials. It is possible to argue that the practice of vernacular architecture in a contemporary home can also be seen as an act of cultural preservation, as well as being evidence of the strong relationship between cultural practice, cultural preservation, and cultural resilience. This section interprets how the inclusion of traditional Saudi features in this home is an attempt by the resident to establish a connection to her local traditional domestic environment. These measures have also created a sense of her belonging to the surrounding contemporary environment. The next section shows how the resident creates meaning in her home out of her exposure to different cultures.

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[26] Interview.1, conducted with Mrs. Munira on 22nd July 2014, Eastern province, Dhahran.

5.3.3 Global culture identities and International exposure

Completely different identities can appear in the same home. I refer to these as imported identities. These imported identities are typically the result of the residents' exposure to different cultures, and therefore to new experiences and images. Indeed, even the photographic images in this section, which enable discussion of the global cultural identities, give the impression that they have been taken from a different home, when compared against those illustrating the Islamic and Saudi cultural identities of the same residents.

The home is a mirror that reflects the lifestyles, journeys, and even the memories of its residents. It is the container of tangible and intangible materials, stored and displayed inside its physical shelter. In other words, a home is a process as well as a physical space, offering an intimate insight into the lives of the individual inhabitants. The design, decoration and contents of a home also serve as a museum of sorts, recording and displaying the changes that have occurred inside its domain (Heathcote, 2012, p.12, 15).

In the case study house, alongside the strong Islamic and Saudi cultural identities, I found other cultural artefacts that hinted at other environments in which the residents have lived in the past. For example, the family lived for a number of years in the Netherlands, for the purpose of work. The impact of their time in that country was evident in different parts of their home, especially clearly manifested through certain special items that they had brought back from their time abroad and displayed in their Saudi home (Fig. 5.30). As an example of this, a number of Dutch ceramic plates and accessories are hung in the dining room. A set of three Dutch artefacts are displayed on the wall that divides the dining room and guest sitting room: a large vintage ceramic Dutch clog, painted in white and blue, and ornamented with beautiful flowers typical of the Netherlands; a square porcelain wall plate, depicting a Dutch man crafting clogs; and, a large set of silver tablespoons and two serving spoons hanging off a white and blue pottery shelf, illustrated with a Dutch windmill (Fig. 5.31). Furthermore, a large collection of 12 differently shaped, white and blue ceramic plates are arranged around a large mirror on the dining room wall, each of which is illustrated with a number of symbolic Dutch images, such as a fisherman, windmill, flowers and birds. On the table beneath this is displayed another large collection of different sized Dutch pottery vases (Fig. 5.32).
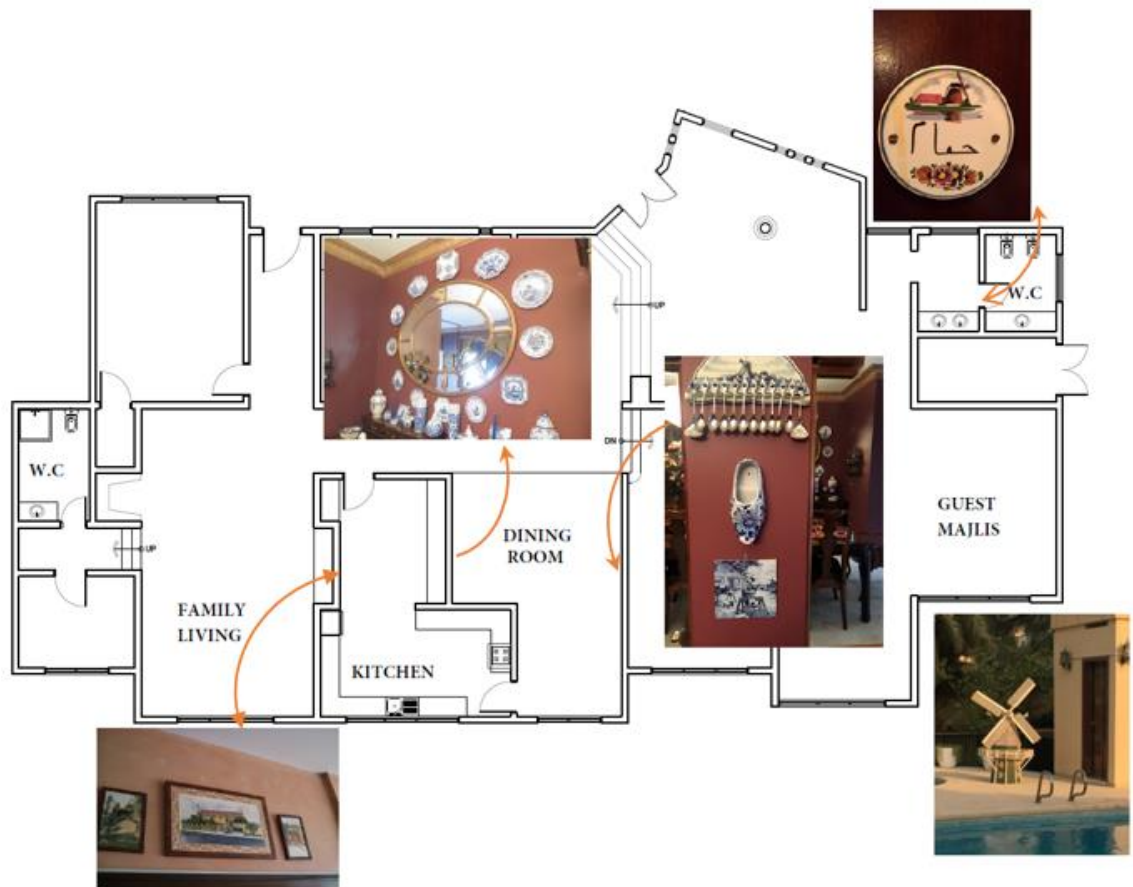
Ground floor layout

Fig. 5.30: location of Dutch artefacts in the house

Fig. 5.31: A set of three Dutch ceramic artefacts, a large vintage clog, pottery shelf and a square ornamental plate on the wall in the dining

Fig. 5.32: A large collection of different shaped vintage Dutch ceramic plates and pottery vases in the wall in the dining room.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Personalized hand-painted Dutch ceramic tiles are placed in different locations inside the home. For example, three paintings are displayed above the fish aquarium in the family room. These paintings depict the house façade and gate door of the case study house. Another image, this time of a Dutch windmill, is displayed on the guest bathroom door and is overlaid with the Arabic term for bathroom. Mrs. Munira explained that she wrote the name of the space in Arabic letters, which were then copied onto the windmill image by an artist in Holland (Fig. 5.33.). One of the more interesting things that I observed was a model of a Dutch windmill, which had been placed in the garden in front of the swimming pool (Fig.5.34). The integration of the symbolic elements of a different culture, against the background of Saudi date palm trees, creates a striking, yet contradictory visual image in the outdoor garden.

Fig. 5.33: Hand-painted personalised ceramic tiles in different places inside the home.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014).

Fig. 5.34: A Dutch windmill model in the garden, located in front of the swimming pool.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Dutch windmills and other artefacts from Holland give an example of how the resident sought to create meaning in her home from past experience, perhaps as a way to help her remember valuable memories. This approach also illustrates how she presented these experiences in the context of a completely different culture. The influence of other particular cultures, with the adaptation and integration of its artefacts into the domestic environment, signifies resident flexibility: in other words, culturally resilient behaviour. The case study examines evidence of how the resident developed an imported cosmopolitan identity in the home, alongside strong cultural identities.

Gehrke and Claes (2014) identified cosmopolitan people as those individuals who have worked, studied and resided in different countries for an extended period of time, resulting in them being more receptive to new culturally different experiences. These contradictions are clearly resolved in the resident's mind through her rich, cosmopolitan life experiences. In addition to the Dutch artefacts in the home and garden, there are other examples of multicultural antique furniture in the living room (Fig. 5.35). These objects hail from different parts of the world and include Indian wooden chairs, an Egyptian chandelier, and Iranian carpets (Fig. 5.36, 5.37, 5.38). This assortment of different items from various cultures, in one home, also expresses the cosmopolitan identity of the resident.

This identity is also evident in the exhibition of artefacts on the tables in the family living room. A large antique wooden table close to the seating area displays a collection of vintage mirrors and perfume containers (Fig.5.39), while another corner table exhibits a collection of rocks and stones that were found in the Saudi desert. The two rocks at the top of the image (Fig.5.39), called Desert Rose, are a rare type of stone found in the Eastern Province. It clusters in the sand for years to form a natural sculpture in the shape of a rose. The multicultural environment in the living room expresses the resident's cosmopolitan identity, along with their passion to collect and exhibit different types of local and international artefacts. This case study provides a valuable, living example of the blend between different cultures, illustrating how the artefacts can represent a diverse range of cultures in the same domestic interior, as well as how Saudi cultural identity and artefacts can be positioned within the context of other global cultural artefacts. This collection of artefacts assembled from many different parts of the word signifies first, how the family record their memories through object that transmit meaning about where the family have been. It also illustrates the particular way in which the family chooses to express complex identities drawing from cosmopolitan, Islamic and Saudi cultures, motives, features, and practices in one home.

Ground floor layout

Fig. 5.35: The location of multicultural elements in the family living room

Fig. 5.36: Family living room with antiques and furniture from different countries.

(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5.37: Egyptian chandelier on the living room ceiling.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5.38: Indian wooden chairs clustered in various sitting groups (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5.39: Collection of vintage mirrors and perfume containers, larger collection of rocks and stones from the Saudi desert (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

In this case study, I found another example of a globalised image or global identity being clearly translated through the interior design of the second guest area (*majlis* 2) located in the extension building A (Fig.5.40). The type of furniture, finishing materials, accessories, crystal chandeliers, and style of curtains all combined to create a grand atmosphere in the guest sitting area. The image of the sitting area could represent any luxurious home from any part of the world. In other words, it is a global reflection of the similarities and homogeneities, which exists despite cultural diversity. This can be most clearly seen in contrast to the traditional design of the first *majlis* in the same house. The sitting area contains a number of chairs and sofas that differ in terms of size, colour and fabric. These chairs and sofas have been arranged around the walls to create a corner sitting area, emphasising the intimate and cosy atmosphere of the guest room (Fig. 5.41).

The impression of luxury and quality is also evidenced by the design, colour and materials used in the guest service area, such as in the bathroom and washbasins (Fig.5.43). The intention to decorate the guest space in a distinctive manner is evident in the use of the metallic gold colour of the mirrors, washbasins and accessories, in conjunction with the lighting, the texture of the wall paint, and the dark wooden countertops. Similarly, the expensive marble tiles, features, lighting and accessories used in the guest bathroom space reflect the importance being accorded to the guest spaces.

All of the expensive materials, furniture and decorative accessories in the guest room *majlis*, washbasin area and guest bathroom signify the role of guest hospitality in the design of a Saudi home. The provision of a grand, luxurious atmosphere in guest spaces is a way of portraying the importance of the practice of guest hospitality, as well as a subtle illustration of the social status of the house owner. In this case study, the design of guest spaces highlights another example of cultural resilience by showing how the residents reflect a global identity and preserve the value of visual space for their guests. At the same time, it also provides an excellent example of a global perspective developed in a local culture.

Ground floor layout

Fig. 5.40: The second guest area *majlis*.

Fig. 5.41: The opulent decorations and atmosphere in the *majlis* guest space.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5.42: The guest corner sitting area. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Fig. 5.43: The luxurious design in guest washbasin area and bathroom.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2014)

Globalisation can be defined as the key player in shaping and deciphering the meaning of the world, creating communication between individuals of different cultures (Schirato and Webb, 2003, p.1). This term refers to living a global lifestyle, breaking down the differences that exist in diverse cultures. What is important in this case is the effect that globalisation has had on the discipline of interior design, and the corresponding impact of global influences on individual identity at home. Although it can be argued that the broad similarity in human proportions has resulted in a focus on ergonomics that is consistent across cultures, it has also been argued that there has been a unification of interior design through the adoption of furniture products that have standard dimensions. This ultimately means that design decisions in countries and cultures around the world have been standardised to better serve and represent the needs of modern society (Alawad, 2015). This unification has been achieved through the similarity of furniture products, which have been designed in accordance with standard heights, shapes and sizes. This reflects the argument that, "Through the process of globalization interior design has been unified throughout the word to reflect modern societal needs. Interior design has constantly redefined itself as an expression of culture" (Alawad, 2015, p.80).[27]

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[27] In her focus on social identity, Alawad (2015) explains that, "Identity is seen as dynamic and fluid: it is viewed as a structure as well as a process. There are a number of identities including personal, social, national, religious and gender" (p.80).

On the relationship between home and identity in reflecting individual lifestyle, it has been argued that the various ways in which a resident choosing to decorate and furnish their home expresses their lifestyle and identity in a more individualistic and organic manner (Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004). Therefore, the need for a modern lifestyle can be seen as the drive to adopt an international approach to furniture and design in domestic interiors. Through this, a global identity can emerge in line with developments in media, travel and technology.

Five terms of condition influence the occurrence and movement of global cultural flows: "they occur in and through the growing disjunctures among ethnoscapes, technoscapes, mediascapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes (Appadurai, 1996, p.33). In this context, 'ethnoscape' denotes the people in our landscapes; 'technoscape' refers to the global development and distribution of information-based and mechanical technology; 'mediascape' describes the reallocation of the ability to create and distribute information; 'financescape' encapsulates all movement and interaction of capital, such as through stock exchanges and global marketplaces; and 'ideoscapes' are the images that describe ideologies, especially at state level (ibid).

Indeed, the dramatic changes of all the five circumstances from the past to the modern era have created a platform for an increasing response to global culture, while also posing a serious threat to local heritage and culture. In this case study, the expression of a global cultural identity can be seen through three overlapping dimensions that I have explained in my model of global cultural identity dimensions (Fig. 5.44). All of the dimensions that reflect imported cultural identity are classified under the impact of global culture. However, they differ in terms of exposure to different cultures, such as the circumstances, length and strength.

In order to develop global cultural identity dimensions, I have highlighted a number of examples and analysed them with images in relation to the suggested model. These examples include: past work experience for a period of time in a different culture, such as the impact of Dutch culture; the direct exposure of the resident to multiple cultures, as a consequence of travelling to various countries; and lastly, the impact of international flow and modernity. However, it is important to clarify that all of the imported identities overlap and can be felt in different parts of the home.

It is vital to understand how to recognize the imported complex identities developed in relation to the periods of time that individuals have spent in different cultures and which

have subsequently manifested within the local home atmosphere. It is also important to explore the extent to which artefacts can function and create meaning that distinguishes them from local and global cultures in the same surrounding environment. Finally, it is important to consider how certain symbolic objects can link the resident to past experiences and memories.
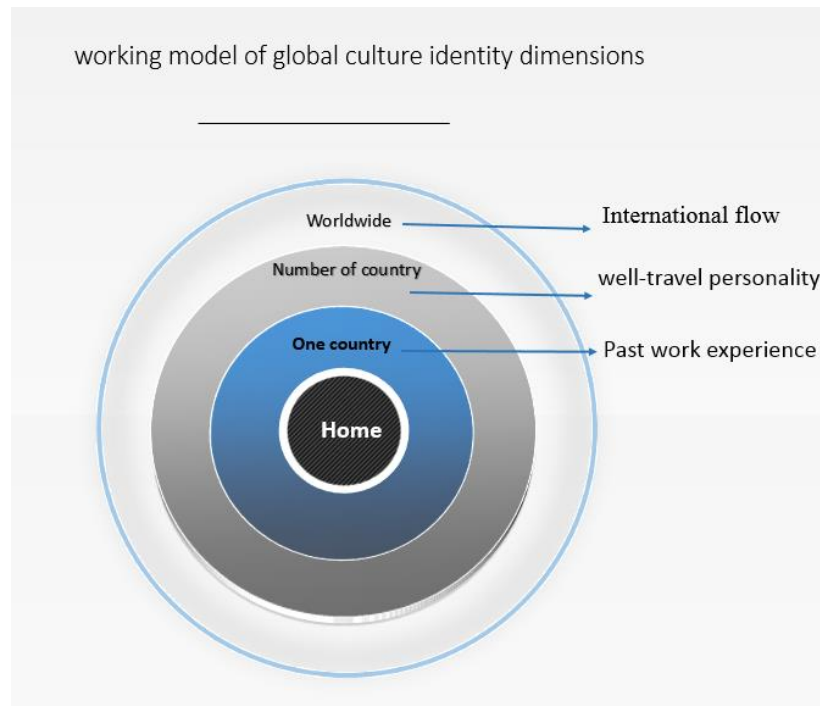
Fig. 5.44: Working model of global culture identity dimensions.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

The house decoration, furniture, and artefacts displayed in this case study can be seen as an exhibition, or as different chapters in the personal story of the residents. In reference to the model of global cultural identity dimensions, I believe that the length, intensity and circumstances of the exposure to a specific culture can play a significant role in emphasising its image inside the home in a manner that is more powerful than other global cultural identities. Another notable interpretation is that the extended exposure to a particular culture can create a strong, distinct imported identity that cannot be found in another home under the umbrella of global culture. It can be a characteristic of a specific case study home that exists solely in relation to a unique experience.

In this case study, the home was an extraordinary phenomenon created by a highly creative, individual Saudi woman. This reflects the idea that, "A house is part of the material structure of society, whereas a home is a phenomenon made by its residents"

(Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen, 2004). This case study provides an example of the ways in which the residents have adopted new images while simultaneously preserving old ones. Moreover, I have interpreted how residents seek to reflect their religious identity, traditional cultural identity and global cultural identities in the same home.

The home can be a mirror that tells a story about the past and present lives of the residents. It is the physical shelter that represents intangible knowledge, such as religion, culture and identity. Hall (1997) argues that while a house is made of bricks and cement, a home is composed of something rather indefinable. He argues that homes are composed by the meanings that we ascribe to these buildings and how we choose to represent them in the words, stories, images and emotions that we associate with them; essentially, a home is what we think, feel and say about the building in which we live.

The way that residents choose to express their identities through their homes can differ to a large extent. In other words, many individuals (particularly those in Saudi society),[28] have found that the decoration of the interiors of their homes offers a vehicle to reflect their individual personality and culture (Gram et al., 2004). The development of complex identities as a positive consequence of socio-economic transformation was examined in this chapter through the detailed analysis of Mrs. Munira's modifications, which illustrated how she had adapted new practices in the design of interior spaces to reflect her religion, identity, memories and past experience in her home. This exploration was presented in three sections, expressing a strong inherited Islamic identity, Saudi cultural identity in a contemporary home, and global culture identities and international exposure.

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[28] For further discussion on the importance of social identity in the home interiors created by Saudi women, see Alawad, A.A. (2015) 'Researching the motives behind the acquisition, possession and application of heritage collectibles in home interiors'. *Journal of Arts and Designs Studies, 29*, 80-87.

Conclusion

The significance of the case study in this thesis is that it examines one of the early design concepts imported into Saudi Arabia. This design is an American home style, incorporating an open space layout and a distinct lack of privacy in terms of its organisation. This case study shows how the resident has transformed the home to her Saudi culture over the past 32 years. It also offers an in-depth insight into the impact of the transformation of the domestic environment on the organisation of physical space and the social lives of the residents.

Although the American home model has been imported from a different culture and geographical region, it has been subjected to substantial modification to better conform to Saudi social and cultural needs. Studying the chosen home and its contents as material culture reveals the wider socio-cultural factors that have shaped its production. This examination has provided my investigation with evidence of the key relationship between cultural practices, cultural resilience and cultural preservation in a domestic environment. As mentioned previously in the theoretical chapter, the concept of resilience has not been widely covered in relation to practice. Therefore, in this thesis, cultural resilience can be understood as the ability of a resident to reorganise, adapt and adjust their environment to reflect their religion, culture, past experience and memories.

