



Settling for Less

**THE PLANNED RESETTLEMENT OF
ISRAEL'S NEGEV BEDOUIN**

STEVEN C. DINERO



SETTLING FOR LESS

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Steven C. Dinero

SETTLING FOR LESS

The Planned Resettlement of Israel's Negev Bedouin



Steven C. Dinero



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} PREFACE }

23 March 2007; Near Hatzetim, Israel—

Sheep. I am surrounded by them. As the sun lowers ahead of us, the dogs barking feverishly and nipping at their hooves, they move slowly forward in a wave, groups breaking off to one side or the other only to return to the main herd as we proceed down the hill. The noise of hooves and maa-ing is all around us. The goats among the herd stop more often, standing on their hind legs—climbing up in some instances—into the low shrubs to get at some of what must be the tastier leaves. As the girls herd from left, right, and center, some walking, some riding donkeys, one restraining a reluctant ewe forcing it to slow down in order that its lamb might suckle, the boys come over the hill to our right leading the half dozen camels still at this site—the few dozen others from the herd are several kilometers to the south where there is more room for them to graze.

Suddenly they all converge, the kids, the hundreds of sheep and goats, the camels, the donkeys, the dogs, the 3 Holstein calves which do not fit into this scene at all but which are increasingly prevalent in the northern Negev—all at once in one thunderous rush they begin running headlong toward the open pen, the water tankers, the tent where smoke is wafting out as tea and coffee are about to be served—Home.

And then I see my 10-year old son, and my 7-year old daughter and wife ahead of us as the animals all charge in their direction. I cannot but wonder if they are feeling the rush that I am feeling now. It is a rush that I first felt when, as an American high school student from Buffalo on an exchange program in Qiryat Gat in 1978, I caught my first glimpses of the bedouin out the Egged bus window on my way to the market in Be'er Sheva, where I would sit for hours drinking tea and catching furtive glances of those who sat on the ground or at nearby tables, wondering about their lives.

* * *

I wrote these words several months ago and thousands of miles away from where I now sit in my Philadelphia office. Working now as a middle-aged professor, I can say that the rush I felt that day was no less great than what I felt when I was that impressionable teenaged high school exchange student.

Indeed, 30 years later, I remain as interested and concerned as ever—if not more so—for the future welfare of the Negev bedouin community. That this formerly nomadic people is a community in transition, a community experiencing great change in a relatively brief period, is well-known, recognized, and widely publicized.

But my particular interest in the bedouin of the Negev may be narrowed to a limited set of questions. Since the early 1990s, I have been conducting research in one of the government-planned Negev bedouin towns, Segev Shalom/Shqeb. From then until now, I have sought to better understand how community planning and development principles have been used in order to help transition a formerly pastoral-nomadic community from tents to towns, from shepherding to wage labor, and from an ascriptive- to an achievement-oriented social order.

As will be seen in the pages that follow, I approach this seemingly straightforward issue with some significant provisos. First, I begin with the basic premise that nomadism is more than a geographic mechanism or referent solely to be associated with the availability of pasturage for flocks, drinking water, and the like (Salzman 1980). Rather, nomadism is a complete social, economic, and political system that well supercedes the boundaries of mere geography. When, therefore, this system is altered or placed under stress, be it by natural or human-made forces, the entire system must react, respond, and adapt. And in the present case, it has done just this, sometimes in a predictable manner, but often in ways that are far less so predictable.

This brings me to my second proviso: the difference between planned change and that which is unanticipated. All planners know the well-worn phrase: ‘Men plan, God laughs.’ But a response to this might be: were people *not* to plan, *that* result might bring tears. Alternatively, if planning is not undertaken with good intent, with positive ideals in mind, and, dare I say it, with *love*, then yes, the unplanned, the unanticipated, the unexpected may not only be the result despite planning—it may be preferred to it. Planning is a tool; some who have used planning in the State of Israel since its inception have made omelets, some have made soufflés, and some have made messes. But then, is that the fault of *planning* or of *planners*?

A third and final proviso must be noted here, and that is that the bedouin of the Negev are not the Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. That is to say, they do not “shun” electricity, and do not shun things “modern,” but rather adapt whenever and wherever they can or must to the needs of the day. They do not aspire to live like the Western Orientalist’s “Lawrence of Arabia”-type image of what was (if ever it was) the idyllic bedouin culture and society. The bedouin have changed, they are changing, they will change. Change, in and of itself, is not what is at issue in this book.

What is at issue, and as *Chapter 1: Planning in the Negev Bedouin Sector* will address, is *the nature* of this change as it has been traced historically, and the degree to which this change was *planned* by a government that, from its founding, has set its sights on this community and will not rest until every bedouin has become *what it wants*, rather than *what the bedouin want*, the community to be. The question that will be addressed here then is how the changes that have taken place over the past six to ten decades have served the needs and interests of the bedouin community, as compared to how these changes have been pursued in order to serve the interests of Israeli Jews at large. Moreover, when change is imposed from above and is undertaken in a manner that is heavy-handed (ham-handed is not culturally appropriate here), any developments that result are almost certainly to be held suspect.

This is not only true of the bedouin, of course, but it also can be found in any community anywhere in the world. But, in the Negev bedouin case, this planning initiative is nested within several complicating layers of social, political, and economic stresses that make it unique. For not only are the bedouin a minority in terms of their lifestyle (i.e., nomads versus sedentary peoples), as can be found throughout the Middle East and North Africa and throughout much of the world, but they are also ethnic minorities (Arabs) and religious minorities (Muslims)—that is, the groups who are yet in conflict with the dominant Jewish State that is charged with looking out for their welfare and development. Thus, one can view the planning agenda outlined throughout this chapter within a social context of clashing values, worldviews, and attitudes embedded within the economic/political regional dynamic, informed at the macro level by the broader Arab-Israeli conflict, and at the micro level by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is no wonder then that virtually every aspect of this issue is so highly charged and politicized.

And yet, one rarely reads in the growing literature on the topic the perspective of the *ordinary bedouin* on what is happening in their community. To be sure, bedouin professors present their ideas and concerns cogently on a regular basis, but the common town resident is rarely heard. Nor, necessarily, does one hear the voices of those Jewish Israelis who have devoted their careers to the purpose of planning in the bedouin sector.

Rather, one may read *about* the bedouin, many speaking of them as “victims,” while others charge that they are Israel’s next greatest threat to internal security, safety, and stability. And yet few if any of these *listen* to what those in the bedouin or planning communities have to say, and fewer still seek to give voice to those perspectives. This chapter, and those that follow, are replete with lengthy quotes seeking to serve as a corrective to this issue. It is not my goal here to speak for the bedouin or for the planners

who work on their behalf; they are quite capable of voicing their views for themselves.

In order to try to bring such broad issues down to a more approachable human scale, *Chapter 2: Segev Shalom—Background and Community Profile* will consider the concerns of one small location within the bedouin community, Segev Shalom. Like any case study, Segev Shalom has unique traits that do not allow for extrapolation to all of the other planned towns in the Negev today, let alone those parts of the bedouin community that remain unrecognized, “illegal,” spontaneous, and unplanned. And yet, there are many lessons that can be learned from this case study, and that do provide building blocks for an understanding of where the bedouin have been, where they are heading, and how development and planning might be used in a manner that may yet further contribute toward the development of this minority community.

There is no question that the bedouin community is non-monolithic. On the other hand, however, the argument suggesting that because of this, little can be done in this sector, is a red herring. Much *can* be done to understand the bedouin of the Negev by using case studies. One must simply recognize that when it comes to the bedouin of the Negev, each individual case may hold unique qualities and characteristics, but overall the whole bedouin population shares a variety of needs and concerns, which, more often than not, tend to supercede individual needs and interests.

In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I provide the bulk of material pertaining to the specific aspects of the Negev bedouin community centered at Segev Shalom. Much of the material presented in these three chapters was gathered using four anonymous, independent, scientific household surveys implemented over a fifteen-year period (1993, 1996, 2000, and 2007). These surveys, which sought to quantify both the state of bedouin town residents’ “Quality of Life” (QOL) (a controversial and subjective measurement, to be sure), as well as residents’ opinions about their own living circumstances and conditions, allowed me to gather a large amount of descriptive quantitative data relatively quickly, which then could be analyzed, tested, and linked over time. While the results of each survey present, perhaps, but a snapshot of sentiment and circumstances at that particular time, the results of the four surveys when compared over an extended period reveal several of the trends identified throughout this study. In order to further clarify these movements and developments, such standard planning methods were combined with anthropological and sociological methods throughout the period of study as well, including the use of personal interviews, focus groups, and participant/observation activities.

In *Chapter 3: Planning, Service Provision and Development in Segev Shalom*, I discuss the planning and use of service provisions over a period of

more than a decade in Segev Shalom. As discussed in Chapter 1, the primary objective of the resettlement agenda from the governmental point of view is the provision of public services to the Negev bedouin community. Thus, using Segev Shalom as a case study, I examine in this chapter the extent to which these services are being provided. More to the point, I also examine the degree to which these services have been taken on and fully utilized during the 1990s and 2000s, and the extent to which the residents of this particular bedouin community are enjoying them.

Continuing in this vein, I then examine in *Chapter 4: Health and Education* two main areas of social service provisions in the town: health, education, and, to a lesser degree, social welfare. The reasons for isolating these areas are straightforward: first, the literature typically addresses these as the areas that offer insights into a better understanding of the degree to which true social development is taking place in developing communities, such as that of the bedouin. Secondly, and related to this, these are the areas where the government suggests that the most progress is being made in transitioning the bedouin into a developed society. In short, these areas provide ideal barometers for measuring the extent to which “modernization,” as it is typically defined in the Western development literature, is truly taking hold in the sedentarizing Negev bedouin community.

And yet, it will be shown that planned change among the bedouin of the Negev has fallen short of government expectations or hopes. In the meantime, unplanned change has resulted from the resettlement initiative, which is not only unexpected, but poses potential concerns for the Israeli collective going forward. As I discuss in *Chapter 5: Negev Bedouin Identity/ies Development in Segev Shalom*, augmented senses of identity/identities construction and expression is one major area of interest. For as most of the members of the bedouin community no longer undertake seasonal migration, no longer hold flocks, and no longer reside in the iconic black goat-hair tent, the question of “where have all the bedouin gone?” (Cole 2003) is an appropriate one. When added to the query, “in the Negev today, what then is a bedouin?,” one finds a spectrum of identities being held and embraced, each with its own set of uncertainties, trajectories, challenges, and potential sources of confusion.

As *Chapter 6: The Resettled Bedouin Woman* reveals, if there is one area of change in Negev bedouin society today, which well encapsulates the ambivalence of planned and unplanned change, and of “modernity” as envisioned by the state confronting some of the vestiges of a wary bedouin society yet at odds with itself when it comes to the acceptance of some but not all cultural innovation, it is the changing role of the bedouin woman. During the 1990s and 2000s, the changes that have occurred in this arena are startling and profound, and are at the heart of social and economic

change in the bedouin community. And yet, this has come with a price; there are those who see the glass half full, recognizing that the fact that today one sees bedouin women Ph.D.s and medical doctors, as few as they are, is a major step in Negev bedouin development. But as these changes are occurring, so too do some see greater limitations being placed upon women, upon their rights, their privileges, and upon their freedom of movement, than even before.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 each discuss the extent to which social development has taken hold in the Negev bedouin community. And yet, as I suggest in Chapter 3, economic development remains extremely problematic through the Negev today, both within the planned and the unrecognized communities. If there is one area of economic development that can be highlighted as an example of a “success story,” however, it would be found in the area of tourism. *Chapter 7: Bedouin Tourism Development: Planning in the New Economy* seeks to address this very topic. Here, I note that in the 1980s–1990s, this sector began to develop in the Negev with bedouin themes and connections, but almost without exception, was dominated by Jewish interests and perpetuated a narrative that, it can be argued, did little to serve the present day needs and concerns of the resettled bedouin. As the chapter notes, however, by the 2000s, bedouin tourism had become an area of economic development for the bedouin themselves. Further, a narrative that is more closely aligned with the present-day experiences of the bedouin community was now being told, although some vendors have taken this idea still further, and were now perpetuating an image of the bedouin-as-victim/oppressed as a selling feature of their tourism ventures.

Given the highly charged political nature of the subject at hand, I am compelled then in the final chapter, *Chapter 8: Segev Shalom—A City on the Edge of Forever?*, to draw in an additional literature and genre, Science Fiction, in order to place what appears to many to be a political conflict in an alternative light. Further, I do so in order to draw parallels between the themes found here—utopianism, alternative futures/realities—and similar ideals found in the planning literature. In so doing, I also wish to raise the question of whether the *future* of the bedouin community is already fixed, based upon *present* realities and limitations, or whether planners can envision alternative futures, which can seek to overcome the present problems and difficulties enumerated throughout the body of this text. In this regard, I discuss future planning in the Negev bedouin community, including Segev Shalom. While there is no doubt that some of what I put forward is utopian, what can also be said is that those of us who believe in planning believe that we can *make* the future; the future does not make us. It is incumbent upon all interested parties to put forward ideas or dreams of the future—that, after all, is with what planning is truly concerned.

This then is a study of what can—and perhaps cannot—be accomplished through planning for these former pastoral nomads. More, it is a recognition that there is yet a great deal of work that needs to be done in the bedouin sector, and that well-intentioned outsiders can only do so much to move the initiative to the next level. The ultimate question I wish to raise, then, in concluding these two decades of study in Segev Shalom is whether we, as planners, concerned observers, Jews and Arabs alike, have the will, the ability, and above all, the desire, to actively alter the *present status quo* in order to overcome the *past* and help ensure a brighter *future* for a bedouin community, which, here-to-date, has endured excessive hardship and rapid change, abandoning its previous lifestyle and traditions in response to the economic, political, and social forces of the state, while getting very little in return—in effect, *settling for less*.

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Like any scholarly work such as this, dozens of colleagues, friends, and yes, total strangers too numerous to name played a key role in helping me finally to bring its completion to fruition. Trying to remember and recognize everyone, particularly when one considers that I researched and wrote parts of this work over more than fifteen years and that I am now at the age where my memory is no longer my best-friend, is truly an exercise in futility. That I will forget someone is a certainty, and I offer my apologies in advance for any such slight. With this in mind, I have several people to recognize, though I will try to keep the list as brief as possible.

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I also wish to acknowledge a number of academics at Ben-Gurion University's (BGU) Geography Department who gave freely of their time, advice, and encouragement in helping me through the maze of bedouin society during the early years of my research. In particular, I wish to thank Avinoam Meir, my advisor in Israel when I was a graduate student and now my colleague and friend, who provided advice and assistance throughout every phase of this project, and who inspired so much of my early work

in the field. Similarly, I cannot thank enough Gideon Kressel, now retired from his many years at the Blaustein Center for Desert Research at Sde Boqer. It is simply impossible here to relate in a few words how much of an impact this man has had on my life over the past two decades. Suffice it to say that I consider him my mentor and friend, and that I remain hopeful that somewhere within these pages, I will have succeeded in offering back to him some insight as a result of all of the guidance that he has provided to me over the years. Professors Allan Degen and Jon Anson, also at BGU, facilitated several field visits during the 2007 research period.

Professors Emanuel Marx and Aref Abu-Rabia (as well as a number of additional anonymous reviewers) read an earlier version of the manuscript. Having read their work and having consulted with both since I began this research (in Marx's case, I first approached him seeking advice and expressing interest in pursuing this sort of study back in 1982), I am truly honored to have had their input in making this a better piece of research.

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Kher El-Baz, Director of the Social Welfare Office in Segev Shalom, must also be noted here. Kher has been there since the beginning, yet every conversation with him offers me new information, new insights, and new ways of understanding the bedouin condition. I wrote, in 1995, that at times Kher's efforts seem "thankless"; I, however, cannot thank him enough for all that he has given me over the years, and I know this to be true of the bedouin community as a whole as well.

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High School Headmaster Muhammad (Abu-Tarek) Hamamdi should, one day, write a similar study to this one. He is one of the most knowledgeable men concerning the bedouin community of Segev Shalom that I have ever known. Abu-Tarek is a teacher, a scholar, a man of principle, and a man of honor who loves his family and his people above all things. I learned much from him over these past several years; it is simply impossible for me to fully quantify it all.

Taleb and Amira Abu-Kueider and their extended family are my bedouin family in Israel. For these past several years, they have opened their homes and hearts to my family and myself, and have shared a very special and irreplaceable friendship. We come from different worlds and yet our lives have become intertwined. It is something I do not in any way take for granted; I will cherish the memories we share always.

What has become true over the years, again and again, is that my working relationships with Taleb and so many others have each evolved into friendships. And yet what is also true is that I know for a fact that what I have to say in the following chapters may not sit well with some of my colleagues and friends in Israel. After all, I am on the outside, looking in on their lives and experiences. But what I can say about all of the people I have acknowledged here is that each respects my perspective, and would agree to disagree with me. And doing so over a glass or two of Turkish coffee, with a dash of cardamom added, all the better.

On this side of the Atlantic, I first wish to thank my parents, Albert and Roslyn Dinero, for encouraging me, a naïve teenage Buffalonian, to board that first El Al plane on 23 July 1978. When I landed in Lod a day later and headed to Qiryat Gat, a new world, that they would never fully understand, was opened up to me—and I have never looked back. I only pray that I am as good a parent to my four as they were (and are) to me.

Shai and Matan heard about the bedouin almost from the moment they met me. I know they still remember when we took that first family trip to Israel back in 1998, and I introduced my new family to this part of my life. And Ari and Maya both know only too well how much of their young lives have been influenced by my work in the Negev, and by the writing of this book. How much tea and coffee have they drunk, how much pita have they eaten? When they are older, I hope that reading this book will help them to understand what it was all about. But knowing them—how they interacted with the bedouin people with such incredible ease during our stay in 2007

in particular—perhaps they already understand more of what follows than I might realize.

Lastly, there are those who can carry out their research without their spouses being intimately involved in what they do. I am not one of those people. My wife, Penina Hoffnung, is my support system, my inspiration, my guide, and in truth, the smartest person I have ever known. I could never have completed this work without her, nor would I have wanted to. I am forever indebted to her and, though she must know this by now, it is for this reason that I dedicate this work to her, just in case she is unaware of just how much I appreciate her role in every aspect of my life.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

23 July 2008

NOTE ON ARABIC AND HEBREW TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATIONS

Language is a crucial but nonetheless confounding element to any researcher or writer who seeks to work in the Arab World. As those who are familiar with the Middle East well know, there are numerous ways to transliterate the Arabic and Hebrew languages into Roman letters. Diacritical marks often help, yet, at times, may hinder the ability to pronounce words, which, in truth, are best read in the original form. “Kh,” “Ch,” “Q,” and the like are often used in an attempt to compensate for letters that do not have easy equivalents in English. The result is usually less than ideal.

For the purposes of simplicity, I have attempted throughout this work to minimize such distractions. For the most part, whenever possible, Arabic and Hebrew terms are used only when the English versions simply will not do (the names of towns or people, Israeli concepts, and so on). In these instances, I attempt to use a relatively “easy” transliteration system, whereby what one reads is, more or less, what the word would sound like in the actual language. For example, *ayins*, *alefs*, *kafs*, and other challenging letters are Anglicized wherever possible to facilitate reading and comprehension.

Similarly, Arabic and Hebrew terms are used at a minimum and are translated into English whenever possible. My translations of quotes, in many instances aided by a fluent speaker, are as honest and in keeping with the spirit of the informants as possible. But this is always a challenge; how to translate a term like “*davka*,” for example? Readers of English not familiar with the term will not fully appreciate the “in your face” attitude that usually attends its usage.

But then, that is the point, is it not? For just as there is often a communication gap between English readers and the subjects of this study, so too is there a gap between Israeli Jews, most of whom do not speak Arabic, and bedouin Israelis, most of whom do speak Hebrew (males above a certain age most especially), but who prefer Arabic, even if every other word seems to be the Hebrew word “*b’seder*” (OK?). And, of course, the gap between and among the subjects of the study is not merely linguistic, but is also one of ideas, beliefs, thoughts, and ideals as well.

There are, of course, scholarly books available concerning the Negev bedouin Arabic dialect, and its very unique history and qualities. This is not one of them. The goal here is to use transliterations and translations that make the work as readable as possible, yet also preserve the “flavor” of the region, and of its peoples. I hope I have succeeded in this effort.

Chapter 1

Planning in the Negev Bedouin Sector

The life of a Bedouin is a tent-pole on a camel.

—Bailey, *A Culture of Desert Survival: Bedouin Proverbs
from Sinai and the Negev*

A desert waste is preferable to a contentious neighbor.

—Bailey, *A Culture of Desert Survival: Bedouin Proverbs
from Sinai and the Negev*

In an ideal world, new town planners operate in the realm of Utopianism. The true planner, the authentic planner, the planner on the cutting edge, is he or she who sits and dreams, who is willing to ask the most dangerous of questions, such as “What if?” The planner of the twenty-first century does not even think of these as dreams, but rather as the blueprints of a new reality in the making; the planner is simply the mechanism and the catalyst that makes these dreams come true.

The planned town then is the actualization of the dream, that which is brought to life by the will and whim of those willing to go outside of themselves, beyond the limitations of what is, and, if the planner is truly inspired, by what is even deemed possible. The planned new town is—or at least it can be—that which no one ever believed could come to pass. It is, in effect, Tomorrow’s city, Today.

And yet, one basic proviso must always apply: new towns only have the potential to be Utopian so long as they are planned with the interests of the potential residents as their guiding principle, and not in the interests of the planners. So long as the planners plan for their own self-interests, dystopian outcomes and unintended consequences can be assured. It is a clichéd truism that a town is only a reflection of the people who reside there. This is all the more true when one considers the new town or community; until human inhabitants arrive, the town is not a town at all, it is merely an empty shell.

And so it is with the state–forced resettlement of the bedouin Arabs of the Negev Desert in southern Israel into the planned new towns that have been created for them since the 1960s. The successful implementation of this planning initiative has been jeopardized since the outset, it was ill conceived, poorly designed, and is, to the present day, questionable in every facet of the ways in which the bedouin continue to be resettled. Planned with no bedouin input until very late in the process, the new bedouin towns have long struggled to serve the community’s needs. This was not accidental, but was part of the state’s agenda to relocate the bedouin off of the land and into concentrated areas as quickly as possible for its own political ends. Moreover, this failure to work with the community also played a key role in the towns’ inability to attract in-migrants. At the same time, those who did relocate found “towns” barely meeting the definition of the word, and that only recently are beginning to develop into viable, livable communities.

In the following chapters, I will seek to show that there are numerous examples of ways in which the towns *are* succeeding in performing a role as nodes of social and economic development in the Negev bedouin community. Israel’s state planners might be tempted to suggest (as many do) that in the areas of health, education, women’s status, and other social status indices, the bedouin are developing remarkably, following a “modernization” curve well in line with most hopes and expectations. One can only conclude, then, of how tragic it is that despite these successes, many if not most in the bedouin community as a whole perceive the resettlement initiative as nothing short of a dismal failure. Rather than being viewed in this light, the Utopian “dream” remains elusive, as many Negev bedouin yet struggle to awaken from what they perceive to be nothing short of a living nightmare.

A History of the Bedouin New Town Planning Initiative*

The literature is replete with descriptions of the story of the Negev bedouin community’s urbanization process into planned towns. The narrative has been repeated a number of times (see, for example, Meir 1997; Kressel 2003), and need not be retold in full yet again on these pages. However, certain elements of how the bedouin community has, over time, been divided, concentrated, and resettled, and an explanation of how the initiative was planned and re-planned over time, is necessary in order to fully understand and appreciate the role that displacement has played historically in the new town initiative, and how, to an extent, these past events still impact the program’s successes and failures in the present temporal context.

According to the Israeli Land Authority, four million *dunams* (approximately one million acres) of land in the Negev Desert were under control of the bedouin prior to the creation of the State of Israel (Shapira, 24 November 1992), lands upon which, in many instances, many tribes lived in semi-permanent, “fixed” residences (Marx 1967: 10). Between 60,000 and 90,000 bedouin resided throughout the region prior to the 1948 War of Israeli Independence (Boneh, 1983: 47), comprising seven major “macro-tribes” (Arabic: *kabila*): the Tarabeen, Tiyaha, Hanajira, Jibarat, Sa’idiyin, Ahyawat, and the Azazmeh. The Azazmeh—the tribe providing the focus of most of this monograph—had, since the late 1910s, lived within a territory demarcated by the “arid mountains” of the Negev interior, as the stronger Tiyaha and Tarabeen tribes had moved into better quality grazing lands further north (Marx 1967: 9).

After the 1948 War, only 11,000 bedouin total remained in the Negev, the majority having fled or been expelled to the West and East banks of the Jordan River, the Gaza district, and the Sinai Peninsula. Of these, 90 percent were Tiyaha; only a few hundred were Azazmeh, and “even fewer” were Tarabeen (Marx 1967: 12). While the Jibarat, Hanajira, Sa’idiyin, and most of Tarabeen fled altogether from the region, the Ahyawat moved southward into the Sinai. The majority of the Tiyaha did not flee during the War, but waited out the outcome of the War to determine the new political dynamics in the region (Boneh 1983: 53).

As for the Azazmeh, the tribe was split into sections, but experienced no wholesale flight during the War. Still, of the twelve major sub-tribes that originally comprised the Azazmeh, only the Mas’udiyin remained intact. Some one thousand remnants of several other tribes were thus united under a few Azazmeh sheikhs by 1960 (Marx 1967: 13), using the same “Azazmeh” name as their tribal identification. Disparate groups of bedouin, including some Tarabeen, Subhiyan, Sbeihat, Sarahin El-Ryati, and others, were now included within the tribe’s structure (Boneh 1983: 53).

Upon the establishment of Israel, the entire Southern District was placed under indefinite Military Administration. Part of the Administration’s responsibilities was to remove all remaining bedouin groups from their various locations and relocate them within a *siyag* (Hebrew: translated as a “restricted” or “fenced-in place”), a reservation-like region of some 1,000 square kilometers (see Map 1.1), that is, one-tenth the size of the original area of habitation in which the bedouin originally resided (Boneh 1983: 55–56).

With few exceptions, the vast majority of Negev bedouin complied with the removal order. In addition, the Administration required that the bedouin obtained permits in order to exit the *siyag*, which were given out on a limited basis and then only for purposes of travel, or to those who worked outside of the closed area in various occupations, including non-pastoral

activities. In reality, however, bedouin families living south of Be'er Sheva in the Mitzpe Ramon and Avdat areas were able to escape removal into the *siyag* because of their remote areas of residence. The Israelis did not in truth control the Negev and its borders fully until 1956—only then, two years after nearly all other Negev bedouin, did the bedouin in the more peripheral regions of the southern Negev take on Israeli citizenship. Moreover, the *siyag* was not totally closed. It was possible to leave, but only in one direction: Jordan (Hamamdi, 7 February 2007).

The *siyag's* purported purpose was to serve as a control and security mechanism, utilized both to protect the Jewish population of the new country from potential violence at the hands of the bedouin, as well as to concentrate the bedouin in one relatively small geographic area and remove them from “state lands.” From this point onward, state policy in the Negev served to encourage permanent bedouin settlement within a concentrated area, and effectively to eliminate nomadic activity as a whole (Marx 1967: 53–54). These efforts were based in part upon assumptions, expressed throughout the literature, that the passing of nomadism is a “natural” phenomenon (Meir 1997: 2), as peoples move from the pole of “traditionalism” to the pole of “modernity.” But in the Israeli case, this process may be further politicized and problemacized; with sedentarization and the active ceasing of nomadism, the bedouin would, some contended, experience changing political contexts, and a “cultural orientation away from the Arab culture of the Middle East toward a more modern Western culture” (Meir 1997: 5), most naturally embodied by the newly evolving Israeli State.

And yet, any measures to permanently settle, at the state's behest, on lands that were not traditionally their own were met with resistance and vigilance on the part of the community. Rather, the bedouin sought to maintain a continuity with past land holdings, viewing resettlement in the *siyag* as but a temporary development (Marx 1967: 54).

Four major areas of settlement soon resulted from the relocation: the Huzaiyil (Rahat), Hura, Laqiya, and Tel Sheva areas. These settlements initially had no government-directed plan, and no services other than schools. In the four settlements, some water provision was specially arranged. Settlement site location within the *siyag* was chosen based upon a variety of criteria, including proximity to highways in instances where residents sought easy transport access (Boneh 1983: 71).

The evacuation of the bedouin to the *siyag* led to restricted movement of the bedouin, whose free-ranging pastoral practices required large geographic areas in order to remain economically viable. Therefore, while this concentration did not bring an end to the pastoral aspects of bedouin society, it did signify the discontinuation of the active nomadic lifestyle by a majority of the bedouin population. The whole area was placed under

almost continuous cultivation, especially in barley and other cereals. Overuse of the soil was inevitable; erosion, though recognized as a danger, was simply accepted, as there seemed no way to conserve land in such a limited area (Marx 1967: 19). With the desire to control certain areas of the Negev for military purposes, the government placed further limitations on where animals could graze. But the need for pasture outside of the *siyag* continued throughout the mid to late 1950s, as flocks were increased in order to maximize potential profits. Conflicts with Jewish newcomers to the Negev led to additional political stresses, and further reluctance by the Administration to open more lands to the bedouin for pasturage.

The combination of landlessness and the difficulties of raising flocks on limited grazing land led to alternative activity in the wage labor economy. By the mid-1960s, 45 percent of bedouin male laborers worked in agriculture, 23 percent in construction, transport, and services, and 32 percent were “unemployed” (that is, they lacked employment in the wage labor economy; Meir 1988: 261). Still, pastoral activity and traditional

dry farming continued to provide a known alternative to the uncertainties of employment in the modern economy (Meir 1988: 263).

As Be’er Sheva was further developed as the regional center of the Negev during the early 1960s, its pull for bedouin labor increased. The founding

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Map 1.1. Location of the Recognized/Legal Negev Bedouin Towns as of 2000. Used by permission, courtesy of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

in 1961 of the new Jewish development town of Arad created a variety of job opportunities for bedouin wage labor as well, with light construction proving particularly attractive (Boneh 1983: 60).

As bedouin men increasingly turned to wage labor outside of their community, women, girls, elder community members, and others unable to work in these areas took over the responsibilities of tending flocks (though men remained responsible for camel herding; Marx 1967: 47). Like other Arab laborers in Israel, bedouin men were not allowed to remain in the cities or take their families there, thereby ensuring that they acquired only temporarily employment outside of the *siyag* (Marx 1967: 51).

Socially, the creation of the *siyag* led to severely crowded conditions, at least by bedouin standards. The population density in the area under Military Administration was 15 persons/square kilometer, as compared to 2 in the Sinai and 220 in the rest of Israel (Marx 1967: 14). Nearly 3,300 families were located there, intensively utilizing the available land as best as was possible for all agricultural, pastoral, and residential needs (Marx 1967: 19). This lack of freedom of mobility, particularly amidst a population that had previously moved about relatively freely without limits or borders, produced a number of societal impacts. The close geographic proximity of various groups who historically had remained distant from one another due to social, cultural, or familial reasons, were now brought together in a new social dynamic.

To be sure, some degree of spontaneous settlement had occurred prior to the creation of the State of Israel in the late 1940s. Some bedouin settled during the Ottoman period in the latter part of the nineteenth century, responding to market forces and opportunities that presented themselves in the areas of agricultural production and animal husbandry (Kressel 2003: 56). Moreover, as Abu-Rabia notes, the Ottomans strove to settle the bedouin by the turn of the twentieth century, a process that continued throughout the British Mandate period, as well as towns for some tribes that were developed in the western Negev (1994: 13). Thus, the imposition of the *siyag* served to disrupt the lives not only of those who were yet nomadic, but of those who had begun to settle as well.

Beginning in 1959, only one group member was allowed to go outside of the *siyag* (in the beginning of May) with the flocks in search of summer grazing. Usually a youth, the shepherd would follow his flocks, while his family would stay behind. "The camp thus [became] a more permanent center of the [Bedouin] group, while hitherto the members of the group had joined [the group] only at ploughing and harvest time" (Marx 1967: 85).

This led to perhaps the greatest social shift to take place in the bedouin community during this period, the transition from mobile to fixed camp locations (Marx 1967: 87). The permanence of the spontaneous settlements

inside the *siyag* provided fixed points of reference, and a sense of place previously foreign to the bedouin life experience. This development was to have profound repercussions later on, as the government sought to relocate the bedouin a second time, and to further concentrate the population into even fewer settlements.

The crux of the political conflict over land ownership typical of pastoral nomad-resettlement projects and access had thus begun. From the outset of the creation of the Military Administration of the Negev, the Lands Department of the Ministry of Agriculture sought to assert ownership over all of the land in the Negev, using the Ottoman Land Laws of 1858 and 1859 as the basis of its claims (Boneh 1983: 117).

Although the bedouin themselves were able to choose their settlement locations within the *siyag*, the “spontaneity” of this settlement clearly had been initiated by the state’s removal program (see Map 1.2). Therefore, the move from nomadism to semi-nomadism to permanent settlement was not spontaneous in nature. Rather, observers such as Boneh suggest that, “an alternative way of articulating the phenomenon of Bedouin settlement in the Negev [during the period of the *siyag*] is to view the Bedouin as *reluctant participants* in the process of sedentarization” (Boneh 1983: 72; emphasis added).

In this relatively enclosed environment, the Administration practiced indirect rule over the bedouin tribes by acquiring the assistance of various tribal sheikhs, in effect co-opting them, by granting favors and utilizing their respected positions in the community in order to exercise effective communal control. Allocation of land, for example, was undertaken via distribution through local sheikhs. They were thus empowered to decide who received which lands, and how much was received.

The sheikhs’ power thereby increased to the point that, by the mid 1950s, even tractors could only be purchased by permit—and again, permits were distributed via the tribal sheikhs. According to Marx, “a chief [sheikh] who had access to the Military Administration could gain many advantages for his tribesmen and, therefore, greatly increase their dependence on him. This put him in a position effectively to carry out the Administration’s instructions in the tribe” (Marx 1967: 44–45). At the same time, the relationship with the government allowed the sheikhs to influence where schools or other facilities might be placed in order to increase their prestige among their tribes (Meir 1990: 772); this in turn also implied that services were in effect “favors” rewarded for good behavior, rather than necessary facilities for all to utilize and to enjoy.

By conferring such powers and privilege upon the sheikhs, the state introduced what Boneh has contrasted with “the egalitarian status of Sheikhs typical of nomadic Bedouin” (1983: 59). Thus, it may be contended that a

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Map 1.2. The Location of the Recognized Towns in Relation to Nearby Jewish Communities and the *Siyag*.

