

## CREATING NEW VERNACULAR:

### RE-ENACTING CULTURE AND MAKING PLACE IN THE WINTER CAMPS OF BAHRAIN

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Vernacular in many parts of the world, particularly those that are rapidly developing under the forces of globalization have been undergoing dramatic change. From total abandonment to superficial constructions, vernacular in such societies survive often on the edge of perceptual, social and physical space, unsure of their place in the world and unable to compete with the ever-modernizing social space. However, the desire to return to, and to immerse even momentarily in the traditional and vernacular have resurfaced in many a ways from ubiquitous designed villages and renovated historic centers to modern shopping malls in almost every modern community.

In Bahrain, such desires manifest more clearly and determinately during every winter period, when the rich urban dwellers choose to reconstruct what is perceived to be a reproduced version of the Bedouin tents in the cold deserts of its hinterland. The traditional Bedouin tents in the Arabian deserts had indeed provided for all activities of life in the deserts in the past although now, they have been abandoned in preference to the individual villas, the compounds and the housing condominiums.

Despite having been provided with the modern amenities such as electricity, satellite televisions, microwaves and barbecue

settings, the winter tents seem to re-enact some of the unique cultural practices of the past Bedouin culture. This paper takes a closer look at the winter camps of Bahrain which have become a modern vernacular practice that borrows from and temporarily reconstructs a by-gone practice of every day living that had existed among nomadic Arabs. It examines the history of the traditional tents and Bedouin camps and the ways in which they relate to the contemporary vernacular of the winter camps. It takes the position that the future of the vernacular lies not only in the continuation of the old but the inventions of the new that builds upon those cherishable from the past.

*Keywords:*

*Vernacular, Bedouinism, Bahrain, Winter Camps, Culture.*