The first section of this chapter highlights the significant role played by guest hospitality practices in ensuring the perpetuation of the practice of privacy in the design of a Saudi home. It interprets the continued survival of encoded cultural values in new formats and different domestic environments, providing examples that clearly show how the modification of the villa served to increase the size of the building and so provide visual, acoustic and olfactory privacy requirements. It also provides evidence of how the modifications created opportunities for the resident to express her diverse identities. As a result, I found strong evidence of a link between cultural resilience and the development of identities.

The findings in this in-depth qualitative case study are valuable in interpreting how complex identities can develop in terms of positive adaptation, adjustment and creative resilience in a domestic environment. I have explored how the resident expresses strong inherited identities that reflect her Islamic religion and Saudi culture in her villa. These co-exist alongside the expression of other more global and cosmopolitan identities, which result from the resident's exposure to different cultures, new experiences and new images.

In the reception hall, the first interior space, of the house, the resident reflected a strong Islamic identity. The investigation shows my detailed analysis of the way that visual Islamic art has been employed in a domestic space, as well as how it has been projected through the use and location of calligraphy from the holy Quran, the display of the ninety-nine names of Allah, the symmetrical Islamic pattern ornamentations, and the symbolic Islamic elements.

I argue that the existence of traditional Saudi elements in this case study is an attempt by the residents to establish or strengthen their connection to the local traditional domestic environment, as well as to foster a stronger sense of belonging to the surrounding contemporary environment. This was strongly apparent in the fieldwork, from the moment that I entered the home through the traditional gate door, which was similar in design to traditional courtyard houses. Saudi culture was also reflected in the unique design of a symbolic feature (*kamar)* inside the *majlis.* This design is considered to be a traditional manner by which to express hospitality and the social status of the host to the guest, and its presence was a clear indication of the cultural preservation manner in the home. An important observation in this in-depth qualitative case study highlights an example of adapted spaces in the structure of a contemporary Saudi home, which appeared as a result of cultural significance, such as the location of the outdoor kitchen, which provides olfactory privacy, or the placement of the *abaya* area to meet the needs of female guests.

The modification in the case study home provides an example of a problem-solving manner that considers the inherited characteristics of cultural resilience, such as the use of an aquarium as a physical boundary to provide privacy in the family room. It also undertakes the transformation of the structural column into a piece of religious symbolism that projects visual Islamic ornamentation in the reception hall. In the same home used by the same resident, a completely different identity emerges. I called it the 'developed identities'. The expression of a cosmopolitan identity can be seen through three factors: the residents' experience of living in a different culture; their exposure to multiple cultures during trips to other countries; and the impact of globalisation.

Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of this investigation is the exploration of the creative ability of females and offers a fresh perspective and insight into the roles of women in changing and shaping a home environment. In this case study, the role of a Saudi female, Mrs. Munira, in identity-creation extended beyond her creative ability in interior decorating. She has made a remarkable achievement in the production of a new

form of cultural preservation, translated through the practice of museum making. In the next chapter of my thesis, a detailed investigation explores the production of a unique museum in this home.

A MUSEUM IN A DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT
A new form of cultural preservation in a Saudi home

The creation of a private museum

Museum, home and culture

Private museum making and the development of new form of cultural practice

Museum & home in the context of the Eastern Province

The Private Museum Movement PMM and its role in Saudi cultural preservation

PMM and its place in Saudi heritage and the national tourism policy

6

Contents

Introduction

This chapter focuses on private museums, with particular emphasis on the one in the case study house. This examination seeks to draw out the implication of these museums for cultural preservation in the Saudi context. Initially, I begin this investigation by presenting the museum, looking at the production of the bespoke structure for the museum in the private garden of the case study home. This chapter also examines at the new forms of cultural preservation uncovered during this study and explores the interconnected roles of identity, memory and creativity in the production of the museum.

In the second part of this chapter, I discuss the relationship between the museum and house, in the context of a contemporary Saudi home and in relation to the topic of cultural preservation. Through examining the differences in the function of spaces, I seek to explore and explain the integration of museum and home areas in the practice of private museum making.

The findings of the investigation show that the museum is not just a physical building for the storage, display and organisation of artefacts that preserve Saudi culture, but also actually creates new cultural practices and social networks itself. In the third section of this chapter, I examine how the practices of cultural education and exhibition participation have developed as a consequence of the museum.

The fourth part examines and discusses the classification of home museums, drawing upon real examples from the Eastern Provinces. Here, I examine the types of museums encountered as part of the fieldwork undertaken in my thesis. A comparison is then made of the different home museums, in terms of their creators, artefact displays, presentation methods, and other manifestations of creativity.

Finally, the fifth part of this chapter provides a discussion of the emergence of the Private Museum Movement (PMM) in Saudi Arabia and interprets the implications of this movement from an architectural perspective. In addition, I highlight the significant role that private museums are currently playing in the tourism industry and as a network of cultural practices that reflect and preserve Saudi culture for future generations.

6.1 The creation of a private museum

In this part, a discussion is provided of the museum that was built in the private garden of the case study house. The examination focuses on the way that this museum contributes to cultural preservation and explores the roles that the identity, memory, and creativity of the owner played in its production.

The museum was created by Mrs. Munira, the mother in the family that occupies the case study house. Upon meeting Mrs. Munira, I was struck by her considerable intelligence, experience, and remarkable awareness of the need to preserve culture. These qualities led her to develop the private museum, which currently contains many valuable and quite ancient artefacts, with some over a century old. The image below (Fig.6.1) shows Mrs. Munira, posing in her museum with the first two items in her collection. This picture was originally published in a newspaper article entitled *Saudi Female Transforms her Home to a National Museum* (Al-sharq, 2012).[29] Mrs. Munira is a clear example of the role played by women in cultural preservation through the PMM movement.

Mrs. Munira (2015) described the development of her museum as occurring in three main phases. In her own words, "The museum developed in different stages. First, in the late 1980s, it was only a small room in the garage that contained a small collection of items. After my son went to university in America in the 1990s, I moved it to the game room, located in the corner of the garden. The final phase began in 2005, with the construction of a new building standing in the current location. This separate building was needed to hold the increasing collection of items" (Int.2, 29 July 2015).[30] The history of her museum clearly illustrates how the practice of collecting artefacts can be a dynamic, on-going process, and that the museum is a growing space. The development of the museum locations is depicted below (Fig. 6.2), showing the phases of its development, from the garage, to the games room, to its present location[31].

In response to my question about her decision to locate the museum inside her home, Mrs. Munira explained that the objects in the museum had become a treasured part of her life and so she could not imagine being separated from them. "I feel that the museum is a part of me and the artefacts are like my children. I could not imagine being separated from

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[29] More newspaper articles about Mrs. Munira Al Ashgar and her private museum are cited in section 6.3 (p. 264). These include examples from Al-Sharq newspaper (2012), Al-Arabiya newspaper (2012), and Al-Hayat newspaper (2015).

[30] Interview 2, conducted with Mrs. Munira on 29th July 2015, Eastern province, Dhahran.

[31] It is important to clarify that the ground floor of the current museum building is also used as an outside kitchen and storage space. The new spaces were added after the extension of the museum, not before.

them" (Int.2, 29 July 2015). This strong attachment is expressed in Mrs. Munira's passion for artefacts, the personalised way in which she has organised them, and the way that she has designed the façade, entrance and interior of the museum. This attachment is even evident in the way that she shows visitors around the museum, which demonstrate that the space is an extension of her identity, memory and culture. Detailed discussions of all of these issues are provided in the following sections.

Fig. 6.1: Mrs. Munira Al Ashgar holds up the first two pieces with which she started her museum collection (Source: Al-Arabiya, 2012).
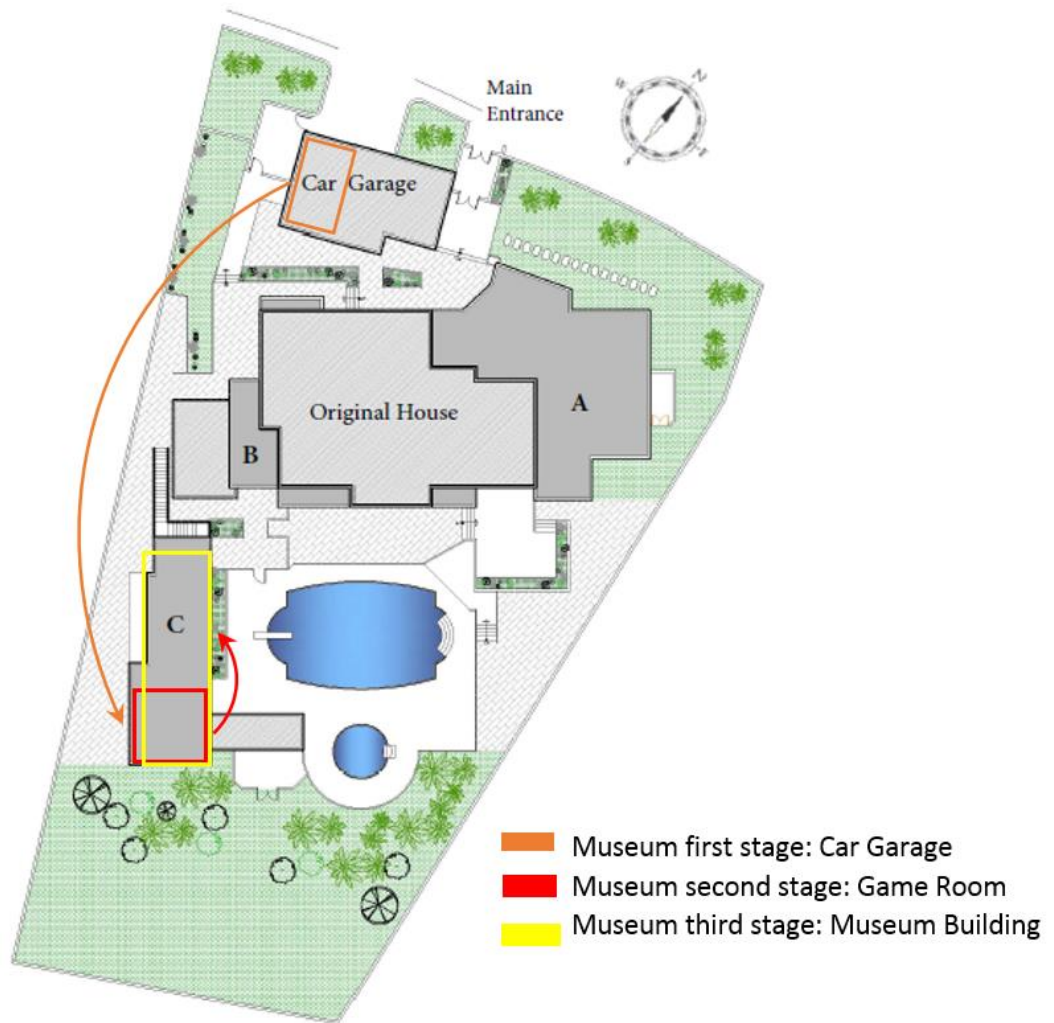
Fig. 6. 2: The development of the museum in the case study house

6.1.1 The design of the museum building

The design of the museum building was profoundly impacted by the concept of individual memory. The specific memory, in this case, is intrinsically linked to Mrs. Munira's personal experiences and her recollections of her early life, particularly of the traditional courtyard houses in her childhood neighbourhood. These factors (the early life and personal experiences of Mrs. Munira) are particularly rooted in two of the traditional communities of Saudi Arabia, the eastern region, and the central region. As a consequence, her personal knowledge regarding traditional domestic environments is especially full of rich memories from these regions, effectively providing a reservoir of strong references to support the processes of creating and designing the museum building. This design perspective is clearly reflected in the museum façade, interior space and entrance.

Her stated intention – highly evident from the finished product – is for the design of the façade to reflect the story of her life. This goal has been achieved through the use of the traditional architectural features related to the area in which she was born, the central region, as well as of the area in which she spent her childhood, the eastern region. This has resulted in a façade that is stylistically mixed, but reflects the two aforementioned regions of Saudi Arabia: the central region and the eastern region. The upper part of the façade is reminiscent of central region courtyard houses, particularly concerning the presence of white triangular crenellations atop the edge of the roof's façade. Meanwhile, the arched wooden windows closely adhere to the style of the traditional openings commonly found in the eastern region (Fig. 6.3).

 Comparison from historic photographs taken of the traditional house façades of the two regions, it is evident that the façade of the case study house incorporates a number of elements from each area. These elements include: rectangle form (both regions), water *mrzam* (both regions), arched windows (eastern region), natural wooden doors without colour (eastern region), and triangular crenellations (*sharfat*) on top of the wall (central region) (see Fig. 6.4).

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Fig. 6.3: The museum façade (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).
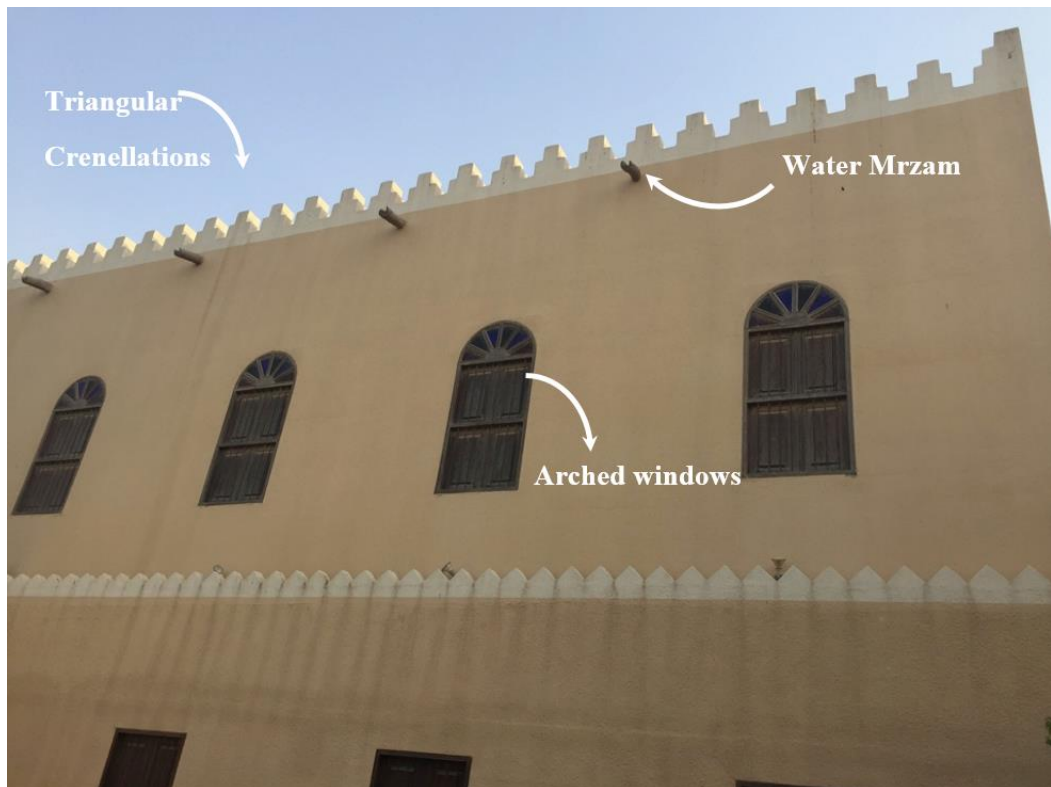
Fig. 6.4: Traditional architectural features on the façade (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).

Although it has been built from modern construction materials, the museum is intended to resemble a courtyard house. This architectural approach therefore constitutes an imitation of a regionalist practice, with the form, motif and detail having been taken from their particular regions and applied in a new context. It should be noted that all of the features in the façade are without function: the windows and door openings are not real, and the triangular crenellations and waterspouts (*mrzam*) are also purely decorative.

One of the most characteristic features in traditional courtyard houses and mosques was the wave of triangular crenellations on the top of the walls. In addition to the decorative, aesthetic properties that they added to a building, especially after they were covered by a white plaster, the crenellations also serve a practical purpose by protecting the mud walls from rainwater. This function was supported by the use of water *mrzam,* which function to direct rainwater off the mud walls.

This imitation of traditional architecture is highly dependent on the individual memory of the culture, which serves as a strong reference to generate meaning in the museum façade and as a way of forming a long-lasting connection with the past. The museum façade in this home reflects the personal history of its resident, Mrs. Munira, and the storyline that she wants to recount, from her past domestic environment into her current home. The photograph above (Fig. 6.3) illustrates this with a sense of conflicts, between the traditional façade of the museum and the adjacent swimming pool, demonstrating the contrasting images and ways of life. The integration of vernacular architectural element into the contemporary house suggests a tactic of cultural resilience reconnecting the residents to their traditional environment, while simultaneously attempting to create a sense of belonging to the contemporary environment.

In this case study, Mrs. Munira exemplifies the reinvention and restoration of traditional features in the design of her museum façade[32]. For example, she has used a number of vernacular architecture applications as cultural objects that express a meaning and carry memory from the central region and the eastern region, such as the triangular crenellations, water *mrzam*, arched windows, and characteristic wooden doors. In essence, each element in the façade becomes a symbolic object that reflects her past life.

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[32] Babsail and Al-Qawasmi (2015) investigated the contemporary attempts to reinvent traditional designs and construction techniques that had vanished during the preceding 60 years. One example of these attempts can be seen in this case study.

The entrance to the museum was inspired by the entry staircases that were commonly found in traditional courtyard houses (Fig. 6.5). In both the Eastern Province and central parts of the Kingdom, these staircases comprise a long flight of steps, without a landing or roof cover, which are often located in the corner of an open courtyard. In the case study house, elements were added to the staircases to give the residents and guests the feeling of living in a traditional domestic environment. Examples of these include the placement of clay water pots at the base of the stairs, signifying the fact that local people in the past used to drink water before or after using the stairs (Fig. 6.7). The false wooden window and lantern lamp on the landing suggest the way the staircase was traditionally lit at night (Fig. 6.6). The synergy of these details serves to create an authentic traditional atmosphere that cannot be attributed to special reference books or expert architects in vernacular architecture, but instead comes the from personal experience and memories of the resident's life.

Fig. 6.5: The museum staircase design (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).

Fig. 6.6: A lantern lamp located near the door to the museum (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).

Fig. 6.7: Clay water pots at the base of the stairs and a window and a lamp at the top.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

Mrs. Munira has spent the majority of her life in the Eastern Province. Because of this, the impact of the region can therefore be strongly felt inside the museum building, which she has organised according to her translated memories of her home atmosphere to create the spatial arrangement of courtyard houses in the area. Indeed, the implementation of the interior design took a different approach to that of the façade, which was primarily achieved through imitation by the use of new materials. In contrast, the interior design of the museum utilised original construction materials bought from traditional courtyard houses after they were demolished.

The museum door was originally acquired from an individual in the Al-Ahsa area, where it had previously been the façade gate of a locally famous family. The gate is considered to be a work of art, with a beautiful hand carved pattern, a number of large decorative metal studs, and a linear metal lock (Fig. 6.8). The interior of the museum is adorned with large arches that connect the ceiling and wall; the use of arches is particularly representative of the vernacular architecture of the Eastern Province (Fig. 6.9). The materials in the ceiling construction and the additional wood beams, called *danchal*, were also previously used in courtyard houses in the Al-Ahsa area (Fig. 6.10). These *danchal* can be considered as artefacts and offer museum visitors a real example of the kind of ceiling support system that was used in traditional courtyard houses.

In this case study the effort[33] of Mrs. Munira to use original materials bought from traditional courtyard houses is the clearest indicator of her investment in expressing a strong, genuine regional identity that reflects the traditional domestic environment of the Eastern Province to a museum visitor.