Used by permission, courtesy of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

more top-down style of rule previously unknown in the community began to develop. To this point, bedouin society had been relatively decentralized, with each man having equal say and decisions being made largely based upon the Islamic principles of consensus (Arabic: *ijma'a*). But throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the community was controlled in a manner of concentration, encapsulation, and co-optation, with the traditional leadership increasingly playing a key role in helping the state carry out its agenda of what Boneh (1983: 59) calls “indirect rule.”

The bedouin were granted Israeli citizenship in 1954, soon after the *siyag* was created (Marx 1967: 54). A permanent leasing program was enforced beginning in the mid 1950s, despite hopes that citizenship would serve as a vehicle through which land might be returned to the community, as the bedouin had hoped. Citizenship also served to formalize the community's severed ties with other Arab and bedouin groups in the region. It also put

an end to cross border movement, by further encouraging a vested economic, if not political, interest in the Israeli State (Boneh 1983: 54).

In addition, by conferring citizenship upon the community, the state also took on the responsibility of providing the group with adequate healthcare, schools, and other facilities (Shapira, 24 November 1992). Such provisions were both costly and difficult, however, due to the geographic dispersion of the population, even within the *siyag* area itself.

It was within this context that the bedouin new town planning initiative was developed. In the early 1960s, the state determined that the creation of a limited number of sites would best serve the state and the community alike by permanently settling these nomads, which would act as an attractive tool to draw people together and to further concentrate them in urban areas. In addition, these services, which were not provided in the unplanned camp setting due to various logistical and budgetary limitations, could serve to further the socioeconomic development and modernization of the community into a contributing element of the broader Israeli society and economy. As Dudu Cohen, Director of the Ministry of the Interior, Southern District (24 April 2007) explains:

One of the reasons that the government decided to open development towns for the bedouin is that the government is not able to distribute services to such a widely distributed population ... If the government wants to put up a school—where should it put it? It's got to deliver educational services, social work services. A government can only deliver services in a central location.

And so, it's not just this government, all governments make the decision that they need to build settlements, [and that] within this framework the residents will be able to establish their life routines, to receive all the services that a government is obligated to give to its citizens, and also to allow the residents to progress and develop...

But if you want Internet [a later addition, to be sure], university, a little higher education, academics, you can't do it in the wilderness. You need the 'stuff': media, electricity, educational services, healthcare, higher education for the children. You need to create contact with and availability of all these services for the bedouin, or else their children will remain in the same situation that their parents are in.

And yet, there are those who would contend that when the resettlement plan was born on 19 September 1965, the primary impetus of the program was nothing of the kind, but was in fact the removal of the bedouin from the land, with the ultimate purpose of putting an end to their claims of land ownership throughout the Negev region (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 17).

Israel's bedouin new town program began in earnest with the designation of Tel Sheva as the first planned bedouin town, which followed the formal removal of the *siyag* (Boneh 1983: 74). By 1968, forty-three buildings had been constructed in the town by the Israeli government. The central business district included a community center, space for shops, a restaurant, and a youth club. Each house was built with a separation between the guest room and the rest of the house, in an attempt to replicate the design of a traditional bedouin tent.

According to outside observers, the town initially proved to be a failure (Boneh 1983; Horner 1982). Tel Sheva's planners failed to fully understand the nature of bedouin society, or the needs and desires of the community for whom the town was designed. Tel Sheva's houses, for example, were only 70 m² in size (Gradus & Stern 1985: 53), too small to house the large bedouin families for whom they were built. Windows were similarly designed too small for people who were accustomed to the wide-open expanses and the freedom of the open desert. Land lots were also only 400 m², large by Jewish Israeli standards, but still unable to accommodate both houses and outbuildings for livestock. Many new residents simply used the houses to house their animals, while they lived in traditional tents in their backyards (Gradus & Stern 1985: 54). Moreover, the town's center did not function well. Members of the community tended to shop once per week, generally at the Be'er Sheva Thursday *suq* (Arabic: market); as a result, the center's stores had little or no activity during much of the week.

By the mid 1970s, only 25 of the 46 houses built by the government were occupied (Boneh 1983: 74). Opposition to relocating to the town was based upon the mixed tribal living that Tel Sheva encouraged, and the inability adequately to maintain traditional modesty and privacy practices given the town's physical layout and design. Planners' attempts to quickly integrate disparate bedouin groups through physical planning failed to recognize the strength of ongoing tribal rivalries (Ben-David 1993: 44). Still, many bedouin groups did relocate to the area *around* the town, attracted by the services provided there, even if they did not want to live *in* the town.

Those who did move into Tel Sheva itself were overwhelmingly *fellahi* bedouin in origin (see Chapter 5). These bedouin had originally come to the Negev from Egypt via the Gaza district beginning at the turn of the twentieth century (Kressel et al. 1991: 29), fleeing difficult living conditions in the Nile Valley that encouraged a significant out-migration (Kressel 2003: 29). Following their movement eastward, they had found protection, assistance to earn their livelihoods, and, most importantly, land for agriculture, which they did not own but leased from the "True" *Arab* bedouin tribes in the area (see Marx 1967: 66).

Though these *fellahi* groups were accepted into the “True” bedouin community, they acted as landless tenants to these bedouin (particularly as agriculturalists), and held an inferior social position in relation to them (Kressel et al. 1991: 31). While Boneh suggests that “annexed” *fellahi* bedouin groups were expected to pay patronage to their “True” bedouin advocates by offering them their daughters as wives (especially second wives), for example, to further seal the *fellahi*-“True” bedouin arrangement (1983: 96), Marx (1967: 67) states that this behavior was not common when he conducted his fieldwork.

Despite their social inferiority, the *fellahi* bedouins’ role in the resettlement of the Negev bedouin is a crucial factor. For the most part, the *fellahin* took on the material culture and lifestyle of the “True” bedouin when they came to the Negev, becoming virtually indistinguishable in appearance. But this acculturation process moved in two directions (Kressel et al. 1991: 45), with an inter-penetration between both cultures, sets of values, and lifestyles. The *fellahin* impacted the “True” bedouin, as they brought agricultural behaviors and practices to the Negev, while they took on the residential patterns of the local culture and lifestyle, living in tents and dressing and behaving as the local bedouin behaved.

Unlike their “True” brethren, the landless *fellahi* bedouin, who had once lived in adobe huts in the Nile Valley, sought permanent settlement in the Negev, and relied upon settled agriculture more than livestock raising as their primary economic activity. The *fellahi* bedouin also helped introduce modern tools and machinery into bedouin society (Kressel et al. 1991: 43), particularly in the field of agriculture.

Although the processes of environmental adaptation to agriculture and sedentarization in the Negev appear to correlate with the existence or lack of *fellahi* bedouin in a given area in the Negev, researchers have been unable to confirm this hypothesis (Kressel et al. 1991: 45–46). Still, what is clear is that by the beginning of the British Mandate period after World War I, only 86 percent of the bedouin, “True” and *fellahi* combined, were nomadic tent dwellers (quoted in Meir 1988: 259). The rest, primarily the *fellahi* bedouin, had already begun to settle in more permanent settlements, the precursors to today’s spontaneous and planned settlements.

Given the history and social environment of bedouin society, it is not surprising then that the *fellahi* bedouin led the way to settlement in the planned towns, beginning with Tel Sheva. These bedouin were more culturally receptive to the sedentary lifestyle of the planned town, given their backgrounds in sedentary agricultural villages and their desire to move up socially (which was impossible within the framework of the “True” bedouin tribal structure; Boneh 1983: 101).

As non-landowners and “lower class” bedouin, the *fellahi* bedouin therefore had little to lose in relocating and more to gain. The *fellahin* saw relocation to the town as a vehicle for upward mobility and land ownership. Resettlement also allowed them finally to separate themselves and become independent from the “True” bedouin tribes to whom they were indebted (Boneh 1983: 102).

Thus, the outstanding political and social divisions in the planned town of Tel Sheva remained between groups of *fellahi* and “True” bedouin origins. While “True” bedouin mostly refused relocation for fear of settling upon lands previously belonging to other “True” bedouin, the *fellahin* felt little reluctance to enjoy the fruits of the state’s initiative. Therefore, concerns over land ownership questions, which tended to follow along *fellahi*/“True” lines, continued to form the primary distinction between those groups choosing to relocate into Tel Sheva, and those who remained in non-planned settlements (Boneh 1983: 81).

Lastly, it is important to point out that the role of the *fellahin* in the bedouin’s resettlement in Tel Sheva and elsewhere was not universal. Neither *fellahi* newcomers, the Ottoman government, nor even traders penetrated the geographically harsh Azazmeh territory in the southern Negev Highlands to any degree throughout the aforementioned period of *fellahi* migration into the Negev. Therefore, the Azazmeh experienced limited exposure to outsiders, with the introduction of modern farm machinery, for example, occurring in the Highlands only well after the creation of Israel (Kressel et al. 1991: 46). The Azazmeh’s reliance upon their flocks, even when engaging in limited agriculture—using camels to pull plows for example (Kressel et al. 1991: 47)—reveals the degree to which the traditional preference for livestock helped to perpetuate a nomadic lifestyle in the southern interior reaches of the Negev. It may therefore be argued that the limited exposure to the *fellahin*, and a continued preference for livestock rearing even as its status was in decline (Kressel et al. 1991: 47), would prove to be contributing factors in later resistance on the part of the Azazmeh to settle in permanent locations.

Planning Since the 1960s

Overall, the outcome of the Tel Sheva relocation was at best mixed. A new approach to bedouin new town planning, which took the bedouin’s land use and social interests into greater account, began in the early 1970s with the construction of Rahat, twenty kilometers northwest of Be’er Sheva. Though the Rahat region was already home to a large spontaneous concentration of Huzaiyil bedouin, the town was planned and officially recognized as a legal

new town settlement by the government in 1973 (Boneh 1983: 77), when residents began to receive electricity and running water.

Unlike Tel Sheva’s plan, traditional bedouin sociocultural functions were expressed spatially in the Rahat plan (Gradus & Stern 1985: 55). The town was broken down into neighborhoods comprised of self-built homes, and was designed exclusively for related “True,” *fellahi*, or *Abid* (former black slave; see Chapter 5) bedouin groups. Outsider groups or tribes could no longer move into just any area, but had specific neighborhoods designated and preserved solely for their use. These large neighborhoods, which were connected by the town’s primary roads, served separate communities and helped to preserve tribal hierarchies. Circular roads, cul-de-sacs, and green spaces helped lend definition to the different neighborhoods.

As Fenster explains: “ethnic identity interests of the Bedouin can be identified as those which retain their cultural or national identity. In planning terms, [those interests take on] spatial expression [which] relates to meeting their landownership needs, respecting the privacy of the Bedouin clan, especially at the level of the nuclear and extended family, and the privacy of women” (Fenster 1991: 37). The physical layout of the towns also reflected the social engineering interests of the state. “From a social standpoint, the planners saw a social advantage in the tribal integration that would take place in large scale settlements, when agricultural settlements had up till then been inhabited by only one tribe” (Fenster 1991: 146). The social dynamic envisioned is diagrammed in Figure 1.1.

Additionally, economic opportunity, such as light industry, was introduced in the Rahat plan. Negev regional planners sought to centralize industry in specific areas and not to place industry in residential areas. In Jewish and Arab towns alike, the need for electricity, sewerage, and other major infrastructure are too expensive to provide to a variety of areas. The

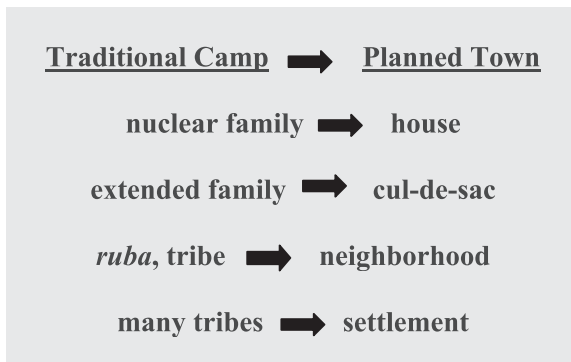


Figure 1.1 Bedouin Town Physical Layout Model.
Adapted from Fenster, 1991: cited, 150.

creation of concentrated industry zones for the maximization of economies of scale is, then, considered to be far more cost-effective (Gur, 18 May 1993).

The new policies and design features in Rahat helped to make the town a much greater success than Tel Sheva was in attracting residents. In the late 1980s, Tel Sheva underwent a replanning program in order to rectify previous planning errors, and to learn from the successes of the Rahat program (Abu-Saad, 2 November 1992; Gradus & Stern, 1985: 56).

Thus, by 1982, some ten to twelve thousand people were living in Rahat (Boneh 1983: 77), though the majority still remained, like Tel Sheva's immigrants, largely of *fellahi* origin. The population had nearly doubled by the early 1990s, and by 2007, the town had grown into a city, the largest bedouin community in the world, with a population of at least 42,000 residents (Dudu Cohen, 24 April 2007).

Soon after the creation of Rahat, in 1975 a group known as the Albeck Committee was created to discuss and address the ongoing "bedouin problem" and to seek some resolution to it. The problem, simply stated, was (and is) the ongoing challenge for how to relocate the bedouin into the towns, that is, to concentrate them into ever-increasingly smaller geographic living environments. There are three principles that developed out of this committee that are relevant to present-day concerns. First, it was restated that the state does not recognize that the bedouin own the land upon which they live (i.e., what is referred to throughout this volume as the "*pezurah*," (Hebrew: dispersion); that is, the term used by the state as well as the literature when referring to the unrecognized, informal, "illegal" settlements built by the bedouin on lands they claim as historically under their ownership). Second, the bedouin can be compensated for these lands when they relocate (despite the fact that they do not have a legitimate land ownership claim from the state's perspective). Lastly, this compensation to the bedouin would be premised upon the tacit agreement that they would only receive such monies so long as they then agreed to move to one of the planned towns (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 21).

Thus, following the construction of Tel Sheva and Rahat in the late 1960s and early 1970s, construction of K'seifa and Aroer ushered in a new era of planning. Unlike the four aforementioned large areas of bedouin concentration, the two towns were built as part of an effort to expropriate lands from the bedouin that were needed for a specific construction project. Moreover, bedouin town planning in the early 1980s shifted in emphasis, moving away from reliance upon a predominantly physical planning approach to one of greater concern for social and economic development. Increased awareness of tribal cleavages, an attempt to recognize and accept some agriculture activity in the urban areas, and a concern not only over

service *provision* but also service *quality* all contributed toward this trend (Ben-David 1993: 74–77).

The history of the building of K'seifa and Aroer (later renamed Arara B'Negev) in 1982 as a result of the Tel Malhata project had been discussed at length in Fenster's comprehensive dissertation (1991) and need not be detailed here. However, a brief review of some of the planning events of this period is relevant to understanding today's planning activities. In particular, the evolution of the resettlement program was a major turning point, due to the time pressures associated with this particular area of bedouin spontaneous settlement. For the first time, the government undertook a more inclusive, comprehensive, and intensified planning approach, utilizing development anthropological methods as part of the bedouin resettlement project.

The K'seifa and Aroer relocation project developed out of a 1976 plan for the northern Negev. The plan included construction of a military air base at Tel Malhata, which was eventually carried out in response to the withdrawal from the Sinai as a part of the Camp David Accords (Fenster 1991: 121). The base project required an area of 150,000 *dunams* (nearly 40,000 acres), upon which some five to seven thousand Negev bedouin resided (Fenster 1991: 161). At the time, 1,273 tents existed in the region; by 1979, nearly another 1,200 had been erected (2,464 in total, quoted in Fenster 1991: 129), largely in an effort to combat the government's removal plans. Families also expanded the building of tin, wood, and stone houses to create more "facts on the ground" (a strategy repeated often throughout the Negev, see below). Nearly 5,000 of these structures were built in 1982 alone (Fenster 1991: 130).

The need to quickly construct the base following the military pull-out from Sinai, and the realization that the bedouin would remain intransigent against the state's land expropriation efforts, demanded a reorientation of the resettlement process, which took into greater account the demands and land claims of the area's population. The government first had hoped that the bedouin would move from the land with little hesitance. When this failed to occur, however, the 1979 Land Law was passed with the intent to seize it. The resulting fears, anxieties, and rumors only further complicated state efforts to pursue its relocation agenda (Marx 1990: 233).

A "Bedouin Team" was created to help facilitate the removal order and to offer a comfortable alternative to the 1979 Land Law. The Team included anthropologists, planners, and others sympathetic to bedouin concerns (Fenster 1991: 163) and knowledgeable of their interests. Through the use of advocacy, mediation, and negotiation, the Team sought a pluralistic approach to the recognition of the bedouin's land rights, and to their essential participation in the planning and resettlement of K'seifa and Aroer (Fenster

1991: 171). The Team also sought to bring the state and the bedouin communities together in order to reduce the tension and conflict between the two, and to integrate the bedouin into Israeli society through improved services and a higher living standard.

In 1980, the Implementation Authority of the Camp David Accords Land Acquisition Law of 1980 was created by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Justice to carry out the building of the base (Shoshani, 7 December 1992). The Bedouin Team was incorporated into the Authority as a think tank to assist in pursuing bedouin cooperation through relocation (Fenster 1991: 166). This organizational change from the Bedouin Team to the Authority, that is, “from a pressure advocate group to a bureaucratic executive” (Fenster 1991: 178), revealed a shift in the project’s need for timely implementation.

The Implementation Authority acted as an umbrella group with four sections: 1) the Negotiating Team, responsible for questions of compensation and resettlement; 2) a think tank, (essentially the Bedouin Team), which served as problem solvers; 3) the Planning Team, which planned the settlements themselves, and included Ministry of Housing representatives; and, 4) the Administrative Team, which held the financial responsibilities of implementation. Other responsibilities included writing plans, town construction, preparation of irrigated land, data gathering, bedouin planning preferences, compensation agreements, supervision of evacuation, logistics, and accounting (Fenster 1991: 193).

Implementation occurred through a step-by-step process, in which there were a number of levels to accomplish the removal task. The preliminary level was to provide basic public services to the two towns, including schools, clinics, and neighborhood facilities, and then to wait and to see who would voluntarily relocate. The Authority then brought the plans to the bedouin to hear their opinions. The Authority found a number of limitations in its efforts, however. As one member explained, “[the bedouin] didn’t have a total understanding from maps, from descriptions on paper. So we went to the places themselves to show how development would actually appear, and where” (Shoshani, 7 December 1992). These leaders included sheikhs, heads of *hamulas*, teachers, and various people with some education or knowledge; that is, “not just simple people.”

Despite the seemingly “obvious” improvements that the new town living had to offer, the bedouin still proved unwilling to accept the relocation plan, refusing to trust totally those in positions of authority. The initial approach of the Bedouin Team and the Implementation Authority had been to approach and to work through the sheikhs and other traditional leadership in order to gain the trust of the community in pursuit of the government’s goals (Fenster 1991: 176). When, after a short time, it became apparent that

the sheikhs were similarly reluctant to cooperate with the removal effort, the government shifted away from the traditional leadership to the younger bedouin leadership, which they expected would prove more amenable to relocation and resettlement (Fenster 1991: 177), rather than to admit that inherent problems might be found within the allocation initiative itself.

Still, bedouin negotiators in these meetings were part of the community elite. They therefore were unable to speak for the whole of the community without first seeking group consensus. This desire to gain broader approval stemmed from Islamic principles of shared, democratic leadership, which call for group member agreement in the context of the decision-making process (*ijma'a*; Arabic: consensus). And yet, predictably, as more people were brought into the planning process, implementation of the project became that much more complex and ineffective (Fenster 1991: 178). The desire to get the relocation job done quickly led the Chief Negotiator to accept demands of various pressure groups, particularly the *fellahi* tribes in the area. These agreements did not necessarily serve the Authority or the bedouin, for that matter, in the long term, but they did help facilitate relocation (Fenster 1991: 195).

Various promises to individuals, such as “securing nomination of leaders of the clans as official sheikhs, licenses for weapons, licenses for driving taxis, and also promises relating to the development of services for each neighborhood such as schools and mosques” (Fenster 1991: 236), later backfired when it was revealed that the Authority lacked the power to deliver on such promises. Such agreements also served to create a system of reward for those who held out the longest (Fenster 1991: 237). Those with the most land also gained more than those with little or no land (Shoshani, 7 December 1992).

The building of K'seifa and Aroer well epitomizes the problems inherent in the bedouin resettlement project during this period. In particular, “the negative response of nomads to ‘top down’ sedentarization, even with positive incentive, stems from the simple fact that planning has not met their pluralist needs, either in cases when the physical layout of the settlement has not suited their ethnic needs, or where the very sedentarization process itself failed to provide their citizen needs” (Fenster 1991: 119–120).

Overall, the removal of bedouin to Aroer and K'seifa was unique because of the use of development anthropological methods and the inclusion of public participation in the towns' planning process. Experts and other advocates were engaged to facilitate a development anthropological approach previously lacking in Negev bedouin town planning. One could, therefore, conclude that the towns would better succeed in serving their residents because of the Implementation Authority's greater efforts to address the bedouin community's demands.

In the final analysis, the primary concern of the government was that of land appropriation for the military base, and it offered little in terms of the development of the existing community there. "We just wanted to build the air strip, that was our job," offered one of the planners involved in the project. "That was the final goal" (Shoshani, 7 December 1992). That said, the social and economic status of K'seifa and Arara B'Negev today differ little from the other towns in the bedouin system.

Throughout the 1980s, Negev bedouin resettlement moved slowly forward, oftentimes relying upon forced, rather than voluntary, relocation undertaken by the Green Patrol, an aggressive quasi-military entity created by Ariel Sharon in 1978 and operating out of the Israel Land Administration with the sole purpose of relocating the bedouin off of the land and into the towns, seemingly at any cost. As the first town in the system, Tel Sheva received considerable attention during this period as it was redeveloped toward the end of the decade in response to the more positive results experienced in other towns. Rahat, as the second town in the system, both learned from and contributed to the Tel Sheva planning experience, and was rapidly becoming the most successful of all of the towns in terms of attracting in-migrants. K'seifa and Aroer, as products of Camp David and the Sinai land agreement, offered unique compensation and incentives to area tribes in return for their relatively quick relocation off of the land needed by the state. By their very creation through the relocation of the population from the Tel Malhata region, they were automatically viewed as "successful" in terms of meeting the state's regional development needs; that is, the military base was built, so the relocation was a success.

In 1986, the Bedouin Authority, which developed out of the Tel Malhata initiative, was created. Although the Land Authority remains the overarching body overseeing bedouin concerns, this body to the present-day has direct jurisdiction over the daily interests and concerns of the bedouin community throughout the Negev. Since its creation, the Authority has a "monopoly" on planning and development in the community (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 39), playing a significant role in virtually every aspect of the bedouin's lives, both inside the planned towns and in the so-called "*pe-zurah*" (the "dispersed," unrecognized settlements).

The Authority has been criticized by some for having such considerable concentrated power. No other population in Israel is similarly governed by such an agency, which has been compared to the United States Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 33), an agency similarly criticized for being too paternalistic and controlling of Native American concerns and, for all intents and purposes, a "state within a state." Further, as Swirski & Hasson point out (2006: 44), all administrative positions in the Bedouin Authority are headed by Jews. The Director

confirms that this is the case and, he contends, it is for a good reason (Yeshuran, 10 May 2007):

Everyone who works here [in the Bedouin Authority] is Jewish. I had three bedouin working here when I first took over [just last year], but they soon left. They had difficulty doing the work. Bedouin don't wish to speak with other bedouin, they don't want them to know their business, to have them know their private affairs. Everyone now admits that having bedouin mayors was [also] a mistake. No one will get along or listen. In Arara [B'Negev] they now have two governments, as they have two competing groups and no one group will listen to the other.

As for the final two of the seven original bedouin towns, Hura (1989) and Laqiya (1985), (the development of Segev Shalom will be addressed in detail in Chapter 2), their creation was somewhat unique as well. As noted above, they, along with the Tel Sheva and Rahat regions, were home to substantial numbers of spontaneously settled bedouin since the time of the *siyag* in the 1950s and 1960s. Their recognition in the mid 1980s as legal "towns" (as opposed to the "unrecognized settlements"), to be formally developed and included within the planned town system, was a logical move on the part of a government anxious to provide for the most bedouin families at the least cost. Throughout the implementation period, the Land Authority continually sought to facilitate more voluntary resettlement whenever possible. Emphases were therefore placed upon greater provision of comforts and services, rather than upon removal by force or through monetary incentives.

Still, implementation of the resettlement project became standardized by the Land Authority during this period as well. A series of physical planning steps, in which town design reflected the potential demand for housing at the level of the sub-tribe, was developed and regularly utilized. The government approach to physical planning of neighborhoods, which developed in the late 1980s, was a byproduct of the design problems previously experienced. The planning steps were as follows (Shapira, 24 Nov 1992):

1. Take aerial photos of a spontaneous settlement, and try to count/estimate how many households exist there. Then, designate an adequate number of neighborhood lots in an appropriate town;
2. Enter the community on foot and actually survey the number of residents. Reach a closer estimate;
3. Plan a neighborhood based upon the tribal breakdown and population numbers involved.

Almost all of the lots in the towns were improved with basic infrastructure prior to their sale. These up-front costs were difficult for the government to absorb, particularly when the bedouin were resistant to relocation. On average, it cost the government 40,000 New Israeli Shekels [NIS] (about \$15,000 in early 1990s NIS) to develop a single, one *dunam* lot. Purchasers were charged 8,000 NIS (\$3,000) as part of the purchase price toward this infrastructure, and the government absorbed the difference. Services, such as sewers, were lacking in the bedouin towns when initially built because of the expense, as they were deemed too “rural and *moshav*-like, with houses too far apart to make sewers cost-efficient” (Shapira, 24 November 1992).

Eligible land-buyers in the bedouin new towns were required to fit into one of a number of specific categories. Those who could acquire lots included families comprised of a man, his wife, and children (both the man and the wife own the house, contrary to Muslim law in this regard); a woman with children; and single men over the age of 21 years, who have served in the Israeli army (Shapira, 24 November 1992). Single women and widows, regardless of age, could not acquire lots in the towns. This policy was based on the belief that if a woman then married, the resulting family would own two *dunams* of land. Though clearly undemocratic, the Land Authority argued at the time that, “we can’t afford for a family to have more than one *dunam*. Even today, one *dunam* is too large, because there is not enough land planned and allotted to the municipalities to adequately absorb present population demand” (Shapira, 24 November 1992).

A fourth and final step in the planning process was actively to encourage family group/*hamula* relocation following the near completion of a sub-neighborhood. This step, however, often proved to be the most challenging of all. On average, though 90 percent of the lots in a given neighborhood may be purchased, the Land Authority determined that only 40 percent were actually improved and occupied by their landowners during this period in the early 1990s. The remaining purchasers tended to remain in spontaneous settlements in the area, but did not choose to relocate into the towns.

Thus, the planning, development, and selling of the lots in a bedouin town were only the first stage in the relocation process. To measure proximity to completion of its planning goals, the Israeli Land Authority also looked at the ratio of lots planned, developed, and improved *to houses actually built and occupied*—that is, the relationship between the first steps of the government development of lots, and the final goal of getting people into houses upon those lots—and, I would add, off of the land claimed by the state.

A policy that continues to be followed to the present-day to address this issue allows resettlers to move into town before a house is actually built.

Families then have nine months to provide the Bedouin Authority (previously, it was the Land Authority) with a house design for a structure to be built, and then have two to three years to actually build the structure. However, if the structure is not built on time, the Authority will take no recourse against the family in question (Shapira, 24 November 1992). In the meantime, families are allowed to build shacks or tents in which they may live while preparing to build a permanent stone home, and while accumulating the necessary funds to support its construction (see Images).

The ease with which this process is implemented is, like most aspects of the resettlement initiative, a subject of widespread disagreement between the state and the bedouin community. Moreover, from the state's perspective, the process has been streamlined over the past 15 years, so that today, few families should encounter any difficulties in relocating to a town (Yeshuran, 10 May 2007):

Someone in the *pezurah* can apply to purchase a *migrash* [Hebrew: town lot] and have the process completed in a month. They need to know the number of the *migrash* they wish to buy, have photos, a town map, and put in an application. There are people here [in the Bedouin Authority] to help them through the process, to "walk them through." But anyone who wants to do it knows what to do. We have a lawyer here whose only job is to help them with this. If they need a ride to take them around we can help with that too.

The bedouin who must go through the process, however, offer a different viewpoint. In 2007, a 28-year old bedouin man, who already lives in a bedouin town, stated:

There's a lot of bureaucracy [to obtain a *migrash*], and it's not at all clear how to go through all the steps. But you have to go through the Bedouin Authority, and you have to show them a plan for at least a 100 meter² house [that you intend to build on the site]. Within 3 years it has to be built, and a house of this size will cost around 170,000 NIS (U.S.\$42,500).

Over the years, the ability effectively to attract newcomers has largely hinged upon a policy of seeking first to attract the new local bedouin leadership (*not* the local sheikhs, who often resist relocation for fear of lessened power or prestige in the new environment). If these leaders were not interested in resettling, the Land Authority would seek out people who were and would work with them to encourage tribal resettlement through its assistance.

As Authority officials explain, "we can't do it alone because [the bedouin] don't trust the Government. We find out who is interested in moving, and

go from there” (Shapira, 24 November 1992). Although this dynamic can prove useful for the state, insofar as it can work with designated individuals who in turn exercise considerable influence over family members, over the years, the issue of working with *hamula* resettlement as opposed to nuclear family resettlement presents additional challenges to state planners:

There’s an additional problem that from our perspective is making the normalization process in the bedouin population more difficult, and that is that bedouin are only willing to come as families, as *hamulas*. And so there’s no situation in this population in which a contractor gets a piece of land from the government and develops it, and then sells the units, in all the settlements. A contractor, if you can get him interested at all in building 300 living units, builds them, develops them, markets and sells them.

With the bedouin, it won’t work this way at all, because the people who will move there are only the people that the family will agree to live with. No one will go there with force. So you need to plan specifically for them. You can’t use a plan with a free market approach. You start to plan with relatives, the tribe, the *hamula* and you know that not everyone can live opposite the other. You know that there’s a large group that won’t live with a second group.

It’s an obstacle to planning, because this is not a sophisticated free market that you can come and say, ‘I’ll plan, and the market forces will function. The contractor can raise the prices, lower the prices, everyone can live with everyone else.’ It’s not like this with the bedouin population. (Dudu Cohen, 24 April 2007)

In a “worst case” scenario, the Land Authority will take bedouin groups or sub-tribes to court in order to remove them from the land. By law, bedouin living outside of the town system in the *pezurah* are illegal squatters; there have been no successful attempts to fight the government relocation in the court system. After residents move out of an unrecognized settlement (and sometimes before), the government razes the settlement with bulldozers in an attempt to discourage residents from returning. The rationale for this policy, beyond the service provision discourse set out in September of 1965, has, forty years later, simply come down to a question of the rule of law. The Director of the Bedouin Authority states: “To be a modern, planned state, you have to have order. Look at this map! Look at all the unrecognized settlements all over the place. This isn’t order” (Yeshuran, 10 May 2007).

As recently as the early 2000s, it was possible to say that “several thousand” bedouin still resided in tents in the Negev (Kressel 2003: 89). By the end of the decade, however, this was no longer true, and very few tents

could be found anywhere in the region other than in the tourist areas (see Chapter 7). Rather, following a pattern that appears, to the Western observer at least, to be modeled on the children's story of the "Three Little Pigs," those bedouin who do not wish to relocate to the towns, some 40 percent of the population (Dudu Cohen, 24 April 2007; Yeshuran, 10 May 2007), are instead increasingly replacing their tents with tin shacks, and their tin shacks with cinder block structures. They are laying down cement pads for walkways and sitting areas as well. The rationale for these efforts is clear; the more "permanent" such communities appear, the bedouin believe, the less likely they will be destroyed, uprooted, and forced out by the Green Patrol and its army of bulldozers. By using ever-stronger building materials, the bedouin are seeking to communicate a message to the state of: "we're here to stay; we're not going anywhere—your huffing and puffing notwithstanding."

Thus, planning for the urbanization and resettlement of the Negev bedouin has evolved considerably since its inception in the 1960s, relying upon a top-down model typical of a centralized, state-centered planning approach. Only in recent years have the views of community members been incorporated into the planning agenda through the use of regional, and later local, councils (see Chapter 2). While these councils in theory exercise direct control over the daily affairs of the planned bedouin towns, the reality is that their role in the planning process is largely limited, serving as agents of "resistance" and "resilience" to the state's efforts (Meir 2007: 205), while most if not all of the actual planning and governing of the towns remains divided, shared, and largely contested under the aegis and jurisdictions of the Land Authority, the Bedouin Authority, and the Ministry of the Interior. As Meir sums up the issue,

The state used its hegemonic power in this regard to impose the scientific rationality of the planning process. Thereby, planning was employed in its classical traditional mode, that is a rational and objective activity viewing all human agents in space as one type. By regarding the western style of urban life as the only viable option for the Bedouin, and by excluding them from participating in decision making, the state in fact considered its knowledge superior to that of the Bedouin. It acknowledged no "otherness" in this respect. (2007: 212)

As a result, planning for healthcare services, education, infrastructure, and social welfare services in concentrated urban locations, the bulwark of the resettlement and modernization initiative and the main attraction to be offered to potential resettlers, remains primarily in the hands of the Israeli State with limited local control. Moreover, over forty years later, the bed-

ouin new towns are the subject of much criticism and controversy. Rather than serving as nodes of social and economic development and modernization, many contend that they are nothing less than violent, impoverished, crime-infested slums.

The Outcome—The Socioeconomic Viability of the First Seven Planned Towns

While explanations for the causes will vary, few do not acknowledge in the early twenty-first century that the first seven bedouin new towns that were planned in the Negev are in crisis. The extent of the situation, the level of concern, and the answers for how to move forward vary, most especially between state and bedouin observers. One thing can be stated with certainty: poverty and the malaise found in the towns today can be traced directly to a lack of access to a variety of resources, beginning with the land itself.

Several statistics bear out this contention. First, between 65 percent and 75 percent of the Negev bedouin population as a whole lives below the national poverty line (Katz and De Schutter 2001: 24). Second, while 27 percent of the Negev population is bedouin, the community today lives upon 2 percent of the land. In Segev Shalom, for example, an area of 5,500 km², the population was 6005 residents in 2005, providing a density of 915.8 people/km² (Bustan Report 2005: 3). And yet, according to Dudu Cohen of the Interior Ministry (24 April 2007), even this density is not adequate. “Land is a finite obstacle, it is not something you can produce, it is a given, a fact. You must use the land in the most correct way, the most intelligent way. You can’t waste land, because if you waste it, you can’t find new land to replace it. So you must do good planning that looks at the future needs, not just in the next five, ten years, but fifty years into the future and ask, what will be? And so it will not be possible to continue to live as the bedouin do in the density that they live today.”