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[33] Regarding the references used in the design of the museum building or the artefacts display methods, Mrs. Munira informed me that, "It was all done by me. I have no time to review books or check references, because I am very busy with participation in exhibitions inside and outside the Kingdom, as well as my membership in many charitable institutions" (Int.2, 29 July 2015).
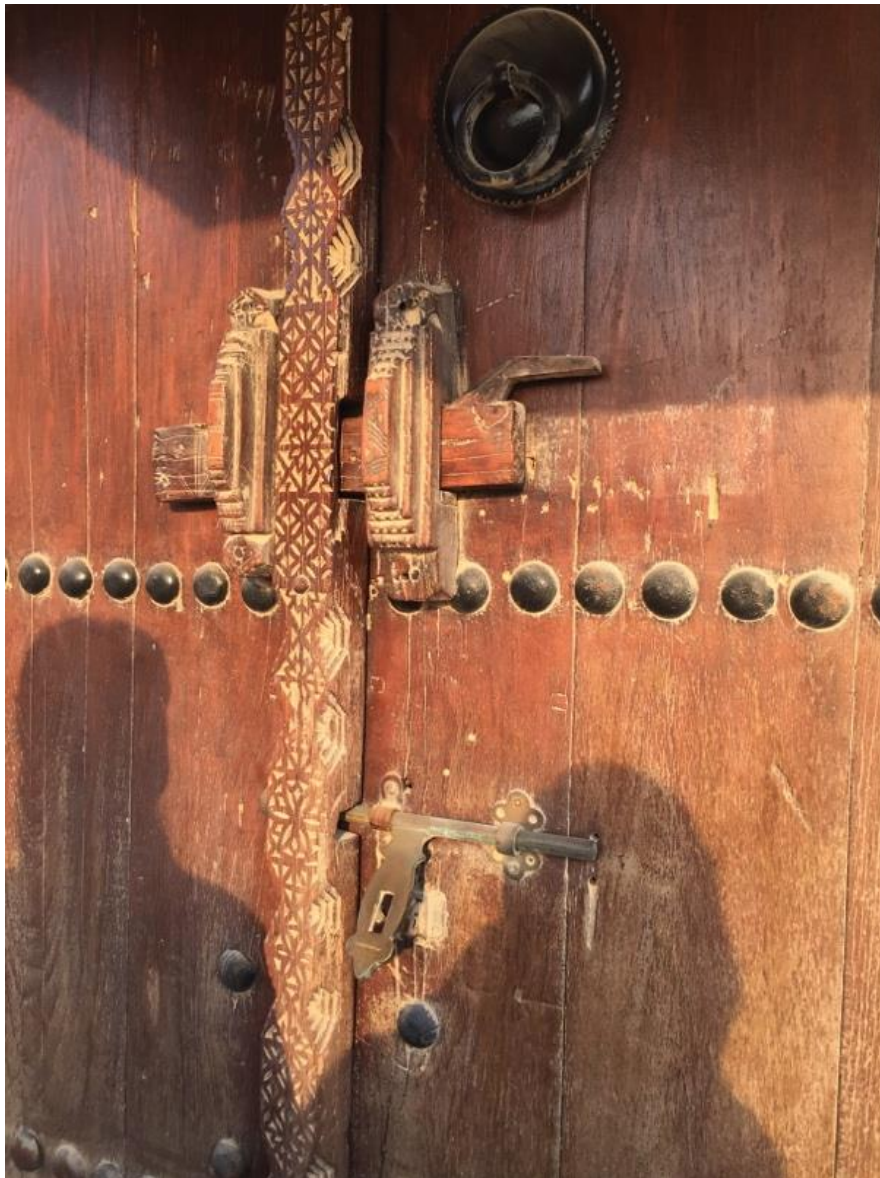
Fig. 6.8: Original gate with intricate hand carvings
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

Fig. 6.9: Arches connecting the ceiling and wall.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)
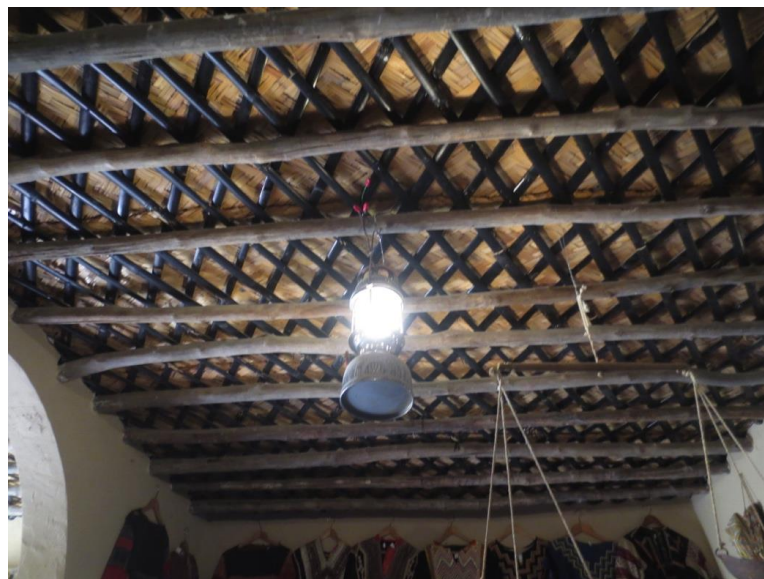
Fig. 6.10: Ceiling construction material and wood beams (*danchal*).
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

6.1.2 Museum classification scheme

In the case study museum, a geographical approach to the overall organisation and social dimensions was adopted in the presentation display method. This resulted in the museum being divided into discrete sections, each of which relates to a particular region of Saudi Arabia. These depict and present information about the different social activities that are characteristic of that region, in an attempt to reflect the variances that occur in traditional material culture. The classification scheme was intended to clarify the differences that exist between traditional communities in each part of the Kingdom, in accordance with their geographical locations. In this way, the museum seeks to represent the entirety of the Kingdom in micro-scale.

The first section in the museum represents the coffee corner, the guest hospitality space that is ubiquitous to all traditional Saudi houses across all geographical regions of the country. The second section presents the various cultural artefacts of the southern part of the Kingdom. After this, the tour passes through sections that represent the northern part of the Kingdom, then the eastern region, the central area, and finally the western region of Saudi Arabia. This arrangement is depicted in the diagram below (Fig. 6.11).
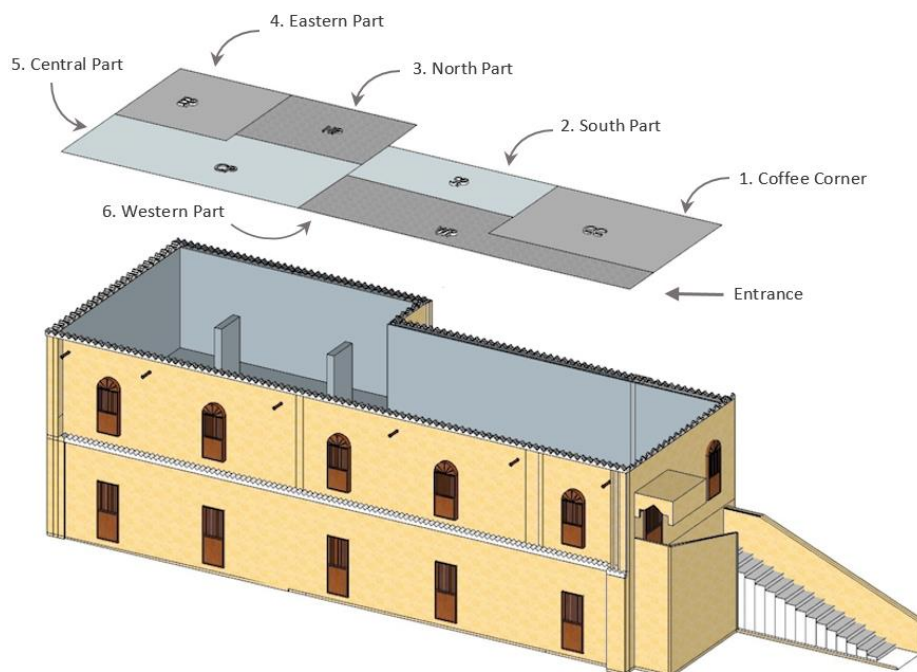
Fig. 6.11: A three-dimensional drawing of the museum showing its geographical layout.
(Source: Al-Jamea, 2015)

In the museum, on the right side of the entrance door, is the first display section. This area represents a traditional coffee corner in a *majlis*. Two male characters, Hassan and Saleh, sit in this area, drinking coffee and eating dates. In the storyline that Mrs. Munira has devised, Saleh makes a rhythmic sound using a traditional tool to grind cardamom for the coffee. In traditional Saudi culture, this sound was an invitation to any man passing in the street to enter and to inform the host that somebody was sitting in the *majlis* (Fig. 6.12). In other words, the sound functioned as an audible communication between the man inside the house and any man outside, acting as an invitation for the latter to enter, because the *majlis* door entrance was always left open. This explains why, in the design of courtyard house façades, the guest *majlis* was normally the only room that would have a direct window opening onto the street, as this allowed sound to pass from the interior to the exterior of the house.

In the museum, the first area that greets visitors is the coffee corner, which highlights its importance to Saudi culture, as well as neatly situating the coffee area within its classical role of welcoming visitors. The *kamar* shelf in this area displays all kinds of coffee pots (*dalla)* and the tools to prepare coffee, behind the traditional rectangular stove which is used to cook and heat the coffee. Seating is reconstructed on the floor, with cushions placed to support the back. When representing the coffee scene in the courtyard house *majlis,* Mrs. Munira paid close attention to small details, such as the placement of dates and a bowl for washing coffee cups (*fanajeel)* in front of the two men, as well as decorating them with the *misbaha* (prayer beads), which is a traditional accessory worn by men (Fig. 6.12).

The characters of Hassan and Saleh wear the *bisht*, a traditional men's garment that is usually made of wool. The *bisht* conveys a particular meaning about persons who wear it. Classically, this article of clothing was worn by ordinary people on special occasions, such as Eid or weddings, but it is worn all the time by those of a high social status, such as princes or family leaders (*Sheik*). In traditional Saudi society, these kinds of garments and objects have a powerful impact on those who see them and those who wear them. For example, a person who wears a *bisht* can gain high self-esteem from wearing it and act differently as a result. Meanwhile, individuals who see a person wearing the *bisht* will relate a particular status in society to them. This illustrates that objects often links

individual to a particular social or economic status (Woodward, 2007).[34] The *misbaha* is also another object related to identity, specifically to the Islamic religion and is therefore an important part of a man's ensemble in Saudi culture. Individuals use the *misbaha* to track prayers related to the religious practice of *tesbih*. *Misbahas* are made in numerous different sizes, colours and materials, with some being made from expensive materials such as pearls, or being infused with long lasting fragrances. By dressing the mannequin in the *bisht* and *misbaha*, Mrs. Munira's has acknowledged the significance of these objects of material culture. This decision has also enabled her to exhibit to museum visitors the actual apparel worn by men in the coffee gatherings in a traditional domestic environment. In the museum, the coffee corner is the first section area presented to visitors, thus highlighting its importance to Saudi culture.

Fig. 6.12: The coffee corner in the museum
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

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[34] Woodward explains that the relationship between objects and identity is incredibly important, because of the power and associations that objects hold, especially in terms of the culture or emotions of an individual. These serve to convey *subjective identity*, helping people to communicate certain messages or aspects of their identity. They can also assist an individual in acting in a particular way, such as when an individual changes their self-perception, perhaps feeling greater authority or power, after donning certain kinds of clothing, such as a suit (Woodward, 2007, p.4).

6.1.2.2 The Southern Region of the Kingdom

Asir is the southernmost region of Saudi Arabia. In the museum, this region is displayed immediately after the coffee corner. It is represented by a display wall that holds eight hand-made embroidered dresses, which are hung at the same level and represent the traditional women's costume in the Asir area. Most of these dresses are woven from dark-coloured fabrics, such as black, dark red and green, which have been decorated with straight-lined embroidery patterns (Fig. 6.13).

In the centre of the section, one male (Ali) character and one female (Hamda) character, stand on Asir Mountain. Ail wears a traditional black outfit, adorned with a colourful scarf over his shoulder and another around his waist. In addition to this, he wears a leather belt to carry his dagger and a headband with natural flowers placed in it (Fig. 6.14). The female character, Hamda, also wears a black outfit, but her dress is decorated with colourful embroidery and the silver jewellery that is an essential part of female traditional dress in Asir. As in many cultures, jewellery typically symbolises social and economic status in Saudi Arabia. Traditionally, it is mostly made of silver and worn around the head and neck. Another object that can be considered a symbolic element of the identity of Asir women is the large handmade hat that they commonly wear to protect them from the harsh sun in the mountains (Fig. 6.15).

In this section of the museum, in addition to displaying the original traditional costume of the southern region of Saudi Arabia, Mrs. Munira has also endeavoured to distinguish between the male and female outfits. She has even invested in real jewellery, to enable the correct silver accessories to be displayed on the mannequins, as this represents their real appearance and style of adornment to the museum visitors. The way in which the information about this region has been presented and documented signifies the importance that Mrs. Munira has put on cultural preservation, faithfully representing the costume of the Asir people in the context of the whole of Saudi Arabia.

Fig. 6.13: The traditional women's costume in the Asir area (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

Fig. 6.14: Ali's traditional costume
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

Fig. 6.15: The female character, Hamda
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

6.1.2.3 The Northern Region of the Kingdom

In this section of the museum, which presents the context of the northern desert, a small-scale model of a Bedouin tent (*bayt shar*) is displayed. This model illustrates how traditional tents were typically divided into discrete sections for guests, for the family, and for women, with the common domestic items being displayed in front of each division (Fig. 6.16).

Fig. 6.16: The model of *bayt shar* (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).

Seeta is a character hiding in her *hawdaj* next to the model of the tent. A *hawdaj* (howdah) is a structure, such as a carriage or litter, which is positioned on the back of a camel to carry people. These were classically decorated with colourful rugs and were a symbol of wealth. The character of Seeta is a representation of a Bedouin woman from the north, so she covers her face with a *burqa*, another cultural signifier of Saudi women. In this scene, she is spinning wool while inside the *hawdaj* on the back of a camel (Fig. 6. 17).

Fig. 6.17: Seeta in her hawdaj spinning wool (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).

Hanging on the adjacent wall, five women's costumes from the northern region are displayed in the same manner as the dresses of Asir (Fig. 6.18). The northern dresses are brightly coloured, with less embroidery than those of the south. Interestingly, the back of the dresses in this section are longer than the front. Mrs. Munira explained that the extended back was intended to wipe away the footprints that the women made in the sand, to prevent others from tracking or identifying their location in the desert.

Three noteworthy things are displayed in this northern region of the museum: an example of the traditional domestic environment (*bayt shar*), an example of a classic transportation structure (*hawdaj*), and the aforementioned women's costumes. It was Mrs. Munira's unique idea to present a *bayt shar* in the form of a model and then to display a Bedouin woman character inside a type of vintage carriage that has largely disappeared from modern life. The section clearly showcases her ability to construct creative depictions of traditional images from various material cultural objects.

Fig. 6.18: women's costumes from the northern region (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).

6.1.2.4 The Eastern Region of the Kingdom

There are six different characters in the Eastern Region section of the museum (Fig. 6.19). The first character is Hussa, a woman wearing a *burqa* over her face and an *abaya* to cover her dress. As discussed previously (see section 5.2.1), the *abaya* is a black fabric garment that is worn outside by women to cover the entire body[35](Fig. 6.20).

The second character in this scene is a pearl diver named Hussein, who is presented as having recently emerged from the sea, carrying oysters in a net carried around his neck (Fig. 6.21). As pearl diving has historically been a vital source of income for the people of the Eastern Province, the pearl diving scene in the museum is full of objects related to the sea and, specifically, the experience of pearl diving. Examples of these artefacts are the tools used to open oysters, a range of different sized nets, and two scale models of the ships that were classically used for diving in the Gulf sea, which took place on voyages of six months or more (Fig. 6.22).

Fig. 6.19: The Eastern Region Section
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

Fig. 6.20: The female character called Hussa.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

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[35] In addition, the *abaya* also clearly conveys the information that the wearer is a Muslim female.

Fig. 6.21: The pearl diver, Hussein. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

Fig. 6.22: Two models of old pearl-diving ships (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).

Alongside the diving scene, another traditional cultural practice is represented: the *henna* night, an important event and ritual that typically occurs on the night before a wedding. Four characters are present in the *henna* night scene: the bride standing in the centre, her mother on the left, and on the right her two sisters. The bride wears a *thawb,* a beautiful dress that is fashioned from silk and embroidered with golden threads. This is a symbolic costume that is worn for important traditional social events. A green *thawb* is worn only by a bride before her wedding night due to the belief that the colour will make her life more bountiful and joyous. Another important traditional bridal object was gold jewellery. The obligation for a bride to wear a large quantity of gold over her head and neck was so strong that a woman was expected to rent jewellery for the night if she did not own sufficient or appropriate pieces. It is for this reason that the image of the bride on her *henna* night could not be accomplished without the gold jewellery or green *thawb*. These objects have a performative capacity in this scene, becoming symbolic codes that signify the identity of the bride[36] (Fig. 6.23).

In the section of the museum dealing with the Eastern region, Mrs. Munira has made a conscious choice to present these particular scenes in recognition of their significant cultural importance in relation to the region. For instance, the geographical location of the Eastern region on the Gulf Sea created a strong attachment between the local people and the sea, as it was an essential part of their daily life. Memories of cultural events related to the sea, such as the reception of sailing ships returning after long diving trips, traditional songs, and other maritime customs are all significant to anyone who has lived in this region of the Kingdom.

The *henna* night is an excellent example of a cultural event that is rooted in the past, but which is still relevant in the modern context, as these nights are still commonplace in the eastern region and central region. In the museum, Mrs. Munira highlighted the significance of this event by the display of the gold jewellery and green *thawb* on the mannequin, which served to represent the bride on her *henna* night. It is crucial to mention that, in the context of Saudi culture, images of the *henna* night celebration are incredibly important in the domain of female memory, as they are intimately connected with the wedding ritual. The wedding event is presented in the next section of the museum.

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[36] Indeed, it is generally acknowledged that any attempt to portray a concept or an identity in a museum space is heavily dependent on the ability to present material objects effectively, and to facilitate interaction with these artefacts (Woodward, 2007, P.152).

Fig. 6.23: The bride in the attire traditionally worn on the *henna* night.

(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

6.1.2.5 The Central Region of the Kingdom

Two scenes are presented in the central region called Najd section of the museum: the first is the interior of a bedroom, depicting the scene when the woman first enters the room on her wedding night; and the second is a scene of five family members in the house courtyard. The characters in the second scene, three women and two children, a young boy and a small girl, are standing in the courtyard in their traditional Najd costumes (Fig. 6.24). All of the items of furniture in the bedroom are antique pieces collected from old bedrooms. This includes the steel bed, cupboard, dressing table and mirrors (Fig. 6.25). On the bed, the bride and groom sit wearing the traditional Najd costume in which they would be garbed on the wedding night. The steel bed is high and three steps are used to climb up to it (Fig. 6.26), which was originally intended to enable the space under the bed to be utilised as a storage area (Fig. 6. 27). A wooden cot for a newborn baby is located near the steel bed. Sarah, the baby girl that will eventually be born to the married couple, is sleeping in the cot (Fig. 6.28).

Eight magnificent women's *thawbs* are displayed on the wall in this area, illustrating the traditional Najd costume (6.29). In this section of the museum Mrs. Munira has not only presented the bedroom scene of the wedding night, using antique furniture, mannequins, customs and artefacts, but she also suggested the future lives of the bride and groom, with the inclusion of their newborn girl. Such is the attention to detail in this storyline that the little girl has even been given a name. The details of the presentation in this section, with a collection of antique furniture and accessories, shows the effort undertaken to correctly present the way that bedrooms were arranged in courtyard houses. This section of the museum is filled with a wealth of information for the visitor, presented using a range of engaging techniques. These include numerous mannequins, a carefully arranged selection of furniture, traditional costumes, and specifically chosen accessories. This attention to detail signifies the importance of this scene in comparison with other sections of the museum, with its significance drawing from its power position as region in the Kingdom, with the capital of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, being situated in Najd.