A few places that a bedouin can go, at least to visit if not necessarily to live, are neighboring Jewish communities near and around Be’er Sheva. Meitar, population 6,400 in 2005, has a density of 381.5 residents/km²; Omer, population 5,900 in 2005, has a density of 293.8 residents/km²; and, Mitzpe-Ramon to the south, population 5,000, has a density of 78.1 Jewish Israeli residents/km² (Bustan Report 2005: 4).

But, of course, the dearth of land is only one resource that is notable in the bedouin towns. In truth, resources of all kinds are in fact lacking, and land is but one of many scarce commodities. Lithwick, for example, in his study of the first seven towns, notes that the average family income in the

bedouin towns is less than half of that in Be'er Sheva (2002: 9). And yet, given the extremely high bedouin birthrate, three times the national average, the urban population is increasing at 5 percent per year based on natural increase alone; excluding migration numbers, the population in the towns was expected to double between 2002 and 2010 (Lithwick 2002: 11).

As of 2002, the total population of the planned communities was 76,364, according to the Negev Regional Development Center (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 66)—suggesting that some 150,000 bedouin live in the seven urban communities, not to mention the additional nine communities that have since been added to the bedouin planned settlement system within the Abu-Basma agreement (see below). Were one to measure the “success” of the resettlement initiative in these numbers alone, there is no doubt that the urbanized bedouin population, and more to the point, the percentage of the population living in one of the planned towns, is very clearly on a skyward trajectory.

With a natural growth rate of 5.5 percent, the Negev bedouin population doubles itself every fourteen to fifteen years. This issue alone, the state contends, is enough to provide a barrier against effective, realistic service provision, as planners simply cannot keep up with the growth of the community (Dudu Cohen, 24 April 2007).

Lithwick also notes one of the most commonly held criticisms of all of the towns: they have no economic rationale to offset the community's population “explosion” (2002: 10). The towns have been planned with limited commercial or industrial infrastructure, no transportation or communication links, and thus little ability to attract investment. “[Regarding] the seven Bedouin towns, it is difficult to discover even ... minimal systematic rationales for their creation. To most disinterested observers, the first initiatives have been deemed to be serious failures. Later towns were based on minor modifications and improvements but in the large, they tended to follow the same if not always clearly stated formula that could hardly be appropriate for such diverse entities” (Lithwick 2002: 12–13).

As Swirski and Hasson note, low level budgeting and limited follow through in terms of using the allocated funding appropriately explains many of the financial difficulties experienced by the bedouin towns (2006: 58–59), which, since their creation, consistently have remained amongst the ten poorest communities in the State of Israel. Rahat, they note, has a library, but no books had been purchased for it over a year after it was built (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 57).

In 2003, the Israeli Land Authority allocated 4.5 million NIS for the Bedouin Authority. In the same budget, it allocated 25.8 million NIS for “Land protection” and 121 million NIS for “Planning and development in the minorities sector.” And yet, while three-quarters of the budget for “Land

protection” was actually used, only half of the funding set aside for “Planning and development” was used; half the funds simply were not taken up (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 81).

The economic difficulties of the towns are clearly evident when it also comes to the vicious cycle of limited tax bases upon which further to build and to extend infrastructure and growth. While the state is willing to provide its share, the assumption is that the bedouin town residents, living within a market-based economy, will provide theirs as well. “The government undertook to finance the development costs, while residents of the new localities were asked to finance housing construction, with the help of a mortgage amounting to 70 percent of the basic cost of building a dwelling unit” (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 17).

While such expectations appear to be fair and equitable and are found across the country in the Arab and Jewish sectors alike, the situation in the Negev bedouin towns is a familiar Catch-22; without adequate job opportunities, incomes are low or nonexistent. The unemployment rate in the bedouin towns as a whole, for example, is approximately 35 percent, compared to 12 percent in nearby Be’er Sheva. Over 64 percent of those who are employed occupy “blue collar” positions (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 95). The state planners are aware that such issues are a concern, but believe that over time things will change:

We need to bring employment that is appropriate in today’s contemporary times that can include the bedouin. If we were to bring just any industry that requires high levels of knowledge or technology, they won’t be included in it. They end up being janitors, landscapers, and service workers ... So we are talking about industries like carpentry, metalworking, vegetable [growing], greenhouses—things like they do in Gaza. That’s the first phase. Of course, we’re also bringing high tech here mainly because of the university and the young people we want to keep here.

In another fifteen or twenty years, if the young bedouin also will change the character of his educational level and preparedness a bit and wants to integrate, there will be a place for him to go. But we are working on these two levels simultaneously because we need to bring employment that’s suitable to both the bedouin population and the Jewish population. But you always need the carpenter, the car mechanic and also the high tech guy in every society ... that’s everywhere in the world. (Dudu Cohen, 24 April 2007)

Moreover, cultural restraints limit female participation in the workforce, although this is changing (see Chapter 6). According to an analysis conducted in the mid 2000s, 87 percent of bedouin women living in the planned towns

are not considered “in the labor force.” As for those who are considered a part of the force (i.e., the remaining 13 percent), 80 percent of these women are employed (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 96).

Nonetheless, whether male or female, monthly wages for urbanized Negev bedouin average about 3,000 NIS/month less (males) and 1,700 NIS/month less (females) than their counterparts in Be’er Sheva. The gap is slightly less when compared to workers in the neighboring Negev town of Yeruham (1,750 NIS/900 NIS, respectively), one of the poorest Jewish communities in the State of Israel (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 97).

Regardless, the bedouin towns are poorly planned in terms of offering any realistic way of being self-supporting or self-sustaining; lacking virtually any economic infrastructure, a reliance upon market forces to attract badly needed investment or employment opportunities is not very realistic, particularly when the Jewish sector in the Negev finds itself similarly neglected much of the time by a state that limits its attention or investment anywhere south of Qiryat Gat. Thus, the creation of the planned towns may have solved some of the state’s concerns, but from the perspective of the bedouin community, they have done nothing of the kind:

From the viewpoint of the country’s leaders, concentrating the Bedouin in townships is a ‘solution’ with clear advantages, the chief among which is to reduce the visibility of ‘the [Bedouin] problem.’ The Bedouin will be neatly confined in their townships, and the concentration of camps and tin shacks will no longer constitute an eyesore for those traveling the Negev highways and byways.

However, it is a moot point whether this will suffice to solve ‘the problem,’ since all the problems that today trouble the residents of the ‘recognized’ [that is, planned] localities are likely to surface for those who have been resettled: the lack of infrastructure, the low quality of public services, the absence of economic development, and the dearth of economic opportunities. (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 99)

The cyclical nature of the unemployed bedouin’s inability to support the tax bases of their own communities is exacerbated by the fact that those bedouin living informally in the *pezurah* are well aware of the lack of employment in the towns, the higher cost of living due to taxes and fees, and the increased tensions with other tribes. Rather than the towns serving as magnets and drawing more in-migrants in to help further support their struggling economies, the towns appear to offer disincentives for resettlement. To coin the old adage, “good news travels fast,” among the bedouin of the Negev, “bad news travels faster.” Thus, many bedouin refuse to relocate to town because of this growing recognition. “This awareness [of eco-

conomic struggles and unemployment] became associated with their refusal to evacuate the lands they claimed until the issue of ownership is settled. They believe that the drawbacks of life in towns outweigh the benefits” (Meir 1997: 199).

And yet, from the perspective of the government and the planners who are most directly responsible for the state of the bedouin towns, any fault for their slow development or progress seems to lie everywhere but in the towns’ planning. There is some concession that perhaps the towns offer too few options, but this is an area that the state now hopes to rectify with the establishment of nine additional towns under the Abu Basma agreement (2000; Swirski & Hasson 2006: 50). As Cohen explains (24 April 2007): “we know that we failed in the fact that we planned only one model of settlement for them ... we didn’t create other models of settlement, for example, like *moshavim*, to enable them to carry out agricultural activities ... and so, in the framework of the plans for the settlements of Abu Basma we’ve fixed that, and all the new settlements are mixed ..., and whoever wants to raise herds or agriculture will have a neighborhood that’s planned for it.”

Cohen explains that, already, there are residents of Rahat who are now raising flocks, as in the past, but these flocks have now been removed outside of the city into an area comparable to an industrial zone, which is isolated from the residential part of the community. A main road provides a water system, sewerage, and infrastructure in order that those who wish can maintain their animals, but in a manner that is healthy and more acceptable to the community as a whole. He explains: “That’s how we can take out all the herds that are now inside the city, and manage the livestock all under a cooperative management system, like a ‘mall’ for raising herds. Each one has his own area, but it’s cooperatively managed because it is a large number of animals, and there’s a large movement of trucks bringing in and taking out the feed, [and] providing water ... but today, in the newer settlements, we’re doing this integrated design right at the start.”

Such a concept clearly offers promise and is reminiscent of Prof. Gideon Kressel’s idea of developing “Villages for Shepherds” (1988), which he first publicized in his 2003 volume, though he had broached the idea with colleagues years earlier. Such a plan serves as a culturally appropriate response to past economic difficulties, when many bedouin tribesmen were forced to give up their income from pastoralism and farming, only to discover that there was no compensation to be found in wage labor opportunity in the towns (Meir 1997: 201).

From Cohen’s perspective, the state has little to lose in making such compromises. Rather, he believes that the shift to modernity and “progress” is well under way, and there is little the bedouin (or anyone else for that matter) can do to stop it. And yet, despite his optimism, the Abu-Basma plan,

which seeks to integrate urban life with some aspects of agriculture production and pastoralism, reveals that Israel's planners have begun to accept the fact, perhaps begrudgingly, that not only do the bedouin resist planning that fails to consider their best interests, but they also refuse to conform to it. As the bedouin become more educated and as bedouin society becomes increasingly integrated with Jewish society, as Cohen describes, an unintended outcome is that the bedouin are also that much more aware that the services and provisions in their towns are inferior to those in the Jewish sector. As a result, they are becoming increasingly more assertive and sophisticated, are embracing greater expectations, and are more demanding that their concerns be addressed than they ever have been before (Meir 1997: 201–203).

The outcome is in stark contrast to the planning approach of the past. Still, in the final analysis, it is clear that the planners in charge of implementing Israel's bedouin resettlement initiative are, above all, seeking ways in which to pacify the bedouin community, while simultaneously accomplishing the greater goal of getting the bedouin off what is believed to be state land. As Moshe, planner for the Bedouin Authority, explains it:

When we give solutions to the immediate situation, we give them to the bedouin in such a way that it says in the future, in another ten of fifteen years if the head of the family wants to *change* the nature of these [agricultural/pastoral] lots to residential, there'll be that option. We leave it open in the mechanism of the plan to change it. They'll have to pay a few *agorot* [Hebrew: pennies] in order to change it, but that's okay. That's a natural thing.

But we leave in, and that's the built-in idea of the plan—that's the way it should be, *what [the bedouin] wants*. You see the goal? The goal is the usage of the lot. If for now it's agricultural, he can change it to residential in a very short process, a localized, short process. This is the biggest change in the planning, and in my opinion, the greatest change that we have made in the past few years. (15 February 2007)

Conclusions—The Unclear Benefits of Urban Living

This account of the bedouin resettlement initiative over the past five decades allows for a number of inter-related conclusions at this juncture. First, many state planners argue that the issue of bedouin concern over their losing ownership over the land when they resettle is a red herring. They contend that the resettlement initiative is, first and foremost, recognition of the

changes that are happening naturally within bedouin society. Resistance to relocation, they contend, is simply strategic; why relocate without gaining financially from the state? The longer one waits and “squats” on the land, the more this will force the government’s hand; or better still, the more likely that one will not have to move at all. Or so the argument goes.

It is my contention, conversely, that it is the potential loss of their land to the state that forestalls most bedouin resettlement, but for many today it is more than this. Ultimately, the reason so many bedouin, 40 percent of the approximate population of 175,000 who currently do not move, is directly due to the failure of the planned towns to serve as the Utopian magnets they might have been, which were supposed to be designed to draw in resettlers. This, despite the fact that living in the so-called *pezurah* is illegal and that the approximately 40 settlements located in the *pezurah* are subject to demolition at any time. In essence, I have argued with the various government officials with whom I have spoken that if the bedouin do not feel that living in the towns is an improvement over living in the *pezurah* (or further, if they believe that such a move is for the worse), they will have no incentive, other than the rule of law, to relocate.

Interestingly, in time, I found that these officials and I shared a meeting of the minds. Ilan Sagie, for example, an Interior Ministry official, stated his view this way (24 March 2007):

All the Azazmeh are supposed to go into Segev Shalom. But they are saying that they don't want to. Why? You know exactly why. Today the bedouin are 'playing on the eyes' of the Government. And in my opinion it's a good game. If I was on their side, I would behave exactly the same way. First there were seven bedouin cities, now there are sixteen since the Government approved another nine [under Abu-Basma]. And they're saying, 'If we sit and wait, they'll approve more' ... [Among] the bedouin, everybody wants to live exactly where they're living right now [in the *pezurah*].

They just want the Government to approve a settlement and bring them roads, water, and electricity, and a clinic, and a kindergarten ... and then they can stay there, each one on top of his own hill. That's what they want. The State cannot allow such a thing for many reasons. So they're playing a waiting game. 'If we hold out longer, we'll get more of what we want.'

And yet, no sooner did he complete his thought that he then conceded:

But you're right, that's exactly the reason that people aren't moving to Segev Shalom. They think differently than we do. They think they're losing [when they come to town] because for them, living alone with your wife and children is preferable. It's not important under what conditions, it's

preferable alone [to] them, because they live with their extended family, their sub-tribe.

To live with others invites troubles. That's their thinking. So if they think they are inviting trouble, they will come up with all kinds of reasons why it's better to sit there and not move. Look, if you were to ask me if I would be willing to live under the conditions the way they're living today in the *pezurah*, I'd say, 'What, have you fallen on your head?' I'd be willing to go and live in Segev Shalom. Under no circumstances would I be willing to live in the *pezurah* ... But it's a different mentality, the bedouin mentality, and you can't erase it in a few or ten or even twenty years.

Given this logic, one could argue that even the best-planned towns would not attract in-migrants, as the bedouin have motivations that simply defy the interests of the state. But when one adds to this the further realization that, in truth, the towns are not in any way the "best planned," it should be a surprise to no one that bedouin attitudes toward the resettlement initiative remain at best skeptical.

In truth, it is well recognized that the towns have been victims of benign neglect (or worse) since their creation. As such, the differences between the town and the informal settlements (see Chapter 3) are less blatant than Sagie implies. On the one hand, housing cannot be compared; most houses in the towns are far larger and of a higher quality than the temporary dwellings of the *pezurah*. On the other hand, being able to afford to initiate *and complete* a permanent stone home is an ongoing challenge that many simply cannot accomplish and thus, they live inside the town but in temporary homes, including some tents, which are no different from those in the *pezurah*.

Like Sagie, however, Cohen does not see things in this light. From his perspective, the planned town is clearly an improvement over the unplanned one, although he grudgingly offers that some improvements to the towns may be appropriate (24 April 2007):

One of the most important things today is to raise the attractiveness of the permanent settlements. We know that today, perhaps, it's not so attractive, but it's more attractive than living in some tent somewhere, without a road, with sewage running in the street, without water so you have to bring it in drums. But that's what we in the Bedouin Authority do, raise the attractiveness of the permanent settlements.

Again, it should be noted here that all unrecognized settlements have access to running water (though not at each individual dwelling or household) and residents no longer are reliant upon wells or cisterns. None have sewage in the streets; the bedouin are incredibly clean, and their culture

demands that they take great care in how they handle human waste. The unrecognized towns do in truth have roads, which are not necessarily paved, of course.

But then, many of the streets of the planned towns are not paved. Not all planned town residents have access to electricity or telephone service. For years, Israel's bedouin in the *pezurah* and towns alike have used cell phones, not relying upon the landline option. While some informal settlements have Internet access via satellite dish, many parts of the planned towns lacking phone lines do not. And yet, Cohen continues:

If a bedouin in the *pezurah* prefers to live in the wilderness without water and without electricity, relying on a generator, the sewage flowing by him, and afterwards he becomes ill and comes and complains to the State saying 'why is he sick,' I have no answer for this. This is a conflict that always exists. His son is studying in Segev Shalom, that's true, but he meets in the school, let's suppose, the son of someone else who lives in Segev. But the son of the one who lives in Segev, when he comes home to his house there, he has electricity, he can connect to the Internet, he can study and do things, and he tells the son who lives in the *pezurah* what he did the night before. And the one from the *pezurah* can't do it, because he hasn't got these things.

So through that connection, you create a stimulus in the children of the *pezurah* who put pressure on the parents, 'why don't I have electricity? Why can't I connect to the Internet?' This is a situation that we call non-formal education.

It can be argued that the model the state is embracing is one of development, which relies upon the bedouin residents' innate jealous and competitive nature and desire to "keep up with the Hamamdīs" by relocating to these "Levittowns," as Americans sought to "keep up with the Joneses" during the height of rapid suburbanization in the 1950s and 1960s. But more to the point, it is a development strategy that will only work so long as the "boy" in the town can actually connect to the Internet (in Segev Shalom, half of the neighborhoods do not have phone lines and therefore no Internet access), can frequent the Community Center (Segev Shalom does not have a *Matnas* community center), can participate in after-school clubs or activities, or for that matter, can participate in affordable camps (as very little of this exists in the planned towns, see Chapter 3).

Moreover, the state believes that it must continue to provide services in the *pezurah*, if not simply because the bedouin are citizens who have a right to these provisions, then because "you believe that education and enlightenment will help the bedouin society to progress, and not the op-

posite.” In theory, in other words, the state could withhold these services in an attempt to place further pressure upon the bedouin to resettle, “but then the state would’ve shot itself in the foot, because the instant there is no education, then you start with problems like violence, and problems like [bearing large] numbers of children and polygamy. When someone has education and enlightenment, automatically, these numbers are reduced. We have surveys that show that the instant that people moved to an urban settlement, they tend to marry fewer wives and have fewer children” (Dudu Cohen, 24 April 2007).

The idea then is not to make the settlements of the *pezurah* unlivable, but to make the towns attractive. But, it is argued, this is not solely the job of the state, nor is it a budgeting matter alone. The desire to make the towns attractive to in-migrants, and to respond to the criticisms often leveled concerning inadequate jobs, infrastructure, and the like often raises other difficulties that many planners may not consider.

There’s always someone who thinks that whatever you try to do, someone from your *hamula* needs to profit from it. It’s hard to manage things this way. The bedouin were never in a situation when they had to come to an agreement between themselves. When you’re in the wilderness, you don’t have to reach agreements with anyone. This is your territory, this is his territory, you don’t trespass on him, he doesn’t trespass on you. But it isn’t the same when you have to live together and you have to reach agreements.

There are places where we haven’t succeeded in putting in a sewage line 300 meters, because it passes through the territory of ‘*Hamula A*’ and they will not agree to have a sewage line in their territory. And what’s a sewage line for goodness sakes, you don’t disturb anything! You dig, put in the pipe line, and cover it up, and there’s no problem. Lord Above! ... It’s difficult. Also for the people who work here it gives the feeling that “Well, if they don’t want it why on earth should we help them?”

Ultimately, what comes out of the discussions with Cohen and the other state planners can be enumerated as follows:

1. Plans for the bedouin towns were poorly designed from the outset, failing to take bedouin participation, cultural interests or other concerns into account;
2. Budgeting for true development in a variety of areas has, since the creation of the program, been offered at a level that suggests that the initiative was halfhearted at best;

3. The state planners appear, despite a lack of funding and foresight, to be seeking to implement the initiative as well as they are able, although their directive is, ultimately, to get the bedouin community off of the land and into the towns;

Lastly, it is quite apparent that:

4. The bedouin community is skeptical of state planning efforts, distrustful of government motives, and reluctant to conform to its demands, even when, at times, the state's actions have the potential to benefit the community.

In conclusion, then, I began this chapter speaking about Utopianism. Needless to say, the bedouin towns of the Negev desert are dystopian at best. State planners and residents alike find themselves in a situation today in which there is much criticism and blame to go around, yet few easy answers exist to resolve the crisis plaguing these communities. In the final analysis, more than forty years after the resettlement initiative was implemented, the state and the bedouin, the planners and the residents, still appear to be missing one another, literally and figuratively, by speaking a different language, holding differing expectations, goals, dreams, and desires.

Ultimately, it appears that in many ways, the major distinction between the planned towns and the informal settlements is, for the bedouin at least, the fact that the state has deemed these densely concentrated areas that have enjoyed a certain level of planning as “legal,” while those lands upon which the bedouin sit today, lands the state lays claim to as it continues to consolidate its hold on what was once Arab Palestine, are deemed illegal. Indeed, not only do many in the bedouin community perceive that there is little difference in this regard, but even those involved with administering the resettlement initiative similarly note that this distinction can to a certain extent be put into question (Yeshuran, 10 May 2007):

Moving to town because living in an unrecognized settlement is against the law is no small thing. But there are other reasons: electricity is more expensive in the *pezurah* than in town, especially when they are using generators. Water in town is easy to get, you just turn on the faucet. The towns are orderly, unlike the *pezurah*.

But yes, if the State brings the services [education, healthcare] to the bedouin in the *pezurah*, then you're right, what's the point of moving? There is a conflict right here in this state. This is a governmental problem, not a bedouin problem. The courts say that the bedouin in the *pezurah* must

have these services, and so they get them [even though they live in the *pezurah*] and even though the State also says they are living illegally. It's a real controversy, and there's no agreement.

Until there is an agreement, one can appreciate the ambivalence that many bedouin, some 75,000 or so, feel about relocating to one of the towns.

And yet, in the meantime, despite all of the negative concerns expressed above, the irony is that living in the towns *does* have its benefits. In the chapters that follow, I will analyze data gathered in one of the recognized towns, Segev Shalom, between late 1992 through to early 2007, that will reveal that overall, residents who have resettled there are in many ways better off socially and economically than their family and friends in the neighboring *pezurah*. At the same time, however, I will reveal as well that despite these improvements in virtually every possible area of growth, the residents of Segev Shalom are less satisfied with their conditions and circumstances than one might anticipate. Not only are many of the bedouin today *less* content with their lot than in the past when they lived in more difficult and challenging circumstances, but the community as a whole has become more politicized, agitated, and resentful—all unanticipated consequences of the bedouin planned town initiative.

NOTE

*Some of the historical information in this chapter comes from Dinero, Steven C. 1995. "Human Settlement in Post-Nomadic Bedouin Society: An Assessment of Social and Economic Transformation in Segev Shalom, Israel." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate Program in Urban Planning and Policy Development. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Chapter 4.

Chapter 2

Segev Shalom—Background and Community Profile

A person educated in the ways of the desert can make it in the city, but not vice versa.

—Muhammad (Abu-Tarek) Hamamdi, Segev Shalom, Israel,
24 April 1993

The founding of the Negev bedouin town of Segev Shalom/Shqeb as-Salaam (Hebrew/Arabic) was officially inaugurated in 1979 as the result of a unique agreement struck between Azazmeh Sheikh Ouda and the state, and was designed to allow the tribe to settle on its own traditional lands rather than to be relocated on others' land as had been the case with the other tribes that had resettled years earlier. Together with Aroer and K'seifa, the two towns that had been created in 1982 (Swirski & Hasson 2006: 14) within the context of the Tel Malhata project, these three localities comprised the *Moatzah Masos* (Hebrew: *Masos* Regional Council) from 1988 until 1996, when the three were split into separate municipalities.

The Segev Shalom Local Council was then created as its effective replacement to govern the town and was comprised of nine members. And yet, it was not until four years later, in 2000, that Segev Shalom finally held its own local elections for the first time to elect a local bedouin *Rosh Ha'Moatzah* ("Mayor"), allowing the residents of Segev Shalom to direct and run their own affairs in an independent fashion (see Chapter 3). This system has been in place ever since.

Early Town Development and Demography

Segev Shalom was created by the state primarily for members of the Azazmeh tribe, who, to the present day, dominate positions of significance and power in local political and social institutions. Encouraging the Azazmeh to resettle has been a challenge from the outset, perhaps in some ways more challenging than the resettlement of any other tribe. By the early 1980s, it

was already recognized that, in general, those bedouin who persisted in living in tent environments in the *pezurah*, which by this point was already exceptional, were by and large members of the Azazmeh tribe (Boneh 1983: 67). As Kressel notes (2003: 56), the Azazmeh have long been known to resist surrendering what might be called “traditional” pastoral nomadism in the classical sense of the words, as they also were the last of the tribes to adopt agriculture as a supplement to herding, primarily engaging in livestock husbandry and rearing until the turn of the twentieth century.

What is also known, however, is that as “True” landed bedouin, the Azazmeh, unlike the *fellahin* or the landless *Abid* bedouin, have a great deal to lose by abandoning their lands for the towns. Therefore, while in part the rationale behind this resistance may be attributed to the Azazmeh’s “traditional” worldview, the issue also has a pragmatic side that must be taken into account.

The development of Segev Shalom, and the fact that it is the smallest of the first seven towns planned in the Negev, is a reflection of this history. Initially designated over 4,000 dunams (1,000 acres) and designed for a total of 10,000 people (Ministry of Housing 1990: 30), the town only became an active resettlement site as late as 1986. When, in 1979, the town was first inaugurated, the implementation Authorities “only had preliminary ideas about the town ... [there was] a picture of how it would appear, where it would be located, but that’s all” (Shoshani, 7 December 1992). Moreover, the Land Authority acknowledges that the 1982–1986 period was one of stagnation throughout the bedouin town system, which included little development in any of the seven towns that were recognized at the time. Only three permanent stone houses existed in the area that was designated for legal house construction in Segev Shalom in 1979.

Kressel contends that, in truth, the founding date of the town is 1984 (2003: 72). As of 1985, there were still only 40 families living in the town (Hamamdi, 11 November 1992). By 1986, the town had 14 permanent buildings in *Shekhuna Alef*, and 4 buildings in *Shekhuna Bet* (Hebrew: neighborhood; Arabic: *hara*; however, the language used in the planning and development of the towns is Hebrew, not Arabic [see Map 2.1]).

By 1987, only 60 lots had been sold in the town, but a major infusion of residents began to relocate to *Shekhuna Bet* that year from the area of Emek Sarah, near the junction of the Dimona and Eilat highways. The Masri *hamula*, comprised of 120 *Abid* households, took three years to move completely in. This family, whose members are former black slaves and the decedents of slaves to the Azazmeh (see Chapter 5), was a small, weak, and landless group with little status in bedouin society. Their young leader, Muhammad Masri, viewed the move as a major step up socially for himself and the family as a whole (Masri, 24 November 1992).



Map 2.1. Segev Shalom Physical Plan. Drawn in 2003 by Blustein Maps, Haifa for the Segev Shalom Local Council. Used by permission, courtesy of the Council.

At this time as well, *Shekhuna Alef* began to attract more residents, primarily from the Abu-Jarabiya and Hamamdi *hamulas*, both of which were Azazmeh bedouin. *Shekhuna Gimmel* only slowly attracted residents, primarily from the Gidefi, Abu-Sualim, Abu-Sleiyech, Hamamdi, and

Mas’udiyin *hamulas*. Still, roughly 10,000 to 12,000 Azazmeh bedouin continued to reside in the vast region south of Be’er Sheva and north of Mitzpe Ramon during this time (as cited in Dinero 1999: 27), and were resistant to relocation into the town.

Thus, as of late 1992 when this study was initiated, it can be said that the town was still in its infancy (Illustrations 2.1, 2.2). In *Shekhuna Alef*, only 77 percent of existing lots had been sold at that time. According to the Land Authority, an additional 4 percent were in the process of being sold. Housing starts had occurred on only 52 of the lots purchased—that is, 60 percent of the neighborhood lots were unimproved. In *Shekhuna Bet*, conditions were no better. Of the 247 lots that were planned, 77 percent were sold and 7 percent were in the process of being sold. In that neighborhood, 72 housing starts had occurred, leaving 71 percent of the lots unimproved.

As new neighborhoods, *Shekhunot* (Hebrew: neighborhoods) *Gimmel* and *Dalet* were, of course, even less developed than *Alef* and *Bet*. In *Shekhuna Gimmel*, 226 lots were planned, of which 24 percent had been sold by late 1992, and an additional 1 percent were in the process of being sold. Though officially, no housing starts had occurred at the time in *Gimmel*, some building had already begun during the period in question and a few houses already did exist in the neighborhood. By early 1994, a number of new housing starts could be seen throughout the town; in *Shekhuna Gim-*



Illustration 2.1. *Shekhuna Alef*—1993.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.



Illustration 2.2. *Shekhuna Bet*—1993.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

mel, streets had been paved in anticipation of the new housing developments there.

In *Shekhuna Dalet*, 260 lots were in the planning stage only at the time, while in neighborhood *Hey*, 312 lots were also in the planning stage. Planning for *Shekhuna Dalet* began in December 1989, and planning for *Shekhuna Hey* began in January 1990 (Ministry of Housing 1990: 10). It was estimated at the time that it would take between six and seven million NIS (\$2–3 million) to open *Hey* and *Dalet* to resettlers (Shapira, 1 December 1992). These costs included building a 900-meter long road to the entrance of *Hey* at 40 NIS (\$17)/meter, 12 meters across, and 3 meters of shoulder. In addition, two bridges were needed to connect the neighborhood to the rest of the town.

The Land Authority developed only 150 lots at first (almost half of the 312 planned), to see how well the neighborhood was able to begin attracting new in-migrants. At the time, just this half of the units was projected to cost 1.5 million NIS (\$530,000), when water lines and electricity were brought in and the road was built to connect *Hey* with the rest of the town.

Thus, when this study began in late 1992, 60 percent of the developed lots in Segev Shalom had been sold (excluding the new neighborhoods not yet opened for residents, *Dalet* and *Hey*). Of those sold, 40 percent had houses built upon them, or at least construction had begun. Overall, some

50 percent of lots planned were developed, and the other half remained undeveloped (Ministry of Housing 1992: 19).

Segev Shalom's housing start percentage on lots sold in 1992 was slightly lower than the overall figure for all lots developed in the bedouin town system, in which 70 percent had been sold. Of these, for all 7 towns, 43 percent of those lots developed and sold had been improved with houses or housing starts (Ministry of Housing 1992: 17–22). In addition to housing, some town improvements were also initiated during the early 1990s. For example, a new white stone central mosque was completed in 1994 (see Chapter 5, Illustration 5.2). Previously, town residents prayed in a building not unlike some of the temporary corrugated tin dwellings that surrounded it. Curbing on the main road into town was introduced in late 1993, as were lights around the town soccer field to allow for night play. The increased numbers of residents, with the anticipation of more to come, led to the need to relocate the high school in order to provide additional classrooms (Hamamdi, 6 January 1994).

A town center 70 dunams (17 acres) in size was also planned for Segev Shalom during this period. The center was to be comprised of 120 housing units, plus all of the facilities expected in an Arab village of its projected size. These included the existing central mosque, plus a post office, schools, banks, a supermarket, and a sports center. But it was stated at the time by the town's Jewish *Rosh Ha'Moatzah* that until the town's Regional Council



Illustration 2.3. *Shekhuna Bet*—2007.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.



Illustration 2.4. *Shekhuna 6—2007.*

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

had sufficient funds to build such a center, it would remain only in the planning stages (Sagie, 27 May 1993).

By 1995, there were 420 officially recognized households in Segev Shalom. The town's population had reached 2,354 (see Figure 2.1). The average household was home to approximately 6 people, the same as most of the bedouin towns at this time (Statistical Yearbook 1999: 123–124). While the Azazmeh have always been the numeric majority in the town, they have never surpassed more than about two-thirds of the number of respondents in any of the random samples collected for this study. Methodological efforts to represent all of the demographic sectors in the town offer part of explanation for this (see below); in addition, the *Abid* population in the town is growing rapidly. Statistical evidence from 2007, for example, shows that of those who are married to one spouse, *Abid* bedouin couples in town are more likely to have small children than similarly monogamous Azazmeh residents ($p=.02$). A related test found that monogamous Azazmeh residents, conversely, are more likely to have more high school-aged children in the town ($p=.04$). This was found to be true regardless of the parents' ages.

Thus, since 2000, the black bedouin community of Segev Shalom has begun to expand out of *Shekhuna Bet*, most especially into *Shekhuna Gim-mel*. These *Abid* bedouin, who often refer to themselves in the town as “Tarabeen” (though members of the Tarabeen tribe in other areas of the

Negev are in fact “True” bedouin), differ from the “True” bedouin in numerous ways (see Chapters 3, 5), which are largely recognized by state and local officials (Sagie, 24 March 2007; El-Harumi, 28 May 2007). Similarly, the Azazmeh town residents view them as a separate and distinct group; *Shekhuna Bet* is “*their* neighborhood,” for example, and the mosque located there is “*their* mosque.”

In the meantime, there is no doubt that there is a growing number of other tribes in addition to the Azazmeh, including *fellahi* bedouin and “others” now residing in the town who were not there during the early years of the town’s evolution and development. In fact, until very recently, there were no *fellahi* bedouin in Segev Shalom at all; early on in the town’s existence, a group of *fellahin* attempted to move into *Shekhuna Gimmel* (with permission from one sector of the Azazmeh leadership), but they “didn’t last a day.” Some of the other members of the Azazmeh leadership came to the settlement site soon after the *fellahin* began to move in and forced them immediately to leave (Shapira, 24 November 1992).

As for the “others” now residing in the town, these include Palestinian “collaborators” from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, also known by the Hebrew epithet “*shtinkerim*.” In a controversial move, they were resettled in the town from the Palestinian Territories in the 1990s, presumably in compensation for cooperating with the Israeli Government against Palestinian interests. It is estimated by the town leadership that as of 2007, there were “no more than 15 or 20” such families in the town (El-Harumi, 28 May 2007), although “word on the street” perceives this number to be far higher.

Such families are highly stigmatized, and very few bedouin residents have anything positive to say about their existence in the town. Those living in the *pezurah*, similarly, cite their existence in town as one of many reasons against relocating to Segev Shalom. Such attitudes, suggest state government officials, may simply serve as an excuse for bedouin resistance to ongoing efforts to relocate (Sagie, 24 March 2007).