Another important thing to note is the links that Mrs. Munira has evidently tried to establish in her presentation of cultural events in her museum, from the *henna* night scene in the Eastern region section to the wedding night in the Najd section, to the depiction of the new born baby. This illustrates the storyline that she has subtly woven between the scenes to deliver the cultural narrative to museum visitors, with a sense of authenticity and reality. These decisions seem to suggest that Mrs. Munira has emphasised the life of

women in the traditional environment, perhaps due to the customs that limited the role of women to internal events and activities, while men participated in external events. Woman spent more time at home, more artefacts relating to houses are based around women, which signifies the impact of Saudi gender segregation on the contents of the museum.

Fig. 6.24: The three women in the courtyard   Fig. 6.25: The bride in her traditional outfit

Fig. 6.26: The bedroom scene furniture. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

Fig. 6.27: The steel bed (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

Fig. 6.28: wooden baby cot (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

Fig. 6.29: Traditional *thawbs* displayed on the wall of Najd section (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

The Hijaz section depicts two couples, standing in traditional costumes (Fig. 6. 30). The man, Siraj, wears a simple white outfit with a lightweight black vest, and the woman wears a heavy outfit. Her head garment is heavily embroidered and the silver jewellery around the neck is also substantial (Fig.6.31). In addition, the female character wears wooden high-heeled shoes, which women only wore when entering the bathroom to protect their dresses from touching the water on the floor (Fig.6.32). Nine different women's outfits are displayed on the wall, presenting a broad representation of the traditional dress of Hijaz women, many of which are embroidered with the usual lines and geometric forms (Fig. 6.33).

Fig. 6.30: A couple from Hijaz (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).

Fig. 6.31: The head garment   Fig. 6.32: women's high-heeled wooden shoes

Fig. 6.33: The traditional Hijaz women's dress
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

In fact, it is crucial to mention that many more traditional women's costumes are displayed than men's, which suggests that there are far fewer styles of traditional male outfits in Saudi culture. It may also be explained by the gender of the museum creator, which will have enabled her to more easily acquire female outfits.

In addition to the costumes displayed in the Hijaz section, two grand *mashrabiya* are hung on the wall. As wooden screens that cover a window opening, the *masharabiya* was a traditional element of the façades of homes in Jeddah and Makkah (Fig. 6.34). Originally, the purpose of these screens was to create spaces that enabled water to be cooled and this usage that shaped the evolution of the name '*mashrabiya*', which derives from an Arabic word that means 'the place of drinking' (Saudi Aramco World, 1974). The *mashrabiya* circulated air inside the house through small wooden openings, as well as providing privacy to women inside who wished to view the outside street. The Hijaz section of the museum highlights significant features that identify and distinguish buildings in the Western region of the whole Kingdom.

Fig. 6.34: Two grand *mashrabiya* are hung on the wall of the Hijaz section
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015)

6.2.3 Components of a private museum production

The analytical framework provides a conceptual lens through which I examine the museum in the case study home. In order to clarify this analytical framework, which is based on a number of different overlapping perspectives, I developed a working model of the components of the production of identity, memory, and creativity for the museum (Fig. 6.35).
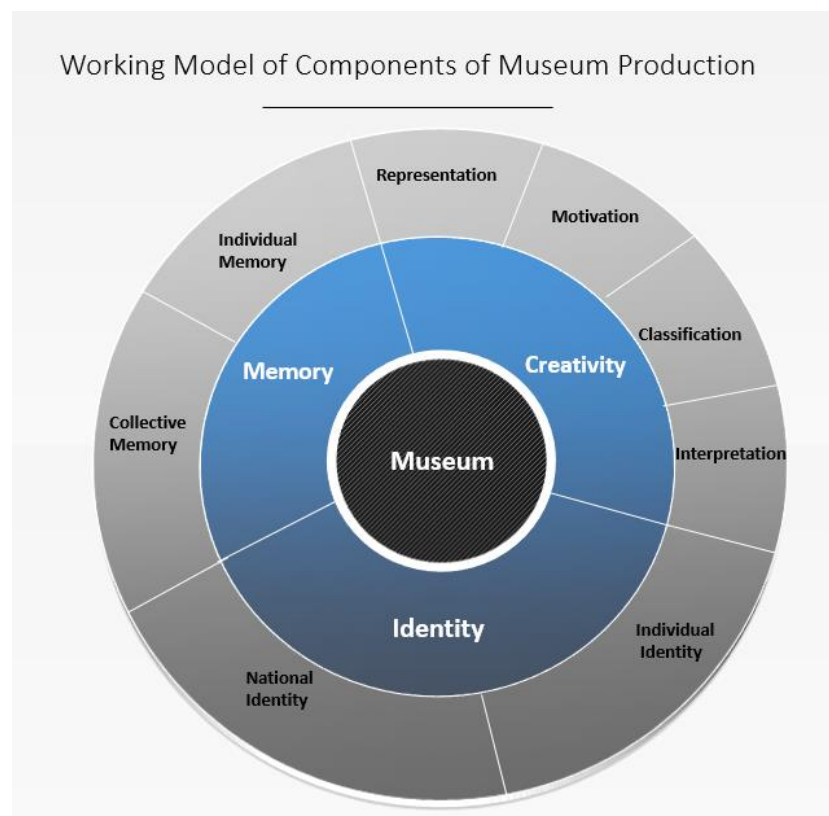
Fig. 6.35: Working model of the components of museum production.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2016)

6.2.3.1 Creativity and its role in the practice of museum making

As explained in the theoretical chapter, the creative thinking approach considers the inherited characteristics of cultural resilience. In this case study home, creative resilience is reflected beyond the creation of stunning pieces of art, or what is normally understood as the products of creative fine art. This artistic collection has been translated and presented in an extraordinarily unique way, through the construction of a building and the curation of a museum inside a private home. In this sense, Mrs. Munira is an artist who has created and illustrated in detail each corner of the museum. In this section, I discuss the topic of creativity through the key concepts of representation, classification, motivation, and interpretation.

The creative ability that Mrs. Munira displays through her presentation method is clearly shown by the use of costumed mannequins as presentation tools (Fig. 6.36). Each of the 22 mannequin models is depicted in a traditional activity, has a name that is typical of the area that he/she represents, and each wears a traditional costume. This shows that Mrs. Munira not only displays items and static objects, but she also gives them a life, a name and a story. This enables them to interact with the visitor through their costumes, activities, and the symbolic meanings that these collectively present. In a creative sense, she curates each cultural scene in great detail, looking at the most suitable atmosphere for the presentation, including the selection and arrangement of all of the furniture pieces and the placement of small accessories.

Objects in the museum are displayed according to the cultural knowledge of the host, who identifies each object in the context of Saudi culture. For example, the way in which traditional Saudi costumes are displayed in the museum is directly linked to the region from which it hails, as discussed in the classification section 6.1.2. In this sense, the museum is an example of how Mrs. Munira generates meanings through the use of objects to recall and describe tangible and intangible events. Objects in material culture are inherently loaded with meaning, enabling them to convey messages or ideas, or even to fulfil useful social functions (Woodward, 2007). Objects have cultural communicative capacities when understood within the specific context that they exist. It can therefore be said that the object is a setting. In other words, its location within a network of other material objects represents cultural events, narratives, or cultural practices. In the case of the case study museum, revealed scenes such as the henna night, the wedding night or the

pearl collection scene all demonstrate the representation of an immaterial memory through material artefacts. The customs, tools and accessories that are part of the presentation scenario are the tangible artefacts that are effectively conveying the material memory. The museum curator has transferred her understanding of traditional knowledge to the visitor by means of interesting oral stories, in an attempt to create a dynamic relationship between every physical object and associated past experiences. For objects to acquire the ability to retain significance in other environments or for protracted periods of time, objects need to be materially grounded. This requires them to have people to represent them, to interweave them with stories or social significance, and to associate them with meanings and symbolism that resonates with the local culture. This, in turn, can bind objects into the social relationships and customs of a particular culture (Pels et al, 2002 p.153).

However, in the practice of ethnography, it is important for presentations to include texts that can help onlookers to better understand and translate the meaning of the objects. In this context, the word 'texts' can refer to oral or social constructs that provide a framework for knowledge, in addition to the standard physical writings placed alongside the artefact (Lidchi, 1997). In the case study museum, the texts provided are oral narration rather than written texts, with the curator personally presenting the information about each artefact, in a manner that is charming to the museum's visitors[37].

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[37] On p.261, Fig 6.40 evidence in the form of notes from visitors reflects positive experiences in the museum. For example, one of the visitors writes, "Wonderful antic collection. Thank you for having us viewed it!"; another writes, "wonderful experiences … thanks for sharing"; another writes, "Thank you so much for showing us the wonderful house and museum"; and another writes, "Loved being here, very lovely, experienced the Arab culture and hospitality!".

Fig. 6.36: Location of mannequins in the museum displays.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2017)

A crucial factor in this museum display is the self-expression of the owner, Mrs. Munira. In museum making, the presentation method usually proceeds in accordance with certain policies that are controlled by institutional views and stance. As a result, some museums may fail to deliver an accurate image, in terms of cultural representation. However, in the case study museum, the evident self-expression creates a sense of authenticity from the natural, genuine individual effort of the curator.[38] In the museum in the case study home, the use of mannequins with lifelike human features was intended to present an authentic picture of traditional people (Fig.6.37). This is reflected in the attention paid to the characters, costumes, and societal positions of each of the mannequins, in addition to the fact that each of them has been given its own name and identity. These design decisions have combined to create a heightened sense of realism and intimacy in the presentation of the museum. In this thesis, I argue that Mrs. Munira's ability to translate her traditional ideas, images and memories through all aspects of this museum constitutes an excellent example of cultural preservation through the application of her creativity.

Fig. 6.37: The creation of mannequins with anthropometric characteristics to present an authentic picture of traditional people inside the museum. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2017).

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[38] In contrast, findings from researchers in modern museum practice highlight the importance of the ethnographically correct feature of 'dolls' in the display, as this plays a crucial role in ensuring that the museum is delivering realistic presentations. In fact, Simic (2006) argues that if a modern museum uses dolls in exhibits, then they must have the anthropometric features of the people they seek to represent (p.314).

One of the main functions of the museum in the case study home is to store and display the assorted artefacts and objects that have been gradually accumulated by the resident, effectively enabling her to record traditional culture. The presentation method therefore functions as a network system that creates links and associations between objects in order to generate meaning. Presentation in a museum has a significant role; it is the process by which meaning is created. Lidchi (1997) has called this "the poetics of exhibiting" (p.168) in reference to the way in which structure and presentation can be used to weave together the various disparate artefacts in an exhibition, giving them a sense of order and interconnectivity that ultimately creates its own sense of meaning. In this museum, the display clarifies the variation in costume, habits, and activities among the different traditional communities in the different regions of Saudi Arabia. It also implicitly comments on the similar importance ascribed to the coffee corner by the people of all the regions. In this sense, the museum represents the whole kingdom in a microcosmic scale. In order to understand the production of this museum and especially the classification plan that generated and established the meaning of the objects, it was important to understand how meaning was created through classification and display in the case study museum.

The first section in the museum represents the coffee corner, the guest hospitality space that is found in all traditional houses across Saudi Arabia, irrespective of their geographical location. The classification scheme in the museum then proceeds according to the geographical locations of each region, beginning with the south of the Kingdom, then the north, east, central, and finally western region of the Kingdom. However, as mentioned in the discussion of the history of this museum, it should be noted that the practice of collecting artefacts has been and continues to be a dynamic process. The consequence of this is that the museum is therefore a continually growing and evolving space. From its inception, in the garage of the family home, moving to a larger space in the games room, and then to its present location, the museum has been in a constant state of growth and revision. Despite the larger space, the number of items has continued to increase, and the current space is therefore arguably too small to effectively host and clearly present all of the artefacts. It can be argued that the presentation is not fixed and is in a state of continuous expansion between the spaces, although it is still possible to observe the main classification scheme.

In general, museums are spaces that exist to facilitate the acquisition, protection, conservation, and display of objects and artefacts. In this case study, the function of the museum building completely fits and even transcends this description. Its creation occurred as a response to a profound sense that the culture was dissolving and it therefore exhibits a particularly strong approach towards cultural preservation, by recalling and recreating images from a past traditional Saudi life. It has been argued that museums are as much a part of culture as the relics and artefacts that they accumulate. They are actually unique cultural spaces in which earlier times are brought to life and living culture is temporarily suspended (Lidchi, 1997, p.168). In this museum Saudi culture springs to life because of Mrs. Munira's efforts; she has collected artefacts from all around the Kingdom. She is particularly dependent on the popular local market (called AlSouq), which is the best place to buy antiques in each region. It is from these markets that she acquires the objects or artefacts related to Saudi culture, such as tools, costumes, accessories, furniture and even construction materials.

The motivation for the production of the museum seems to have been the curator's personality, passion and curiosity, which motivated her to collect, organise and display the objects. The practice of museum making requires a special kind of mind, which is curious, open-minded and investigative enough to seek after rare objects, while simultaneously being able to draw them together into a cohesive whole and manage the resultant exhibition (Lidchi, 1997, p.158). As the museum's curator, Mrs. Munira not only fits this description, but she also feels a sense of responsibility to participate in cultural conservation, protecting this knowledge for the next generation, with her ideas being creatively reflected through the practice of museum making.

Nostalgia for an earlier time can be another important factor in gathering the motivation for creating a museum. The word nostalgia derives from the Greek words '*nostos*', meaning homecoming, and '*algia*', which means longing (Sodaro, 2013), and refers to the feeling of yearning for a time or place that no longer exists, or perhaps is even an idealised concept that never actually existed at all (Boym, 2001). In this museum, nostalgia for childhood memories, a traditional home and neighbourhood have all influenced the ways that the artefacts have been displayed to reflect intangible culture. Nostalgia is a very valid response that may be experienced by visitors to a museum, as they witness sights or other sensory stimuli that trigger responses and evoke recollections. In this way, nostalgia gives a valuable insight into the way that people understand or recall

their past lives, and especially into the things that they value the most, either consciously or unconsciously (Devine, 2013).

The museum presents entire collections of historical artefacts that were used in traditional life and existed in the local market, such as old Saudi currencies, liquid containers, coffee preparations items, cooking tools, sewing equipment, medical tools, vintage cameras, antique iron, and many other objects. The large collection of cooking instruments is presented on a table situated in the middle of the museum, whereas the other collections are distributed in the gaps between the main sections. Some of these artefacts are over 100 years old and are therefore no longer part of everyday life in Saudi Arabia, such as the stone mill (which comprises two circular stones placed parallel to grind grains) (Fig. 6.38).
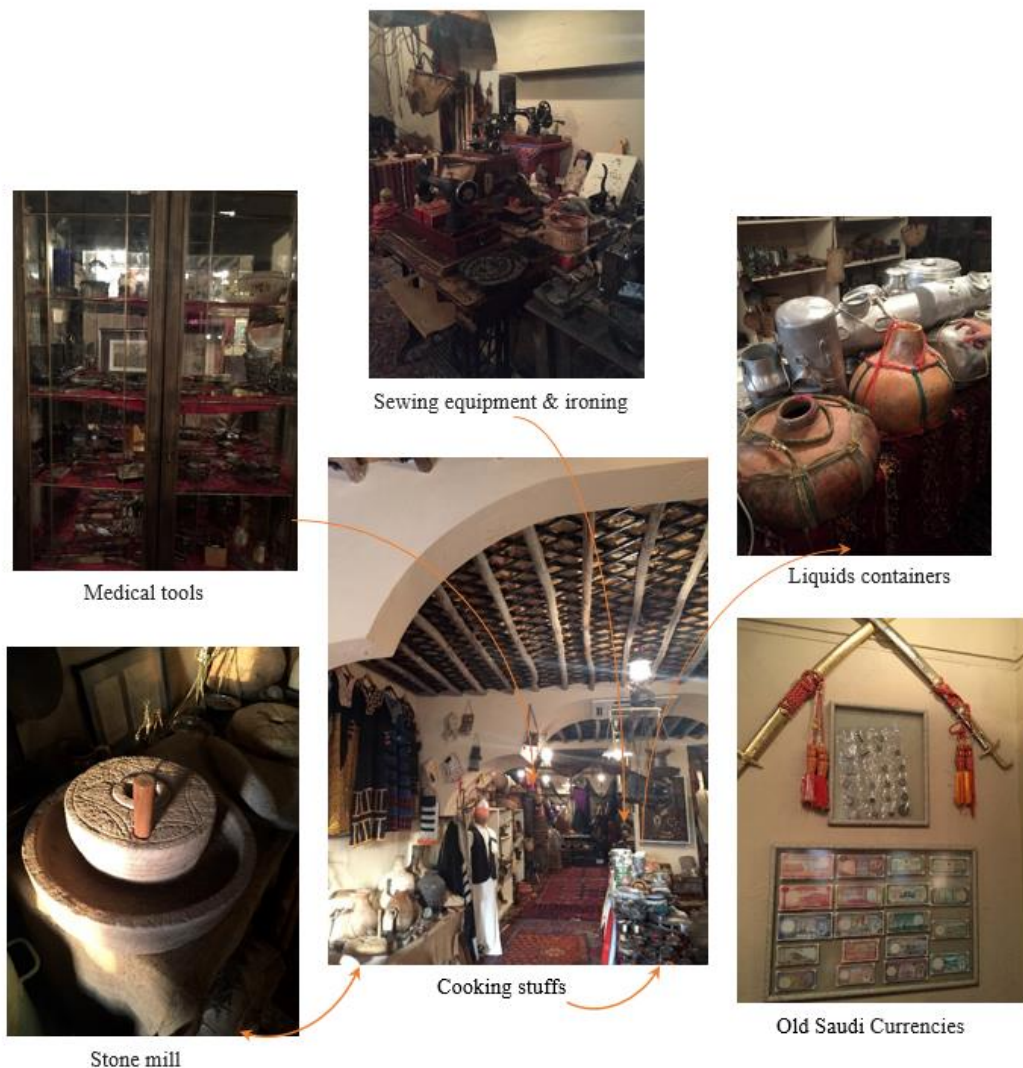
Fig. 6.38: Entire collections of historical artefacts that were used in traditional life and existed in the local market. (Source: May Al-Jamea, 2015).

Recently, in *New Directions in Museum Ethics*, some academics have argued that museums not only have the ability to generate social change, but that it is even possible that they may even have a duty to do so (Janet et al., 2013, p.1). Having undertaken an exhaustive examination of the case study home, I would also argue that the transformation in the traditional environment and corresponding social change could empower a person with the capacity to create a museum. Once the museum has been created, it impacts upon the life of its creator and causes social change, which produces new forms of cultural practice. I explain and discuss this process in detail in section three of this chapter.

6.2.3.2 The function of cultural memory and identity in the design of the museum building

Although Saudi Arabia has classically had a unique and distinguished vernacular architecture, the traditional built environment has largely disappeared and transformed in response to the extreme pressure associated with the radical development the country has experienced after the discovery of oil. Nevertheless, the image of the traditional environment is remembered by the people of Saudi Arabia, many of whom stress the importance of retaining this link with the past.

In order to utilise the concept of memory as a component of museum-making analysis, it is first important to define the meaning of this term as both collective memory and individual memory then clarify its link to museum industry in the literature. Rodriguez et al. (2007) defines memory as the ability to recall, to generate and to reconstruct our past, while explaining that cultural memories are the key historical events that have a long-lasting effect upon a society, potentially even enacting significant socio-cultural developments, and which therefore tend to perpetuate even when a society has profoundly changed (ibid, p.1). Others have argued that memory should be understood in terms of its continual relationship with forgetfulness, with the two being inextricably linked in a dialectal sense, meaning that "the social relations of memory are activated in new ways in the social landscapes of our times" (Radstone and Schwarz, 2010, p.4).