Politics and Town Development

The *Moatzah Masos* (Hebrew: *Masos Council*) was created in 1988, and governed the three towns until 1996. Ilan Sagie, a Jewish Israeli who lives on a moshav north of Qiryat Gat, was appointed *Rosh Ha’Moatzah* at that time, and remained in the position until the *Moatzah* was dissolved. Although a technocrat at heart, Sagie played a crucial role in developing the town during the key period of its formative years of existence. While the state, operating primarily through the Land Authority during this period, saw its primary role as getting the bedouin off the land out of the *pezurah*

and into the towns, once there, the role of actualizing their resettlement and of fulfilling their demands and expectations with little money to work with was “his problem” (Sagie, 27 May 1993), and continues to be the primary role of subsequent town leaders.

Thus, when I first interviewed him in late 1992, he was sanguine about his intermediary role, as he served as both state functionary and presumed bedouin advocate in what amounted to a no-win environment. At the same time, however, his outlook on bedouin life, and on the challenges and difficulties experienced by the bedouin residents of Segev Shalom and the other *Masos* towns, reflected an understanding and appreciation of their struggle, which informs the ideologies and policymaking strategies of very few Jewish State officials working in the Negev bedouin sector. Again, I quote him at length (16 November 1992):

The bedouin don't care about infrastructure. They just want to sit on their own individual mountains. But when pastoralism fails, then infrastructure becomes relevant. Why? Because they need good roads to go to work, phones to call in late, electricity to see at night like what exists in their places of work, education for their kids so they can access good jobs when they're older. When he ceases being a shepherd, the bedouin's need for the spontaneous settlement ceases ...

No, we shouldn't force people into the towns. Old people, for example, can't make it in town. It's like forcing Indians to live in New York. At first, it didn't happen. But today, there are Indians living there ... Still, if someone wants infrastructure, they must come to the town. But it's the economic problems that prohibit him. A bedouin wants to build a house, to be comfortable, but he doesn't have enough money to build. This is why they wait to come to Segev Shalom. Economic problems are worse in the town [than the *pezurahi*]. Electricity, water, local taxes all cost money. And their children want to dress like the others, to get new clothes, to have candy, gum, and soda. So the family budget must be higher in town.

Years after the conclusion of his period in office, some town residents—even those too young to remember him well—expressed the belief that his leadership compared well with the present-day bedouin leadership. As one young male respondent to the 2007 survey put it, “I am not satisfied at all with this government today. They talk about improvement in the town but after a while it becomes clear that it's all a lie. Five years ago, [we finally realized] it was all an illusion. Ten years ago, it was all disappointments. Fifteen years ago, we still had hope. At least then, when we had the Jewish mayor [Sagie], if there wasn't improvement it was obvious and if he didn't succeed

then he would do more and put his whole soul into it to try to make things improve.”

Such views stand in sharp contrast to those of Sagie’s immediate successor, whose role in the town’s development, beginning with the dissolution of *Masos* and its replacement with the Segev Shalom Local Council on 1 August 1996, was far less distinguished. Ironically, the disbanding of the *Masos* Regional Council had long been sought by town residents. Many bedouin residing in Segev Shalom, Aroer, and K’seifa felt that their individual interests were paramount, and not shared or appreciated by those of other tribes, let alone the other towns that together comprised the governing body. In 1994, a number of the tribes in the three towns had appealed to the Supreme Court asking that *Masos* be dismantled and, in 1995, it was finally agreed that the Council would be broken up in order that each town would govern its own affairs (Meir 1997: 217).

And yet, when the Segev Shalom Local Council was created, it was placed under the direction of the Israel Ministry of the Interior—recognition of the fact that much of the actual town planning was taking place at the top, and that the role of the Council was to serve as an implementing agent and less as an actual governing organ. This Ministry was controlled by Shas, the orthodox Sephardic party supported primarily by Jews of North African descent and headed by Knesset Member Eli Suissa, as part of a coalition agreement with the government of Benyamin Netanyahu (Dinero 2000: 187–188). Therefore, a party appointee, Knesset Member Eliezer Mizrachi, became the town’s *Rosh Ha’Moatzah* (Hebrew: Council Head; i.e., “mayor”) for the next four years. An orthodox Jew in his early 50s, Mizrachi was a diamond polisher by profession, with a yeshiva education. He lived in Jerusalem throughout his tenure as Negev bedouin town mayor.

Although governance of Segev Shalom took a turn for the worst during this period, in which representative government appeared to many to remain as distant and inaccessible as the governance structures that guided the town’s development, efforts under the Netanyahu government to encourage resettlement out of the *pezurah* and into the town continued unabated (see Figure 2.1). These efforts included a new strategy inaugurated in 1997, which sought to “contain the spread of the scattered Arab population, prevent further invasion into state land, and tighten the enforcement of the state’s planning and construction laws” (Yiftachel 2003: 39). This would be carried out, according to the Israeli newspaper *Ha’Aretz*, through increased reliance upon the Green Patrol’s often excessive efforts to contain “illegal” bedouin settlement activity, to restrict bedouin grazing rights, and to declare large tracts of land “restricted military training areas” (as cited in “Israel offensive...,” 3 September 1997).

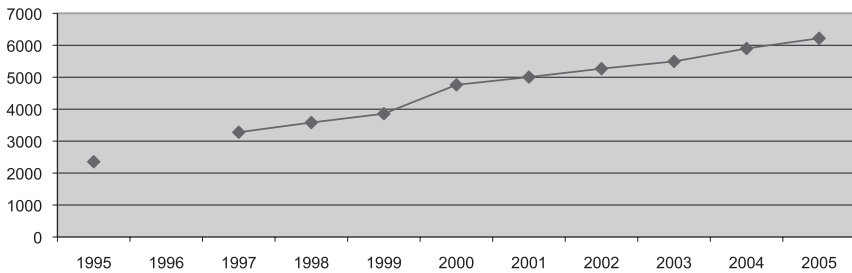


Figure 2.1. Segev Shalom Population Increase Averaging 387 Resettlers/Year, 1995–2005.

Source: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 1995–2005.

The September 2000 elections provided a turning point in the town's political history. Residents of Segev Shalom, as well as three other bedouin towns, were able to elect local bedouin leadership, including a bedouin *Rosh Ha'Moatzah*, for the first time in their short histories ("Four Negev Bedouin Towns...," 19 September 2000). In Segev Shalom, the winning candidate was Amir Abu-Mu'amar, 40 years old at the time and the eldest son of town founder Sheikh Ouda Abu-Mu'amar. Amir benefited from the fact that the Sheikh played a key role in the development of the town from its inception. He was well regarded in Jewish Israeli society, having been one of very few Negev bedouin to have fought in a battle unit during the Yom Kippur War (see Chapter 7), and was highly respected for his intellect and his negotiating abilities with state officials. He had over fifty children, who were the offspring of 6 wives.

Born in a tent in December of 1959, Amir finished high school and three years of college in order to obtain a teaching certificate. He taught school for six years, four in Segev Shalom and two in Tel Sheva. For two years, he served as the Secretary of the *Moatzah Shoket* (the Regional Council of Hura and Laqia), before stepping down in November 1992. Amir moved to Segev Shalom in 1984 when he was 25 years old.

His goals as *Rosh Ha'Moatzah* were a reflection of years of frustration and ambivalence about the planning and development of Segev Shalom. On the one hand, his beliefs centered upon the idea that "the bedouin loves nature; all this infrastructure in town just isn't appropriate to our lifestyles. The bedouin is a man who loves the desert, who loves the large open areas. He wants to wake up in the morning, open his eyes and not see a wall, but be able to see far off into the distance. He looks ahead into the future" (Mu'amar, 10 December 1992).

On the other hand, his true conviction appeared to lie not in how the towns were inappropriate to the bedouin lifestyle, but rather, that it was



Illustration 2.5. Main Intersection—2007.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.



Illustration 2.6. Dentist's Office—2007.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.



Illustration 2.7. Halal Butcher—2007.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.



Illustration 2.8. Shwarma Restaurant—2007.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.



Illustration 2.9. Bakery—2007.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

the planning and governance of the towns that was serving to render them weak, inefficient, and unsuccessful. It is this sentiment that drove him, ultimately, to pursue political office. Nonetheless, his sentiments well represent a people at odds with itself, and with those who act on their behalf with little regard or understanding for their concerns. As it is bedouin leaders such as Amir Abu-Mu’amar who are best able to verbalize the Negev bedouin condition, both within Segev Shalom and, in fact, throughout the towns of the Negev today, I quote him at length (Mu’amar, 10 December 1992):

Segev Shalom wasn’t planned well at all. There are two reasons, both economic. The bedouin economy is based upon agriculture in the fields, and the raising of animals. These two things supported them. They didn’t need to go out of their community—everything they needed was right there. Today, they have to go and buy and sell things. In town, the two economic foundations don’t exist. You can’t work the land here, there’s no land. There is no agriculture here. Therefore, people don’t want to come here. The people who come here are those who work in industry, they work in education. Those without these jobs stay out. Most of my family is outside [in the *pezurah*].

There is another reason why they stay out. It’s political. The State comes and says that the land is theirs. But the bedouin say “no, it’s ours, you’ll

have to pay us for it or we won't go." There are others who want to come here. But if I'm living fine outside, and I have flocks, where will I put them in the town? Where is the land for them? We need economic opportunity here. We have to pay for the phone, electricity, water. How will people pay for these things? Most important, they have to find work to pay for all of this. But there isn't any.

This town is our grave. We came here looking future-ward, but our path has many thorns. Every way that you go, it hurts. This is a pressure situation. You either try to find a solution to all of this, or you get angry, nervous and frustrated. Let me just give an example: we have no sewer system here. Where we used to live, it wasn't modern, but we lived in a clean environment. When we had to go to the bathroom, we would go into the wadi, far from the place where we lived. We had no facilities, it was very simple. It was very natural, the water, the sun, everything breaks down, it's good for the earth. Here we have a septic tank. It isn't healthy. The sewage should go into a system and be taken far away, but instead it is right here where we live. So even these small things affect people psychologically.

In many ways, Amir's perspective well represents the challenges of the bedouin today, recognizing that previous political and social structures no longer work in a dynamic globalizing Israeli context, yet also realizing that the bedouin need to find their own way through the newly developing environment that the resettlement initiative has produced. In the early 1990s, he told me that, "I don't want to be sheikh. We live in a democratic society now. I'm no better than anyone else. The position of sheikh is from the past. It isn't appropriate today. In the past, we saw the sheikh as democratic. But now we live here in town, so the sheikh isn't appropriate, we live in a municipality. The next 'sheikh' should be the mayor of Segev Shalom."

His conclusion then provides the prologue for his four years as *Rosh Ha'Moatzah*:

Ilan Sagie means well. But *you* can't know where *I* have an itch to scratch. There are many possibilities—only *I* know where to scratch. 'If I am not for myself, who will be? If not now, when?' [paraphrasing the famous Rabbi Hillel]. People are stupid, they're not smart. It's a pity. We have everything, but what we need is good will. Most of us did the army. I served—this is my country. My father worked with the British government even before the State of Israel existed. We were here during the Ottoman period, during the Mandate. [At this point he pulled a pistol out from underneath the pillow by his side]. See this? This was [David] Ben-Gurion's. He gave it to my father in friendship. And yet, look at us today. We still don't have equal rights.

After four years of governing the town with a philosophy centered upon the pursuit of equality and justice for the residents of Segev Shalom, most especially the need for local job opportunities *inside* the town, Amir Abu-Mu'amar was unseated by Saeed El-Harumi by a narrow margin in elections held in September 2004, who ran on a platform supported by Israel's Islamic parties. During the brief period that El-Harumi has ruled the town, his primary area of emphasis has been on physical improvements to town infrastructure, roads, and the building of schools. In addition to governmental funding for these projects, the town also enjoys a partnership with the Jacobs International Teen Leadership Institute (JITLI, see below), spearheaded by San Diego entrepreneur and investor Gary Jacobs and his wife Jerri-Ann. The Jacobs family contributed over \$80,000 toward development projects in the town, the most well-known of which is a high-profile playground located adjacent to the Municipality complex.

The philosophy of the El-Harumi administration, especially with regard to the ongoing goal of growing the town and drawing in new in-migrants from the *pezurah*, is straightforward. "We need to make Segev Shalom attractive, a magnet for young people to come from the periphery. I think we are succeeding" (El-Harumi, 8 February 2007).

As the town has grown, however, the demographic concerns that Ilan Sagie encountered throughout his tenure remain critical, if not greater than was manifest in the past. While tribal and family conflicts that are well-known throughout the other bedouin towns are far less apparent in Segev Shalom, the recent nature of the resettlement initiative, and the fact that social dynamics are not erased once one moves into the town but are often magnified, is a constant concern in bedouin local politics. As El-Harumi notes (28 May 2007), "We are mostly one big tribe here. When I won in the elections, I told my supporters 'no fireworks, no big celebration.' My opponent, the previous *Rosh Ha'Moatzah* [i.e., Amir Abu Mu'amar], is my cousin, my relative. We are family here. We had no reason to make it uncomfortable for him. In other towns there is conflict between groups, between tribes, over budgets and other issues, and nothing gets done. That's not how it is [in Segev Shalom]."

Conflicts between families in town, sometimes leading to violence, is an ongoing problem in all of the bedouin towns, but of far less consequence in Segev Shalom. Clashes exist, but they are largely limited to power struggles between various *hamulas* (such as the Abu-Mu'amar and the Hamamdi families) and do not extend beyond the political dynamic (Sagie, 24 March 2007). And yet, the bifurcated nature of the town between the black *Abid* bedouin and the Arab "True" Azazmeh bedouin is unmistakable and, as will be seen below, is manifested in virtually every aspect of the residents' social and economic status.

The Tarabeen, the blacks, are poorer here than the Azazmeh. We know about the poverty. They are wonderful people but they have some difficulties. Our job in the *Moatzah* is to bridge the gap between the Tarabeen and the Azazmeh. We are trying different things to do this. The Council has developed a program to send students to *Shekhuna Bet*, to help work with the people there on various projects. They are helping people as there is need. We are also sending social workers to work especially with this population. We know they need to help them to overcome some of their problems. (El-Harumi, 28 May 2007)

As for growing the population of Segev Shalom, this concern also harkens back to the period when Ilan Sagie was forced to plan for an ever increasing population of resettled bedouin, with high expectations built upon the promises of a state fixated upon the goal of relocating the bedouin out of the tent settlements, off of the land, and into the planned towns at any cost—but lacking when it comes time to allocate adequate budgetary allowances required to pay for the demands made by these resettlers in the new environment.

The state strives to make it as easy as possible for residents of the “un-recognized” settlements to relocate to the towns through what it believes are strong, heavily subsidized, “carrot-like” incentives to induce relocation. A *migrash*, that is, a *dunam* (1000 m², approximately a one-quarter acre) sized plot of land in Segev Shalom is free for a new buyer relocating out of the *pezurah*. As noted, the system is designed to limit expansion beyond one *migrash* per family once resettlement is accomplished. “If you already live in town, or if your family already has a *migrash* and then you want to get another, well, we know who is who, we know you already got one without cost. So no, you have to pay for another.” In Segev Shalom, a *dunam migrash* cost 74,000 NIS in 2007, approximately \$18,500 (Yeshuran, 10 May 2007).

Moreover, in a twist of irony that further reveals the tensions between the local community and the state, *Rosh Ha'Moatzah* El-Harumi believes that if many bedouin relocate but the flow occurs too quickly, the town will only suffer, not gain, from their arrival. He therefore has worked with the Council to develop a plan that is accommodating to in-migrants, but that also recognizes the limitations that the town must face in serving the needs of all of its existing residents.

We simply cannot accommodate all the Azazmeh here now. Maybe we can take those in the immediate area around Segev Shalom, maybe up to a town size of 13,000–14,000. But we don't have the budget, the resources from the Government, for any more than that. [As it is] people come from

the *pezurah*, they use our schools and resources—the kids go on field trips with our students, use our facilities—but all this is supported by our budget. They don't live here, they don't pay any taxes.

So Abu-Basma [i.e., the Council created to represent the newly recognized municipalities which are only slowly being developed and built] gets the money for their budget, and yet we are the ones providing the infrastructure ... I recently wrote a letter to the Wadi Na'am [a major *pezurah* settlement] leadership. I told them they were better off living in another town of their own [as is their present goal]. We cannot support all of them here at this time, not with our present budget. So I said "good luck, I hope they will give you your own town as you wish." (El-Harumi, 28 May 2007)

Despite such struggles with scarce resources, Segev Shalom is recognized as one of the few towns able to manage effectively and efficiently its finances. Sagie, who in 2007 was working in the Ministry of Interior's Southern District as Coordinator of Building and Development, noted that the Segev Shalom municipality is unique in its ability economically to function well.

Segev Shalom is always the one town that's got what's called sound fiscal practices; it's the way it should be, the budget has always been in order. And it's that way to this day. It's never happened there that a salary went unpaid. Under both Mu'amar's and El-Harumi's tenures, things have been managed the way they need to be ... This gives this particular settlement an advantage. Because the settlement is more compact, it is also easier to undertake projects. If you have a certain need and you have the budget, say a million shekels to make sidewalks and roads and that kind of thing, you're able to do it in such a compact place. It's far easier than in a settlement in which you've got a house here and a kilometer away another house, and a neighborhood over here and another neighborhood way over there. (Sagie, 24 March 2007)

Dudu Cohen concurs (24 April 2007). From his perspective, Segev Shalom is "more developed and successful in its level of management" than the other towns. He notes that the *Moatzah* is run professionally and in a manner that is helping the town to stand out as one of the Negev's true success stories:

The treasurer is excellent and the professionals are good, and that's important too. Ten years ago you couldn't find in the bedouin sector such great professionals in the fields we're speaking about—accountants, treasurers, those that deal in financials. It's the only municipality that last year wrote a final report on the year's work. That is to say, they did what seems

natural, that you want to start planning for the next year, so you complete the previous year's report to check what you did and didn't do and build the following year's plan on that.

Segev Shalom last year concluded 2005's work, invited all the residents, and said to them, "Look what we've done in the last year, look what we want to do in the coming year." That's a different type of management that you don't often see in the bedouin sector. And so I say that in all these steps, the way they came to their residents to present to them a "*din and heshbon*" [Hebrew: judgment and accounting]—of what they've done and what they're planning on doing—this is a change in behavior and values in public service ...

So in this respect, Segev Shalom is fairly advanced and trying hard to improve its situation, to position itself better among all the other bedouin towns. See how its grown? They've done a lot of work in the town. It's almost doubled in area [since it was first developed]. There are 8,000 new housing lots.

While such praise is rare and is a positive sign of just how far Segev Shalom has come since the false starts of the early years of its development, a Local Council perspective, which seeks to *discourage* rather than encourage resettlement into the town, is somewhat dissonant with the state's resettlement agenda. An attitude that appears to be concerned more with spending limited resources on those residents already in the town, rather than constantly striving to bring in more resettlers, can be seen as far back as 1997. Although the town rated third of the seven at the time in terms of "current budget allocation," its expenditure *per capita* placed Segev Shalom first out of the seven towns in terms of seeking to develop the town and improve residents' quality of life (Statistical Yearbook 1999: 134).

Development in Segev Shalom's Non-Residential/Commercial Sectors

By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Segev Shalom was no longer the small, dormitory town that it had been during most of its early years of existence. The town had five public schools, two health clinics, and a small number of private doctors offering their services out of their private residences (see Chapter 4). The town also offered three mosques, the central mosque in *Shekhuna Alef* and two smaller, informal buildings in *Shekhunot Bet* and *Hey*, as compared to the early 1990s when there was but one—a simple shack where the central mosque stands today. There is also a

small post office in town where banking transactions, such as paying bills, purchasing money orders, and the like, may be carried out as well.

Further, since the year 2000, two major changes have taken place in Segev Shalom that have contributed to its growth and development. The first has been the state's recognition that by using the "stick" that seeks to force the bedouin out of the *pezurah* and into the town, they have accomplished little other than to create resentment, mistrust, and anger within the community. Thus, a strategy that instead relies increasingly upon the "carrot" of seeking to draw resettlers in by making the town a more attractive living space has become the greater emphasis of state planners in recent years.

Moshe Moshe, a Bedouin Authority planner who has worked in Segev Shalom, as well as some of the other towns, for several years and who holds the primary responsibility of growing and developing the town (15 February 2007), suggests, "in the last six, seven, eight years people have identified the economic potential of Segev Shalom. That is to say that today, when a family comes into the settlement of Segev Shalom, it doesn't come because the state says, 'you can't live here [in the *pezurah*] anymore, we're posting an eviction notice, we're clearing the area.' No, it has other reasons to move in." He notes that by early 2007, there were almost no empty properties in *Shekhunot Gimmel, Dalet* or *Hay*, a direct result, he contends, of these changing attitudes.

Such reasons are not only economic per se, but are in many ways a reflection of the changes the state has long sought, that is, the "modernization" of the community, its goals, desires, and so on. For, he contends, "the traditional style of life that was there in the past is changing. It's changing all the time. In the past, you needed 2,000–3,000 dunams in order to live with the flock—but now there's no flock. So you say to yourself, 'What am I doing out here in the field anyway? Why am I out here alone with the mud and the rain and in discomfort with no electricity and no water? And if, God forbid, Mother and Father are sick, and it rains and the wadi overflows, I won't be able to cross over, or maybe they'll die in the car.'" As a result, Moshe argues, the bedouin are relocating to Segev Shalom in increasingly large numbers.

In part, he attributes this to a change in planning strategy within the town environment.

The revolution that we started began in 1995 ... [We decided then that] we needed to stop dictating to them how it will look; we needed to include them in the planning. We need to hear from them what they want in the plan, what looks right to the bedouin. We won't always give them what they ask for, not always. If they ask for thirty *dunams* per family, that's not something we're able to give. If they ask for five *dunams* per family, that's

something that we can weigh or consider ... we're going to plan together with the people. And we're going to try to reach the maximum possible that will bring about the most comfortable life that we possibly can offer.
(15 February 2007)

In addition, Moshe highlights the fact that, increasingly, the bedouin have begun to pursue a limited level of entrepreneurial activity within the town. Although such risk-taking is relatively new to some sectors of the bedouin community (see Meir & Baskind 2006), there is no doubt that this is happening; businesses that simply did not exist in 2000 have seemingly been created overnight, both within the central *suq* (market) area, as well as throughout the town's *shekhunot*. This, it must be noted, stands in sharp contrast to only a few years ago, when the town had virtually no economic activity or opportunity and was comprised almost solely of residential housing (see Dinero 2000).

It is notable that the *Moatzah* is incapable—although some charge, unwilling—to maintain a full rendering of the economic activity taking place in the town. The bedouin are loathe to comply with the Council by officially registering their places of business, offices, and other activities, as this would subject them to various regulatory constraints, not to mention requiring them to pay various local and national taxes. Thus, many if not most non-residential economic activity in the town is unofficial, unregistered, undocumented, and unregulated (Segev Shalom Local Council, 2 May 2007).

According to an internal document dated fall 2006 (which in truth was developed for public health policy and livestock management purposes, and notes such concerns as rabies vaccinations, animal bites, and the like, but also includes a list of officially registered food selling/marketing establishments; see “Plan and Work Management for Veterinarians,” Fall 2006), there were only eleven businesses officially registered at the time:

- 5 full groceries
- 3 small groceries
- 2 restaurants
- 1 produce market

A quick drive through the town past a number of groceries, repair shops, butchers, and other small, cottage-scale commercial operations, many of which are run inside or next to the proprietor's residence, reveals that this list is far from complete, however. Thus, at my request, an assessment was conducted and a list of commercial/non-residential enterprises was compiled by the *Moatzah* (no such list existed up until this time), which was to include both registered and unregistered non-residential activity in Se-

gev Shalom. This “official” list, which includes the above-mentioned food-related establishments, reads as follows (Segev Shalom Local Council, 2 May 2007):

- 11 groceries
- 2 restaurants
- 1 produce market
- 1 sports equipment shop
- 1 lottery station (TOTO)
- 1 cell phone store
- 1 dentist
- 1 travel agent
- 1 car parts store
- 1 car wash
- 1 building materials store

And yet, no sooner was this list submitted to me that it became clear that it is still incomplete. For example, it does not include at least three bridal salons in town (one in the town *sug*, two in *Shekhuna Alef*), a pizza shop located across from the high school (“Pizza Star”), three butcher shops (two on the main road, one adjacent to *Shekhuna Bet*, and one adjacent to *Shekhuna Alef*, and one in the *sug*), a number of car repair garages, a doctor’s office in *Shekhuna Gimmel*, a bakery (on the entrance road by *Shekhuna Alef*), and a variety of other small enterprises now found throughout the town.

By and large, entrepreneurial activity in the bedouin community as a whole has been dominated by *fellahin*, rather than “True,” bedouin (Meir & Baskind 2006: 86). In Segev Shalom, many are neither, but are of Palestinian origin. In addition, Muhammad Masri, titular head of the *Abid hamula* in town, is responsible for developing a large mixed residential/commercial site on the main road as it passes through *Shekhuna Bet*, which includes restaurants, shops, a butcher, an apartment for his second wife and family, and other commercial activities.

As Moshe, Bedouin Authority planner, notes with more than a hint of self-congratulatory pride, this commercial growth is all quite recent, and is occurring in a variety of sectors (15 February 2007). Moreover, he suggests, there is much more economic growth to be expected in Segev Shalom in the years ahead as a result of the present economic planning activity now taking place in the town:

Now, if you notice, as you come into Segev Shalom from the direction of the mosque, on the left before you reach the square there’s a strange

structure, just in front of the empty area, a structure with glass. That's a dentist's office. The son of the Sheikh, Ashaf, completed his dental degree and opened a clinic. Now pay attention, in the last seven years there's merchandising, along the street, on the left and the right, there are all kinds of stores. That wasn't there before—there was nothing ...

Another example of what is happening in Segev Shalom is in the new industrial area. We've already established a few businesses there ... [But presently] nearly all these properties are empty. But all of them are sold ... Now, why? This road [pointing to a map], it's true it ends here in the parking lot right now, but Be'er Sheva is here and here's the cut off road. From Emek Sara there's going to be a road that's going to cross the cut-off road and is going to go up to Route 25. So people see the potential. The man who just sat here, it took me ten minutes to convince him to take ownership of this property here, property Number 25. Why? Because I told him tomorrow, this is all going to open up. Now tomorrow may turn into one, two or three years. But this will be. The same tomorrow, even if it happens in two or three years, he'll already be here. "I'm already here, [he'll say to himself] I'm already a fact." Okay?

While Moshe's optimism and desire to take credit for the economic growth and development of Segev Shalom appears at first blush to be reasoned and well-earned, other voices in the Israeli government provide an alternative perspective to this effusiveness. As of mid 2007, the 258-*dunam* Industrial Zone in Segev Shalom included the following businesses:

- Car repair garage
- Flour production company
- Building materials company
- Food preparation company
- Baking goods company
- Masonry materials company
- Carpentry materials company
- Truck repair garage

According to the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Labor, these businesses, all totaled, employed no more than 30 men (El-Amour, 14 June 2007). Two of the companies were owned and operated by outsiders; one, a bedouin from Hura and the other a bedouin from Arara B'Negev. The rest were owned and operated by men from Segev Shalom.

A chicken processing plant was also planned for the area, which would employ 400–500 employees. The company, which was based in the northern Israeli city of Hadera, was planning to move and, "all things going well,"

would begin business sometime in late 2009. El-Amour noted that the Israeli government was subsidizing this project, offering incentives to try to attract this and other businesses to come to Segev Shalom. “They are giving them a 24 percent tax break for the first year to relocate here, with further incentives for the first 5 years that they are here.” But, he charges, the government invests in projects in neighboring Jewish areas to a far greater degree. “If nothing is built in the Dimona Industrial area, the state will step in and try to help. Here the same thing is happening in Segev Shalom and the government is hardly doing a thing. We are trying to make it attractive, to work cooperatively with Emek Sarah, for example, to make the natural connection there. So if we can just join up with them, create something cooperative with the Jewish industrial areas, there is a lot of potential.”

El-Amour, a bedouin who lives in K’seifa, sees the very issues that Moshe sees, and yet unlike Moshe, his reaction to what is happening in Segev Shalom concerning economic activity and development is far more sanguine.

People buy a *migrash* [Hebrew: lot] [in the Industrial Zone] but don’t build anything on it. We don’t really know why—there are many reasons. Some buy but don’t have enough money to build a business. Some buy but just don’t know what to do—what kind of business to create, what to do.

There’s also so much bureaucracy here, it takes so long to get a business going. You pay 100,000 NIS (\$25,000) more or less for a lot. But then it takes a few years to get through the bureaucracy to actually have a business up and running. So people just start something in a shack by their houses. There’s nothing here [in the Industrial Zone] that’s attractive, nothing new to draw people in, no new technology, nothing that allows people to dream. So there’s not much activity there, and actually, *we can’t really say that there even is an Industrial Zone in Segev Shalom at all.*

In their study, Meir & Baskind (2006) make very similar charges. They note that much of what holds back the bedouin entrepreneur or investor today from successfully creating and succeeding in a business enterprise is not “culture” or the fear of risk-taking, as some might hypothesize, but rather, the inability to find banks willing adequately to finance their start-ups; the inability to access business consultancies willing and able to advise them on effective courses of action in how to succeed in the competitive business climate of the Israeli capitalist economy; and the inability to overcome the “tyranny of bureaucracy,” wherein the state, the bedouin believe, presents disproportionately difficult obstacles before any bedouin businessman wishing to open a commercial enterprise (Meir & Baskind 2006: 88–90).

Moreover, El-Amour suggests that: “the *Moatzah* doesn’t know how much [commercial] activity there is outside the Zone, and doesn’t want to

know. This is the informal economy, a 'black economy.' Now they are building all along the main road into the town. It will be like a 'Central Park,' with new buildings that are connected, orderly, and that line the street. Some will have grass. These won't be separated from one another standing individually; they will not be haphazard."

In essence, private investment is now driving the planning process, rather than planning driving development. The commercial area along the main road that Masri and other businessmen have invested in already exists, and now the planners are attempting to bring some order to it—largely behind the guise of a little grass and some landscaping. What is being seen increasingly in Segev Shalom is that private enterprise, initiated by some of the town's more daring individuals willing to undertake capitalist ventures and who, to varying degrees, are willing to conform with the system, is succeeding in the town.

What is also quite apparent is that on the one hand, the Industrial Zone in Segev Shalom—that is, the site where the government is seeking to impose economic development—is, as of 2007 at least, largely unsuccessful and for all intents and purposes, empty. On the other hand, commercial activity thrives inside the community itself, but it goes unchecked, unregulated, and uncontrolled—and yet ironically, the state wishes to take credit for its existence. As is the case with much of the planning and development in the bedouin sector, the residents of Segev Shalom are not fully conforming to the rules and regulations or demands of the government. As a result, development is happening internally, indigenously, naturally, *not because* of government intervention per se, but rather, *in spite* of it.

This development is not surprising. In their work on bedouin entrepreneurship (2006), Meir and Baskind made the initial assumption that in the planned Negev bedouin towns, commercial enterprise would develop as the bedouin modernized, and this would be a direct result of the planned change initiative. Further, they hypothesized that, unlike the *pezurah*, commercial activity and behavior would be more pronounced in the planned town environment than in the *pezurah*, given "that degrees of development and well-being, exposure to development and a modern business environment, and friendliness and comfort of the operational business environment, are all more favorable in towns than in the underdeveloped unrecognized settlements in the 'dispersion'" (Meir & Baskind 2006: 84).

And yet, they found no statistically measurable differences between the towns and the *pezurah* in terms of entrepreneurial activity, and the rise of businesses in the two environments. Their conclusion is incredibly telling:

This might imply further that there are no differences between town-dwellers and "dispersion" [i.e., *pezurah*] dwellers in their degrees of devel-

opment, exposure to development and to a modern business environment, and the consequences of these in terms of business entrepreneurship. The explanation for this may be found in the issue of the infrastructure and economic bases of the planned towns. The government promised public investment in these towns in the 1970s and 1980s in order to attract the bedouin from the “dispersion” to relocate there. This could have generated a significant difference in degrees of economic growth and development between these spaces, making the towns more attractive. In fact, however, these investments have been negligible. (Meir & Baskind 2006: 84)

Conclusions

As the above statistics reveal, during the 1990s and 2000s, the social and economic growth and development of Segev Shalom has been considerable. The questions that this chapter raises, however, and that will be raised repeatedly in the chapters that follow, will be: 1) to what extent have improvements been experienced in the Negev bedouin community, specifically Segev Shalom, that make it an attractive place to live, and to attract additional resettlers; 2) to what extent do the bedouin town residents perceive/enjoy these changes and improvements, and how might this be measured; and last but not least, 3) to what extent are these improvements and changes attributed to the state’s planning efforts, and to what extent do bedouin residents believe that improvements in their lives today are occurring not *because* of government intervention/planning efforts, but *in spite* of them.

In general, it may be said that bedouin perceptions are largely in contradiction with the state’s perception of reality. While all indices suggest what *should* be perceived as an improvement in bedouin resident quality of life, that sentiment is not sensed by many, if any, Segev Shalom residents. At the same time, from the state’s perspective, the issue of a failure to see advances in social and economic development in Segev Shalom and the neighboring towns does not come down to planning, but is almost entirely cultural. A resistance on the part of the bedouin to register their businesses or to conform with the official system by holding camels after relocating to town, for example, is not contextualized in order to understand that, in fact, there is a rationale and logic to the decisions the bedouin make based upon their being members of an impoverished, disenfranchised, minority group having limited choices, limited resources, and limited power. Rather, state planners see theirs as a job of seeking to change the culture of the bedouin, to “modernize” their ways of thinking, rather than to understand, respect or appreciate bedouin society for who and what it is. This paternal-

istic mentality is at the heart of what makes planning in the bedouin sector such a problematic enterprise.

Thus, the issues which will be addressed in subsequent chapters (3–7) will include the labor limitations presently found in Segev Shalom, changing educational opportunities, changing bedouin roles and identities in Israeli society, and the role of women in this change. I conclude this chapter by quoting at length one of the key architects of Israel's bedouin planning and resettlement agenda, Ministry of Interior (Southern District) Director Dudu Cohen, as he effectively lays out the state's perspective on the social and economic development of the Negev bedouin in reference to these issues as it stands in 2007 (24 April 2007):

If you look among the bedouin women they're either childcare workers or teachers, [since] any other occupation that would allow them to meet with men is a problem. And so that affects the nature of the work, the nature of their education, it affects everything. The drop-out rate in high school is very high because their parents aren't willing to let them leave their village and study in a school outside the village. So they learn in the elementary schools where they live, but very few go on to high school, so very few go on to university. So you get to a situation in which the level of education for a bedouin woman is very low; she [doesn't] bring in any money.