In the context of this investigation, the substantial change facing society was the profound transformation of the built environment. In *Mapping Memory* Radstone and Schwarz (2010) identify an important association between memory and trauma, noting that trauma may be instrumental to the creation of memory and therefore able to transcend physical or temporal limitations (ibid, p.8).

However, they caution that the concept of trauma should be consider critically and carefully, with a high degree of self-awareness and reflection. They also give example of the active memory in relation to some traumatic events and explain that,

> "Memory is active, forging its pasts to serve present interests. Whether embedded within nationalist struggles, for instance, or in the daily rituals of home-making in new lands practiced by the migrant, memory's activities in the present belie the apparently simple, reified, and knowable past evoked by the call to remember" (ibid, p.3).

In line with this argument, memories can be activities, such as in the case of home making when shifting to new lands, and can also involve the transformation of the surrounding domestic environment. Actually, the process and ways of activated memory stress the important of helping the society to preserve their culture after the experience of transformation, with scholars like Halbwachs arguing that, "no society can develop without a historical consciousness, a collective memory of the past" (cited in Apfelbau, 2010, p.92). This perspective is valuable in helping understand the link to collective memory, as well as the complex underlying reasons for social behaviour. This theory argues that it is only possible to understand the past effectively in the context of "past events that interest us from the frameworks of collective memory" (Apfelbau, 2010, p.92).

It also significant to mention that this theoretical perspective stresses the protection of the accuracy of individual memories, while also considering the influence of collective memory on societies and memories as a whole (ibid, p.82). In examining the strong relationship between individual and collective memory, it is necessary to understand that each group has its own memory and exerts its own influence. Each group has a collective memory that defines meaning and importance in its particular context, as manifested through the specific history and customs of that group. Individual members of that group can then utilise its collective memory to frame and better understand their own identity. This is effectively a dialectic relationship in which personal histories and memories are moulded and evaluated by the wider context in which those individuals exist. It is through this process that memories acquire legitimacy or otherwise (ibid, p.85).

This study utilised collective memory as categories to examine the roles played by memory in the production of the museum building in the case study home. In doing this, my primary focus was to examine the specific role of memory in creating the museum

and the building in which it is housed, as well as to gain a better understanding of the potential function of collective memory as a force for cultural preservation. Individual memory in the context of this study is exemplified by the personal experiences of the museum's creator, Mrs. Munira. In this case, the curator has drawn upon her individual memories and interpretations to construct an image of the past through the artefacts displayed in the physical space of her museum, thereby contributing to the production of collective memory.

Although an individual will necessarily have a host of personal memories, the way in which these are recalled or expressed is often highly influenced by the given time, locations and communities in which that person lives (Crane, 2000, p.6). The concept of individual memory in the design of the museum building was linked to the memories of the curator, Mrs. Munira, especially regarding the traditional courtyard houses of her childhood neighbourhood. Here, individual memory serves as a strong reference in the processes of creating and designing the museum building, as has been reflected in the final design of the museum façade, the interior space and the entrance. "I drew upon my experience of living in the traditional domestic environment. My memories are strongly related to two regions of the kingdom, because I was born in the central region and I spent my childhood in the eastern region. The interior of the museum reflects the eastern region, while the façade of the museum is really a mixture of influences from both the central region and the eastern region" (Int.2, 29 July 2015). This was discussed at length in the first part of this chapter 6.1.1.

In examining the relationship between memory, identity and culture, some of the most important defining and identifying elements of any culture are artefacts. Many of the various aspects of cultural identity, such as the use and design of space, clothing, food, music or language, are intrinsically rooted in material culture, in the objects and symbolic artefacts of society (Schreiter, 1998, cited in Rodriguez et al., 2009, p.107). In the museum fieldwork, two types of identity were observed: national identity and individual identity. These identities are different, but can often closely linked together and overlap in complex ways. Tracing the expression of individual identity in this case study was complex, as it was an overlapping concept that was present in many areas of the research investigation. Perhaps most importantly, in the current context, is the identity related to Mrs. Munira, which can be viewed from a number of different perspectives. These describe the ways that she is related to her past and to the traditional environment, as part

of a wider collective identity. At the same time, it also refers to the qualities that differentiate and distinguish her from her present community.

Nevertheless, it is evident that Mrs. Munira's individual identity is expressed through her unique personality, which possesses all of the characteristics required to create and successfully practice museum making. Her identity can be strongly felt in each corner of the museum, through the way that she arranged and displayed items, especially through the links that she creates between objects. This was evident in each of the geographical sections of the museum, in which activities and events were presented in conjunction with the related artefacts, such as the bedroom furniture presented in her depiction of the central region wedding scene. This becomes more evident upon comparison with an official museum, as discussed in more detail in 6.5.1. In addition, her identity can also be recognised through the use of her imagination and creativity, which she uses to devise and tell stories that bring many of the displays to life. Finally, her identity is closely linked to the place where she was born, which is reflected in the façade design, and to the place where she has spent much of her adult life, which is reflected in the interior design of the museum.

However, in the museum case study it essential to clarify how other scholarly link the concept of memory to museum industry. For example, Ernst (2000) considers museums to be producers of memories, acting as archives of cultural knowledge and heritage, with all museums universally functioning to preserve individual and collective memory (Crane, 2000, p.4). Crane raises significant questions about the role of memory in museum making, examining the ways in which memories and museums affect and influence one another. In particular, this relationship is characterised by the role of museums in preservation, in which they seek to capture memories and present them in a clear, coherent manner, despite memories being intrinsically amorphous (ibid, p.1).

In the context of this case study, Mrs. Munira has collected, ordered and presented memories inside the physical space of a museum. In this way, she has used it much like a warehouse to store and incorporate the physical displays of scientific and cultural items that have been processed from memory and thought to manifest in a structured, tangible form that allows the collective memory to be shared (Crane, 2000, p.3). The memories in the museum are transmitted images from the mental frame of the museum creator, translated through display methods to depict the past life of traditional environments.

This study is predicated upon an understanding that collective memories are either material or immaterial. Material memory is represented through physical or 'tangible' objects that had a physical function, such as costumes, tools, and furniture. In contrast, immaterial memory is composed of 'intangible' ideas, such as social activities, position, or occupation, all of which is presented through scenes and characters. For example, the coffee corner, the henna night, and pearl collection scenes can all be considered as being representations of immaterial memory, while the compiled tools and accessories used in the presentation scenarios are tangible objects that convey material memories. In order to understand the effective role that collective memory performs in the preservation of culture, it is essential to highlight the way in which memory is often transmitted through stories or 'narrative'. "Memory is always the home of narrative" (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997, p.xx), playing a key role in this ancient and highly effective way to activate and shape thought, in order to create or shape human identities (Rodriguez, 2007, p.7). To comprehend Saudi culture, Mrs. Munira uses narratives to express the collective memory of each regional community in the Kingdom. These memories of Saudi culture are then interpreted and expressed to the museum visitors through the unique narrative storyline that she has composed. The role of collective memory functions to reflect both tangible and intangible heritage in this museum, serving as a strong example of cultural preservation through the recording of cultural practices for the next generation.

In fact, the museum in the case study exemplifies how individual identity has the ability to reflect a national identity, as shown through the presentation of the different regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia inside the borders of the museum. With regards to the role that it plays in presenting national identity, I argue that the museum effectively serves as an archive in which memories can be stored and which emphasises the importance of gathering and presenting culturally significant objects. This site houses a collection of objects that play an important role in creating the foundation of national and cultural identity, as well as furthering scientific knowledge and art, all of which come together to shape and inform the field of museology (Crane, 2000). The Saudi artefacts were stored, organised, and displayed inside the museum to reflect national identity according to the personal knowledge and perspective of the owner. The entire arrangement of the artefact collection combines to construct a portrait of national identity. However, Mrs. Munira then divides the bigger picture to shed light on the different regional identities of Saudi Arabia, in terms of their local customs, habits and traditions.

In summary, it is important to clarify that the museum space contains two types of collective identities: a national identity and a regional identity. Each of the five major regional or geographical community is represented in the museum (southern, northern, eastern, central, and western), which all combine to form the national Saudi identity. In this sense, the museum is a travelling space that transports the visitor to the different regions and earlier times, through a variety of scenes, characters, and objects.

6.3 Museum, home and culture

This section discusses the relationship between museums and homes, in the context of culture. During this discussion, I seek to highlight the similarities and key differences that exist between these two buildings with respect to cultural preservation. An explanation is also provided of the integration of the museum and home spaces in the case study through the practice of private museum making.

The word museum originates from the Greek word '*mouseion*'. However, it only took on its modern meaning, namely a place for the collection and exhibition of important objects, in the seventeenth century (Garwood, 2014). The word 'museum' can now be used as an umbrella term that is equally applicable to a wide variety of themes, including history, art, science, archaeology, and more (ibid). The dictionary definition of a museum is "a building in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are stored and exhibited" (Oxford Dictionary, 2016). This position is essentially supported by academics, who define museums as those buildings that exist for the protection, conservation and display of important artefacts and objects that have either artistic or cultural significance (Vergo, 1993, p.41). In addition to the role of ensuring the safety of valuable objects, museums also serve an important educational and entertainment function for the general public, who should be encouraged to participate in museum life (Garwood, 2014). Given the cultural focus of my thesis, it is also important to note that museums are buildings that house cultural heritage and therefore play a valuable, even essential role in preserving the collective memory and legacy of societies (Crane, 2000).

A museum should therefore be understood as a broad term for different types of buildings that exhibit artefacts. The specific focus of my study is a museum that presents cultural artefacts, otherwise known as an ethnographic museum. This type of museum can be thought of as "a representational strategies feature the ethnographic objects or artefacts of other cultures" (Lidchi, 1997, p.153), presenting the history of a people and reflecting

both tangible and intangible knowledge through a network of material culture. The presentation of cultural materials holds important significance for cultures, not merely in a historical sense, but also because the rapid transformation that has occurred and continues to progress across the modern world requires ethnographic museums to play a valuable role in historical education (Ter Keurs, 1999). There is even a school of thought that argues that a link can be established between the rise of ethnographic museums and the expansion of Western nations (Lidchi, 1997). In my case study, I have identified an overlap between the home as a network of material culture and the museum as a space that exists to present a network of ethnographic material. In essence, then, the home reflects identity, culture and tradition, whereas the museum preserves both individual and collective memory, identity, culture, and tradition.

As an extension of the home, the museum has added new dimensions to both the experience of the museum and the domestic environment. While the museum is open and welcoming to visitors, the home is still characterised by the high degree of privacy that is required by Saudi culture. In this study, I make note of the balance, and combination that exist between the practice of private museum making and the level of privacy that is implicitly and explicitly required in the Saudi domestic environment. My research illustrates how the home became part of the museum and, how conversely, the museum became part of the home. The case study shows how the two spaces (i.e. home and museum) have influenced and integrated with one another under the perspective of cultural preservation. For example, the physical form of the museum, both in terms of the external façade and the interior design, has adopted the characteristics of the traditional domestic environment, with the home having become a display place, modified to facilitate the function of the museum. In addition, both spaces have influenced their users, in terms of their social interactions. The location of the museum in a private home inherently influences the times that are available for members of the public to visit it, while residents of the home also experience different forms of social interaction with museum visitors as a result of its location.

During the data collection phase of my fieldwork, I asked Mrs. Munira about the location of the museum inside her house and whether this conflicted with the needs for privacy inside a Saudi home. She responded, "The museum is not strictly public, as it is only accessible by appointment. That allows me to manage visiting times and ensure that the privacy of my family is respected. I do not give any visitors an appointment without my calendar book, so I can decide what is a suitable time before confirming any visits" (Int.2,

29 July 2015). In addition, I found that the family home constitutes an important part of the museum visit, because visitors must enter the home before reaching the back garden, where the museum is located. In this way, Mrs. Munira guides the museum visitors through a four-stage tour of the house, introducing the reception hall, the Arabic *majlis*, the living room and the floor sitting *majlis* (Fig. 6.39).
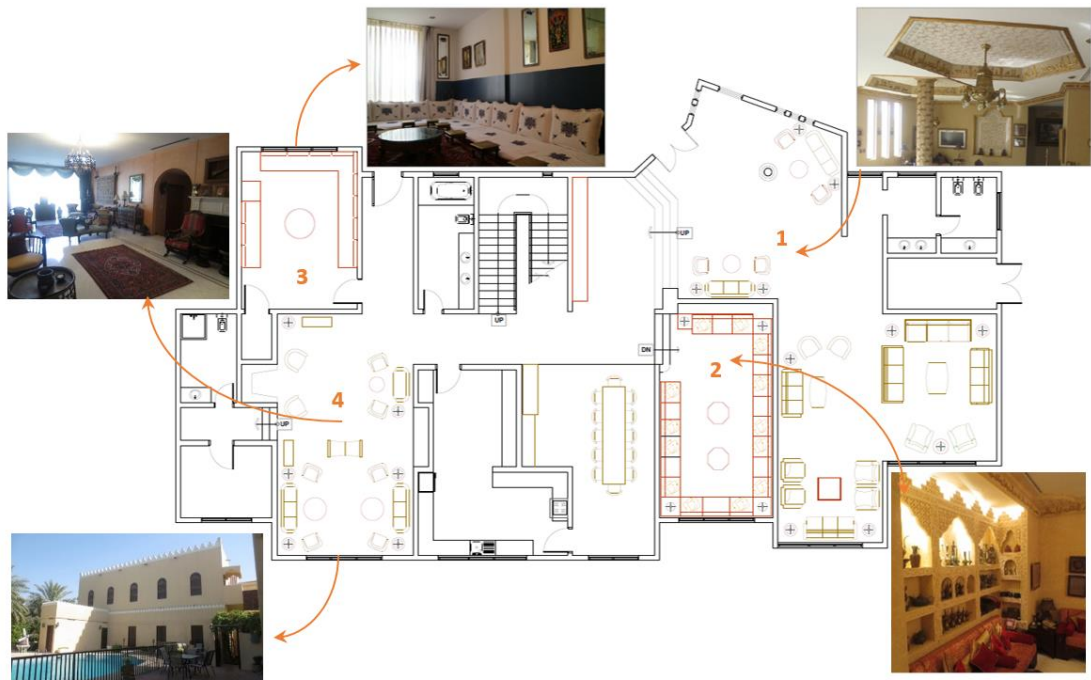
Fig. 6.39: The four spaces inside the home a Museum visitor's is introduce to.
Al-Jamea M.2017

When a visitor enters the home, the first area through which they pass is the reception hall. This area conveys a luxurious, beautifully appointed, and religious atmosphere. The interior design of the reception, as the entrance to the home, projects the most significant identity that Mrs. Munira seeks to express to her visitors. Each visitor is then exposed to the traditional Saudi identity through the atmosphere of the second space, which is the guest sitting room *majlis*. In this space, the visitors are welcomed to drink coffee and eat dates while they are provided with an explanation of Saudi hospitality rules. The role of hospitality in Saudi tradition is explained to all visitors by the curator, Mrs. Munira. For example, she tells guests that the coffee pot (*dalla)* must be held in the left hand, and the coffee cup (*fanajeel)* in the right hand, which shows respect to the guest. Then, the actual serving of coffee must begin with the people sitting on the right side, unless there is an older person, who must be served first.

She also explains that when the coffee cup (*fanajeel*) is served, it must be less than half full, which is intended to allow the guest to enjoy the generosity of the host by drinking as many cups as possible. In the Bedouin tradition, a cup that is full of coffee may be interpreted as an insult, leading the guest to throw the cup away. Mrs. Munira insists on explaining this custom before she serves the coffee, as one of her early American guests said "I like it" when she saw the small amount of coffee in the cup. This comment was a response to her different cultural expectations, which led her to presume that her host only wanted her to try the coffee because the cup was not full. In response, Mrs. Munira told her, "Whether you like it or not, this is the way to serve coffee" (Int.2, 29 July 2015).

After that, visitors enter a cosy room with a U-shaped arrangement of seating on the floor. The area was designed to reflect the typical atmosphere of a traditional *majlis* in courtyard houses. The living room is the fourth stage of the house tour and reflects a multicultural environment that clearly shows Mrs. Munira's cosmopolitan identity, expressed through the displays of artefacts that she has accumulated from her travels in countries around the world.

An important concern was raised about the four-stage tour and its relationship to the museum during the presentation of this case study, entitled *Cultural Resilience: A Museum in a Home Environment*, which I presented at the 2015 *Reading Architecture across the Art and Humanities* conference in the University of Stirling. The question concerns how the four-stage tour conveys knowledge about the museum to its visitors. I interpret this tour as comprising highly valuable introductory information about the

museum's curator, which is given to the visitor inside the home before the museum is entered. The reception hall clearly identifies Mrs. Munira as a devout Muslim, while the *majlis* tell visitors about her attitude towards Saudi traditions. The living room shows that she is a cosmopolitan person, whereas her sense of belonging to the Eastern Province is reflected in the typical traditional *majlis* that she has situated next to the living room. This shows that, in a very real sense, the organisation of the home and the museum reflects the character and experiences of the mother of the family that lives there.

At the end of the museum tour, visitors write a message in the visitor book, in order to express their gratitude to Mrs. Munira for her hospitality (Fig 6.40). Some of the comments illustrate that the manner in which Mrs. Munira conveys her cultural knowledge to the visitors constitutes an example of cultural teaching that has developed alongside the practice of museum making.
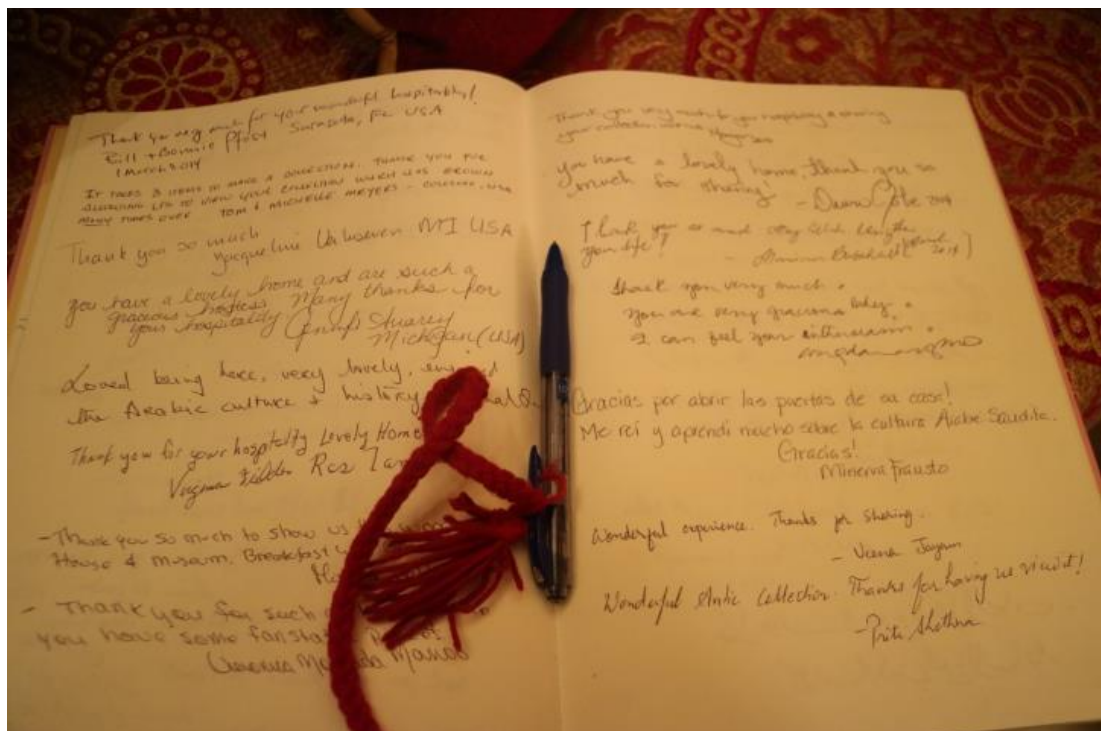
Fig. 6.40: The museum's visitor book, with the words of thanks.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2017)

6.4. Private museum making and the development of new forms of cultural practices

The findings of the investigation show that a museum is more than a physical building for the storage, display and organisation of artefacts to preserve Saudi culture. It also creates new forms of cultural practice. In this case study, I explore the relationship between social change and museum creation, as well as the role of museums in causing social change. It is important to note that the transformation in the traditional domestic environment and social change has the capacity to generate motivation for cultural preservation, such as in the creation of a museum. Conversely, the museum has then created social change in the life of its creator and produces new forms of cultural practice, as will be explained in detail in this section.

Several important questions will be tackled in this section: how did the practice of the museum in one location extend, evolve and develop to produce new forms of practice outside its boundaries? How did the functions of this museum, as a space to safeguard objects, add new dimensions to the lives of the residents? And, how did these functions establish different patterns of cultural practice? The fieldwork findings indicate that two major outcomes emerged from the creation of the museum: the opportunity for high-level participation in international exhibitions and the creation, or development, of a new social network. Mrs. Munira is very active in her community, being a member of different organisations and participating in many charity events. However, the museum practice has given her a new form of social networking, based upon the attraction of a wide variety of visitors, who visit due to their interest in Saudi material culture.

The visitors to the museum have varied greatly in terms of age, position, and nationality. For example, Mrs. Munira receives visitors from schools, university students, and embassy guests from many different parts of the world. When asked about how prospective visitors learn about her museum, Mrs. Munira explained that the typical channels are, "through the company employees, from the embassy and also from other visitors, who tell their friends and acquaintances about their visit to my museum" (Int.2, 29 July 2015).

Many newspaper articles have also been written about the museum by journalists who have visited. In the image below, several different newspaper articles have been collected, all of which deal with the topic of Mrs. Munira and her private museum (Fig. 6.41). In a newspaper article entitled *Saudi female transforms her home to a national museum* (Al-

sharq, 2012), an image shows Mrs. Munira and the first two items in her collection. Other articles that have featured her museum include, *Saudi female turned her home into a museum visited by ambassadors and has rare pieces over 150 years old* (al-Arabiya, 2012) and *A Saudi woman turned her house into a museum to preserve her country's heritage* (Alhayat, 2015). With the media and visitors interest in Mrs. Munira's private museum, a significant matter was recently discussed about the significance of artefacts to Saudi society. On this topic, Mrs. Munira clarified that she had observed, "Society has recently started to value artefacts more. Even if it is late, we can say it is never too late" (Int.2, 29 July 2015).

Mrs. Munira enjoys welcoming people in her house and showing Saudi generosity to guests through her complimentary hospitality. This new form of social networking grants her the ability to practice cultural teaching,[39] by passing her personal knowledge about Saudi culture onto visitors. Indeed, I have witnessed that she spends hours explaining and answering questions in an effort to convey the tangible and intangible heritage of Saudi Arabia to her guests.

This positivity and expertise has resulted in Mrs. Munira being closely involved in many local exhibitions. However, the practice of collecting, displaying and organising traditional artefacts has extended her cultural network beyond the borders of the Kingdom. Because of her fluent English and her passion for disseminating information about traditional Saudi culture, she has been able to convey her knowledge about the rich Saudi culture in international exhibitions in a number of countries, including Singapore, Austria, Azerbaijan, Norway, Spain, and the Netherlands.

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[39] Typically, educational trips undertaken by schools in the Eastern Province will focus on the oil industry or technology. Popular destinations include the *Saudi Aramco Energy Exhibition* located in Dharan, which focuses on the cultural and historical aspects of the oil industry. King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals runs another popular centre, *Scitech,* which is located in Al Khobar and focuses on the principles of science and technical innovations. The *King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture* was also recently finished in Dhahran by the Aramco Company. Although this centre incorporates a museum, it has not yet opened to the public. Finally, Dammam Regional Museum is due to open in mid-2018. However, through the collaboration with some local schools (but not public), visits to this private museum have been plays a crucial role in instruction, through to provide culture education.

Fig. 6.41: Mrs. Munira Al-Ashgar's museum highlighted by several journalists and newspapers.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2017)

During my field work, my attention was caught by an old black and white photograph that was hung on the mirror of the cupboard in the central section of the museum (Fig. 6.42). The photograph was recently published in Alhayat newspaper, in the article *In order to preserve the heritage of her country Saudi woman turned her house to 'Museum'* (Alhayat, 2015). The photograph shows Mrs. Munira at an exhibition in the Netherlands with Prince Bernhard, the husband of the Queen of the Netherlands, in front of the Saudi section, where he is tasting traditional food. In this picture, Mrs. Munira is wearing an embroidered dress, from the south part of the Kingdom Asir, along with silver jewellery around her head and neck. The traditional outfit signifies that Mrs. Munira has an ongoing commitment to cultural preservation and illustrates how she even reflects her Saudi identity through her dress. This photograph clearly demonstrates how the museum and practice of cultural preservation has enabled Mrs. Munira to move in international circles and the media that may otherwise have been impossible.

Fig. 6.42: The photograph showing Mrs. Munira at an exhibition in the Netherland with His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard in 1981 (Alhayat, 2015).

In 2006, Mrs. Munira participated in an international exhibition in Singapore, entitled *"Saudi Aramco: Heritage, aspiration and innovation"*, aiming to augment and enrich the cultural dimension of the relationship between the two countries, which has classically been a focused business relationship. A copy of the Alriyadh newspaper shows Mrs. Munira explaining Saudi cultural traditions to the Singaporean minister and his guest (Fig. 6.43). The Saudi section in the exhibition included a number of items from her museum collection, such as jewellery and artefacts that represented customs from different parts of the kingdom. Mrs. Munira wore a traditional Saudi costume, called a *thawb*, made of silk embroidered with golden threads (for more information about the *thawb*, see section 6.1.2.4). Her hairstyle was styled to exactly replicate the styles of traditional Saudi women and was then covered with a lightweight black scarf.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list and discussion of the number of engagements that Mrs. Munira has attended inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. However, it is significant to note that she has become an active participant in official cultural networks because of her personal endeavours in preserving culture and educating others about Saudi traditions. On the other hand, her individual identity was expressed in the way that she receives and welcomes museum visitors into her home, providing information whilst wearing a traditional costume and making them feel welcome. Her charisma, outlook, voice and personality are all facets of her unique individual identity, which serves as an inspiration to also express the collective identity.

Mrs. Munira's elevated awareness of the significance of cultural preservation drives her to enthusiastically collect historical artefacts, which she then preserves inside her home. She has invested a portion of her private land to create the museum, and uses her personal finances, time, and effort to deliver her message and to enable visitors to explore Saudi culture, free of charge with her complimentary hospitality. This research offers a fresh perspective and insight into her role as a female social influencer. In so doing, my research presents an example of the role played by a Saudi woman in changing and shaping a home environment, as well as how this individual effort can present a national identity in an exceptional manner.

Fig. 6.43: **Munira Al-Ashgar** at an international exhibition in Singapore in 2006 (Alriyadh, 2006)

6.5 Museum & the home in the context of the Eastern Province

In my field work, three separate site visits were undertaken to museums in the Eastern Province. My goal in undertaking these visits was to conduct a thorough examination of home museums in the area and to classify my findings in accordance with clear, real world examples. This experience also offered me the opportunity to compare museum types from my fieldwork data, in terms of their creators (especially in terms of gender and the comparison between museums run by the government or private individuals), artefact displays, and presentation methods.

The first museum visited in the fieldwork was *Bayt Al-Baiah Museum,* which is situated in Hofuf area in Al-Ahsa, In keeping with the meaning of the word '*bayt',* which means 'home' in Arabic, *Bayt Al-Baiah* is a home that has been transformed into a museum building. The other two museums, which are actually the focus of this study, are examples of the creation of private museums inside an inhabited home. I opted to visit two private museums of this latter type, because one of the locations was created by a male (*Al-Naathil's Museum,* in Hofuf city) while the other was created by a female (*the case study museum,* in Dhahran city). This decision was made to give me an opportunity to examine the effect that the gender of a creator can have on the type of material culture and the way it is presented inside a museum space.

- Bayt Al-Baiah Museum (Hofuf)
- Al- Naathil's Museum (Hofuf)
- The case study museum (Dhahran city)

6.5.1. Bayt Al-Baiah Museum

The *Bayt Al-Baiah Museum* is located in the traditional Al-Kut neighbourhood. It was originally built in 1788 for Bin Omer Al-Mullah, who was responsible for the administration of justice in Al-Ahsa (Saudi Tourism, 2016). The house became state property after being purchased from its owners. It later became one of the most important historical tourism sites in the Eastern Province. The key historical significance of the house being preserved is that King Abdul Aziz, the monarch who united the Kingdom of Saudi, was a guest in this house. Even more importantly, the night that he stayed as a guest in this house was the same night that he was recognised as the King by the residents of Al -Ahsa.

Images and fieldwork to describe *Bayt Al-Baiah Museum* were presented in chapter three of this thesis, in the section on the history of the domestic environment of the Eastern Province, prior to the discovery of oil (see section 3.3.2). The museum is under the auspice of the SCTH, which provides all necessary financial, maintenance, security, and technical support for the operation of the museum. During the renovation process that was undertaken to provide tourist facilities inside the courtyard house, bathrooms spaces were installed for the museum's visitors. At this time, the ground floor was also paved with tiles (see Fig. 6.44) and lighting was added.

Both the display of artefacts and the presentation techniques are also chosen by the institution. Objects are displayed at a carefully measured distance from one another, which allows a visitor to examine them individually. Each artefact is also described by a written text that explains its name and use (Fig. 6.45). The museum provides an excellent example of the structure, organisation and decoration of courtyard houses in Hofuf. The building also illustrates the typical design of traditional *majlis* and the coffee corner shelf (*kamar*), the style of arches that were common in traditional eastern province architecture, and the grand ornamentation technique (Fig. 6.46) (for more detail, see images presented in section 3.3.2).

The most significant of the observations that were made at the beginning of the visits have been mentioned earlier in this thesis, with regards to the display of several advertising brochures that are published by the SCTH (Fig. 6.47). One of these brochures is entitled *The Private Museum in Al-Ahsa* and contains a number of excellent photos of the museums, in addition to their locations and the names and contact numbers of their owners (see Appendix B). This is shown in the following section, with the example of Al-Naathil museum. According to SCTH data, a total of 17 private museums are currently registered in the Eastern Province, with 12 of these being located in the Al-Ahsa area alone. The increased individual efforts in the field of cultural preservation in this area were noted during my fieldwork, raising the potential importance of the cultural significance of the practice of private museum making in Saudi Arabia.

Fig. 6.44: Tiles on the floor of courtyard

Fig. 6.45: Written text on labels in front of the artefacts

Fig. 6.46: Substantial ornamentation all around the door of the entrance room where King Abdul Aziz spent the night

Fig. 6.47: Private museum advertising brochures

6.5.2 Al- Naathil's private home museum

The second museum I visited was the *Al- Naathil* museum, an example of a private museum in the Eastern Province. This museum is situated in a contemporary neighbourhood in Hofuf city and carries both the name and façade design of the classic courtyard houses of the traditional *Al-Naathil* neighbourhood of that city. In chapter three, the fieldwork site visits provide images and information about the remnants of the demolished *Al- Naathil* traditional neighbourhood (see section 3.3.1).

Due to the rapid housing development that took place in Saudi Arabia in the wake of the dramatic improvement in the Kingdom's economic condition following the discovery of oil, people migrated from the old town of Hofuf to live in the new suburbs in the city. The effect of this is that a completely different environment has replaced the traditional domestic environment. Many of the traditional architectural features of Hofuf also largely disappeared with the introduction of new construction materials and methods.

In one of the new neighbourhoods in Hofuf area, Al-Mazrooa, I found a traditional house façade in the middle of the façades of contemporary villas (Fig.6.48). This exterior marked the *Al- Naathil Museum*, a building that reflects traditional architectural features of the Eastern province. The façade of the museum was designed in exactly the same manner as the Hofuf traditional courtyard houses, with an overall rectangular structure, characterised by arched windows, and an original wooden gate.

The museum is owned by Sheikh Al-Majid, who spent his childhood in the *Al- Naathil* traditional neighbourhood. Sheikh Al-Majid has allocated 380 square metres of his private residential land in order to build a museum next to his villa. The museum has its own separate entrance, with a sign atop the gate displaying the name of the museum and its owner, to help visitors more easily identify the building (Fig.6.49). My visit was arranged with Sheikh Al-Majid by Mr Al-Kuwaiti, the guide from the SCTH.

Fig. 6.48: Al-Naathil Museum's traditional façade existed in the middle of the contemporary villa's façade.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2016)

Fig. 6.49: The main door of the museum, with a sign that denotes the name of
the museum, the name of its owner, and the year in which it was opened.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2016)

The interior of the museum included a *majlis* (guest room) and a long corridor with different spaces divided into corners. The first area to be viewed was the *majlis* with the coffee corner. The design of this space was similar to the traditional *majlis* in Hofuf courtyard houses, comprising key features such as the u-shaped sitting area, characteristic decoration of the arches, and built-in shelves (see Fig.6.50, 6.51, and 6.52). Although in the museum, the *majlis* is densely furnished with a large number of objects and artefacts on display. Despite the relatively limited space of the traditional *majlis* in the museum, many of the home visitors apparently choose to drink coffee there, rather than in the home *majlis*. Sheikh Al-Majid (2016) stated that he also feels a sense of relaxation when he enters the museum *majlis* and claims that the atmosphere makes him feel less stressed. After the *majlis,* Sheikh Al-Majid created a number of different corners, each of which displays a traditional craft and the associated tools. These corners include crafts and trades, such as farming, carpentry, and pottery (Fig.6.53). It is interesting to note that, as Sheikh Al-Majid is a man, his museum seems to have focused more on displaying memories that relate to the outdoor spaces of the neighbourhood, such as the market place and the school area.

Since childhood, Sheikh Al-Majid has collected objects and artefacts, without realising that the scenes around him would become part of history. His memories and past experiences have played an important part in creating the museum, from its name to the details of the traditional construction techniques and finishing materials he has utilised. During the visit, Sheikh Al-Majid showed me his sketchbook, which included his drawings and ideas about the domestic environment, which he had translated into the physical space of the museum (Fig.6.54). Sheikh Al-Majid called the museum *Al-Naathil* so that it would carry the same name as the traditional neighbourhood in which he lived as a child. He also wanted to document the form and construction style utilised in traditional houses after they had disappeared, largely due to the effects of urbanisation, with local people changing their homes and lifestyles. His knowledge of local culture is clear, with his positioning of the coffee area at the entrance to the museum showing his recognition of the significance of the guest hospitality practice in Saudi culture.

This site visit provided important examples of a new cultural preservation form in a domestic environment. It also gave me an example of how a male resident has been able to generate meaning in his current domestic environment in order to reflect his past memories, culture and identity. The museum creator, Sheikh Al-Majid, has translated his perception of the tangible and intangible heritage of the local region into the museum

building in a contemporary neighbourhood[40]. This feat is ample evidence of the culturally resilient manner that can be produced by cultural preservation and as a result of the impact of the transformation of the traditional domestic environment. In other words, this creation demonstrates positive adaptation and adjustment.

Fig. 6.50: Arches in the design of the *majlis*

Fig. 6.51: The coffee corner in the museum

Fig. 6.52: Sheikh Al-Majid in his private museum

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[40] As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in discussions of the role of private museums in cultural education (see section 6.3), most curators of private museums focus cultural preservation to a greater or lesser degree. It is likely that this is because the practice has sprung from the same resilient impulses after the oil transformation, as well as the establishment of museum culture, which is considered a new direction in the Kingdom. More clarification of this point is provided in sections 6.5 and 6.6.

Fig. 6.53: the display of a traditional Hofuf craft in the corners of the museum
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2016)
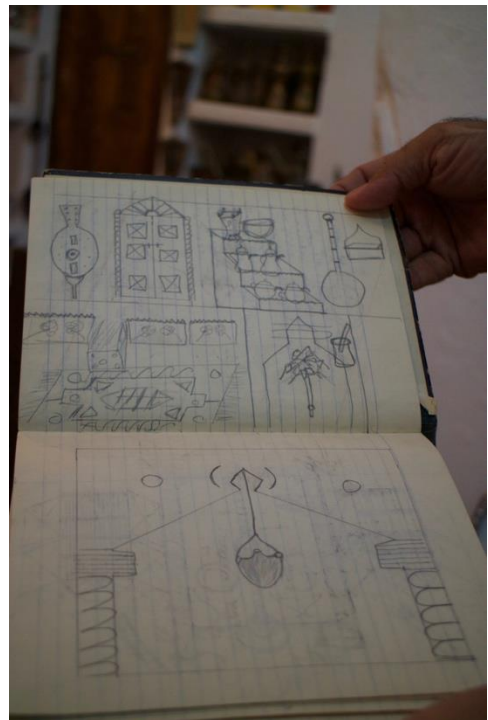
Fig. 6.54: Sheikh Al-Majid's sketchbook, which include his drawings and ideas from his memories.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2016)

At the end of the visit, I made another fieldwork note on the several advertising brochures published by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage given to me by Sheikh Al Majid. One of the brochures detailed the previously mentioned museum *Bayt Al-Baiah,* suggesting that both types of museum are effectively marketing for one another (see Appendix B). The third museum is in the case study home, as examined in the beginning of this chapter, with its exploration of the roles of identity, memory, creativity and cultural practice in the production of a museum

After the completion of the field work phase, I classified these kinds of museums in homes into two main types: ones in which the preserved home has been transformed into a museum for a specific reason; and ones in which a private museum has been created inside the home. As illustrated below (Table 6.1), a comparison has been made between the two types of museum studied in my thesis. Overall, this section has highlighted examples of home museum buildings that currently exist in the Eastern Province in order to show how different perspectives and approaches can be followed in presenting culture in museums operated within the domestic environment. The comparison of these types of museum can be seen below:

	Type 1 Preserved Museum	Type 2 Private Museum
Home	Uninhabited	Inhabited
Creator	Institution	Individual
Artefact and spaces	Complete / Static	Growing / Dynamic
Presentation	Clear presentation	Compact Presentation
Display Impression	Professional / neat	Authentic / organic
Tour programme	Ordinary	Creative
Description	Text material	Story line

Table 6.1: Differences between type 1 and type 2 museums.
(Source: May Al-Jamea, 2017)

6.6 PMM Private museum movement and its role in Saudi cultural preservation

In the case study undertaken as part of my field work, I found that the practice of museum making in the case study house was not an isolated case in the Eastern Province. Instead, it comprises a single example of a new phenomenon that is currently emerging all around the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in line with the capability of individuals in Saudi society. In this thesis, this trend is termed the Private Museum Movement (PMM).

Despite the relatively high price of land and the growing cost of construction materials, some individuals in Saudi society have invested their private resources in the creation and maintenance of museums. In most cases, this involves them spending their savings on the collection, preservation, and display of traditional artefacts. Equally importantly, they give their time to receive visitors to experience and learn about Saudi culture, almost always without charging a fee and with complimentary hospitality. In fact, apart from the capacities and preferences of the owner, there are no limits to what can be considered to be a museum in a Saudi home: a museum might comprise anything from a single room to a multi-space, multi-storey building.

The cultural significance and historical heritage values of artefactual collections in private museum in Saudi Arabia are recognised and prized by the SCTH, who highly value the role played by individuals in the maintenance of national culture. Dr. Faisal Al-Sharif, the SCTH director general in the city of Makkah, has stated that private museums should be considered to be unique and valuable, in the sense that they symbolise a genuine national treasure that can be passed down into the future, for many generations to come (Arab News, 2016).