So from an economic standpoint the man is the sole breadwinner, and his knowledge isn't in high tech, but low tech, and the level of his income is low too. Now, usually he doesn't have one wife but more than one wife and so he has a lot of children and for each one there isn't much to go around. We also need to deal with this topic but to deal with it as a social problem. It's also a cultural problem. You can't change it in one day. The State can't force it on them, if they want to progress, they can't progress in the structure of their lives today, with one head of household among two, three, four wives with tens of children and one breadwinner. Because the result is less for each child; it's math.

As much as the State gives for children, through the national insurance, it's not enough. The ability of the father to give attention to so many children is problematic. At least we are identifying a little change, but not much. It comes from the fact that they are living in a Jewish society, they see that in Jewish society there is one wife, and to live with many wives is not easy; with many children it's not easy; and it's a process that is revolutionizing bedouin society. It's a process that they're undergoing.

Cohen's perspective reveals virtually every aspect of the foundation of the state's Negev bedouin planning agenda. By connecting formal education,

the role of women, polygyny, and economic development, he makes it clear that the onus for development lies squarely on the shoulders of the community itself and not on the government, or its role in implementing and carrying out the new town planning initiative. It is to be determined then how planning and development in the bedouin sector are to be evaluated. As Chapter 3 will reveal, the bedouin community is quite open to the type of development and “progress” that Cohen describes. But the question, of course, is whether the state’s planners are able to deliver. And when they are not, who, really, is to blame?

Chapter 3

Planning, Service Provision, and Development in Segev Shalom

We [bedouin who live in town] like to think we are the same as our relatives out there [pointing toward the spontaneous settlements off in the distance]. But we're not the same. Look at this shiq [Arabic: traditional guest area of the tent centered around the fire pit, but in this case, a small room constructed of cinder blocks]. This is nostalgia, trying to hold onto the past. How do you measure the strength of a bedouin character? By the height of the pile of ashes in his shiq. We have this shiq, but it isn't like what we had out there. I remember what we had, and so I try to recreate it here. My children who are growing up in the town—they don't even have this to remember.

The shiq should be open to the outside, so that people can come one after another. The tent is open; when the dogs bark, you can look out and see what's going on around you. Here, we go home from this shiq, we close our doors to our villas, and we are cut off from the world and the people around us. So we like to think that we are the same as they are [out there], but we're not.

We have lost something by coming here. But of course, you can see what we've gained.

—Muhammad (Abu-Tarek) Hamamdi, Segev Shalom, Israel,
11 November 1992

As suggested in Chapter 2, population growth in Segev Shalom has been steady, taking off roughly at the point when this study was initiated in the early 1990s. It is apparent as well that a great deal of growth, both in population as well as in the early beginnings of economic activity, also has begun to occur in the town, most especially since the year 2000.

While state planners are quick to point out this growth (and to take credit for it), I noted in the previous chapter that bedouin residents often perceive that much of what has occurred has not necessarily happened *because* of

the government's planning efforts, but perhaps, in spite of them. Moreover, what is also quite clear is that resident attitudes toward the provisions offered by the local governing agencies, in particular, the *Moatzah*, remain mixed. While on the one hand, several indices suggest an improving quality of life for Segev Shalom residents, overall satisfaction in the town does not appear to correlate directly in every instance with this change.

Measuring Growth and Development in Segev Shalom

The state and the local bedouin community, including the Local Councils, often appear to be at odds when it comes to their views of the growth, development, and ultimate success of the planned Negev bedouin communities. This is, in fact, a common dynamic in planning, often referred to as a choice between "planning for people, or planning for place." While this binary is itself suspect, as one would reasonably posit that both are required planning goals and need not be viewed in opposition to one another, what is certain is that measuring in a quantitative or qualitative manner the success of Segev Shalom must go beyond an analysis of the trajectory of population growth, successive political leadership or competent financial management style.

As a planned new town for an ethnic and religious minority community, which, prior to resettlement, had never previously lived in an agglomerated environment concentrated upon a small area of land, Segev Shalom and the other bedouin towns was (and is) an experiment not only for its bedouin residents, but for its planners as well. While the academic and popular literature, blogs, and news media are rife with condemnations of the towns for being utter failures, a scientific examination and evaluation of the town, addressing where and how it is succeeding, where and how it is failing, and why, will shed further light on the issue.

As noted, the growth and development of Segev Shalom since the early 1990s has been considerable, and is based almost solely upon resettlement from the *pezurah*. In order to quantify this growth and quality of life improvements that the various planning and governing agencies have implemented during this period, I undertook four independent, scientific household surveys over a fifteen-year period (1993, 1996, 2000, and 2007), with the intent of tracing this change in a systematic, organized fashion.

In undertaking this analysis, I held certain methodological ideals and provisos in mind concerning measuring the successes and failures of the resettlement initiative in general, and the success of Segev Shalom, in particular, in serving the interests of its resettled residents. First, I turned to the World Bank Department of Social Policy's resettlement policies and

evaluation techniques made popular throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Cerne 1988; 1990; 1993), as I believed that these offered an objective standard for resettlement project analysis. They were particularly ideal methods and procedures for quantitatively and qualitatively monitoring post-relocation planning projects, and for measuring the socioeconomic effects and transformations resulting from resettlement of minorities, including indigenous peoples.

The contention of these models was, in effect, that through an emphasis upon adaptive technologies, specialization, appropriate methods, and the anticipated displacement and social alteration resulting from the introduction of planned change, a less-developed community can be transformed from underdeveloped to developing given adequate time, cultural sensitivity, and appropriate planning techniques (see also Rondinelli 1985; 1990). The approach I sought to adopt in order to measure and analyze this change centered upon the premise that “concentrating investments in services and infrastructure in settlements that serve, or could serve, a large population from surrounding rural areas [is] more efficient and effective than scattering services and facilities widely over the landscape” (Rondinelli 1990: 242). This, of course, is the state’s bedouin resettlement argument in a nutshell, and was planned on the assumption that there would be particular functions, linkages, and accessibility of spatially concentrated services to neighboring urban populations.

The resettlement/development literature also argues that the functional integration of place-specific services can contribute to the development of an urban hierarchy, network or system to overcome urban-rural polarization (Belsky & Karaska 1990: 227). It is this *dispersion* of services throughout an urbanizing rural network that, it is contended, will help to further modernization and development.

Such an integration of economic and social services is viewed as a means of moving out of the low productivity cycle typifying rural societies, and as an agent for countering the cultural resistance for change. The provision of services that are required to complete a settlement system hierarchy acts as a further catalyst to economic development.

Overall, the supply and placement of urban functions in order to promote a balanced central place hierarchy is the primary component of this approach (Belsky & Karaska 1990: 227). This goal is seen as more pro-active than a demand-oriented, market-driven approach (Rondinelli 1990: 244). It is the contention of the resettlement planner that “instead of maximizing access to specific facilities based on questionable interpretations of demand, the urban functions method helps planners make locational decisions that can contribute to creating conditions in rural regions that allow market trade to develop” (Rondinelli 1990: 244).

It is significant here to note that Israel's Jewish new town development program, initiated in the early 1950s, was also designed using an urban hierarchy pattern based upon Christaller's Theory of Central Places, which parallels the bedouin new town agenda. The program sought to create an integrated system of large urban areas, medium sized towns, small towns, and hamlets, which would together comprise Israel's emerging urban system. The new development towns were to serve as intermediate settlements between large towns and hamlets (*kibbutzim/moshavim*). Rural centers were planned to support regional needs, such as primary schools, infant clinics, health centers, post offices, service stations, stores, and general goods. Regional towns were designed to serve as centers of production, storage, and export of the agricultural products (Efrat 1984), and to serve as the "super-ordinate" center of a few of these rural centers, providing administrative and supply capacity.

Israel's state planners hoped that regions around the central new towns would develop simultaneously with urban growth. Ultimately, however, this approach proved not very suitable to Israel's existing geographic and social conditions. Planning was rarely done within the regional context, and the physical planning for the new towns was not developed in coordination with social and economic planning (Efrat 1984). Thus, it is both possible to say that these planners were quite familiar with the concepts they sought to apply to the bedouin new towns as they and their predecessors had used them previously in the Jewish sector. It is also possible to say that the results of that initiative were, and remain in the twenty-first century, at best, mixed.

Second, in seeking mechanisms through which adequately to address the success of Segev Shalom and the neighboring bedouin towns, I also sought to use a Social Impact Analysis (SIA) model (see Freeman et al. 1979), as I believe it offers further guidance in measuring the social impact of development projects, including resettlement projects, upon less-developed communities. SIA introduces the contention that social costs and benefits are as important to project success as are economic costs and benefits, and that both must be weighed in determining successful modernization and development planning. In addition to the World Bank's notions of what is *needed and desirable* in a successful resettlement/development project, SIAs help to determine seemingly counterintuitive or previously *unanticipated* development project results. SIAs reveal that "common sense" measures do not always live up to their name (Freeman et al. 1979: 47), and that projects may fail socially or economically to transform a population in the manner initially intended.

In undertaking an SIA-style approach, I assumed in the 1992–1993 study and the analyses thereafter that resettlement and development in Segev

Shalom must, like similar programs, have measurable objectives, a plausible way of achieving them, and personnel able to pursue them (Freeman et al. 1979: 49). By clearly defining specific project goals and by limiting project objectives that can otherwise become contradictory, planners may ensure that project successes or failures can be predetermined and later measured. Setting time limits or schedules delineating specific, realistic objectives (say, increasing school attendance for girls by a certain percentage by a certain date) also helps to direct a project, and to further its progress.

In the final analysis, one of the most important goals I sought to quantify were the impacts (desired and not desired) of the resettlement initiative, particularly though not solely as they have manifested in this bedouin town. The implied impact of state-provided urban services to post-nomads is social and economic development and communal modernization—that is, an improved “quality of life” for those who relocate from their original place of residence to an area designated by the state. But such an improvement is not easily measured, nor is its definition even fully agreed upon (Cutter 1985: 7). It is for this reason that I use a combination of indicators—spatial, functional, and social—in discussing the success of Segev Shalom. What residents think and what the state perceives are, as one might imagine, often two entirely different things.

As Cutter notes, it is the perceptual aspect of one’s comfort level in a given geographic location that, though difficult to measure quantitatively, is a key indicator of individual (and ultimately, communal) satisfaction with one’s place of residence. Psychological well being, satisfaction with one’s lot, and how fully one’s aspirations are being met, is the essence of quality of life attitudes (Cutter 1985: 16). While not always easily summarized, the basic question, “Is life better in town than in the *pezurah*?” provides the essence of quality of life measures in this post-nomadic community.

One final consideration also is necessary in this analysis. In communities such as that of the Negev bedouin, *communal* quality of life factors and *individual* quality of life factors must be distinguished. There is some argument, for example, over whether individual quality of life benefits may conflict with communal quality of life benefits, and that as individualism rises, these improvements may come at a cost to the community as a whole (Cutter 1985: 66).¹ For, while certain changes in the bedouin community may be perceived as improvements over the previous individual lifestyle, they may at the same time be perceived as harmful to the community as a whole (Ben-David 1993: 113).

I kept these various ideas and concepts in mind when I began the process of attempting to measure the growth and success of Segev Shalom from a multifaceted perspective that took quality of life and similar issues into account. I initiated the data gathering for the study by first designing

a survey instrument in the summer of 1992, to be used in the first of four household surveys that was to be conducted in the town in the early spring of 1993. Implementation of the first survey was supported in part by the *Masos* Regional Council (*Moatzah Masos*). I was paid a small stipend, and in return committed myself to writing an analysis for the *Moatzah* about my findings in the town. In addition to the financial assistance, I received office/secretarial support (which I received for all four surveys from the *Moatzah*), as well as the commitment of bedouin students located by the *Moatzah*, who agreed to undertake the actual door-to-door survey process in the town. In this and subsequent surveys, I personally carried out the completion of several of the questionnaires as well, which numbered approximately 10 percent of all questionnaires administered.

The number of surveyors, the number of households visited, and the number of questionnaires successfully completed by necessity increased with each iteration of the survey, a reflection of the growing population of the town, as well as the growth in its geographic size. While, for example, I received assistance from four students in the surveying process in 1993, I required twelve in 2007. In every instance, I divided up the town by neighborhood (*Shekhuna*) and, using maps provided by the Council designating where families actually lived (as opposed to lots sold or housing starts initiated), randomly selected households by lot number (there are no addresses in town) for inclusion in the survey.

As for the sampling frame for the surveys, this was defined as the number of occupied lots in the town, regardless of the whether the dwelling(s) utilized were permanent stone homes, shacks, tents, or other types of residences. In each survey, every effort was made to access a representative sample from each individual neighborhood based upon population (i.e., a clustered sampling approach was used), especially due to the fact that the *Abid* bedouin do not live throughout the town, but only in certain geographic areas. *Shekhunot Alef* and *Bet* are the most densely populated neighborhoods, with the most families residing there, and thus are especially represented in all four sets of the survey findings (as is *Shekhuna Hey* in the 2007 findings, which, since 2000, has become home to a number of diverse groups, including *fellahi* bedouin and Palestinian “collaborators”).

The number of households included in the surveys increased each survey, although the representative nature of the sample remained consistent. The Council assisted in the early iterations of the survey in publicizing that the survey would take place, though word of mouth between residents proved a far more effective “marketing tool” in gaining access to residents’ homes than were the efforts of the government. As a result, in the 1993 and subsequent surveys, the “refusal/no one home” rate was quite low, averaging about 20 percent and declining with each subsequent survey; as town

residents became increasingly familiar with the research project, awareness of its purposes and intentions rose and suspicions dwindled.

This rate is well in line with other household research conducted in developing world environments (see, for example, Thomas et al. 2001: 5; "Household Sample Surveys..." 2005). A greater problem than refusal to cooperate or to answer the door to the surveyor was the number of residents who, as time went on and word spread that a survey was under way, *sought out* surveyors, seeking to voice their views to anyone who, they believed, was willing to listen to their concerns. Other researchers working in poor, less developed environments have had similar experiences, noting that "once the field worker cuts through the initial fear and suspicion, the favorable attitudes come to the fore and result in *greater* cooperation than might be expected in less stratified societies" (Stycos 1993: 56). Still, achieving trust in the Negev bedouin community is an ongoing challenge, largely though not wholly overcome through the use of a team of bedouin student surveyors.

In March 1993, 81 household questionnaires were completed, reflecting more than a third (38 percent) of the occupied households that existed in the town at the time. In July 1996, 102 questionnaires were completed, reflecting approximately the same percentage (36 percent) of all households in the town. In July 2000, the bedouin student surveyors employed for the project were able to gather 150 completed questionnaires. Although the town had doubled in size since 1993 (480 households in 2000 compared to 215 in 1993), this still amounted to 31 percent of the households in the town.

The 1993 survey took a little over a week to complete. The 2007 survey took nearly a month, beginning 4th of March and concluding on the 30th of March. Two hundred thirty-six questionnaires were completed during this period, which amounted to 21 percent of all existing, officially recognized households. The process had by this point become more complex and cumbersome than ever before. In cooperation with JITLI coordinator and elementary school headmaster Abdullah Jirjawi, students were recruited from the Segev Shalom High School to participate in the project. All of the students had facility in Arabic, Hebrew, and even a little English. Having participated in JITLI for some years, all were senior honor students who had made brief visits to the US, Mexico, and Europe. Thus, they came to the study with a level of maturity, sophistication, and understanding that fostered the collection of an incredibly deep and rich data set from what had by 2007 become a town of 6,248 residents living in 1,124 households. It is to this data, and the wealth of information that can be mined from it, that I now turn.

Planning and Development in Segev Shalom—2007: Quantifying Resident Socioeconomic Status and Satisfaction

A detailed accounting of the descriptive statistics that comprise the data sets for the 1993, 1996, and 2000 studies has already been undertaken (see Dinero 1996; 2000; 2004), and need not be repeated here. What follows, then, is a compilation and compression of material from these studies as it meshes with and compares to data from the fourth and final survey, undertaken in Segev Shalom in 2007. It is this data that, by being the most recent and comprehensive, provides an inclusive rendering of the state of planning and its outcomes in the town in the early part of the twenty-first century.

The data set gathered in 2007 (see Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3) is quite comparable to those gathered in previous years. A better gender balance was achieved than ever before, but statistics concerning marriage and age are comparable, if not identical, with similar studies. As in previous studies, Chi-square analysis was used ($p < \text{or} = .05$) due to the small N , the nature of the population, and the data set gathered.

Also as in previous studies, age correlated with a variety of significant social and economic indicators in Segev Shalom. For example, younger bedouin residents were found to be more educated than older residents ($p=.00$), more literate ($p=.00$), and less likely to live in a polygynous household ($p=.00$; see Chapter 6).

Economically, the young were more likely to be employed ($p=.04$), and less likely to carry out a “traditional” behavior, such as growing fruits, olives, or vegetables ($p=.05$). They were more likely to own material goods, however, such as phones ($p=.00$), VCR/DVD players, ($p=.00$), cars ($p=.02$), and personal computers ($p=.03$). Significantly too, those aged 40 years and under were *more* likely to use the social welfare services offered in the town ($p=.05$; see Chapter 4); they were, conversely, *less* likely to have voted in the last election than older bedouin town residents ($p=.01$).

In general and quite logically, younger residents also tended to have lived less time in Segev Shalom than the “old timers” ($p=.02$). One of the major differences between the 2007 data set and previous data sets is, of course, the length of time living in the town. In the 1993 survey, for example, 58 percent of respondents lived in the town five years or less, most of these having relocated fewer than 3 years prior to survey implementation (Dinero 1995). In 2007, approximately this same percentage, 60 percent, had lived in the town at least 11 years; nearly half the respondents had lived in the town for 16 or more years. Quite clearly, the town could no longer be viewed as “new” or recently established.

And yet, there are notable differences between those who could be deemed the “old timers”—that is, the founders of the town who have lived there now for over a decade—and those newcomers who are yet finding settled life in the new town environment a novel experience. Several statistically significant correlations were found between the length of time one lived in the town of Segev Shalom and other economic and social development indices. While this is, of course, logical, there are a number of other correlations that further reveal the differences between these “newcomers” and the town’s “old timers.”

Table 3.1. 2007 Segev Shalom Survey Respondents—Descriptive Statistics

<i>Gender:</i>	M	49%	F	51%
<i>Age:</i>	40 or under	77%	Over 40	23%
<i>Marital:</i>	Married	68%	Single	23%
	Divorced	6%	Widowed	3%
	Polygynous family	32%		
<i>Tribe:</i>	Azazmeh	58%	Tarabeen	32%
	Other	10%		
<i>Years Living in Segev Shalom:</i>				
	1–3	11%	4–6	9%
	7–10	20%	11–15	20%
	16+	40%		

Source: Segev Shalom Survey, 2007.

For example, more recent arrivals were found to be more educated than the old timers ($p=.00$), most especially members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.00$), those under the age of 40 ($p=.02$), and those in the town who for the most part have lower household incomes (i.e., under 10,000 NIS/month; $p=.00$). Further, newer arrivals were found to be more literate than the others ($p=.01$); again, this was especially found to be true among the Azazmeh, ($p=.01$), men ($p=.01$), and those with low household incomes ($p=.01$).

As a result, newer arrivals had a slightly better chance of accessing employment than the old timers ($p=.05$). This was especially true of women laborers ($p=.01$) and those coming from lower income families ($p=.00$). Indeed, overall, these new arrivals remain more likely to reside in lower income households than those bedouin residents who had lived in the town for a decade or more ($p=.00$). This was especially true of the young resettlers

($p=.00$), particularly members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.01$). Previously (see, for example, Dinero 1995), I noted that continued pastoral and agricultural activities in the town have economic, as well as social functions.

Although this dynamic still distinguishes the tribes in town (see below), it does not appear to be impacted by the time spent living there. Newer arrivals to Segev Shalom are *less* likely than old timers to raise flocks or other animals ($p=.01$), particularly the young ($p=.02$) and those with low household incomes ($p=.00$). Similarly, newcomers are significantly less likely to raise olives, vegetables, or other crops ($p=.00$). Once again, this is particularly true of Azazmeh members ($p=.00$) and those families with lower household incomes ($p=.00$).

Table 3.2. 2007 Social and Economic Indicators: Education and Employment

<i>Education</i> (M/F)	None	15%	Some elementary	10%
	Post elementary	26%	HS grad	54%
	Post HS	5%		
	Literate (Arabic/Hebrew/both)	88%		
<i>Employment</i> (M/F)	Employed	53%		
	Household Income under 10,000 NIS/month (approx. U.S.\$2,500)			78%
<i>Job location</i>	Bedouin area	7%	Jewish area/town	45%
	Moshav/kibbutz	8%	Segev Shalom	40%
<i>Agrarian</i>	Raise Animals	37%	Raise Crops	45%

Source: Segev Shalom Survey, 2007.

The length of time living in the town similarly plays a role in other economic aspects of the bedouin resettlers' lives. On the one hand, recent resettlers are less likely to own a TV ($p=.03$), especially Azazmeh families ($p=.03$) and those with low incomes ($p=.03$). And yet, newcomers are *more likely* to own a VCR/DVD than town veterans ($p=.04$), even if they are low income ($p=.00$); they are also more likely to own a personal computer ($p=.00$), especially if they are young families ($p=.00$), or members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.01$). Young newcomer families were also more likely to own a Nintendo/Playstation gaming system ($p=.04$)—an item with which many veteran bedouin respondents were entirely unfamiliar.

As for the extent or degree to which town living serves as an agent for modernization and political moderation, the correlations found in 2007

that suggested any significant relationships offer mixed results. What can be said is that those living in town longer have a more favorable view of the national government ($p=.03$). This was found to be true especially of women ($p=.01$), low income residents ($p=.04$), and respondents under 40 years of age ($p=.05$; see Chapter 5).

Table 3.3. 2007 Housing, Utilities, and Reasons for Relocation

<i>Housing</i>	Permanent house	80%	Temporary Dwelling(s)*	44%
<i>Electricity source</i>	Public Utility	80%	Wire/neighbor	17%
<i>Water source</i>	Utility	96%		
<i>Why did you locate to Segev Shalom?</i>				
	Family reasons	47%	Government force	27%
	Services in town/ quality of life	20%	Born here/other	6%

Note: * More than one dwelling—permanent, temporary, or both—are typically built on a single lot.

Source: Segev Shalom Survey, 2007.

Further, employed Azazmeh residents living in the town longer had a greater likelihood of working in the non-bedouin, Jewish sector ($p=.01$), as what could be viewed as a sign of further integration into the mainstream of Israeli society. Related to this issue, the Azazmeh living in town longer had higher incomes ($p=.01$). Similarly, *Abid* Tarabeen living in town longer were found to be more likely than other *Abid* Tarabeen newcomers to own a stone house, rather than just a temporary dwelling ($p=.04$).

Other differences between the two tribes are also notable. The Azazmeh continue to come to the town in more recent years relative to the Tarabeen. A correlation is found between tribe and time of arrival, where the Azazmeh are more likely to have come more recently to town, while the Tarabeen ceased relocating for the most part over a decade ago ($p=.02$); this is especially so of young households ($p=.00$). In many ways, however, this is only a small difference between these two groups. As noted in previous study outcomes stemming from research conducted in Segev Shalom (see, for example, Dinero 2006; Groode & Dreiherr 2007), there are numerous distinctions between those residents in the town who are of “True” bedouin Arab origins (that is, the Azazmeh tribe), and those who are of African origin. These differences may appear minor, but when viewed on the aggregate, they reveal a vast social and economic disparity between the

two groups that has long defied any planning efforts to achieve uniformity across the town's thin socioeconomic veneer.

The Azazmeh, for example, are less likely than the *Abid* bedouin to raise any sort of animals in Segev Shalom ($p=.01$). This is especially prevalent among the town's poorer residents ($p=.05$), a clear sign that holding flocks and other animal resources is not for "nostalgic" purposes, but rather serves as an economic supplement to household income. The same can be said for agricultural activity in the town: the Azazmeh are less likely than the Tarabeen to raise any sort of crop ($p=.00$), most especially the lower income households ($p=.01$).

Not only does this fact say a great deal about the economic status of many of the black bedouin of Segev Shalom, but more than this, it impacts the town environment as well. *Shekhuna Bet* is physically different from the rest of the town, filled with animal corrals, gardens, small orchards, noises, and smells of all kinds—a bit of chaos and cacophony amidst what is slowly evolving into an otherwise "modern" town. Although such are found throughout the town, the degree of difference between this neighborhood and the others is not lost on the town residents, who bear various resentments against either the *Moatzah*, the *Abid* themselves, or both, for this questionable state of affairs. Survey respondents representing lower income households were generally more critical of the town's cleanliness than were more wealthy respondents ($p=.00$), in particular the members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.00$). That is, overall, the Azazmeh were more critical of the town's cleanliness than were the Tarabeen ($p=.03$).

Wealth disparity between the two communities is also expressed in terms of material goods ownership. For example, the Azazmeh are more likely to own a Nintendo/Playstation gaming system ($p=.03$). Significantly, even the lower income Azazmeh are more likely than the Tarabeen to own a Nintendo/Playstation ($p=.03$). Other luxury/high end items that the Azazmeh are more likely to own include the personal computer ($p=.00$), and most especially those households with higher incomes ($p=.03$). The Azazmeh are also more likely to own VCR/DVD players ($p=.02$). The higher incomes Azazmeh are also more likely to have a satellite dish for their television service ($p=.01$).

As for the Tarabeen households, they too are more likely to own certain consumer products, but these statistics only further the contention that Segev Shalom is highly socially stratified. Tarabeen households, for example, are more likely to own a clothes washing machine than the Azazmeh ($p=.04$). Moreover, this was found to be especially true among the *lower income* Tarabeen families ($p=.02$). The lower income Tarabeen were also found to be *more* likely to own a TV than lower income Azazmeh

households ($p=.01$), who were also *more* likely to own a refrigerator than Azazmeh families ($p=.02$).

In general, of course, consumption by these lower income households is not an indicator of family prosperity as it is for the wealthy Azazmeh, but rather, it suggests that these items (the TV, washing machine, and refrigerator), unlike the high end items consumed by the more well-off town residents, are viewed by these Tarabeen consumers as essential components of post-nomadic life. These are viewed as items for *survival*, not items of leisure (the TV included).

On the whole, however, the bedouin families of Segev Shalom are slowly but surely showing an increasing ability and desire to purchase consumer goods as wage labor engagement and overall household incomes rise (Figures 3.1a, 3.1b). In comparing Segev Shalom residents' levels of consumption with the Israeli national averages for consumer product ownership (Figure 3.2) one finds the following: refrigerator, 99.9 percent; washing machine, 94.7 percent; TV, 91.7 percent; telephone, 86.8 percent; Cable/Dish TV, 70.1 percent; VCR, 64.9 percent; personal computer, 59.2 percent; and, car, 57.3 percent (CBS 2004). While the bedouin ownership rates fall below these rates in most instances, on average, Segev Shalom residents have a *higher* rate of ownership of TVs and automobiles than the Israeli national average.

Predictably, it is found that income correlates strongly with the educational levels of the survey respondents in the town, though this was found

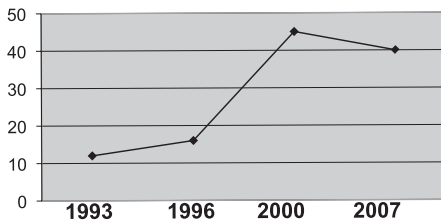


Figure 3.1a. Percentage of Employed Segev Shalom Residents Who Are Working in the Town Itself, Men & Women, 1993–2007. Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

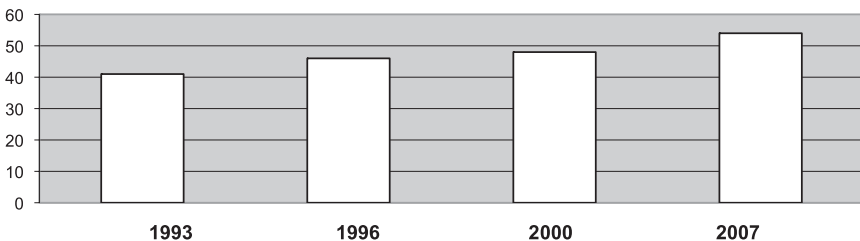


Figure 3.1b. Percent Employed Outside the Home, Segev Shalom Survey Respondents (Male/Female).

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

to be true for the Tarabeen households and was not necessarily the case with the Azazmeh households ($p=.01$). What was also found, however, was that the Azazmeh who were employed in wage labor were more likely to work in Jewish areas, making higher salaries than Tarabeen respondents ($p=.05$). Respondents over 40 years of age who lived in households with higher incomes also were more likely to work in the Jewish sector ($p=.05$).

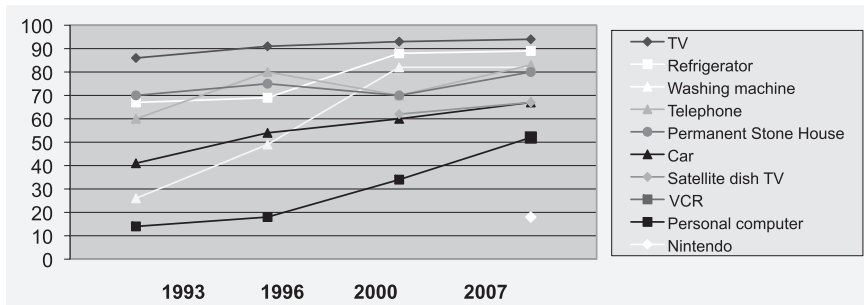


Figure 3.2. Segev Shalom Ownership of Material Goods (%), Listed Most to Least), 1993–2007.

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

Those households in Segev Shalom with higher incomes were also more likely to own a permanent stone home rather than just a temporary dwelling ($p=.03$), a telephone ($p=.03$), a VCR/DVD player ($p=.01$), and a car ($p=.01$). Higher income households were more likely to be connected to the public utility in order to access their electricity ($p=.01$), particularly among young ($p=.01$) and Azazmeh ($p=.03$) households.

It should be noted here that, as discussed at length in Chapter 2, there is limited employment opportunity in Segev Shalom. And yet the employment rate within the town itself has risen sharply during the 15-year study period (Figure 3.1a). This rising job rate is somewhat misleading, as it includes the increasing employment of women in the town (see Chapter 6). According to the 2007 statistics, only 22 percent of the employed male population work in the town of Segev Shalom, compared to 76 percent of the employed women.

Employment opportunity inside the town is but one way of measuring the level and degree to which Segev Shalom can be considered a “town” in the fullest extent of the word, and not merely a bedroom community designed to service the local Jewish cities, towns, *kibbutzim*, and *moshavim*. This is the perception and fear of many Negev bedouin, who increasingly view the bedouin towns as what amount to economically empty peripheral proletarian spaces lacking employment opportunities, and designed to service the bourgeoisie needs of Israel’s Jewish urban cores.

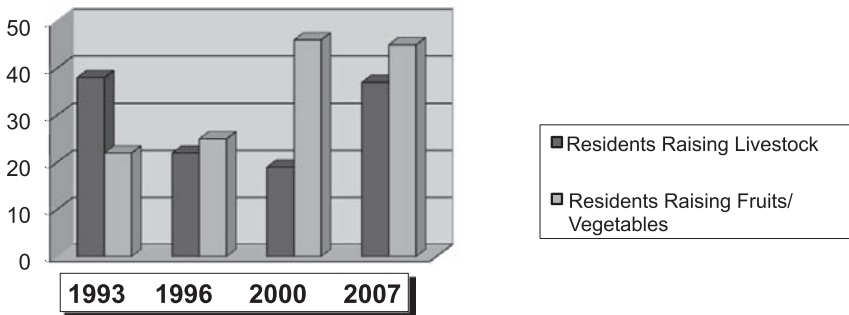


Figure 3.3. Segev Shalom Residents Raising Livestock, Fruits and Vegetables (%), 1993–2007.

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

This lack of economic opportunity, it is believed, only serves to fester internal problems (violence, petty crime, delinquency, and the like). The perpetuation of agrarian activity in the town, both the raising of crops as well as livestock (Figure 3.3), clearly suggests that the economic situation in the town requires these ongoing supplements, however impractical undertaking agricultural activity or animal husbandry may be within a small, densely designed urban environment. Moreover, in Segev Shalom, it appears clear that both forms of activity are on the gradual rise.

The percentage of those bedouin who state that they relocated to the town due to the force of the state as compared to those who have relocated seeking development and opportunity have changed considerably over the years as well (Figure 3.4). While early on in the study, government force appears to have played a significant role in one's decision making, over time it can be seen that this factor became less significant as the attraction of accessing a higher living standard and quality of life began to draw resettlers into the town. What is also increasingly evident is that by 2007, this attraction had begun to fade; newcomers, it appears, had lowered their expectations somewhat, with the recognition that the promises of the 1980s and 1990s had not been delivered.

And yet, many appear to believe that town living will offer them something better—the category “family decision” implies that the bedouins' decision to resettle is increasingly being based upon a constellation of factors, some developmental, some political—than remaining in the *pezurah* (see below), and so they move. Access and use of the town's utilities and publicly planned services (see Figures 3.5, 3.6) further suggest that resettlers are using these provisions in increasing numbers, and view them relatively favorably.

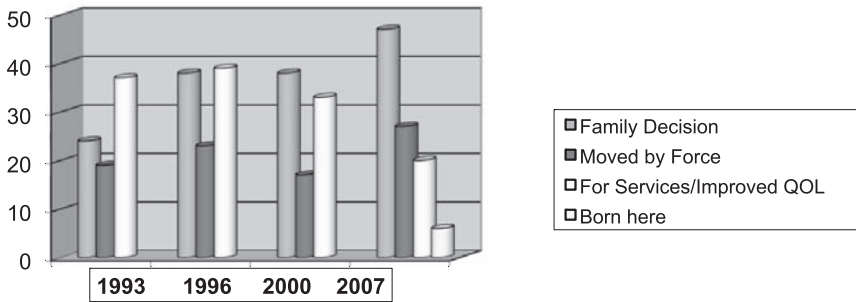


Figure 3.4. Primary Reasons for Resettling Cited by Segev Shalom Residents (%), 1993–2007.

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

In order to try to isolate the motivations of resettlers, I removed the “Family decision” responses from the data, and tested just two categories, namely, “Moved by Government Force” and “Moved for an Improved Quality of Life/Access to Town Services.” Some significant correlations can be found that distinguish these two groups. Those stating that they relocated seeking development or a better quality of life (QOL) were found to be more likely to own one material item, the refrigerator ($p=.03$). While this might appear on the surface to be a curious distinction, it is less so when one considers that in the *pezurah*, where electrical service is not provided as a public utility, privately-owned generators are used and then, only during evening hours. It is common to sit in the dark as the daylight hours wane, waiting for a timer to turn the generator on; it is common too for leftover food to be thrown out or offered to the local dogs, given that refrigeration is impractical and non-existent in environments where electricity is only on four or five hours per day. It is perhaps understandable as well that the correlation between refrigerator ownership and motivation for relocating to the town for QOL purposes was especially strong among women respondents ($p=.02$).

Other material goods and services provide some draw into the town as well. Older residents who stated that they relocated seeking a higher QOL, for example, were found to be more likely to have satellite dish TV than those who stated that they relocated due to government force ($p=.01$). Those seeking a higher QOL also stated a higher likelihood of utilizing the town’s social welfare services ($p=.01$), most especially the young ($p=.01$), men ($p=.03$), and Tarabeen respondents ($p=.01$). Azazmeh and women respondents, stating that they were seeking a higher QOL, also tended to rate the town’s medical services higher than those who moved by force ($p=.05$,

.05 respectively). The women's response is particularly telling; as most bedouin women still do not drive and yet are responsible for healthcare concerns for their children (see Chapter 4), the convenience of Segev Shalom's clinics, like owning a regularly functioning refrigerator, are clear QOL improvements for Negev bedouin women when compared to their lives in the *pezurah* (see Chapter 6).

That said, not all women are more satisfied with the new town environment, or moved there of their own accord. More educated women were more likely than those without high school educations to state that they relocated by force ($p=.01$). Further, those respondents, both male and female, stating that they relocated to Segev Shalom primarily due to government force were significantly more likely to live in polygynous Azazmeh households ($p=.05$).

Those stating that they moved by force also stated that they do not feel equal with other Israelis (see Figure 3.7). While, in general, this was not found to be statistically significant for the general sample ($p=.06$), the correlation was statistically significant for young respondents ($p=.05$), and members of the Azazmeh tribe in particular ($p=.01$). In addition, the Azazmeh who stated that they came by force were more likely to say that they did not feel that the present Israeli government was able/willing to serve the socioeconomic needs of the bedouin community ($p=.04$).

The planning and services offered in the new town environment are, of course, what distinguish Segev Shalom and the other officially recognized towns from the communities of the *pezurah*. If the goal and purpose of resettlement is to offer these resettlers a modern, clean, developed living environment and standard that is deemed unachievable in the *pezurah* environment, one may reasonably seek to assess the extent to which the state

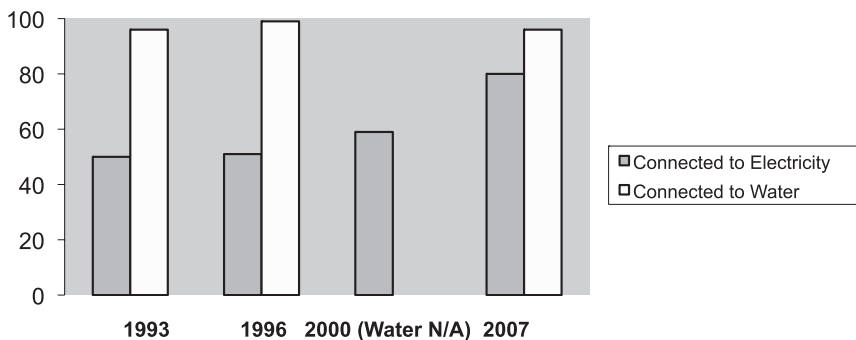


Figure 3.5. Percentage of Households Connected to the Local Utilities, 1993–2007.

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

is succeeding in this endeavor. The answer, as these statistics suggest, is mixed, and, once again, is influenced by a constellation of factors, including income, gender, tribe, and age.

Younger, lower incomes residents, for example, were more critical of the town’s cleanliness than older residents in the same income category ($p=.02$). These older, lower income residents, however, were more critical of the electrical service in town than the younger low income respondents ($p=.05$). And yet overall, those from higher income households rated the electrical service higher than those with lower incomes ($p=.01$), especially members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.01$). Put simply, those who can afford these services tend over all to be more satisfied; many feel they are paying a great deal for these services, and are getting very little for their money.

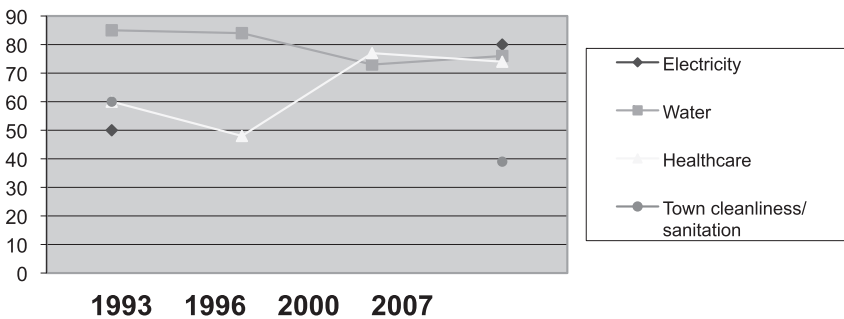


Figure 3.6. Segev Shalom Residents Rating the Town Services Highly (%), 1993–2007.

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

Much of the data seems to reflect what can best be described as “unmet expectations” among some, while others are clearly pleased to accept what little they now have relative to what they once had when living in the *pezurah*. This is clearly seen when comparing the Azazmeh with the Tarabeen. As noted above, the Tarabeen rate the overall cleanliness of the town higher than the Azazmeh. They also rate the water service higher than the Azazmeh ($p=.02$), particularly those coming from lower income households ($p=.01$). But further, the Tarabeen women rate electricity service higher ($p=.01$), water service higher ($p=.02$), and town healthcare services higher ($p=.02$) than Azazmeh women. In general, it can be said that among the lower income households of Segev Shalom, the Tarabeen are generally more satisfied with the new town environment, as they rate the overall town services and planning higher as compared to the past than do the Azazmeh ($p=.03$).

Qualitative Data: The Voice of the People

From these quantitative data, a picture of general satisfaction begins to form, but it is incomplete, as it does not fully reflect what many bedouin residents say about their lives and their feelings of living in the new town environment. In 2000, a new question was introduced into the survey: “Is life in Segev Shalom better than it was 10–15 years ago, worse, or about the same?” In 2000, 66 percent said better, only 4 percent said worse, while 25 percent said things were about the same. In 2007, while the figure for people believing things were better had risen to 74 percent, those believing things were worse rose to 25 percent. Still, this question also does not fully allow the bedouin residents of Segev Shalom to voice their views or concerns about the resettlement initiative, or about urban living.

In part, this is due to the culture and language of the bedouin of the Negev. When asked to “rate” a given service or situation, the first reaction is to request further explanation. “Rating” is a malleable concept, and somewhat novel to the culture in question. So, while here I may wish to distinguish between those who are “more satisfied” from those who are “less satisfied,” such distinctions may mean little amongst the bedouin themselves. Rarely does one receive an initial answer beyond “*kweis*” or “*b’seder*,” the Arabic and Hebrew equivalents, respectively, of “OK,” when asked to judge or rate a particular service, government office, and the like. Often, it is only upon further discussion that some bedouin respondents will feel comfortable enough fully to elaborate upon their true attitudes and feelings (which may indeed be negative), despite an initial response to the contrary.

In order to address this concern, a series of open-ended questions at the conclusion of each questionnaire allowed the Segev Shalom residents to speak about those issues that most concerned *them*. In addition to several concerns expressed regarding healthcare services in town (see Chapter 4), for example, several respondents to the 2007 survey called for “cleaner streets, public gardens, and promenades to walk on” in the town. In fact, nearly every respondent made note of how dirty the town was, and how much this concerned them.

In addition, several respondents, mostly women in their 20s and 30s, called for the opening of a *matnas* (Hebrew: town activity center/club found in virtually every community in Israel), and courses including “music, computers, [and] Hebrew classes.” Said one: “We want trips for the children, day camps, projects for children, a course for kids to learn to swim. They need summer programs for when the kids aren’t doing anything.” Many others repeated several items from this list, and the concern that the town youth tend to wander around after school with nothing to do and “nowhere to play.”

For many in town, especially those under 40 years of age, Segev Shalom provides the services and provisions that they need. States one 32-year-old male: “The changes over the past 10–15 years are for the better. We didn’t have streets, schools, or houses like these in the past. Things are better. We have everything here now, the *Kupat Holim* (Hebrew: public clinic), things we never had before. Everything is for the better now.” Added another 19-year-old male: “We have progressed, it’s better. We have electricity. It used to be that we only had it at night. Now we have a local *Kupat Holim* instead of having to go to Be’er Sheva. We have a school nearby. We have a post office. It’s like a bank, you can cash checks, you can get money there.”

Such sentiment, however, is typically tempered by a list of frustrations and perceived injustices that impact Segev Shalom residents’ daily lives. These attitudes are expressed amongst nearly all of the qualitative information provided on the 236 questionnaires completed that year. The same 19-year-old continues, “we need a bus from here to Be’er Sheva. We need medicine from the pharmacy in Be’er Sheva and we can’t even get there. [When we get there], security checks us more than the Jews as we enter the supermarket or the bank. And they give the Jews more money for their kids for school. They help them more than us. They give the kids in the Jewish *gans* (Hebrew: kindergartens) food assistance, but not ours. You could fill your page.”

Many offered responses that suggest fears of prejudice, racism, and worse. One 35-year-old female respondent said: “The State should care about the Arab citizens and help us with money and the construction of a house. This is very difficult. They should do it the way they help the Jews that want to live in this country. There should be equality. We are citizens in this country and it should help us because it belongs to us too. We live here.” Offered a male respondent: “This State is racist when it comes to the bedouin. I don’t recommend to anyone to move to Segev Shalom.” A 42-year-old male put it differently: “We go to the hospital in pain and they tell us ‘you’re fine.’ I was upset and they kept saying I was OK when I had a problem. If you are a Jew, they’ll look at you even when you’re fine but a bedouin, no. A bedouin woman gets kicked out [of the hospital] right after having a baby but a Jew can stay as long as she wants.”

This theme of inequality, as it is perceived to exist both within Segev Shalom and throughout life in Israel in general, was found repeatedly in the open-ended responses to the 2007 survey. Many of the responses are also similar insofar as they refer to service in the Israel Defense Forces. A 51-year-old male Segev Shalom resident who owns five houses in the town, is married to four wives, and is father to 22 children, states: “The Jews get far more than we do. We have no money in the towns to do anything. They are all the same. Nothing changes for us. I was in the Army. I remember, a Jew will do the same as you, but he gets more ... Economically, things

were better 15 years ago. Everything is more expensive now. You have to pay for water, electricity, taxes. Fifteen years ago I got value for my money but today no. Everything's gone up in price." When asked why he opted to relocate to the town, his answer, without further elaboration, was that he moved "by mistake."

Many respondents also conclude that, given the opportunity, they would leave the town at once and go back to the *pezurah*. While making such statements may simply be out of frustration, nostalgia or sheer hyperbole, what it does seem to suggest is that for many, town living is not and has not met their expectations. And so I provide Table 3.4, in order that the respondents² may, in their own lightly edited words, offer the essence of the concerns and issues of what it means to them to live in the planned bedouin town of Segev Shalom in 2007:

Table 3.4. Segev Shalom Residents' Perspectives, 2007

Resident 1. 41, Male—There are no bedouin—the real bedouin are not here. In the past the women cared for the babies. Today, look at me! [He holds up his infant son, his wife has gone out for the evening].

My brother is in the Army. If you do the same thing you should get the same thing. Arab blood and Jewish blood is both red.

But things have gotten worse here. I didn't come [to Segev Shalom] for me, I came for my kids. Our lives are concentrated here, we need all these services. But in another 20 years, there just won't be any bedouin left at all. Here we are modern people. But outside town, they are still bedouin ... We can teach our kids that "your father is a bedouin, but you can be an engineer or a lawyer!"

I came here for my kids' education, for them to learn Arabic, Arab culture. My brother in the Army is getting an education. But there they teach you the Jewish language and how to be a Jew. Here [in Segev] they can learn how to be Arabs.

Resident 2. 36, Male—We have problems here with high blood pressure and diabetes and obesity. We need exercise especially for our women. Segev especially has this problem. We have to pay for water, electricity, taxes, TV, the house. We have to pay to live. My wife and I both work, that's all we do, so we can pay for all of this.

I miss the camel, the tent, the food ... now we have no time, all we do is work to pay the bills. When I was a kid I didn't learn how to ride a bike until I was in 12th grade, but today my kid in first grade wants one. He doesn't know the history, the culture. If that happens, the bedouin are finished, we're gone. When the bedouin has to make a zoo and put a camel in it to teach his kid what a camel is, that's the end. The bedouin ate only natural foods. Now they are eating hot dogs, salami, these things aren't nature. This isn't 'bedouin.'

I get money for my kids, but I have the *Moatzah*. I have to pay *arnonah* [Hebrew: Municipal tax], water, and electric bills ... We can study in the university so we have equality.

There's a lot of development in the town. Also the society has developed. If bedouin women are educated, her children will be. And if the children are, the society will progress.

Resident 3. 26, Male—The town is dirty. There is trash here. There are no police here. The place is a mess. Work is available [in Israel], but it is just for the Jews. I worked at Ramat Hovav. I worked there longer, I was a better worker, but some Jews came along and they were given promotions ahead of me and in my place.

The town is better [than in the past] for studying and learning. But I think things for our society are getting worse all the time, because I think the Jews hate us more every day. When

I go to Be'er Sheva, I'm stopped 15 times between here and there. Am I not a citizen? But this is how it is.

I have 3 sisters. They married guys from Gaza. They got no *teudot zehut* [Hebrew: Israeli I.D.s]. Anywhere in the world when you marry you get citizenship, but here, my sisters' husbands were taken by the Government and sent back to Gaza.

Resident 4. 28, Male—I pay *arnonah*—for what? I am in my own house, and I have to pay rent! We initially moved here because the Government forced us. Over time, we have seen that Segev is a good place. But there are those who just wish to leave. You can use solar [energy] in the *pezurah* so you don't need a generator. Outside, there's water too.

So most are just saying "So what was the reason, why did I come here?" Here is an example, this guy here [sitting to his left], his family, they left their 2-story house and just went back. If it weren't so difficult, there are many others like him who would follow. Out there [in the *pezurah*], there are no walls—just freedom!

Fifteen years ago, we were freer. Yes, today, due to political changes, we have El-Jazeera, El-Arabiyya, the Internet. [But] it's like we were "primitive" and the government had to come and help us "progress." In my opinion this is not true.

Resident 5. 31, Male—Going to the *Kupat Holim* is a waste of time. It's like sitting at the airport just waiting. The doctors don't speak Arabic. They treat you like children, like we are foreign or strange. They don't really care. They built this new building, but is it for us, or is it from somewhere else built for someone else?

Regarding education, the Jews get far more than we do. The kids here are studying in caravans. It costs 1,400 NIS [approx. U.S.\$350] each day per bus to transport the kids. If they would take all this money they could build a new school from one month's worth of this expense for these busses. Ten elementary schools feed into one high school. Then the girls drop out because of the far distances they have to travel.

Given the chance, I think 90% of the people living here in Segev Shalom would just leave. We'd give up electricity and TV—who needs it, it just gives you a headache. We'd go back if we could. The town is just getting worse—it's a trash bin. They are bringing [Palestinian collaborators] here. They are not opening up new areas for development. We have lots of children, so the town is getting more dense, there's lots of pressure. Further, there is no work, no industry, and no opportunity ...

Resident 6. 32, Male—Everything here [in Segev Shalom] is done half way. They waste money, do things a little at a time. It makes no sense. A lot of it is the *Moatzah*, but this also comes from the [National] Government. They build schools that are too small from the beginning. They want a longer school day. Who is this good for? Not for the bedouin. There is no equality here. You want me to be here but you won't give me equality. They force us to be here but then we can't manage to even build a house!

If I could I would just have stayed outside [in the *pezurah*]. I would have more money now, I would be better off with just a generator. I wouldn't have to pay *arnonah*. I don't need a villa. If I have to live here, I need the money to do it. To live here, to study, it costs a lot of money. If you don't work [as I do], you haven't got a chance.

Ten years ago I was able to earn less but my money paid for more. I make more money now but get less for it. So my life has worsened. Everything you see around you is from ten years ago. I can't finish building my house, or I take food out of the mouths of my kids. Everything has gone up in price, taxes, *arnonah*. The economic situation is really bad. And I think 10 years from now it will be worse. Anyone who is living in a shack now [i.e., does not yet have a permanent stone house built] is in trouble. They'll never live in a house.

Arnonah is 3,000 NIS [approx. U.S.\$750] per year. There are a lot of people who aren't paying and it adds up. So [the Government] will start repossessing their belongings, leading to thefts and chaos. They'll feel like they have nothing to lose.

Source: Segev Shalom Survey, 2007.

To reiterate, these views should not be considered as in any way exceptional. One hears these kinds of attitudes expressed repeatedly, not only in Segev Shalom, but in other planned bedouin towns as well. Still, it must also be emphasized that they provide only a part of the picture, for, of course, the quantitative data above suggests some positive developmental trajectory in the town as well. Perhaps the best way to summarize these ambivalent findings comes from a 50-year-old bedouin woman 2007 survey respondent, who suggested, “We have progressed a little, but then we’ve moved backwards and things are worse today than in the past. We didn’t have a good *Moatzah* in the past, but now we do. But people have changed. Everyone thinks only about himself now, and about what is for his own good. Not about anyone else.”

This sort of nostalgia is common among many of the bedouin respondents, whose memories of living in the *pezurah* and whose claims about their experiences there at times are reminiscent of the Israelites’ memories of living in Egypt under Pharaoh when they are wandering in the Sinai after the Exodus. That is to say, the Promised Land of Segev Shalom has hardly met their expectations—expectations that were designed and built up by a government that sought to relocate them at any cost, but that has provided little since their arrival. But was life in the *pezurah* as good as they remember it?

In an attempt to answer this question, I initiated a small comparative survey in the neighboring communities of the *pezurah* not far from Segev Shalom from 3–13 May 2007. Eight surveyors, teaching staff from one of the Segev Shalom elementary schools and JITLI students from the Segev Shalom High School, randomly sampled 45 households in order to make some comparisons with residents in the planned town. Given that there are several thousand households in the *pezurah*, this survey was considered a small, non-representative sample, too small really to be considered as anything other than a snapshot that might allow some comparisons with those bedouin living in the planned town. When combined with the 236 households in the town, they comprise 16 percent of the total 281 households in the entire study. Still, despite the small *N*, some relevant material can be culled from the data, which offers a further understanding of the relationship today between the planned town and the *pezurah*.

Some Perspective: A Comparison with the “Pezurah”

Several statistical differences can be noted between the respondents of the 2007 Segev Shalom survey and the *pezurah* survey. Most, though certainly not all, of these statistics bear out the contention by the state that living in the new town environment offers development opportunities that are far

less available in the *pezurah*. What one might reasonably ask, however, is whether, like any migration, those living in the town were more open and amenable to certain developmental behaviors and attitudes to begin with than are those who resist resettlement in the urban environment.

For example, a substantially higher rate of polygyny, 48 percent, was found among the *pezurah* households, as compared to those in town, 32 percent ($p=.04$). This statistic bears out Kressel's contention that polygyny rates are higher in the *pezurah* than in the planned towns (2003: 96). Moreover, respondents in the *pezurah* were also more likely to identify as bedouin ($p=.01$; see Chapter 5), 47 percent compared to 19 percent in the *pezurah*. Under the age of 40, the difference was even greater. A trade-off between bedouinness and Muslim identity clearly can be identified; in the town, 50 percent identified as Muslims and 16 percent as bedouin; in the *pezurah*, 30 percent identified as Muslims and 48 percent identified as bedouin ($p=.01$). In both environments, however, an expression of Palestinian and Arab identities was virtually identical.

Still, *pezurah* residents were more likely to raise animals ($p=.00$), raise crops ($p=.02$), and live in temporary housing ($p=.00$). These distinctions, of course, provide the very definitions of what it means to live in the *pezurah* in 2007. In addition, those in the *pezurah* households were less likely to own a VCR/DVD player ($p=.02$), a refrigerator ($p=.00$), a Nintendo/Playstation ($p=.00$), or a personal computer ($p=.00$). None of this was unexpected, but what must be noted here is that no difference was found between the two environments in terms of the ownership of satellite dishes, TVs, washing machines, or telephones. Car ownership and access was no different between the men in the two environments; women in town, however, had more access to cars than women in the *pezurah* ($p=.03$).

Pezurah residents do not have electric service ($p=.00$) or water service ($p=.00$). They predictably rated their electricity lower than town residents

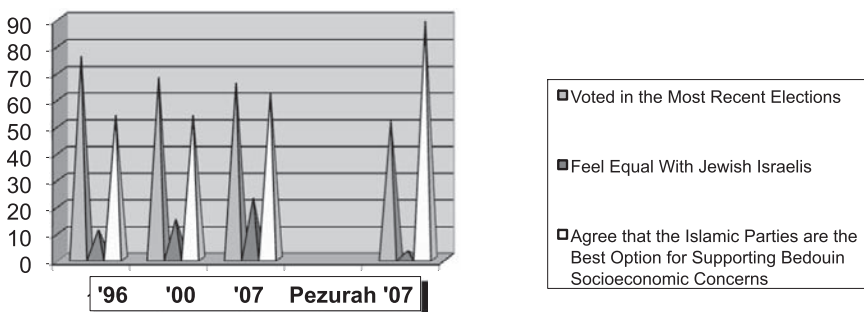


Figure 3.7. Political Indices, Segev Shalom 1996–2007 and the *Pezurah* 2007. Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

($p=.00$), as well as their water service ($p=.00$). *Pezurah* residents also access a private doctor less than town residents ($p=.00$), most especially men ($p=.01$) and those under the age of 40 ($p=.01$). Residents of both areas use Soroka Hospital with similar regularity, however.

Educational levels also varied between the two environments, although all respondents in both environments were similarly literate. However, men ($p=.05$) and those under 40 ($p=.00$) in Segev Shalom were more educated than their counterparts in the *pezurah*. Such a distinction is yet another reinforcement of the strength of the resettlement initiative's social development accomplishments (see Chapter 4). Although children from the *pezurah* attend school in the towns, these statistics suggest that living in the town itself simply makes education that much more accessible. While no correlation was found on the basis of gender as might be anticipated, what was found was that there was a statistical difference between a survey respondent's mother's highest grade achieved between the town and the *pezurah*; the mothers of those living in the town were in general more educated than those living in the *pezurah* ($p=.03$).

The bedouin who are employed in wage labor work in similar job locations, regardless of where they reside. Household income is not significantly different between the two environments. Further, the male level of employment is not statistically any different for town residents than for *pezurah* residents. The women of Segev Shalom, conversely, are considerably more likely to be employed in wage labor than women in the *pezurah* ($p=.02$). Nonetheless, the male statistic is extremely significant, insofar as it furthers the contention noted above that the towns offer little economic opportunity (certainly no more than the *pezurah*), and yet provide less in terms of allowing the bedouin to sustain themselves through their "traditional" agrarian activities of crop production and pastoral nomadism/animal husbandry. Those living in the *pezurah*, on the other hand, are able to carry out any economic activity that those in town are employed in and, *in addition*, engage in agrarian activity if they wish—that is, if they are willing to continually combat the constraining mechanisms imposed by the state against these interests (see Chapter 1).

Resettling or refusing to move is, in part, a political act. Several differences can also be discerned between the respondents in terms of their political attitudes and behaviors. For example, men voted at similar levels in both environments, though women in Segev Shalom were more likely to have voted than women in the *pezurah* ($p=.05$). Those living in the *pezurah* were more likely to state more positive attitudes toward the Israeli government than those living in the town ($p=.01$), though these tended to be older ($p=.03$) male ($p=.01$) respondents.

Residents of the *pezurah* ($p=.00$), especially the young ($p=.00$) and male ($p=.01$) respondents, were more likely to agree, on the other hand, with the statement that the Islamic parties are their preferred replacement for the present government. Those living in the *pezurah* were also more likely to offer either the Islamic or the Arab parties (Bilad, etc.) as better options than the present Kadima party, as opposed to respondents from Segev Shalom who offered these, as well as Jewish/Zionist parties (or, in most case, stated that *no* party could help the bedouin at this point in furthering their social and economic development needs, see Chapter 5; $p=.00$). This sentiment was not necessarily solely based upon the “religiosity” of the respondents per se. While those living in the town do state overall more frequent mosque attendance than those in the *pezurah* ($p=.05$), a behavior especially stated by the men for obvious cultural reasons ($p=.02$), no statistical difference could be found between the two environments in terms of the degree to which respondents stated that they attend the mosque on a general basis (see Chapter 5).

Perhaps the greatest difference noted between the two environments comes down to feelings of being treated equally with Jewish Israelis. While the percentage of Segev Shalom respondents in 2007 who stated that they feel that they *are not* treated equally is quite high, 77 percent, this figure has dropped steadily throughout the study period (Figure 3.7). As for the *pezurah*, 97 percent stated that they *do not* feel they are treated equally with Jewish Israelis ($p=.00$).

Conclusions

The social and economic development results of planning in Segev Shalom manifested over the fifteen years of this study noted in this chapter suggest that a number of observations and conclusions may be put forward. First, it would be disingenuous not to note the overall positive change that has generally occurred in the town, as measured in such areas as access to wage labor employment (including employment within the town itself), material wealth (including the most difficult item for many to access in the past, the permanent stone house), connectivity to the public utilities, and attitudes toward these service provisions. In these and other areas, the bedouin of Segev Shalom have shown slow but steady improvement during the period in question as measured by these socioeconomic indices that can be used to measure the Quality of Life (QOL) of these resettlers.

Second, when compared with those bedouin who remain in the *pezurah*, the differences in the life experiences of the resettled bedouin of Segev Sha-

lom comes into even sharper focus. This is most especially true for bedouin women (see Chapter 6), whose QOL clearly can be differentiated as seen through the lens of the resettlement initiative. Bedouin men may have similar life experiences regardless of where they live, but for bedouin women, resettlement in the planned town appears to have had a substantially positive impact, which is undeniable.

Lastly, despite these improvements, the bedouin do not necessarily express the sentiment or belief that they are better off than they were in the past. Rather, a sense of loss permeates much of their daily discussions—much of it bordering on anger. Residents who spoke with me, including some of those quoted in Table 3.4, are highly educated and employed. Still, most bedouin town dwellers living in Segev Shalom twenty-five years after its creation expected more when they relocated than what they have.

Indeed, the more affluent and educated are often the *most* disillusioned of town residents. Today's bedouin is not an illiterate herder holding onto flocks and wishing to live in a tent; rather, he (and increasingly, nowadays, she) is often a savvy, educated, knowledgeable professional or businessperson who is well traveled, and is quite familiar with Jewish Israel. One 39-year-old female survey respondent stated that it was her wish that someday, "Segev Shalom will be like Tel Aviv or Jerusalem."

And yet, of course, the town is nothing of the kind. Most residents view it as cramped, dirty, and neglected. Many state that they relocated not because the government forced them, as was once the case, but because nowadays, urban life is simply a more viable lifestyle in the global economy, something in which they are very much a part. And yet, as disappointment builds upon disappointment and unmet expectations are commonplace, the sense of disenfranchisement grows. As will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 5, voting rates are dropping, and those who are voting increasingly are throwing their support to the Islamic parties, not because they are "religious" per se, but because they are seeking an alternative to a government and public at large, which they perceive, perhaps with good reason, treats them as less than equal citizens.

They believe that they are being told to settle for less than what they deserve as full citizens of the State of Israel, to take the "bone" that is being thrown to them and quietly, obediently, willingly accept their fate. As will be seen in the following chapter, the gap between the state's perceptions and the bedouin's views is, therefore, incredibly wide. For, like the other services provided, none have shown greater promise—and greater success from the state's perspective—than the provision of healthcare and education services. And yet, from the bedouin community's perspective, no two areas of service provision are more controversial, more dysfunctional, or, ironically, more inadequate.

NOTES

1. In Native Alaska, this dynamic has been referred to as the 'crab-pot' syndrome. As certain innovative, risk-taking individual 'crabs' strive to get ahead and exit the 'cooking pot' (i.e., seeking formal education, wage labor or other ways to progress or better themselves), others who are less resourceful, capable or entrepreneurial 'reach' up with their large claws and pull the culprits back in—out of jealousy, envy, resentment, and so on. I have yet to find a culturally appropriate equivalent term to be applied in the desert, where crabs are few and far between, but the dynamic appears to be similar in any case.
2. It is not coincidental that these extensive comments are all provided by men. Bedouin women remain largely quiescent in the Negev, especially when men are present (which is, by design, almost all of the time). It is for this reason that I created the Bedouin Women's Focus Group (see Chapter 6); women have a great deal to say and contribute, but many, especially those over age 40, remain reluctant to speak up in mixed environments.

Chapter 4

Health and Education

There is no way out of what's fated
—Clinton Bailey, *A Culture of Desert Survival:
Bedouin Proverbs from Sinai and the Negev*

Teaching the young is like carving in stone;
Teaching the old is like carving in the air
—Clinton Bailey, *A Culture of Desert Survival:
Bedouin Proverbs from Sinai and the Negev*

As seen in Chapter 3, an analysis of planning in Segev Shalom and throughout the resettled bedouin sector reveals mixed outcomes. There is no question that some successes may be noted, and a failure to do so, or to condemn the state at every turn regardless of what the statistics show—though commonplace in the Negev today—is simply disingenuous.

On the other hand, like much of the change now under way in the Negev bedouin community, the planning has been inconsistent, spotty, haphazard, and at times implemented in such a poor and neglectful fashion that often any positive outcomes that do accrue are simply overshadowed by patterns of sheer negligence, which serve to reinforce a sense among the bedouin that even when they are gaining, they are in fact losing. There are no better social development areas that exemplify this sentiment more cogently than those of healthcare and educational services.

Healthcare Issues—Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back

There is little doubt that the bedouin of the Negev today have access to more healthcare opportunities than they have ever had in history. That, as the saying goes, is the good news. The bad news is that the resettlement initiative has fostered a situation in which the bedouin of the Negev now show a greater *need* for healthcare than at any time in their history as well—and much of that need can be traced to the resettlement initiative.

Historically, the forced sedentarization initiative was rationalized largely upon the need to provide, above all else, healthcare services to the Negev bedouin community. The state's argument for the settlement of the population, like so many other nomadic communities during the same period, was straightforward: "they are citizens, so it is incumbent upon the state to give them adequate healthcare ... [but] when they are spread out they are difficult to access" (Shapira, 24 November 1992). Moreover, Shapira notes, in the mid 1940s, prior to the creation of the State of Israel, there was only one road connecting Gaza, Be'er Sheva, and Hebron. By horse or camel, it took two to three days to secure medical assistance in Hebron, the site where many bedouin acquired care—if at all—at that time.

Infectious disease, malaria, and tuberculosis (TB), in particular, were common throughout Palestine during the 1930s and 1940s (Abu-Rabia 2005: 422). Soon after the creation of the *siyag*, however, a high incidence of TB was identified among the bedouin community; the state determined that all members should be inoculated as fully and as quickly as possible (Shvarts et al. 2003: 50). "Isolated" and "ignorant" (Abu-Rabia 2005: 424), the bedouin practiced a variety of home, nature-based remedies using traditional healers to treat malaria and other ailments, injuries, and infections.

In 1949, the first mobile health unit was created out of Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva, charged most especially with providing inoculations to the bedouin. In essence, the authorities blamed the living conditions for the spread of the disease; poor nutrition, poor hygiene, and the like were all attributed to living in what amounted to an unhealthy environment (Shvarts et al. 2003: 51). Moreover, there was fear that, in time, the disease would be spread throughout the Jewish population as well.

And yet the irony of the situation is that, at the very time that the state was contending that the inability to provide complete inoculations and to stop the spread of TB and other infectious diseases lay with the fact that the bedouin population was too dispersed and could not be reached, a root cause of the disease's very contraction and rapid spread was to be found in the fact that the community was concentrated into a confined geographic area maintained by the authorities for the purposes of securing and controlling this Arab Muslim population. Thus, Shvarts et al. reveal that it was largely confinement to the *siyag*—and not, ironically, the fact that the bedouin were too dispersed—that led to the spread of TB and to malnutrition (2003: 57–58).

Nonetheless, since the 1950s and 1960s, bedouin health policy has always been hampered by the ability successfully to provide needed services. Often, government officials, academics, doctors, and even social workers are quick to blame logistical constraints or, more broadly, "cultural issues" as the primary barriers to effective service delivery (Moshe, 15 February

2007; D. Cohen, 24 April 2007; Meir 1997: 183; Dreier, 14 March 2007; Shimshoni, 1 June 1993). And yet, there is evidence that shows that, when proper inducements are provided, bedouin healthcare has proven effective and successful, regardless of the logistical, cultural or other barriers at play.

One example reveals this well. In 1953, the Maternal Insurance Law was instituted. The maternity allowance was created to cover delivery costs and to pay for expenses associated with having a newborn, in order to encourage hospitalization for the delivery of babies, which to that point was virtually unheard of (Shvarts et al. 2003: 53). Four decades later, 95 percent of all bedouin babies were born in the hospital (Belmaker, 19 April 1993), and not the tent as had been the case going back in previous generations. Thus, given this sort of appropriate incentive, the bedouin were able to “overcome the cultural barriers and geographic concerns” often cited as hindrances to effective healthcare provision in the Negev community.

Limitations on the provision side of the equation have drawn less attention, although the lack of trained staff was in truth a “primary obstacle” to serving bedouin medical needs throughout the 1950s (Shvarts et al. 2003: 55), and many doctors resisted even living in the Negev, where their services were needed. A lack of doctors with the cultural sensitivities needed to work with such a special clientele was a problem then and, as will be seen below, remains a problem to the present day.

Nonetheless, the Ministry of Health developed a document in 1961 entitled “Development of medical services for the Bedouin,” which stressed that it was “impossible” to raise the health standards of the bedouin as long as they remained “scattered over a wide geographic area in transitory tent encampments affording insufficient shelter, lacking potable water, and adequate education facilities” (Shvarts et al. 2003: 60). The solution to the problem, the document contends, is to settle the bedouin in “solid stone structures in villages or cities in one or several locations and to integrate them into the economy of the country as farmers, unskilled laborers or skilled craftsmen.”

The creation then of Tel Sheva in the late 1960s was good medicine and, in fact, results were almost immediate. There is no question that, once the *siyag* was removed concomitant with the initiation of the planned town initiative, it “[brought] about an immediate improvement in the standard of living of the Bedouin and their economic situation” (Shvarts et al. 2003: 64). But was it the “traditional bedouin lifestyle” that was burdening the bedouin community, making it “sick,” “diseased,” economically weak, and untenable? Or rather, did the Israeli military presence that sought to concentrate and to control the bedouin community in an artificially controlled and confined space against their will, against their interests, and against their long-term health and well-being play a role? Regardless, it was this very pretense of economic and physical weakness that further fed into the

argument for the need to concentrate and settle the community still further, moving from the *siyag* environment to today's "healthy," modern stone homes in the planned "villages and cities."