In 2011, the first forum for private museum owners in the city of Al-Riyadh was opened by the president of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH), His Royal Highness, Prince Sultan Bin Salman Al-Saud. This forum recommended a long-term vision and put forward a proposal to organise a meeting for the owners of the private museum, which will be held in a different city every two years. In 2013, the forum was held in Al Medinah Al-Munawwarah, in the Western Region of the Kingdom, and the most recent forum took place in 2015, in the Al-Ahsa area of the Eastern Province. The number of licensed private museums has since increased from 132 (2015) to 160 (2016), the majority of which are located in the private homes of their owners, according to Dr. Awad Al-Zhrani, the general manager of museums at the Saudi Commission for

Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH, 2016). The distribution of private museums according to their geographic location is clearly skewed, as is evident in the data (see Table 6.2, and Fig. 6.53), which was translated from the data of the third private museum forum report in 2015. It is important to note that the vast majority of the registered museums are owned and curated by men, with only four being owned and run by women[41] (SCTH, 2016). However, this number only represents those museums that have been officially registered with the SCTH. It is entirely possible that there are significant numbers of private museums that have not been officially registered, with recent estimates placing the number of private museum and collections around the Kingdom as high as 500 museums (Okaz, 2017).

Number of Private Museum	Location in Saudi Arabia
24	Riyadh
15	Mecca
9	AL Madina AL Munawarah
8	AL Qassim
17	Eastern Region
33	Asir
2	Tabuk
9	Hail
3	Northern Frontier
1	Najran
7	AL Jawf
1	Jazan
3	AL Baha

Table 6.2: The number, location of private museums in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

(Adapted from: SCTH, 2015)

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[41] Regarding this relatively limited proportion of female museum ownership, it is important to note the abundance of cultural obstacles and familial duties hindering the involvement of women. Nevertheless, some Saudi women are challenging the current situation and overcoming these extant challenges to collect and display artefacts. In this way, they are proving that they are active and important part of the new PMM movement and that they can play an equally valid role in the practice of museum making.
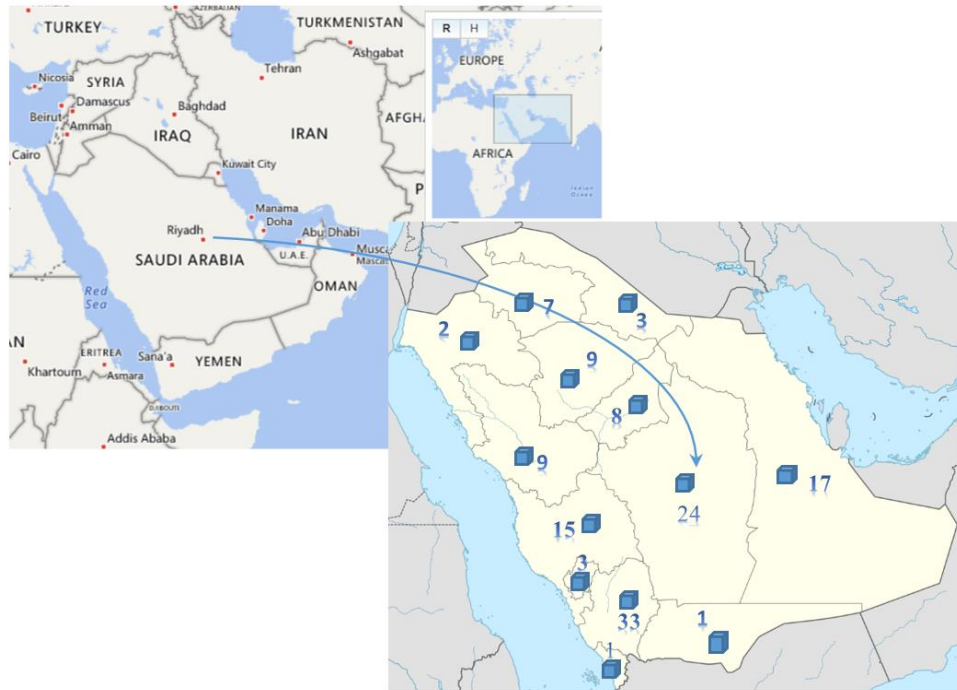
Fig. 6.53: The geographical location and number of private museums in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, according to 2015 data[42].

Tracing where private museums exist within different parts of Saudi Arabia enables a comparison to be made regarding the scale of private museums, according to the geographical location in which they are situated. For example, Table 6.2 shows that 33 private museums in Saudi Arabia can be found in Asir, the southern region, with a further 24 private museums being situated in Riyadh, the capital city. Further research can be conducted into the high degree of individual effort being undertaken in ensuring the continuation of cultural preservation in these two particular areas. The Eastern Province has a total of 17 registered private museums, 12 of which are located in the Al-Ahsa area. The increased impact and effort invested into cultural preservation by individuals in Al-Ahsa area has raised significant concerns regarding the potential ramifications and challenges of the practice of PPM in this location.

The similarities between the different cases of PMM across the Kingdom may be the key reason behind this act of cultural preservation. However, there still seems to be a high degree of diversity in the actual approach taken to museum making. These differences

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[42] Source of the map: (National Geographic, 2017); source of data (SCTH, 2015).

can be attributed to numerous factors, including the geographical location, personality, background and capability of the individuals undertaking the task of museum making. In addition, those parties are likely to have different types of past memories and experiences, often profoundly so, which will invariably be translated in their own unique form of representation inside their personal private home museums.

In the current research, I have presented two important examples of private museums that are being operated in the Eastern Province. These examples have illustrated that the male approach to the practice of museum making, at least in these cases, seems to be focused more on the preservation of outdoor memories, activities and traditional crafts, as was observed in the example of the Al-Naathil museum. In contrast, the female practice of museum making was more concerned with indoor spaces, costumes, and intangible events, as seen in the example of the museum in the case study home. However, both museums have placed a heavy emphasis on the significance of the coffee area, situating it as the first location to be visited and viewed in the museum. Additionally, both museum owners have created a façade design that reflects traditional architectural elements from their childhood neighbourhoods and both installed an original gate door on it. The appearance and spread of the practice of museum making as a phenomenon in Saudi society has also given a new social status to its owners, with many of the owners naming their museum after their family name or childhood neighbourhood, as can be seen in the previous example of the Al-Naathil Museum. Indeed, the cultural significance of the new phenomenon of PMM is the involvement of individuals in cultural preservation.

6.7 PMM and its place in Saudi heritage and the national tourism policy

This research also examined the relationship between the emergence of domestic private museums and the shift in government policy on heritage conservation to support tourism industry. In broad terms, heritage denotes the physical artefacts and inherited, intangible, dynamic characteristics that define the culture and collective memory of a group. Heritage evokes a sense of identity and belonging in individuals and therefore fosters social cohesion (UNESCO, 2005; Howard and Graham, 2008, p.4). The definition of heritage in the present context is based upon, "a constructionist perspective which regards the concept as referring to the ways in which very selective past material artefacts, natural landscapes, mythologies, memories and traditions become cultural, political and economic resources for the present" (Howard and Graham, 2008, p.2). The role that heritage can play in national identity and community development, and history is

sometimes controversial (Kim and Kim, 2009, p59), although heritage is not simply confined to discussions of identity, due to the increasing relevance of this concept in cultural tourism (Timothy and Boyd, 2003; Schröder-Esch, 2006; Howard and Graham, 2008, p.6).

The important role of heritage in tourism has been widely recognised. The heritage policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia discussed below seeks to bolster intentional tourism industry aims, as well as to reflect its unique national identity. A recent dissertation by Al-Rawaf (2016) entitled *Building a Museum Culture in Saudi Arabia: Where are we and what needs to be done* examines the possible avenues through which the relationship between museums and society could be developed in order to increase their relevance and effect in cultural industry. Al-Rawaf (2016) also highlighted the late interest in museum industry supported by Michael Rice and Co (1980) argument, with Saudi Arabia opening its first national museum 67 years after gaining independence, unlike the majority of the GCC countries, which opened national museums immediately after they were founded (Al-Rawaf, 2016, p.4).[43] This reflects a shift in heritage conservation policies in the Kingdom over the last forty years (Bagader, 2016).

The adoption of pro-heritage policies have enabled Saudi Arabia to move from a situation in which many ancient, valued sites were in a state of disrepair and "neglect during the 1970s to nominations in recent years for the inclusion of several sites on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) list" (Bagader, 2016, p.23). This shift in official policy reflects from a focus on the preservation of national culture and identity to the use of heritage in the development of the Saudi tourism sector (ibid). This shift in national discourse was clearly illustrated when the government sector responsible for heritage conservation was renamed to include the term tourism in its title in 2008, when the SCT was replaced by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA). This department has modified the direction of built heritage conservation to incorporate a focus on the role that built heritage sites can play in tourism (Bagader, 2016, p.90).

During this investigation, important evidence on the emergence of widespread museum building in Saudi Arabia can be considered as a highly relevant context for research into changing national discourse on heritage. Three years later after the first forum for private museum owners was opened in Al-Riyadh in 2011, an official announcement regarding

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[43] "Museums were first established in Saudi Arabia in 1976. The Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography was opened in Riyadh with the purpose of "encouraging the scientific examination of the country's past" (Rice and Co, 1980). Later in the 1970s, The Ministry of Education established six other museums of archaeology and ethnography in six different cities across the Kingdom" (Al-Rawaf, 2016, p.4).

Saudi boom in museum building was made by HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud at a conference held in Oxford in April 2014. Extensive discussion can be found of this topic in public news, with examples of published news of Saudi boom in museum appearing in the following articles: *The kingdom to spend $1.7bn on building 230 museums* (Fig. 6.54) and *The Hidden News behind the Saudi Museum Boom* (Fig. 6.55).

Fig. 6.54: The kingdom to spend $1.7bn on building 230 museums

Source: http://old.theartnewspaper.com/articles/The-Kingdom-to-spend-bn-on-building--museums/32466

Fig. 6.55: The Hidden News behind the Saudi Museum Boom
(Source: Dobrzynski, 2014)

The recent Saudi boom in museum building can be interpreted as evidence that links have been established between the emergence of domestic museum formation in Saudi Arabia and changes in the national discourse on heritage. However, it should be noted that the PMM private museum movement started before the boom in museum building in Saudi Arabia, although these private museums have quickly become part of the Saudi vision for the development of the national tourism industry.

This integration into the tourism market has been supported by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH), which defines these types of museums as those "that are owned by non-governmental sectors or private individuals in the society" (SCTH, 2016). As part of its mission to increase tourism and support the cultural industry of the Kingdom, the SCTH supports the conditions and presentation of all private museums, as well as guaranteeing the safety of both museums and visitors, in order to better prepare the museums for marketing and operation (2016, SCTH). It also encourages the registration of private museums, according to the official SCTH classification policy.

The institution offers an abundance of financial support, technical support and training programmes in line with its classification policy. Nevertheless, according to SCTH regulations, private museum owners must meet the private museum license requirements in order to qualify for an official license and to be able to register with SCTH (see Appendix A). The purpose of the SCTH licensing requirements is to help to document the valuable artefacts in private hands, as well as to raise the standards of the private museum industry. For example, the tenth requirement stipulates that the museum owner must attend a training programme to prepare them with the professional skills required to operate effectively in the museum field. As shown in the ninth requirement, the SCTH also seeks to make the museum experience clearer and more educational, by supporting private museum owners in displaying their artefacts clearly, such as through the provision of written information with labels and text material under each artefact. Additionally, museum owners are required to obtain a civil defence license, in order to insure the safety and security of the museum and its visitors.

A recent article (Fig. 6.56) in Arab News (2016) claims that in recognition of the potential for private museums to make a meaningful contribution towards tourism and the national economy, the SCTH is attempting to help owners raise the historical and cultural values of their projects by making them more productive. The article presented a set of future strategies regarding the achievement of private museum's productivity objectives, which

involve planning events and the use of techniques that create links with cultural or historic programmes, including traditional crafts or family activities (Arab News, 2016). In 2015, as part of their appreciation for the crucial role that private museums are playing in cultural preservation, the SCTH honoured ten private museum owners at an award ceremony held at the Riyadh international convention and exhibition centre (Fig. 6.57).

SCTH vice president for antiquities and museums, Hussain Abu Al-Hassan, paid tribute to the efforts undertaken by these individuals in providing cultural services and committed to the continued support and encouragement of the Saudi government in this endeavour. The criteria for honouring these museum owners was centred around the role that they play in constantly receiving visitors and educating them on a wide range of Saudi culture and traditions. The consequence of their actions is that the international community can easily see and appreciate the identity and historical legacy of Saudi Arabia and its various provinces (Arab News, 2015).

The goal of the SCTH is not only to encourage and support private museum owners, but also to create a degree of competition between them, encouraging these talented individuals to reach the highest standards. In this way, they seek to push these entrepreneurial and creative individuals to move forward in a way that supports the vision of the SCTH and enhances the tourism sector. This commitment to cultural preservation should also be acknowledged with respect to the current project, as the SCTH was the only resource from which to obtain information, reports and statistics about private museums across the Kingdom. The officials were extremely accommodating and compliant in providing the required data to support this research.

In summary, this section has demonstrated that the national debate on collective memory, national identity and heritage are potentially valuable in discussions of the formation of domestic museums in Saudi Arabia and the contribution of these private museums to tourism.

SAUDI ARABIA

Govt aims private museums for tourism, national economy

ARAB NEWS | Published — Sunday 26 June 2016

SPREADING VALUES: Al-Zaher Palace Museum in Makkah.

Fig. 6.56: Recognition of the potential for private museums to make a meaningful contribution towards tourism and the national economy

Source: http://www.arabnews.com/node/945096/saudi-arabia

Fig. 6.57: SCTH honoured private museum owners

Source: http://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/714866

Conclusion

This chapter has provided strong evidence for the existence and operation of cultural resilience, as evidenced through cultural preservation, in the form of museum making by individuals in Saudi society. This chapter discusses the unexpected outcomes that can arise from the positive adaptation of the domestic environment. The primary example of this is the development and extension of the Saudi cultural identity beyond mere home modification, interior decorations or artefact placement. The tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Saudi Arabia was reflected in this case study in the creation of a museum building inside the private garden of the case study home, and the homes of other museum owners. In the first part of this chapter, I have explained the design of the museum building and the classification schemes. In addition, I have analysed these data using the over-lapping key concepts of cultural memory, identity and creativity.

The findings of the case study that I conducted as part of my data collection show that Mrs. Munira's cultural memory has provided a strong reference point for the various processes involved in the creation of the museum building. This is reflected in the design of the museum façade, the interior space, and the entrance, as well as in the methods chosen for the presentation of artefacts. Mrs. Munira exemplifies the restoration and reinvention of traditional features in the design of her museum building. Each façade element becomes a symbolic object that reflects her past life. She cleverly uses applications of vernacular architecture, such as triangular crenellations, water *mrzam*, arched windows, and wooden doors as cultural objects that convey memories and express meaning from eastern region, and the central region respectively. This integration of elements of vernacular architecture into the contemporary building suggests a degree of cultural resilience, with the tactic serving to reconnect the residents to their traditional environment, as well as creating a sense of belonging to the contemporary environment. This is critically important in the context of my investigation, which explores a key factor between cultural resilience, cultural preservation and cultural practice. Indeed, this shows how the practice of museum making has developed as positive adaptation to the significant needs of cultural preservation.

In terms of the role that identity has played in the production of the museum, the museum can be said to represent the national identity of the Kingdom on a microcosmic scale, as reflected in the individual identity of its owner and curator, Mrs. Munira. Her identity can be viewed from different perspectives, as it encompasses the ways in which she is related

to her past and the traditional environment, as part of a wider collective identity. At the same time, her identity also includes the unique aspects of her character and the ways that she differs and distinguishes herself from the contemporary community in which she lives.

The manifestation of Saudi cultural identity has been shown to extend beyond interior decorations and the placement of artefacts. It also goes far beyond the creation of stunning pieces of art, or even what is normally understood to be the products of fine art. In this case study, Saudi culture, Saudi identity, and the tangible and intangible heritage of the kingdom were reflected in the creation of a separate museum building inside the private garden of the case study home. Mrs. Munira not only displays items and static objects in this museum, but consciously strives to give life, names and stories to the artefacts that she presents. In this way, they act and interact with the visitor through their costumes, activities, and the symbolic meanings they present. In total, she uses twenty-two costumed mannequins as highly creative presentation tools in this museum. The display seeks to clarify the variation that exists in terms of costume, habits, and activities among the different traditional communities in the diverse regions of the Kingdom. This investigation remarks on the creative ability of a Saudi female to preserve the culture of Saudi Arabia, based on her own ingenuity, focus and creativity.

This case study has also sought to examine the extraordinary relationship that exists between two different functional spaces in a specific domestic environment that is situated within the specific context of Saudi culture. I have remarked on the balance that is struck between the practice of private museum making and the overwhelming need for privacy in the Saudi domestic environment. In this sense, the research provides a living example of the way in which the home and museum influenced one another and became inextricably intertwined. In addition, the findings explore the development of new forms of cultural practice in light of the growth of individual museum making. These include the evolution of new social networks, cultural teachings, and participation in international events and local exhibitions. This research offers a fresh perspective and insight into the role of the subject, Mrs. Munira, as a social influencer and a woman, showing how individual female effort can present and protect a national identity in a unique manner.

This chapter also provides examples of PMM in other areas of the Eastern Province to illustrate different perspectives on how culture can be presented in a museum that exists and operated within a domestic environment. In this regard, I compared the museum types examined during empirical fieldwork experiences, looking at the influence of their

creators, artefact displays, and presentation methods. Furthermore, I have explored the ways in which it is possible to read the existence of the museum in a home environment in different ways, although all of which are valid and effective ways of preserving Saudi culture.

My research addresses the cultural significance of a new phenomenon, which illustrates the efforts being undertaken by individual Saudis in the preservation of culture. The research explores and identifies the phenomenon of PMM, which I define as the attempts made by an individual to preserve their particular cultural heritage through the practice of museum making within their private home. My study interprets the development of this practice in line with the ambition and capability of some individuals in Saudi society. It also highlights the significant role of private museums as a network of cultural practices that reflect and preserve Saudi culture for the next generation, as well as the recent contributions of this practice to the tourism industry.

In the next and final chapter of this thesis, I will draw together the data and discussion presented here, in an attempt to provide a conclusive and satisfactory answer to the research questions established earlier. In so doing, I will provide a discussion of the original contributions that this study has made to the field, followed by recommendations about potentially viable avenues for future study.
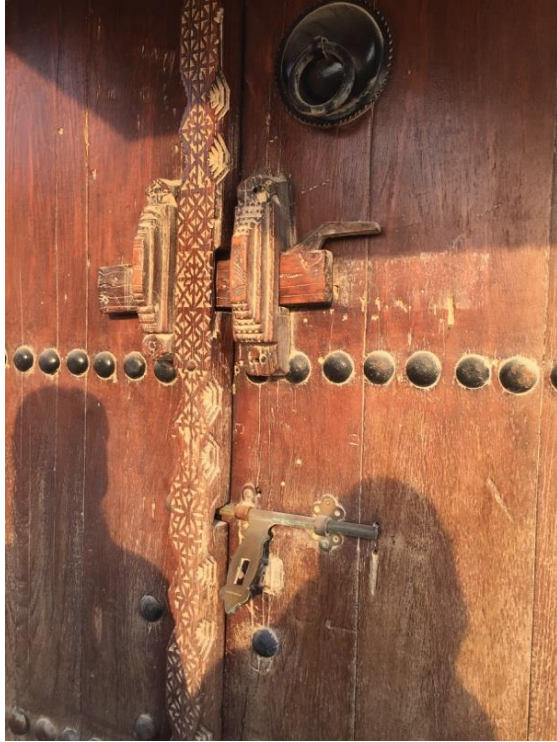
CONCLUSION

Original contribution to
knowledge
Recommendations for further
research

7

Table of Contents

Introduction

This last chapter seeks to provide a conclusion to the study, with a critical reflection on how my research questions have been addressed by the outcomes of this study, as well as to draw out key findings and identify the original contributions to knowledge made by this thesis. Based upon these outcomes, I suggest areas of further research that could be undertaken. This research fills the gap in research in the study of home interiors in relation to cultural preservation, as well as highlighting a case of positive adaptation in the contemporary domestic environment. The study aimed to construct new understandings regarding the impact of the transformations that have taken place in the domestic environment of Saudi Arabia following the discovery of oil. While most previous research in this area has highlighted the loss of identity caused by this transformation, my research has shown how these changes have resulted in the evolution of new modes of cultural preservation and cultural practices in the Saudi domestic environment, as well as the emergence of new identities from them.