As recently as the early 1990s, a considerable degree of concern in the medical community still placed its emphasis upon issues that are related to the largely nomadic, dispersed, non-urbanized nature of the bedouin community. Attempts to immunize bedouin children against various diseases (Hepatitis B, polio, measles, tetanus) were high on the list of healthcare professionals' priorities, as well as were efforts to encourage basic hygiene. Problems with nutrition, which were directly connected to stunting and Failure to Thrive syndrome (FTT), were also emphasized.

Two mobile health units operated out of Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva, serving 9,000 households in the *pezurah* in an attempt to address these concerns. From Regional Medical Officer Ilana Belmaker's perspective, six units might have been adequate, though the process, she noted, of using the jeeps was simply not cost-effective. (Having gone out with the unit a number of times in 1992, I personally saw that it was a time-consuming process as well.) And yet, she suggested, the service had a positive side to it: "The use of the mobile units gives the message of door-to-door service. If we're to face problems of diabetes during pregnancy, premature births, and stunting, we have to go to them if they won't come to us." She concluded by again noting the need for more mobile units. "There are so many problems. We just can't attack them all at once" (Belmaker, 19 April 1993). Significantly, there were *Tipot Halav* (Hebrew: mother/child clinics) and full service *Kupot Holim* (Hebrew: public clinics) in all of the planned bedouin towns at the time, as well as nearby Jewish communities where the bedouin might seek out medical help. Yet also at this time, the Emergency Room at Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva served as the primary medical facility for the bedouin community's healthcare needs.

Over the past two decades, there is no question that one now sees a substantial improvement in the health of the Negev bedouin community. That said, as will be seen below, there is in truth a difference between healthcare provision and access for those who live in the towns and those who resist relocation and remain in the *pezurah*. But what is also true is that within the community as a whole, a variety of problems exist that all bedouin share. Moreover, there are a number of medical concerns in the *pezurah* that are less common in the towns (such as accidental injury); in turn, as the bedouin urbanize, new healthcare concerns are arising in the towns that were, heretofore, previously nonexistent.

One particular issue that has attracted attention has been the occurrence of diabetes. Abou-Rbiah and Weitzman, for example, note that, "diabetes, virtually unknown among Bedouins in the Negev three decades ago,

has become a major health problem in this population” (2002: 689). More recent studies confirm this finding, noting that diabetes rates are significantly higher in the towns (5.5 percent) than in the *pezurah* (3.9 percent; A. Cohen et al. 2005: CR378). A. Cohen and his colleagues found that LDL cholesterol levels were also higher among urban town dwellers, findings that “imply that urbanization of nomadic Bedouins and the changes associated with it, increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases” (2005: CR379).

In other words, changing dietary habits and a reduction in physical activity due to lifestyle changes are largely to blame for these developments. These medical professionals also note that obesity rates are higher among those living in settled environments (i.e., the towns), and that women, who are significantly more obese than men (Abou-Rbiah and Weitzman 2002: 688–689), are also more prone to develop diseases such as diabetes. Dreier has also found that African/black bedouin women (i.e., the *Abid*), have twice the levels of hypertension as Arab women (14 March 2007).

Thus, throughout the past two decades, as the Negev bedouin community has become increasingly sedentary, healthcare issues related not to their level of dispersion, but rather to their concentration in urban agglomerations have increasingly become apparent. Below, I will turn to the specific case of Segev Shalom, in order to address three interconnected queries: 1) does the town’s citizenry manifest any particular healthcare needs?; 2) what provisions are being provided by the state to meet these needs, and to what extent are residents turning to private medical care as an alternative?; 3) overall, how have the services been utilized and viewed by the town’s residents during the 15 years that this study was under way?

Segev Shalom: A Healthcare Profile

Looking specifically at Segev Shalom’s healthcare services, nearly all of those households surveyed in 2007, 99 percent, stated that they use the town’s healthcare services. In addition, 84 percent stated that they sometimes go to Soroka Hospital for healthcare, and 38 percent use private doctors, a handful of which have now begun opening their offices in Segev Shalom in recent years (see below). Still, for most, as was the case when the study was initiated in the early 1990s, healthcare services are publicly provided (as is the case for the majority of Jewish Israelis as well, though again, this is changing). Services are centered at a *Tipat Halav* clinic, which serves as a facility for pre-natal, maternity, and post-natal care to new mothers and is operated by the Ministry of Health, and a *Kupat Holim* family clinic. All of these facilities are located in the town center.

The *Kupat Holim* is in truth where most town residents go for their initial care. A new, state-of-the-art building opened in the town in January 2007 (see Illustration 4.1); the old building (not shown) houses office and storage space. Notably, approximately 60 percent of the 15,000 patients enrolled in the Segev Shalom *Kupat Holim* membership come from communities in the *pezurah*. As noted, Soroka Hospital's Emergency Room has served as the bedouin community's primary "clinic," and has been used, in the words of some observers, "excessively" for decades. But this use has begun to decline since 2000, most especially among bedouin from the *pezurah* (A. Cohen et al. 2007: 332). While some attribute this to the opening of *Kupat Holim* clinics in the periphery to meet the needs there (A. Cohen et al. 2007: 334) (over 20 *Kupat Holim Clalit* (Hebrew: General Public Clinics) have opened in the *pezurah* in the 2000s; nearby Wadi Na'am had 1,000 subscribers alone as of mid 2007), the use of clinics in the nearby bedouin towns such as Segev Shalom clearly plays a role as well.

The Segev Shalom *Kupat Holim* clinic is staffed by 6 doctors per day, each seeing about 30–50 patients, averaging about 250 patients/day. The facility is open Sunday–Friday (which is a half day); it is closed on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath.

Dr. Jacob Dreihier, who has worked as an internist in the clinic for four years, notes that in general, patients tend to be women bringing children, especially young children, in for various ailments. While this was true back in the early 1990s, his elaboration of the state of healthcare in the town as well as the surrounding post-nomadic *pezurah*, where more than half of his patients now originate, well informs the situation today. I quote Dreihier here (14 March 2007) at length:

Many of our patients have diabetes, they adopt bad habits very quickly like not walking and driving everywhere, not exercising, eating junk food and so on. They are less likely to adopt good habits like physical activity, sport—they don't have a sports center here in Segev, and women are not allowed to jog or walk in the streets on their own so they sit at home.

Even the sheep they eat, the lamb, in the past would graze and eat the grass that is growing. Now they have a special mixture which is artificially made, enriched with all these growth hormones and vitamins. The lambs don't get much exercise and the meat is very high in fat. So even if they eat the same amount as before the meat itself has much more fat content than before. They also eat a lot of bread, and drink a lot of tea with sugar.

Doctors who treated the bedouin in the 1960s had ten patients with diabetes, and less than five had hypertension in the whole Negev. It wasn't

recognized at all. Today we have an epidemic of diabetes and hypertension, more than the Jewish sector.

Although it is clear that detection and treatment of these sorts of ailments was also likely to be of a lower level and quality 50 years ago, the doctor's



Illustration 4.1. The Segev Shalom *Kupot Holim* in 2007.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

point is a significant one. Dreier also notes that in the *pezurah*, there are healthcare issues that are not as common in town: high accident rates, including accidentally drinking of dangerous liquids because they are stored in transparent bottles, home injuries due to open fires, and so on are all common events outside of the towns (14 March 2007).

Overall, there is a greater need for healthcare services in the bedouin sector than ever before and that, in general, these services are being used. Ironically, there are now studies that reveal that these services may in fact be “over-utilized” by the bedouin (A. Cohen et al. 2007; Groode & Dreier 2007), a trend suggesting potentially newly developing pathologies amongst a bedouin community that is chronically, for want of a better word, “sick.”

But effective healthcare service provision is, like all aspects of the resettlement initiative, wrought with political, cultural, and economic concerns that problematize effective delivery at virtually every level. While provision of the service, which is culturally sensitive and appropriate, offers one side of the equation, effective use provides the other equally significant side. In the Negev, the disconnection between healthcare service providers and users is profound.

It has been argued in the past that two primary issues stood in the way of effective service delivery in the bedouin community, namely, logistical considerations and “traditional” bedouin culture. In essence, the inability to access healthcare was the bedouin’s own fault. Their belief in supernatural forces, their lack of understanding of “modern medical methods,” and “tribal nature” (expressed through the desire that each community would have its own clinic), and lack of confidence in medical personnel have all been cited as barriers to effective service delivery (Meir 1997: 183–184).

Dreier’s comments on the challenges of providing effective care seem to reflect this sort of sentiment. Again, quoting him at length (14 March 2007):

They have a fatalistic attitude that everything is from Allah and it doesn’t matter whether you comply or not with the doctor, everything is written from above and you can’t do anything to change it. This affects efforts to stop bad habits such as smoking. If a cure helps, the assumption is that Allah intervened—“I got better because Allah wanted me to, not because of my doctor’s advice, physical activity, whatever.” So it doesn’t really matter what you do since everything is dictated from above. The result is low rates of compliance with taking medications, responding to doctor’s orders for physical activity, stopping smoking, difficulty in achieving educational goals ...

There is now greater awareness of problems that arise out of consanguineal marriage and genetic disease. They come to consult before get-

ting married, or during pregnancy. They have a nurse trained in genetic counseling. She's in the clinic once a week. In the first six months, there were 1,000 consultations. In next twelve months, 3,000. So the services are used. But what is done with the recommendations she provides to these couples?

Amniocentesis? Termination of pregnancy? Who complies with these suggestions? They don't always do what she tells them to do. Even when they have children at home with a disease, and the pregnancy tests positive for that same disease and they know how terrible it is, do they terminate? It's a problem because it goes against Islam—they have very strict rules on when an embryo is a living creature and you can't end a pregnancy and the cutoff is very early. And once you know [that a certain disease of problem is evident] it's still against the tradition to [end the pregnancy].

Dreihier concedes, however, that considerable changes have occurred only in the brief period since he first began working in the clinic:

I've seen a few couples that induced abortion just because they didn't want to have more children, where they didn't have any problems, but this is very rare. I was really amazed. But I said "ok, you have 10 kids, it's enough for you, go ahead, sign the papers, no one will question, go, do it." But I was shocked. [I thought] are you a bedouin!?

The frustration in Dreihier's tone is palpable as he discusses his efforts. And yet, there is a certain lack of cultural awareness or appreciation of bedouin society that also can be read between the lines of his thoughts. Other healthcare professionals working with the bedouin have viewed this perspective on medical care in a different manner, which is perhaps less judgmental (Sheiner et al. 2001: 457):

[The bedouin] view pregnancy and childbirth as natural events, which require medical attention only when there are medical problems. This attitude renders them quite suspicious of the health services available and in particular invasive procedures. This position may be emphasized by the low usage of epidural analgesia, although it was highly recommended by the medical staff.

A bedouin medic employed by the Soroka mobile unit, a resident of Laq-iyā, related a series of anecdotes to me in the early 1990s that places this "fatalistic" attitude toward healthcare in an alternative light (Al-Sana, 11 November 1992):

I went out with a social worker to a bedouin family. The man was blind and the wife was mildly retarded. They had four children, all genetically deaf, all mute. We suggested she stop having children. The wife said no; maybe if she kept having children, she would have a normal child who could take care of the rest of the family.

When he last heard, she had had two more children—both were deaf and mute.

A woman was pregnant, and when they did an ultrasound they determined that the child would be a Downs child, and would be missing an arm, and perhaps would have other problems. We suggested she abort. She refused, she had the child, and it was born totally healthy and normal.

There was another woman who was in labor. She had had two C-sections previously, but this time she refused a C-section. I went into the field to locate the husband, but it isn't so easy to find someone out there in the dark. I found him, brought him to Soroka, he and wife talked, and they decided to go home. The husband signed a release saying he knew of the danger to the mother and child alike. The following day, I went out to their tent, and there were the parents and child; the child had been born in the tent without problems.

And finally:

I heard of an old man who was dying. I went to help with the preparations for death; I took his pulse, his blood pressure, and I determined he was simply dehydrated. I wanted to take him to hospital, but his family refused. I went to Be'er Sheva, got an off-duty doctor friend to join me, went back to tent, but [by then] the man was already in a coffin.

These and other stories reveal the Azazmeh mentality, yes. All is in Allah's hands. What Allah wills is what will be. Only the parents of a child who died after we inoculated him refused to accept this submission to fate. They argued that it was the doctor—not Allah—who was to blame for the death of their son.

“Fatalistic” as the bedouin may be, they are using the clinics in record numbers. However, the growing use of private medical professionals, as opposed to the public healthcare system, is clearly a sign of growing wealth and class distinction in Segev Shalom. In January 2007, a new development, a privately created and run dental clinic, was also established in Segev Sha-

lom, housed in what all recognize to be a rather unique looking building built literally in the town's very center.

Not surprisingly, the divisions within the town with regard to the use of such services are economic and, as discussed previously (see Dinero 2006), tribal. The Azazmeh, for example, are more likely to use a private doctor ($p=.05$), especially those under the age of 40 ($p=.02$), as are the more educated ($p=.04$) and those with more highly educated fathers ($p=.03$). Those choosing the term "Israeli" as an identity label (see Chapter 5) are also more likely to access a private doctor for healthcare ($p=.03$), especially those under the age of 40 ($p=.02$). Those with higher incomes tend to use a private doctor as well ($p=.03$).

In 1993, men were found to be more likely than women to use healthcare facilities other than those in Segev Shalom, a sign of their freedom and mobility, unlike their wives, sisters, and mothers, who are more confined within the town's city limits ($p=.00$). In 2007, women were still more likely than men to use the local Segev Shalom clinics rather than outside medical facilities ($p=.03$).

Use of a private doctor is one indication of the sense that, as the bedouin socially develop and progress, they will seek out alternative ways in which to address their healthcare needs. And yet, as Figure 4.1 reveals, satisfaction with the Segev Shalom healthcare provisions, which are used by virtually every household, has improved continuously over the past two decades. This is not surprising; in 1993, the *Kupat Holim* operated out of one of the larger houses in town, providing basic care; by 2007, healthcare services were provided in a modern, multi-floored facility.

Still, Segev Shalom residents are more than willing to voice a variety of criticisms of the town's healthcare facilities, not, as some might contend, because they expect miracles, but rather, because they view the provisions as unacceptable or inadequate. Significantly too, a number of correlations can be found that suggest that who one is, one's economic success, how one views oneself, and so on all play a role in one's experiences and attitudes toward Segev Shalom's healthcare facilities and provisions.

In general, older residents in the 1993 survey were more satisfied than younger residents under the age of 40 with the town's healthcare services ($p=.03$). This was not found to be true in later surveys. What was found in the 2007 data, however, was that those living in the town the longest rated the clinics higher than the others ($p=.00$). This was especially true of those with low incomes ($p=.00$), those *under* the age of 40 ($p=.00$), and members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.00$). Residents with less education rated the medical facilities in town higher than those with higher levels of education ($p=.03$), especially women ($p=.01$), Azazmeh respondents ($p=.05$), and those over the age of 40 ($p=.02$). The low income Tarabeen

also tended to rate the town doctor higher than those Tarabeen tribe members with higher incomes ($p=.02$). In other words, those in the town who are the *least* educated, poorest, and “traditional”—i.e., they who fit the stereotypical bedouin profile that lends to a fatalistic worldview—are most satisfied with the town’s healthcare provisions. Those who expect *more* and who are better off financially are seeking out in increasing numbers what they perceive to be higher quality privatized care.

As for the problems and concerns that are cited by town residents, many that were voiced as far back as the early 1990s were still being repeated in the 2007 survey. All appear to suggest that the services remain inaccessible to patients, even if the providers do not view them as such. Inconvenient hours of operation continue to be a complaint, cited in 1993 (Dinero 1996: 113), and is still an issue of concern today. The lack of adequate personnel (both quantity and quality) to meet the demands of the Segev Shalom population and its periphery has even made the national news (“Beduin complain...,” 13 April 2000).

In addition, a new phenomenon, never voiced in previous surveys, was found among the 2007 findings. A small but notable number of respondents (9 percent of those who responded) complained about the existence of “only one” dermatologist on staff at the *Kupat Holim*, who is available for consultations “only once a week.” The medical staff found these findings somewhat bewildering, insofar as there are no waiting lists for the dermatologist, and “usually, skin disorders don’t have many emergencies in which we feel the need to consult more often than once a week.” (Dreihier, 3 June 2007). As for why this is even considered a concern, Dreihier suggests that, “we can only speculate that skin problems are an especially sensitive issue in bedouin culture, as it [is] related to the appearance of the patient, rather than some hidden internal disease. After consulting with the clinic’s staff, it does appear that skin problems are conceived as bothering as they provoke questions by neighbors and friends and are interpreted as a sign of being unclean and of lower socioeconomic status.”

The other most commonly voiced complaint, which was cited in the 1993 survey (7 percent) and has been noted in every survey thereafter, including the 2007 study (26 percent of those who responded, and it is even noted as a concern by Shvarts et al. in the 1950s in the Negev [2003: 56]), is the lack of Arabic-speaking nurses, doctors, and other medical personnel in the Segev Shalom healthcare facilities. And, yet, this view is disputed by those working in the clinics. “This is highly imprecise; of eighteen people working in the clinic (physicians, nurses and clerks), five are of Arabic origin [sic] and speak Arabic as a native language. These include two nurses, two clerks and a physician. Most of the others speak Arabic to various degrees. If a doctor or a nurse does not understand the patient (or vice versa) he usually

asks for translation by his/her Arab-speaking colleagues. We believe that the professionalism [sic] of the healthcare worker is more important than his/her ethnic background” (Dreihier, 3 June 2007).

Such a gap between the perspective of the service provider and the user prevails throughout virtually every aspect of healthcare provision. The bedouin community’s perceptions and the medical community’s perceptions repeatedly appear to be at odds. This not only serves to compromise effective provision, but also causes further stresses and anxiety for service users and providers alike.

Psychological health and welfare services also require increased attention in the sedentarized environment. Though few studies have been undertaken to make such comparisons, one significant work by Hays and Zouari compared village, urban, and sedentarized bedouin women in Tunisia. They found that the bedouin were significantly more likely to experience higher levels of psychological distress and depression than village or urban women (Hays and Zouari 1995: 84), and that these differences were largely related to stresses brought on by multiple child bearing and economic difficulties, which were new to the settled bedouin community.

Indicators in the Negev similarly suggest that the demand and need for social welfare services is high (see Dinero 1998a). And yet, Lubetzky et al. suggest that despite the presumed need of the resettled Negev bedouin to utilize social welfare services, they often go unused due to a “clash of cultures” in which they “appraise the value of health ... in different ways” (2004: 187). They note that Western medicine is premised upon “logic” and that rehabilitation, therapy, and the like are all crucial to rehabilitation.

Here again, trust and understanding are central to this service delivery effort, for if one does not believe in a certain approach or therapy, this does not mean that the parent of a disabled child, for example, does not under-

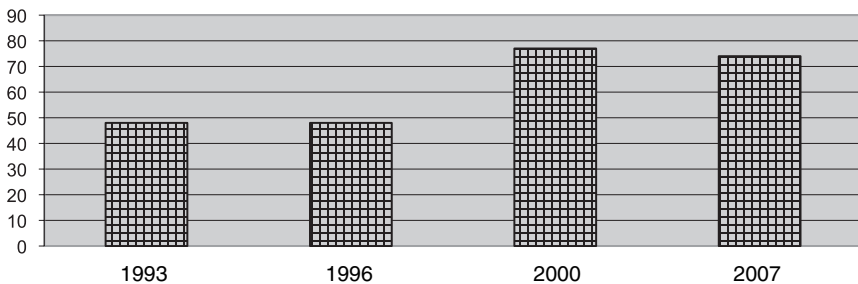


Figure 4.1. Percentage of Survey Respondents Expressing Satisfaction with Healthcare Service Provisions in Segev Shalom (by Survey Year).

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

stand or appreciate the “wonders of modern medicine,” but possibly, that they simply do not trust those delivering the service or do not feel that those providing the service genuinely wish to make a difference. Curiously, Lubetzky et al. suggest that the fact that the bedouin’s use of speech and language therapy services in the Negev is significantly less consistent and reliable than Jewish patients on average “*could* be due to the fact that the Hebrew language is the main therapy tool of this sector” (2004: 190, emphasis added). That such a question must even be posed is bewildering, for it again places the onus of service delivery failure upon the user, without taking note of the dysfunction of the service provision itself.

Meir provides a more sobering approach to the issue. He notes that by turning to social welfare services, the bedouin often lose tribal and family support (Meir 1997: 185). Moreover, as a people that has long functioned on its own under harsh conditions, such dependency is also a sign of lost respect and pride. As he notes, social workers in the bedouin sector have historically relied upon Western ideas and methods. Even the bedouin social workers use such methods given their educational background, and thus, such approaches typically do not meet bedouin needs, or respect bedouin culture. Thus, a tension mounts between the desire to intervene, and the willingness of this society to allow it to occur (Meir 1997: 191; Dinero 1998a: 31–32).

Put simply, the twenty-first century Negev bedouin resident of Segev Shalom has needs and demands that are not being met, or that are barely being satisfied, due to this sort of cultural gap between provider and user. Until 2007, Segev Shalom did not, in truth, even have social welfare services and aid dedicated solely to its residents; they were offered “the minimum of the minimum” out of the offices in Be’er Sheva, which were later relocated to the town. Moreover, financial aid to needy families—one of the primary services of the bedouin social welfare agencies—was extremely limited; “they got very little, and in time they would stop coming” (Goren, 7 May 2007).

Today, suggests social worker Tsofit Goren, the Office of Social Welfare and its services are far more visible, and are being utilized at a far higher level than ever before. As she notes (7 May 2007):

The major change we see [today] is that the population is demanding more services. They want more quality services here in Segev Shalom. But they don’t want a special needs school for example, they want a school with qualified teachers which is specialized, which looks more like that in the Jewish system. There’s greater knowledge now. There are people now who say “we moved to the town”—this is especially true if they have kid with special needs—“for something better.”

This well sums up why so many have moved to the town—and why so many today are so disenchanting. So much of the resentment and frustration comes down to an issue of expectations, that is, the belief and assumption that town living would provide what living in the *pezurah* could not. Nowhere is this truer than in the area of providing for one's children, most especially, in the area of accessing the educational services offered by the state. Like healthcare, it has traditionally been one of, if not the primary motivations for relocating to a planned bedouin town. It is to educational service provision that I now turn.

Educational Services—A Case of Unintended Consequences

If there is one area of service provision in the bedouin sector that has been critiqued the most—and yet, has shown the most success and promise—it is the area of education. As numerous scholars continue to show how inadequate educational service provision is in the bedouin sector (Abu-Saad 1991; 1995), what is rarely said but should be noted clearly at the outset is that today's Negev bedouin community as a whole is the most formally educated community in its history, and perhaps, is the most educated bedouin population in the entire Middle East.

And yet, despite this, the provision and use of educational services is, like healthcare services, highly controversial (see Dinero 2009). The Compulsory Education Law was created soon after the creation of the state, though early on, few bedouin students actually attended school and the state made little effort to enforce the ruling (Abu-Saad 1997: 25–26). By the mid 1950s, roughly 17 percent of the school-aged population was actually enrolled, though this figure refers only to boys. A dropout rate of 37 percent before graduation (Abu-Rubiyya et al. 1996: 2) led to a very low level of bedouin education overall. Only after the *siyag* was removed (which, incidentally, coincided with the aftermath of the 1967 war, when marriage with more educated women from the West Bank and Gaza brought new views of education to the Negev) did enrollment begin to rise (Abu-Rubiyya et al. 1996: 3).

In part, the tensions associated with the implementation of education in bedouin society are connected to the role of children in the household. As Abu-Rabia discusses at length (2006: 867), children played, and still play, a key role in household activities connected to the raising of and caring for livestock. Sending children to school is a luxury few could afford historically, and in truth for many in the *pezurah*, the value of having a child working at home still outweighs the value of sending a child off to pursue a formal education, which will surely train him (or her) for activities that, at

least in the short term, have little likelihood of contributing directly to the economic viability of the household.

By the 1990s when this study was initiated, the literature recognized a number of general problems in bedouin education. Negev bedouin schools are recognized for having the highest dropout rates in all of Israel (see Abu-Saad 1995). For example, according to one study, in 1995, 67 percent dropped out before graduating, compared with 43 percent in other Arab areas (Katz et al. 1998: 4). This was an improvement over previous years. While other studies quote even higher rates (Abu-Saad 1997: 33), perhaps to make a political point, a statistic of roughly 55 percent appears to be the most consistently cited (Abu-Rabia 2006: 879) and still, needless to say, is well beyond acceptable.

Regarding the nationally held matriculation exams, it has been argued that principals often seek to overcome the negative reputations that the bedouin schools experience by recommending only the best students take the exam, in order to make their schools look better, seeking to “enhance [their] prestige” (Abu-Rubiyya et al. 1996: 8). That said, in 1995, 6 percent of all bedouin high school students who took the national *Bagrut* exam successfully matriculated, compared to 22 percent in the rest of the Arab sector, and 40 percent in the Jewish sector (Katz et al. 1998: 5). The figure saw considerable improvement by 2002, with 26 percent of bedouin students matriculating. And yet, that same year, 34 percent matriculated in the rest of the Arab sector, and 52 percent in the Jewish sector, again revealing that the Negev bedouin remain behind the other sectors of Israeli society due to socioeconomic and other factors, directly impacting access to higher education (Abu-Rabia 2006: 877).

Other issues also play a role. Recent statistics, for example, reveal that only 60 percent of the regional teachers are Negev bedouin, the rest hailing from the north (Galilee), where there tends to be a surplus of teachers (Abu-Saad 1995: 156; Human Rights Watch 2001: 113). Yet this presents some issues as well, especially when single Arab women living far from home and teaching in bedouin culture are not fully comfortable with the situation (Abu-Saad & Isralovitch 1992: 778). Differences in dialects, dissimilarities in acceptable clothing, and other mores make teaching and learning a challenge for students and teachers alike (see Dinero 2009).

Most local bedouin elementary school teachers were men in the past, though this is slowly changing (Abu-Rubiyya et al. 1996: 4). A high proportion of the teachers who have taught in the bedouin schools, historically, were uncertified (Abu-Rubiyya et al. 1996: 17). This lack of role models is, of course, problematic and cyclical, and relates back to the fact that many bedouin students still do not complete their schooling, and very few see

the value in pursuing an education as an attractive, viable career option (El-Farona, 19 February 2007).

Predictably, observers have again argued that problems in bedouin education, including high dropout rates and low scores on national tests, are due to bedouin culture (Meir 1997: 176), rather than to the innumerable ways in which the bedouin educational system is inadequate and inferior to the Jewish one. The issue, it is argued, is “related to Bedouin society’s receptivity to modern and formal education ... from a cultural perspective—modern education is still irrelevant for a considerable proportion of the Bedouin population” (Meir 1997: 176–177). Based on such arguments, it has been concluded by some that “educators concerned with the Bedouin educational system need to be guided by a worldview that regards the school as a means of integrating the bedouin into the mainstream of Israeli society” (Abu-Rubiyya et al. 1996: 25).

Abu-Saad is one of very few scholars who has documented the ways in which bedouin education is jeopardized not, as so many wish to argue, because of culture, traditional mindsets, and the like, but, rather, due to the purposeful neglect and unequal treatment of Arabs in Israel in general, and of the bedouin in particular. He notes, for example, the disproportionate distribution of funding, noting that the “Israeli State Comptroller’s 1992 report comparing Jewish and Arab education in Israel reveals that school budgets, teaching hours, professional resources and facilities are not equitably distributed between these systems. In the 1990–1991 school year, the annual per capita expenditure of the Ministry of Education and Culture was 308 New Israeli Shekels (NIS) for Jewish students, and 168 NIS for Arab students” (Abu-Saad 1995: 150).

And yet, though it has been said that “Bedouin schooling is not a priority of the Israeli Ministry of Education” (Abu-Rabia 2006: 880), all statistics suggest that the bedouin are accessing educational opportunity, and at a relatively rapid rate. Not only is this true of the boys, but, increasingly, the bedouin girls as well; the educational gap between the genders that saw only one-half to three-quarters of the female student-aged population in school in relationship to similarly aged male peers in the 1980s and 1990s (Abu-Rubiyya et al. 1996: 10–11; Dinero 1996: 109) has all but disappeared as of 2007 (see Figure 4.2). Of related relevance, literacy rates have concurrently risen (Figure 4.3).

As will be seen below, educational level is a predictor of numerous social and economic development indices in Segev Shalom and throughout the Negev region, in the post-nomadic era. It is notable then that although the schools in town are educating more bedouin schoolchildren than ever before, there are a variety of difficulties that the educators must also face as the town continues to grow and to develop.

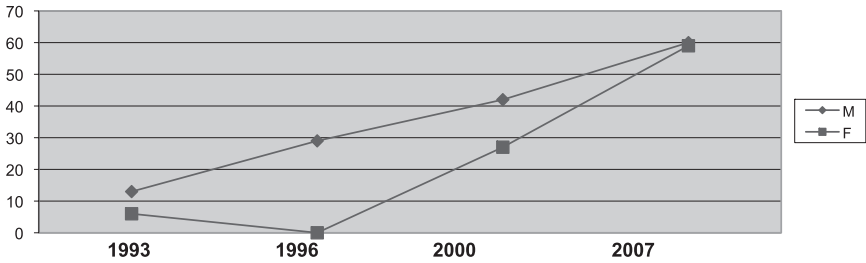


Figure 4.2. Percentage of High School Graduates in Segev Shalom (Male/Female).

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

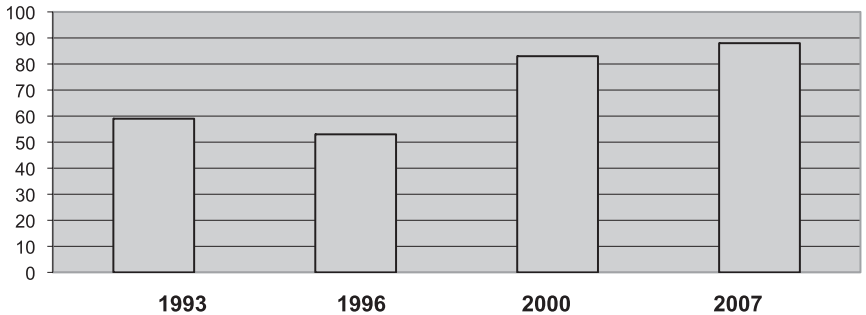


Figure 4.3. Adult Literacy Rates (%), One or More Languages, Segev Shalom.

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

Segev Shalom Education: Challenges and Successes

As of 2007, there were three elementary schools in Segev Shalom, with populations of at least 600, 750, and 1,000, totaling over 2,350 pupils. There is one high school in town that has 1,800 students, and the town now has a middle school with over 150 students (Illustrations 4.2, 4.3); adding a class each year, its expected population will also be 1,800 (Jirjawi, 7 February 2007). By way of comparison, in 1992, there was one elementary school and one high school (grades 7–12) in the town. The entire student body of the secondary school at that time was only 580 students (Hamamdi, 9 November 1992).

In addition to the growth of the town’s population over the years, a substantial proportion of students are bussed to the town schools from the *pezurah*. The shortage of schools there is well known (Abu-Rabia 2006: 877) and is in part purposeful; after all, one of the primary goals of the resettlement initiative was to provide services in a concentrated environ-

ment, and if this were shown to be possible outside of a town, the rationale for resettlement would be further weakened. On the other hand, there are genuine logistical difficulties in building schools fast enough even in the planned towns to keep pace with the growing population (see below); this problem is compounded all the more so in the *pezurah*.

Regardless, only elementary schools are built in the *pezurah*; students must be bussed to the Segev Shalom High School (or one of the other town schools) at the secondary level, which plays a particularly central role in the dropout rates of high school-aged girls (Human Rights Watch 2001: 40), whose male relatives do not want them to travel too far from their homes and outside of the household influence in order to attend school. In most instances, these schools are viewed as “temporary” in any case (Abu-Saad 1997: 31), with designs reflecting the assumption (and purposeful intention) that, in time, the students and their families will relocate permanently to one of the planned settlements.

Be that as it may, in 1992, 20 percent of the elementary school population came from outside of the town (Dinero 1996: 109); in 2007, the figure at the elementary level is closer to 40–60 percent (Jirjawi, 7 February 2007; El-Farona, 19 February 2007). Sixty percent of the secondary school population hailed from the *pezurah* in 1992 (Hamamdi, 9 November 1992); that figure remained unchanged in 2007. Thus, new schools to accommodate this ever-growing student body are under construction in the town almost incessantly, as overcrowding and the use of “caravan” outbuildings lacking air conditioning or proper heating are a constant aspect of education delivery in this (and every other) bedouin town. A late 1990s government study determined that in order to keep up with demand, 146 additional classrooms would have to be built each year (Human Rights Watch 2001: 81), though this has not occurred. The overcrowding issue, which in truth is also of concern in the Jewish sector, is therefore a dominant feature of any bedouin classroom. The dynamic created by this fact is problematic not only for the pupils, but also for the bedouin faculty seeking to give the children the attention they believe they are due.

Let's start with the number of students. Today the number of students has changed. Once there was a smaller, fewer students, and fewer numbers of schools. Now there are more students and more schools. Their needs—like computers and such—has grown. Once in education there wasn't any. Once there were fewer students, fewer needs, but more achievements. For example, the class I taught, the whole class was 20 students, two left, and there were 18. That was enough for a teacher. Today in a class there are 39, and sometimes classes with 40, with 36. The minimum, no the average class is 36.

Even the teacher who really wants to give, he can't. It's like you've got a sandwich of bread and you need to divide it up to 4 or 10. So how much can you give from this? So it's a problem. (El-Farona, 19 February 2007)

But the issues impacting education delivery, according to bedouin educators, go beyond the question of the ongoing need for more facilities. That the schools in the bedouin towns are lacking in every material way in re-



Illustrations 4.2. and 4.3. The Segev Shalom Middle School and High School—2007.

Source: Photos by Steven C. Dinero.

lation to schools in nearby Jewish communities is blatantly obvious and recognized by most observers, including those working on behalf of the state (Katz et al. 1998). Unequal governmental expenditure leading to unequal opportunity is well documented throughout the literature (Abu-Saad 1991). But how this is translated and experienced on the ground, in the day-to-day lives of Negev bedouin educators, has gained little attention. Moreover, just as healthcare professionals see ways in which the bedouin appear to be “less than cooperative” in how they use healthcare, educators also see that making the transition to formalized education appears to some to be a generational process.