My thesis has explored the significant role played by private museum-making as a network of cultural practices that reflect Saudi culture and preserve it for future generations. The significant role of the Private Museums Movement (PMM) in Saudi cultural preservation has also been discussed in terms of its contribution to the tourism industry. I have explored the relationship between cultural practice, cultural preservation and cultural resilience in the domestic environment. Having examined these key theoretical concepts, I have interpreted them from a spatial and material culture perspective. Questions have been raised about the role played by cultural resilience and cultural practices in shaping a Saudi home, looking at the strategies employed by residents to translate their memories, identity, and their tangible and intangible heritage into museological spaces in their homes. I also investigated the extension and evolution of the ways that residents engaged with cultural preservation beyond the practice of museum-making and displaying of artefacts to produce new cultural practices. I have also explored the extent to which it is possible to understand the balance between and combination of the museum-making practice and the Saudi requirements for privacy in the domestic environment.

In this investigation, I adopted a flexible qualitative mixed methods approach in collecting data from multiple sources. The use of drawings, photos, interview,

observation field notes, and other documents enabled me to acquire in-depth knowledge about the objects and topic of my investigation. Data analysis and interpretation was conducted through visual, spatial and material cultural analysis, which allowed me to clarify and comprehensively address my research questions. Finally, the findings of the case study have suggested a number of original contributions to knowledge and opened up new, exciting avenues for further research. This is discussed further in the next section.

7.1 Original contribution to knowledge

7.1.1 From rapid transformation in a domestic environment to cultural preservation

This research adds to knowledge about the transformation of Saudi domestic environments that has occurred after the discovery of oil. My thesis argues that, in addition to the other far-reaching effects on the built environment, this transformation has also manifested in positive forms of adaptation within Saudi homes. This is explained through two overlapping perspectives: the transformation of the national discourse on heritage and the transformation of the role of women on Saudi society. The originality of the research lies in my synthesis and application of the key theoretical concepts of cultural trauma, cultural preservation, and cultural resilience to the domestic environment.

I have shown how a specific resident creatively modified her American home model to better ensure compliance with the privacy requirements of Saudi Arabia and the local cultural practice of guest hospitality. In this way, I have been able to uncover how these strongly encoded cultural values survive, are preserved, and even how they reappear in new formats. Furthermore, I have noted the important role of religion, identity, past experience and memory in shaping these modifications.

The results of this study have enabled me to examine the positive adaptability, adjustment and creative resilience of Saudi culture, as illustrated by these examples of its adjustment to the new environment. Perhaps most importantly, this adaptation has been illustrated by examples of the use of traditional symbolic features, such as the main gate, coffee shelves *(kamar)* and the *majlis* sitting area. These design features constitute attempts by the resident to reconnect with her traditions and to create a stronger sense of belonging in the contemporary environment.

7.1.2 The practice of private museum-making in a Saudi home

The investigation revealed a new form of cultural preservation in a contemporary domestic environment, namely the practice of museum-making. I have provided an in-depth explanation of how traditional symbolic features and the display of heritage artefacts have evolved beyond mere distribution to specific parts of the home, instead being positioned in their own distinctive place inside the home through a practice of museum-making.

This added new dimensions to the understanding of the structure and purpose of the adapted domestic environment. I found a new relationship between the home environment, characterised by high degrees of privacy and a museum functioning as a place to welcome visitors. In addition, I developed an understanding of the steps undertaken to ensure balance between the importance of the Saudi privacy requirement in a domestic environment and the practice of private museum-making.

I found that part of the home had become part of the museum and how conversely, the museum became part of the home. My discovery and analysis of the practice of private museum making constitutes a significant original contribution to knowledge, as I am unaware of any previous academic study into this phenomenon.

7.1.3 The Private Museum Movement (PMM)

The practice of museum-making in the case study home opened a door to future research findings. I discovered that the private museum that I studied in this project was not a unique case, but rather an example of a new phenomenon emerging all around the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in response to the capability and desires of some individuals in Saudi society. This research explores and identifies the Private Museum Movement (PMM), defining it as: an individual's attempt to preserve Saudi cultural heritage through the practice of museum-making within their private home.

This research addresses the cultural significance of the new phenomenon of PMM, which highlights the efforts of individuals in cultural preservation. As noted in chapter six, there are no limits to what can be considered a museum space inside a home. A museum constructed as part of the PMM could be a single room or a multi-space building, depending on the capabilities of the owner and the extent to which the museum is able to expand to utilise more space.

In fact, I discovered that owning collections of artefacts and creating a private museum is highly valued by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, with the sector recognising, supporting and encouraging the development of registered private museums. In some senses, PMMs can be seen as a collaborative relationship between individual citizens and the tourist industry, which also serves to support the cultural industry of Saudi Arabia.

7.1.4 The Saudi female role in a domestic environment and private museum-making

To date, only a limited number of studies have sought to investigate the changing role of women within Saudi domestic environments. My research offers fresh perspectives and insights into the role of women as social influence. This is primarily conducted through an examination of Mrs. Munira Al Ashgar and the role that she plays in cultural preservation, through the curation of a museum inside her home. Mrs. Munira Al Ashgar strongly believes in the preservation of the Saudi culture for future generations, as reflected creatively through the practice of museum-making.

In the creation of Mrs. Munira Al Ashgar's museum building, she has not relied upon special reference books or from expert architects in vernacular architecture practice. Instead, all of the details involved, including the structure, organisation and traditional atmosphere, are informed by her personal knowledge, experiences and memories. These aspects of her character have been refreshed, activated and integrated into the design of the museum building. This makes the museum a living example of the ways that individual memory and collective memory can come together in creative ways, as reflected in the design concept of its façade, entrance, interiors and the presentation of its artefacts.

Inside the museum, Mrs. Munira displays items and objects, and even created named characters, stories and scenes, which are depicted through the use of 22 costumed mannequins. These characters interact with visitors through their costumes, the scenes in which they have been placed, and the symbolic meanings that they represent. This is a highly effective way of showcasing the variations in dress, habits and activities that exist among the different traditional communities across the regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In addition, I also analysed the use of religious text, calligraphy and ornamentation in the home, through which Mrs. Munira reflects an Islamic atmosphere and identity. I also studied the modifications that have been made to the house in line with Saudi privacy requirements and the cultural practice of guest hospitality. A balance has been struck in the home between the cultural needs for privacy, which have been balanced with the functions of a museum as a place to welcome visitors and display artefacts.

Through the access that Mrs. Munira kindly gave me to her house and her generous co-operation in this research, new contributions to knowledge have been gained about the important role that Saudi woman can play in cultural preservation and social matters.

7.2. Recommendations for further research

This investigation has uncovered and developed a wealth of ideas regarding useful areas of further research. The most promising of these, which will be discussed below, are as follows:

7.2.1   Private museum-making and its role in Saudi cultural preservation.

7.2.2   Cultural preservation in oil producing countries in the Gulf.

7.2.3   The role of women in shaping the Saudi domestic environment culture

7.2.1 Private museum-making and the Saudi cultural preservation industry

The practice of private museum-making in Saudi Arabia, as discussed in my thesis, is a topic that warrants further research given the complexity of this field. Further documentation of the individual efforts undertaken in Saudi cultural preservation would facilitate examination of the differences between the individual perception of the tangible and intangible aspects of Saudi culture, the different perspectives of men and women regarding the practice of museum-making, and the type of memories that determine the choice of artefacts to be displayed inside museum spaces, according to the creator's gender.

However, the impact of the individual practice of private museum-making on collective memory also warrants further research. Valid areas of research could include questions that include: Are there common elements across Saudi private museums? How are these museums influenced by public museums? What challenges do private museum owners face in maintaining their museums? How do these museums impact on domestic

environments? These kinds of questions arise from my research and demonstrate the wealth of possible avenues for further study.

7.2.2 The cultural preservation movement in oil industry countries

This study paves the way for new, more generalizable findings. In addition, it may be viable to undertake broader investigations to examine whether the key theoretical concepts of cultural trauma, cultural preservation and cultural resilience are equally applicable to the domestic environments of other countries that have been shaped by rapid, post-oil development. Examples of viable candidates for such investigations include Kuwait, Qatar, or the United Arab Emirates. Given that these nations have also experienced a rapid and traumatic transformation of their built environment after the discovery of oil, it is worthwhile to identify whether any positive cultural changes have occurred, such as those that I observed in Saudi Arabia. In particular, investigations should be carried out to determine whether the private museum movement has emerged in other Gulf countries.

7.2.3 The role of women's identities in shaping the domestic environment

The education of women in Saudi Arabia has profoundly increased their involvement in residential project design, as well as in the ways that they express their identity in domestic environments. As with many other parts of the world, the education, job, and position of a Saudi woman in the community are highly reflected in the design of her home. Furthermore, many men depend on women in the area of home design, as wives, owners and interior designers. Further research could be conducted to better understand the changing role of women in shaping architectural and design decisions in Saudi Arabia and to investigate how their identities and positions are influencing the design of contemporary Saudi homes.

Appendix A: The requirements for the SCTH private museum owners license

According to the regulations of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH), private museum owners must meet the private museum license requirements in order to qualify for an official license and to be able to register with SCTH. The 10 requirements to obtain a private museum license are as follows:[44]

1- Fill license application form

2- Copy of national identity

3- Museum location sketch

4- Internal drawing to show display places and dimensions

5- List of museum items

6- A CD containing photos of the exhibited items

7- Copy of Civil Defense license

8- Owner's personal photo of 4X6 cm.

9- Private museums on Saudi State history to have text material from King Abdul Aziz Dara

10- Obtain owner's museum rehabilitation program license, which is given by the SCTH

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[44] Cited from the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH)
https://www.scta.gov.sa/en/Museums/PrivateMuseums/Pages/PMCond.aspx

Appendix B: Example of museum brochures (field work)

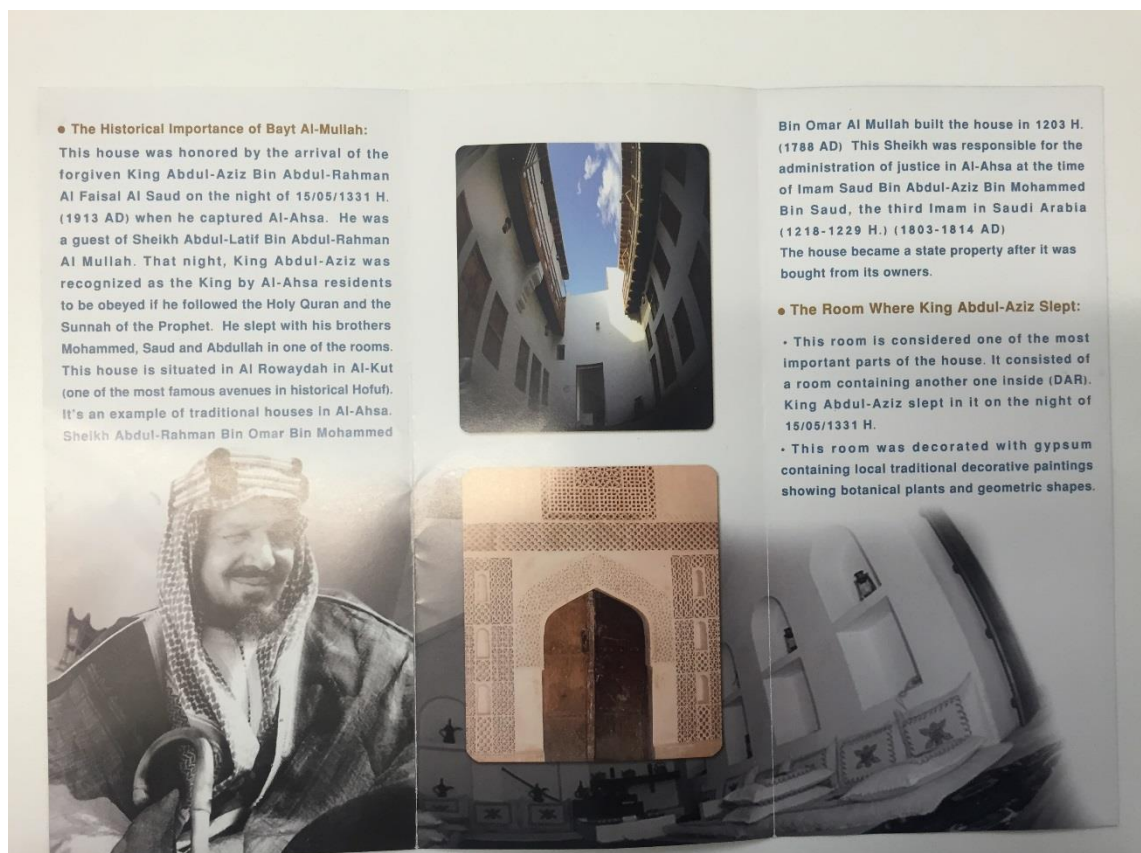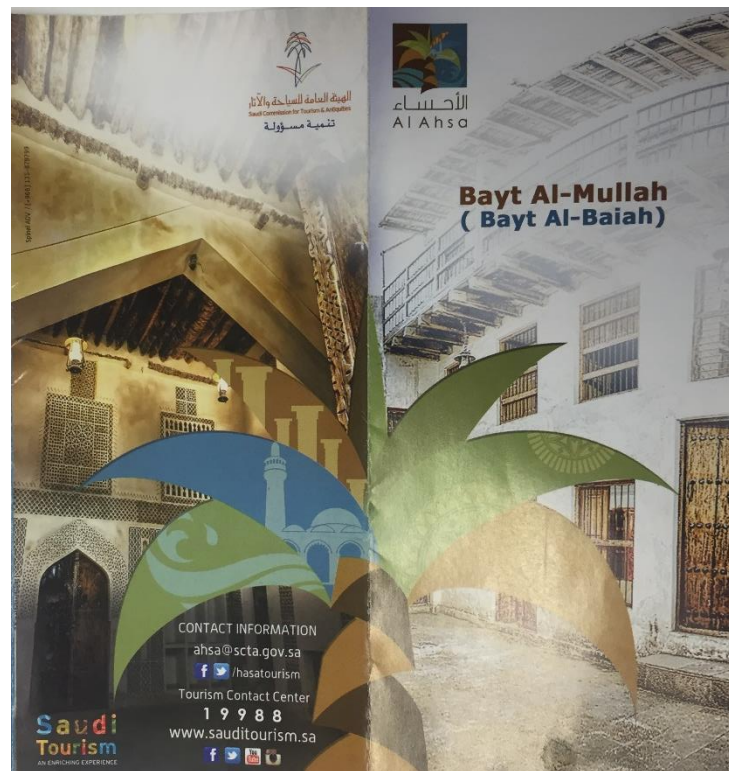Figure 8.1: *Bayt Al-Baiah Museum,* located in Hofuf area, became a museum under the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (for more information see chapter 3 section 3.2.3.2 and chapter 6 section 6.4.1)

Figure 8.2: Example of private museum advertising brochures

Figure 8.3: Private museum brochures with photos of the museums, their locations, names and contact numbers of their owners

Appendix C: The University approved ethics statement

C.1 Ethics Approval VRE1314-0008A: Notification letters

22 May 2014

Dear Ms May Aljamea,

Ethics Application: VRE1314-0008A

Project title: Doctoral research project

I am writing to inform you that your application was considered by the ABE Research Ethics Committee. The proposal was approved.

If your protocol changes significantly in the meantime, please contact me immediately, in case of further ethical requirements.

Yours sincerely

Prof Nick Bailey

ABE Research Ethics Committee

I am advised by the Committee to remind you of the following points:

1. Your responsibility to notify the Research Ethics Committee immediately of any information received by you, or of which you become aware, which would cast doubt upon, or alter, any information contained in the original application, or a later amendment, submitted to the Research Ethics Committee and/or which would raise questions about the safety and/or continued conduct of the research.

2. The need to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

3. The need to comply, throughout the conduct of the study, with good research practice standards.

4. The need to refer proposed amendments to the protocol to the Research Ethics Committee for further review and to obtain Research Ethics Committee approval thereto prior to implementation (except only in cases of emergency when the welfare of the subject is paramount).

5. You are authorised to present this University of Westminster Ethics Committee letter of approval to outside bodies, e.g. NHS Research Ethics Committees, in support of any application for further research clearance.

6. The requirement to furnish the Research Ethics Committee with details of the conclusion and outcome of the project, and to inform the Research Ethics Committee should the research be discontinued. The Committee would prefer a concise summary of the conclusion and outcome of the project, which would fit no more than one side of A4 paper, please.

7. The desirability of including full details of the consent form in an appendix to your research, and of addressing specifically ethical issues in your methodological discussion.

CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Cultural Preservation in a Saudi domestic environment in the Eastern Province

Lead researcher: _____

I have been given the Participation Information Sheet and/or had its contents explained to me.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I have had an opportunity to ask any questions and I am satisfied with the answers given.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I understand that I have a right to withdraw from the research at any time without needing to provide a reason.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I understand that if I withdraw from the research any data included in the results will be removed if that is practicable (I understand that once anonymised data has been collated into other datasets it may not be possible to remove that data).	Yes ☐	No ☐
I would like to receive information relating to the results from this study.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I wish to receive a copy of this Consent Form.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I confirm that I am willing to be a participant in the above research study.	Yes ☐	No ☐
I note the data will be fully anonymised (if applicable) and may be retained in an archive. I am happy for my data to be reused as part of future research activities.	Yes ☐	No ☐

Participant's Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

This consent form will be stored separately from any data you provide in order to ensure that your responses remain anonymous.

_____

I confirm that I have provided a copy of the Participant Information Sheet approved by the Research Ethics Committee to the participant and fully explained its contents. I have given the participant an opportunity to ask questions, which have been answered.

Researcher's Name: _____

Signature: **Date:** _____

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Glossary of key Arabic words

abaya	dark garment worn over women's clothes when outside
alsouq	local market
bayt	home
bayt shar	name of Bedouin tent
barasti	traditional dwelling built from palm fronds and poles
bisht	traditional male outwear usually made of wool
burqa	traditional garment and veil worn by women
dalla	coffeepot
danchal houses	wood pillars used in the construction of ceilings in courtyard
duwasheg	long rectangular mattresses, placed on the floor around the walls, forming a continuous u-shape sitting area
fanajeel	small coffee cups
fereej	traditional neighbourhood
hawadj	a carriage positioned on the back of a camel, offering accommodation during travel. Previously a symbol of wealth
kamar	shelf for the display of coffee pots
Kaaba,	the building in the centre of the Holy Mosque, faced by all Muslims during prayer
kiswa	cloth covering for the *Kaaba Al-Musharrafah*
majlis	area for male guests

mashrabiya	projected wooden screen covering a window opening. It is a traditional element of house façades in parts of the Arabian Peninsula
misbaha	a string of beads used to count short prayers (tesbih) in Islam
mrzam	a pipe located on the roof used to drain rainwater
termis	modern coffee pots
thawb	traditional, symbolic costume typically worn by women at important social events. The dress is normally made of silk and embroidered with golden threads
wijaq	rectangular place to cook and heat the coffee over the coals