For example, the role of parents who, though they may value formal education for their children, are unprepared to help them fully with their schooling, is one crucial element that few have discussed (see Abu-Saad 1995; Dinero 1996, as exceptions). As the aforementioned statistics reveal, formalized education is new to bedouin society. In 1993, only 1.2 percent of those surveyed in Segev Shalom stated that their fathers had graduated high school, while 78 percent had no formal education (Dinero 1996: 110); by 2007, 16 percent stated that their fathers had graduated high school, while only 49 percent stated that their fathers lacked formal education.

And yet, just as assumptions about healthcare access and satisfaction are not always born out by reality, attitudes toward education, and access to it, do not always follow patterns that modernization theorists might anticipate. Though admittedly some statistics appear to suggest that education levels reveal that the bedouin are in a period of transition from one generation to the next and from the nomadic phase to the planned town environment and that it will take time before this transition is complete, this does not mean that all of the players on the “continuum” (Meir 1988) are in fact following the progression from “traditional” to “modern” in an orderly fashion. Middle School Headmaster Ibn-Nasir explains (19 February 2007):

The problem is with the parents, yes. They don't always worry about their kids' education. The kids don't do their homework, they don't have the commitment. But the parents who *don't have* much education, they sometimes tend to have a *greater* commitment to get their kids educated than the others.

Headmaster El-Farona sees the issue similarly. He states (19 February 2007):

It doesn't matter if [a student] lives in the settlement or outside [in the *pezurah*], in connection to education. There's no connection. I see sometimes that there are children whose mother and father know how to read

and write and they help them, and they're better students than those who live in the settlement. It doesn't matter about the living conditions. Those who live in a tin shack—sometimes they have electricity, sometimes they don't have electricity—but it doesn't depend on those conditions, it depends on who is looking after the children. These things matter. Even if a child lives in a castle, he has everything, but who's looking after him?

...

(T)here are people in the town who don't want to raise their children. This one will have his house, he's got everything. But he doesn't want to look after his children. There are people outside [in the *pezurah*] who don't have anything, but they invest all their energy in their children. That's the difference.

Another “difference” that plays a significant role is the question of student motivation and commitment to the educational enterprise. For most people, formal education amounts to a means to an end, the end being a better job, financial security, and so on. To suggest to a post-nomadic indigenous population that formal education is a worthwhile endeavor in and of itself is not only naïve, but fails to consider the economic foundation of this classic social development measure.

In Negev bedouin society, economic success does correlate statistically with educational achievement (see below). But as with the case of healthcare, perception plays a key role here as well; if the perception in the bedouin community is that educational success will not lead to economic success, then it should be no wonder that teachers will continue to struggle in the classroom to convince their charges that their scholastic endeavors are worthwhile. El-Farona, who was a classroom teacher for 12 years before taking on his new role of the past 8 years as Headmaster of one of the town's elementary schools, states (19 February 2007):

If we take a boy who has completed 12th grade and has his matriculation exams but he doesn't have any money, he won't go on to study ... He'll think, “For what?” His brother did it, he completed it, and for what? To be unemployed? The father sits at home, the brothers sit at home, [and] they get unemployment payments. Today, what will the boy think? They're sitting and sitting every day getting unemployment checks. He won't even make an attempt. Once, we all went out to work. Everyone went out to work. Today, no. Now the father explains to him, “Look, I get money from the State.” The child, what does he think? “Why should I even make an effort?”

...

Sometimes there's a job notice in the paper, and we're sitting around, and there's folks who say, "Listen, [it's not for me], I'm an automobile technician, or whatever." They say that because since they didn't do the army, or because they're bedouin, they fear they won't take them. So I say, "Look, try. Go. Show them that you're capable." So, he's thinking he's screwed from the start. He won't even put himself out as a candidate. There's also that thinking. "Go, try to change it. You may not succeed, but go, try." These are the things you have to try to change. But that's the outlook of our young people.

Despite such perceptions, there is no question that educational level is a primary indicator—if not, *the* primary indicator—through which much of the nature of social and economic development and political change now occurring in Segev Shalom can be examined, measured, and traced. Education is central to the process of moving the bedouin community from an ascriptive-oriented society to an achievement-oriented one (Abu-Saad 1995). This has been true since data was first gathered in Segev Shalom in 1993, when it was found that education levels correlated with reasons for relocating to the planned town. Less educated bedouin were more likely to state that they relocated seeking the development opportunities that town life had to offer, while the more educated were more likely to cite other reasons for relocating, such as government force ($p=.04$). In the same survey, it was also found that those living in the town for 5 or fewer years, the "newcomers," tended to be less educated than those living in the town more than 5 years ($p=.03$). Lastly, education and employment correlated ($p=.00$) as did education and gender ($p=.00$); the more educated were male and had a greater likelihood of being employed.

By 2007, several additional factors correlated with educational levels. More educated residents tended to be under 40 years of age and were single/never married ($p=.00$). As suggested by the educators' sentiments above, parents' educational levels played a role in one's own ability to access scholastic achievement. The more educated bedouin were found to be more likely to have more educated fathers ($p=.00$) and mothers ($p=.00$). The father's education also played a role in one's economic status. Curiously, an inverse relationship was found between the father's education and the possibility of owning a stone/permanent house, although the relationship was not strong ($p=.05$). Perhaps more predictably, those with less educated fathers were less likely to own a phone, ($p=.01$), a TV ($p=.00$), or a VCR/DVD player ($p=.00$).

As one would expect, younger residents (under the age of 40) tend to be more educated than older residents ($p=.00$). This impacts dynamics in the town; those who came to the town longer ago, the "veterans," and "found-

ing fathers,” are less educated than the recent arrivals ($p=.00$), especially those in-migrants under the age of 40 ($p=.02$). The Azazmeh newcomers are more educated than the Azazmeh veterans ($p=.00$)—that is, they who founded the town in the early 1980s and who feel a particularly vested interest in the planning and development of “their” town. In general though, members of the Azazmeh tribe are more educated than the Tarabeen ($p=.05$). Lastly, lower income newcomers are more educated than veterans ($p=.00$); they may come to the town with limited financial resources, but the one thing they have that many low income town residents still lack is education.

As for the role of education in Segev Shalom’s economic development, the ramifications from a statistical viewpoint appear to be clear. And yet factors such as age and tribe play a role in one’s ability—beyond educational level—to access economic resources in bedouin society today. When looking at the labor force as a whole, for example, the more educated residents of Segev Shalom are more likely to be employed ($p=.00$). And yet, this is especially true for women ($p=.00$), though not for men; for those under 40 ($p=.01$), but not over 40; for Tarabeen members ($p=.00$), but not the Azazmeh; for those with lower incomes ($p=.00$), but not for those with higher incomes.

In other words, those in Segev Shalom who could be referred to historically as the strongest, proudest, ablest community members—namely, through the ascribed status as “True” Azazmeh bedouin men who have come of age and have wealth and means to prove it—now are able to express these same ideals through the obtainment of education. But when they do so, there is no statistical correlation between this achievement and whether they will ever acquire a wage-labor position compatible with their educational accomplishments.

When, however, the data that includes all of the town’s sectors are considered, the findings do confirm what one might anticipate about the connections between educational achievement and economic well being and behavior. Those with more education, for example, also were found to have higher family incomes ($p=.02$). They were less likely to raise animals in town ($p=.00$) to supplement their incomes, especially those with young households ($p=.01$). The more educated were also less likely to raise crops or fruit-bearing trees in town ($p=.00$), another sign of both social and economic transition away from a subsistence economy. Again, this was found to be especially true of young families ($p=.02$) and the Tarabeen ($p=.03$).

Education levels also were found to play a role in goods ownership. While this was true to a limited degree in the 1993 findings, by 2007, several correlations could be found within the data. The more educated residents, for example, were more likely to own a phone ($p=.00$), especially the young

($p=.01$) and those with *low* incomes ($p=.00$). The same was true of those owning VCR/DVD players ($p=.00$, $.01$, and $.00$, respectively).

The more educated were more likely to own a car ($p=.02$), especially those with low incomes ($p=.01$). Among those under 40, the more educated were more likely to own a satellite dish for their TVs ($p=.03$); this was also true of those with low incomes ($p=.04$). Among the Azazmeh, the more educated residents were more likely to own a washing machine ($p=.04$); this was also true of those with low incomes ($p=.01$). And lastly, those bedouin in town who were more educated were more likely to own a computer ($p=.00$), and again, this was especially true of those under the age of 40 ($p=.00$), the Azazmeh ($p=.00$)—and, of course, those with low incomes ($p=.00$).

Once again, the bedouin seem to be following a classic model of socioeconomic development, and yet once again, they appear to be diverting from it in unique and significant ways. For while it is to be expected that higher educational rates might yield exposure to new ideas, interests, changed tastes, and so on, all of which would lead to new patterns of material consumption, what stands out here is the factor that should play the biggest role—can one afford to buy all these consumer products—is an inverse variable. Rather than finding that those with higher incomes are the standard bearers of early bedouin consumerism, it appears that those with *lower incomes*, but who have achieved *higher levels of education* are by far the most likely to wish to acquire the material accoutrements of twenty-first century Israeli society.

The picture becomes cloudier still when one considers political attitudes, both local and national, and how educational levels influence these views. In previous data sets, correlations were found between one's educational achievement, and one's views and satisfaction with local services, national governance, and the state of bedouin society as a whole. As but one example, in 1993, more educated male respondents were more likely to be critical of Segev Shalom's sanitary services than the less educated ($p=.01$).

The 2007 data set provided similar findings. Those residents, men and women, with higher incomes and who were more educated tended to rate the local water service lower than the less educated ($p=.04$). Although, in general, more educated residents tend to be more critical of town services as these examples reveal, there are exceptions. More educated men, for example, rate the electrical service in town higher than those with less education ($p=.01$). But perhaps of greater relevance and significance to the long-term growth and development of Segev Shalom and to the urbanizing bedouin community as a whole is the role of education as it informs the increasingly politicizing nature of the community (see Chapter 6), for it is

these findings which may provide a window into better understanding the direction in which the community is now heading.

For example, the more educated residents of Segev Shalom were found to be *less* likely to have participated in voting in the most recent national elections ($p=.01$). This group, which presumably represents a significant alienated sub-population of today's most informed Negev bedouin, tend to be under 40 ($p=.05$), Tarabeen ($p=.00$), and with overall higher incomes ($p=.03$) in the town.

The pattern is reinforced still further by the fact that those with more educated fathers were also less likely to have voted ($p=.02$), especially the Tarabeen ($p=.00$). Those with more educated mothers also were less likely to have voted ($p=.05$), especially those with lower incomes ($p=.05$), the Tarabeen ($p=.03$), and women ($p=.01$). The more educated bedouin also were more likely to choose an option on the survey stating that the national government is "failing to serve the needs of the bedouin community" ($p=.05$) than those with less education. This is especially true of those under 40 ($p=.04$). Those who are more educated with higher incomes are more likely to express that they "feel unequal with other Israelis" ($p=.02$), another survey option. Further, those who are more educated with fathers who also are more educated are more likely to say that they feel less equal with other Israelis ($p=.04$).

In other words, these statistics suggest that those who are more educated and are on top of the bedouin socioeconomic ladder have a better idea than anyone else (or so they believe) that their political situation is unequal, and, one might conjecture, apparently with little promise.

If there is any solace to be found in their situation, it is clearly not in the maintenance of the political status quo, but in seeking a viable alternative. Thus, the 2007 data reveal that more educated men are more likely to favor the Islamic parties over the Jewish/Zionist parties than the less educated ($p=.02$). Again, what is notable here is that this is especially true of those in Segev Shalom coming from households enjoying *higher* incomes ($p=.00$). The Islamic party option need not be viewed as wholly indicative of an increasing level of Muslim orthodoxy in Segev Shalom, although this is, in part, occurring. It should be noted, for example, that more educated residents under 40 are *less* likely to state that they frequent the mosque ($p=.01$), especially more educated women ($p=.04$).

It does, however, suggest that as the bedouin residents of Segev Shalom become more formally versed in the Israeli educational system, they are not merely learning the "3 Rs." Rather, the aforementioned statistics appear to suggest that today's Negev bedouin, as he or she becomes more educated, is also becoming all the more aware of the social, political, and

economic inadequacies and injustices that are a part of daily bedouin life in Israel. The more they learn, the more they see of Jewish society, then the more they realize just how much Segev Shalom and the neighboring areas are truly lacking and are victims of neglect. As the above has introduced and as the following chapter will allow for further extrapolation and exploration, more educational opportunities for the bedouin is a double-edged sword, exposing them ever increasingly to new ideas and modes of perceiving their newly developing identities within a globalizing Israeli context.

As their formal educational experiences expand, so too do their expectations—expectations that are, to this point at least, largely unmet. Moreover, no sector of bedouin society has been impacted more profoundly by the changes brought on by the expansion of educational opportunity than bedouin women (see Chapter 6). As each new class entering school each year is now 50 percent female, Negev bedouin girls' and women's expectations, hopes, and dreams for the future bare little resemblance to their mothers' and grandmothers' lives. And yet, a variety of barriers and limitations remain, which are not easily resolved outside of a modernization-minded, Orientalist framework. It is to these issues and challenges that I now turn.

Chapter 5

Negev Bedouin Identity/ies Development in Segev Shalom

He who has no sheep has nothing
—Clinton Bailey, *A Culture of Desert Survival:
Bedouin Proverbs from Sinai and the Negev*

Through its policy of land confiscation and forced resettlement, it may be said that the Israeli state has sought over the past four decades to de-territorialize, control, encapsulate, assimilate, proletarianize, and essentially “de-bedouinize” this Arab minority community. As this chapter further reveals, this active policy of social conquest has had little success in accomplishing the state’s sought-after goals, but, rather, has only served to strengthen the resolve of the community against these aggressive measures. It has fostered unanticipated consequences that, from a Jewish Israeli perspective, are problematic at best.

As the following suggests, the social changes fostered by the forced sedentarization initiative are manifested by processes of Arabicization and Islamicization, shown in a variety of ways in which the bedouin now express their identity/identities, most especially in the public sphere, as a part of the Palestinian Arab Muslim minority within Israeli society. An active policy of half-measures on the part of the state, seen, for example, in the areas of health and education provision as discussed in the previous chapter, is further elaborated upon in the pages that follow in an attempt to further explain this politicization process.

Although it is, of course, risky to speculate about the future direction and development of identity/identities development in Segev Shalom, I do so here as a corrective to the persistent efforts by a number of other observers who show little reluctance to do so. For, while it is clear that a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would likely be a significant part of this process, it is the contention here that all indications suggest that, for these Arabs at least, concern over Palestinian statehood, while significant, is a low level priority. Rather, the state’s *domestic* development policies,

priorities, and agenda, and *not* its foreign policy concerns, are central to staving off what is referred to in the mainstream Jewish Israeli academic and media publications as an impending “*bedouin intifada*.”

The Re-Definition of “Bedouinism” in the Twenty-first Century

Before it is possible to deconstruct twenty-first century Negev bedouin identity/identities development and composition in the post-nomadic Israeli context, it is first necessary to acknowledge and address the changing nature of bedouinism and bedouin behaviors and identity construction, which exist throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) today. While the bedouin of the Negev are situated in a unique and exceptional set of circumstances, their situation must be contextualized within the vast set of changes now taking place in bedouin communities throughout the region.

One of the most recent and complete analyses of the changing meaning and “fluidity of Bedouin-ness” is made by Cole (2003). While Cole acknowledges that there are certain cultural markers (hospitality, honor) that have historically typified bedouin communities, he states from the outset that all/most of bedouin societies and cultures today are in the midst of severe change. Given that bedouinism is a lifestyle and not a national/ethnic group,* it is clear that as the bedouin lifestyle changes, so too is the sense and expression of identity/identities that go along with it.

This is seen most profoundly in the negative manner in which bedouin historically viewed settled life. In recent years, bedouin communities throughout the MENA have accepted a settled lifestyle—some voluntarily, some far less so—with the recognition that it allows and facilitates access to public services, modern conveniences (Cole 2003: 247), healthcare, education, and the like. But such a lifestyle change, Cole argues, in which most bedouin today typically reside in permanent housing, where herds may be “visited” by family members, but are tended by hired hands for wages (2003: 249), suggests that bedouinism, and the nomadic behaviors embedded within it, no longer has the resonance or the relevance that it once had.

Bedouin identity in the MENA does continue to be expressed through tribal connections, however. Unlike the capitalist West, neither geographic/residential connections to place, nor one’s occupation, have replaced tribal affiliation as the primary factor in identity construction. And yet, Cole suggests, as bedouinism declines as an economic and social system, “one might argue that an emergent ethnicity is replacing tribal identities of the past” (2003: 252).

Cole is “hesitant to overstress” this new ethnicity as something greater than Arabness itself and it need not be viewed as such. But what can be said here is that what he is referring to is an “ethnicity” that, unlike the bedouinism of the past, may be defined by what these post-nomads *do not do*, or are *lacking*. The bedouin of today, he suggests, are those who have an ancestral/historical connection to the herd, that is, to those animals they *used to have* (Cole 2003: 259). Their identity is based in large part not upon who they are, but on who they are not (Cole 2003: 254). In a word, bedouin identity in the MENA today is being expressed in terms of *deprivation*, both in terms of what was once theirs and is now lost, as well as in relation to that which is possessed by those around them (culture, access to wealth, employment, and so on), motivating them to “rebellion or resistance against the dominant political economy” (Cole 2003: 253).

The formulation of communal identity based upon perceptions of: 1) who you are, and who you are not, as well as 2) who you perceive yourself to be versus who others perceive you to be, is central to the discussion at hand. A significant aspect of bedouin identity formulation in Arab states stems, in part, from stereotyped images of the bedouin as tribespeople, which differentiate them from the rest of Arab society (Altorki & Cole 2006: 649). In the Negev case, however, bedouin identity formulation today is almost entirely fostered by external forces, that is, based not only upon endogenous changes experienced by similar nomadic peoples throughout the Arab Middle East and the world as a whole in the present-day globalizing era, but, rather, also by exogenous factors rooted in the perceptions and fears of others.

Moreover, much of the academic literature and media well reflects bedouin identity as one of “other,” developed as a byproduct of the Jewish/Zionist narrative, rather than as an introspective process to be carried out by those actually undergoing the changes within their community. This narrative is founded largely upon a principle not simply of identifying who is to be *included* in the Israeli collective, but by who is by definition outside of the collective bounds. Thus, the early Zionist movement’s “institutions systematically excluded Arabs since their very *raison d’être* was this exclusion” (Shafir & Peled 2002: 44, emphasis added).

This ideology continues to inform present day Israeli discourse. For example, as the state seeks to conquer and control land/space, terms such as the “Judaization” of Israel/Palestine (Yiftachel 2003: 42) and the “de-Arabization of space” (27) are bandied about, seemingly suggesting that space carries with it the identity of a people, and through the conquest of that land, so too are the people, and the identities they hold, erased or cleansed, “whited-out,” and replaced with Jewishness. But, of course, the identity changes taking place among the bedouin of the Negev today are far

more complex and nuanced than this, and such binaries, easy as they may be to understand, do not offer a complete picture of the situation at hand.

For decades, Jewish Israeli scholars have long used such dichotomies regularly in their definitions of the minorities of Israel, typically presenting Arabness as having features which “are often diametric oppositions of features many [Jewish] Israelis see as typical of their own identity” (Rabinowitz 2002: 307). Such binaries thereby foster the use of oppositional relationships (us/them, modern/traditional, urban/rural, developed/undeveloped, advanced/primitive) and so on. In essence, in other words, Jewish Israeli scholars have typically presented the Arab minorities as the “anti-Jews.” Such “anti-Jews” may, Rabinovich argues, be typified as providing a counter-narrative to Zionist ideology, as “the underlying emphasis of all these features [of Zionism, based] on modernization, hope, and vision is implicitly strengthened by the depiction of the ultimate *other* as possessing diametrically opposed characteristics” (2002: 319, emphasis added).

The bedouin of the Negev have long been viewed within this context as “peculiar and exotic,” living a “life at the margin ... [but in] the process of modernization that brings an era to an end” (Rabinowitz 2002: 309–310). Meir’s *As Nomadism Ends*, (1997), is but one of many examples of this tradition-modernity continuum, in which bedouinism is at one end and modern Jewish Israeli society is at the other, and the “traditional” lifestyle slowly but surely ceases to exist as patterns of nomadism weaken and stagnate in the face of new processes of sedentarization and development in the modern Jewish state.

Thus, concludes Rabinowitz, the Negev bedouin have long been presented to a receptive Jewish public as both “geographically marginal and politically dependent—the opposite of being metropolitan and self-reliant” (2002: 317). In order to better understand and contextualize this changing sense of identity in Negev bedouin society—as defined both internally as well as by those outside of the community—it will be helpful to examine how identity patterns were first formulated prior to the forced resettlement initiative of the 1960s.

Lastly, it must also be recognized that while such identities as “bedouin” and “Israeli” are quite slippery and malleable and need not (indeed, should not) be equated here with “pastoralist” and “Jew,” respectively, so too are such identity markers as “Arab,” “Muslim,” and similar terms subject to a wide degree of interpretation. While, quite obviously, the Negev bedouin belonged to the larger Arab and Muslim collectives prior to sedentarization, their senses of identity and membership in and with those collectives is undergoing alteration in the post-nomadic period. As but one example, the practice of regularly attending formally held religious prayer services within a mosque setting is not something that was historically part of bed-

ouin culture and society. As will be seen below, this has begun to change in the settled/urban environment, both a reflection of, as well as an incubator for, the development of a variety of newly developing ideals, values, and practices.

Identity in the Negev Before and After De-Territorialization

As discussed in previous works (Dinero 1999; 2004), identity/identities formulation among the Negev bedouin was situated within two interrelated contexts. At the “micro” level, identity formulation stemmed from one’s place within one of three different allied groups, *‘Arab* (tribesmen), *fellahin* (peasants), and *Abid* (blacks/“Africans”). Members of the *‘Arab* are recognized by the others as the “True” bedouin of the region, with the most noble heritage. These tribes originated in the Arabian peninsula (some, like the Azazmeh, via the Sinai), most arriving in the Negev beginning in the latter years of the eighteenth century (Kressel et al. 1991), likely coinciding at some point with Napoleon’s Palestinian ventures (Bailey 1980: 36).

Ethnicism in bedouin society may be demarcated by the arrival of the *fellahin* to the Negev thereafter in the nineteenth century. They, as well as a community of blacks who at one time served as slaves to the “True” bedouin, were viewed by the “True” as socially inferior (Marx 1967). These black or “African” bedouin had, until slavery was outlawed with the creation of the state, served in a variety of roles, looking after animals, caring for crops, and carrying out household duties (Beckerleg 2007: 295).

This increased social heterogeneity of a previously homogenous society, combined with greater population pressure on the land, created new political tensions and competition from within for scarce resources. As suggested above, this stratification continued to strengthen throughout the twentieth century and is manifested today in a variety of developmental ways in Segev Shalom and the other planned towns.

In addition to these internal divisions within the in-group, however, traditional Negev bedouin identity was also constructed in terms of how community members saw themselves in counter-distinction from the out-group non-bedouin majority around them. The Israeli case is complicated further by the fact that the non-bedouin, that is, the Jewish Israelis, are also non-Arab, non-Muslim, and are historical enemies to both of these latter groups as a result of the uprooting of the Palestinian Arab population, which resulted during the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

At the “macro” level of the Negev bedouin world, one may identify two groups, *El-‘Arab* (Arabic: Arabs) or *El-Bedu* (Arabic: the bedouin community as a whole), and *El-Yahud* (Arabic: the Jews). Significantly, one need

not embrace the Jewish religion or be an ethnic Jew in order to be considered a member of the realm of *El-Yahud*. That is, anyone not inside the collective is an outsider and is viewed in opposition to “bedouinness,” at least as defined within this context.

Just as bedouin attitudes toward the Jews well typify their minority status, Jewish attitudes toward the bedouin similarly fit the dominant group paradigm. Historically, the Arabs of Israel, including the bedouin, have held separate identities as compared to Jewish Israelis. The inability to access “Israeliness” in a nationality sense, due to the separate status held by Israel’s Arab citizens, is in part a reflection of an existing system of inequality and seclusion that has plagued the community since the creation of the state (Grossman 1993).

The issue of Israeli identity, of who is or is not an Israeli, is not easily unraveled. Jews who see Israeliness as an extension of Jewishness (or vice versa) by definition exclude the minorities from the equation altogether. Issues related to the Jewish symbolism of what is in truth a binational state, such as the National Anthem and the flag, offer Jewish Israelis a sense of identity that by definition excludes the Arab communities. It is important to note, however, that an expressed sense of “Israeliness” had slowly been on the rise among the Arab communities from the mid 1970s through the mid 1990s, but this trend saw a sharp decrease throughout this sector according to national polls beginning in the late 1990s (Ghanem & Smootha 2001).

Moreover, as will be elaborated upon further below, the idea of one seeing oneself/being seen as “Israeli” also may be moving toward being a *class* distinction, at least as it is beginning to become manifest within the bedouin community. This is significant, stemming from an effort on the part of Israel’s planners to use the resettlement sites as socializing agents, drawing together a number of ‘Arab tribes, as well as *fellahi* and *Abid* groups, each of which would reside in its own separate neighborhood (Fenster 1991).

The resettlement initiative has torn the bedouin not only from their geographic roots, but also from their social connections both to one another and to the world in which they were formally situated. At the same time, new internal relationships between the three sub-groups previously at odds with one another, and new connections with the dominant Jewish society at large, have begun to take form. Increasingly, evidence suggests that the Negev bedouin community is internally divided not as it once was, but, rather, between those who have opted for an “urbanized” lifestyle and those who continue to resist the government’s relocation initiative. Further, bedouin identity today is increasingly defined by interactions with the dominant Jewish society at large.

Upon first entering bedouin towns today, one is often met with the same repeated refrain, here summed up by a Segev Shalom shopkeeper who lives in the *pezurah*, in an encounter I had with him in early March 2007, when he confronted me in halting, broken English:

Why did you come *here* [to Segev Shalom] to learn about the bedouin?! You can't learn anything *here*! Do you have a car? Drive out there [pointing towards the hills to the East], go nearer to the mountains. *There*, you will find *bedouin*. *Not here*! When we lived out in the desert, we were free. We lived there without limitations. That's not how it is in the town.

Such attitudes are ever-present throughout bedouin society today, and reflect the views expressed to me years ago that, as the resettlement initiative takes hold and the tent becomes a thing of the past, "there are no more bedouin" in the Negev (Dinero 1999: 25).

Haidar, a local café worker in Segev Shalom, was one of many resettled informants to affirm that town living and the modern values associated with it have negatively impacted bedouin life. He states in 2007:

No one just sits and drinks and talks like this anymore. It's not like fifteen years ago—it was better then—and it was even better fifteen years before that. Today, everyone is running. They run here, they run there. They have no time for anything. All anyone does anymore is just run.

While such views can be attributed in part to the nostalgia that many communities tend to fall back upon during times of change and transition, this should not in any way weaken the power of the sentiment expressed. If nothing else, the fact that such attitudes sound familiar with the workaday lifestyle of many Americans and other Westerners only reinforces the fact that bedouin identity is not only fluid and layered, but at times fails to connect with the realities of the changes that are now a very real part of bedouin lives and lifestyles.

And yet, from a Jewish planner's perspective, such changes in who and what the bedouin are today well reflect and further reinforce the rationale for the state's resettlement initiative, essentially confirming and affirming the need to facilitate still further the de-nomadization/"modernization" planning process, especially among the youth. As Dudu Cohen puts it (24 April 2007):

It's clear today that the process that the bedouin are going through is a societal change, cultural change, mentality change, but apparently, you have to go through it. It's not immediate ... and so, it's clear to every one that

it's a process. It's a long process that will take its own time ... Every society adapts differently to change of this kind. But in the end it will happen, because the bedouin are being absorbed into Jewish Israeli society ...

[So now you hear] "Listen, my children want Nike shoes." Once, bedouin didn't think like this. But because he and his kids are walking around the mall in Be'er Sheva, meeting other kids, or his children are studying in Omer [sic] and not in Laqiya, suddenly his children think differently, [they] want different things. So this absorption into the Jewish society, the more modern Israeli society, causes the bedouin to 'go up' a little bit higher.

The planning initiative seeks not only to alter bedouin identity through exposure to "modern Jewish values," but, similarly, to break down the traditional divisions between the 'Arab, *fellahi*, and *Abid* sub-groups, "meshing" and interweaving them in a manner that will de-emphasize and eventually break down the historic/traditional bedouin communal structure (Dinero 1999: 25–26). Moshe Moshe, a planner for the Bedouin Authority, has suggested that such interactions are similarly playing a role in the development of a new bedouin culture and identity (15 February 2007):

There's another thing here. I'm not pointing this out in a racist way. *Davka* [Hebrew: on the contrary, of all things] the bedouin themselves point this out. [And that is that] there are the *fellahin*. I'll give you a sentence and I don't care if you quote me anywhere or not, because I say it straight to their faces. The ['True'] bedouin is lazy. He doesn't like to work. He likes it when someone else does the work for him. Let him sleep and let him get up at 11:00 in the morning and say, "Ya, Daughter, where's the *nargeelah* [Arabic: water pipe]? And who does the work for him? The *fellah*. So he doesn't have any choice but to put the *fellah* right next to him.

Now, if the *fellah* wasn't here, what you see here [in the towns] today wouldn't be here. Because he, in essence, gives the stimulation to the ['True'] bedouin to go in the direction of business, the direction of educational enlightenment. He did that—the *fellah*.

As was previously noted, the *fellahi* bedouin have played a key role in the sedentarization process. Still, it is difficult to interpret Moshe's words as less than sharp, even if his sentiment, as well as that of Cohen and other government officials, recognizes the significance of the transitions now occurring within bedouin social structures and the identities that these structures embodied. Thus, this recognition is loaded with certain assumptions, ideology, attitudes, and judgments that are often counter-productive to the developmental goals that they are charged to fulfill.

Before turning to the quantitative data to further illustrate these changes in greater detail, I offer the following unfiltered views as expressed by an ordinary Segev Shalom shop owner (6 March 2007), as they, I believe, stand in stark contrast with the perspective of many Jewish State officials. The views expressed are also useful in the way that this bedouin town dweller, without any prompting on my part, summarizes the issues taking place within bedouin society, as well as how Jewish Israelis view the bedouin within the regional context in which these changes are manifest:

We're progressing, but we don't really feel it. In the last ten to fifteen years, people have changed for the worse. In the past, if someone died, no one would have a wedding out of respect. Now, someone dies, and their next-door neighbor will have the wedding [anyway]. Or someone is driving to Be'er Sheva and sees someone who needs a ride and drives right past them. People think only about themselves now.

Why? Because of money. In the past, we had very little. Now people have quite a bit. But in the past, people would just gather at night in the *shiq* of one of the tents and drink and eat and talk about who was sick, who died, who was getting married. Now, in town, everyone has their own *shiq* [Arabic: public sitting area of a tent] in their house. No one sits together. *Everyone wants to be their own sheikh.*

Before the [2000] intifada, *we were bedouin*, and then there were the Palestinians [in the Territories]. But after the intifada started, they [the Israeli Jews] looked at us and looked at them and said 'you're Arabs. They are Arabs, you are Arabs, it's all the same thing.' [In truth] the Palestinians used to live well. Their world and our world wasn't so different. They lived in villas. Now, we live in different worlds. Things have gotten very bad for them. But the Jews here live in a different world than us too. It is like the difference between 'the heavens and the earth' [a reference to the Hebrew bible].

Data Analysis in Segev Shalom: The Results of De-Bedouinization

The qualitative material above provides one aspect of the changing sense of identity, as expressed internally and as viewed from outside of the Negev bedouin community. Quantitative data gathered over more than a decade in Segev Shalom further informs how identity development is being expressed in the resettled Negev bedouin community.

In order to attempt to parse out how the bedouin see themselves, the 1996, 2000, and 2007 survey respondents were first asked to provide a one

or two word definition of themselves and their families (Table 5.1). Such labels are one form of expression that can be used, along with other criteria, to measure how one sees oneself and situates oneself within the public realm. Such self-labeling suggests shared affinities for some groups, as well as opposition for still others (i.e., who one “is” *and* who one “isn’t”).

While it is clear that the term *bedouin* was the primary identifying label for over three-quarters of the survey respondents in 1996, with one-quarter choosing alternative primary labels and over 20 percent not including the term *bedouin* as either a primary or even a secondary term of identity, this was no longer true by 2000. The term *bedouin* had been replaced, mostly by the term *Arab* (nearly 40 percent), although *Muslim* was also chosen by more than 20 percent of respondents.

The term *Israeli*, alone or as a suffix or prefix to an identity label, was barely mentioned by survey respondents in 1996, short of the 2 percent who chose it as a secondary label. Similarly, the term *Israeli-Arab*, the identity label of choice utilized throughout Israeli media and government circles, was only cited by 6 percent of the survey respondents as either a primary or secondary identity label. Four years later, the identifier was still not used a great deal, though it was chosen by more than 10 percent of the survey respondents.

By 2007, the picture of self-identification appeared to be somewhat clearer. The percentage of those who chose the *bedouin* identity label were virtually unchanged from the 2000 results. Those choosing the *Palestinian* label similarly held somewhat constant over the study period. But what has changed significantly is the percentage of those who have chosen the *Israeli* label, which has dropped considerably. More dramatically still, the percentage of those now choosing *Muslim* as their primary identity label, 50 percent of those surveyed, has risen from *less than 10 percent* only a decade earlier. I will return to this issue in further detail below.

Regarding Segev Shalom residents’ sense of belonging to the larger Israeli collective, the respondents’ answers (Table 5.2) confirm that the vast majority of those surveyed in 1996, 2000, and 2007 *did not* feel that they receive equal treatment under the law, despite the fact that they are Israeli citizens.

Overall, poorer/lower income residents who are newcomers to the town are more likely to state that they feel less equal with other Israelis ($p=.05$). The Tarabeen who have been in Segev Shalom the longest are more likely to express a greater sense of equality with Jewish Israelis than Tarabeen newcomers ($p=.04$). The number that answered “yes” to the question, roughly 20 percent, is just slightly lower than statistics from similar studies asking similar questions about bedouin sense of well-being and inclusion (ex. 29 percent; see Abu-Saad, Yonah, and Kaplan 2000: 57). Although it is appar-

Table 5.1. Identity Labels

	1996 (N=102)	2000 (N=144)	2007 (N=232)
Arab	0.0	0.0	1.3
Arab Palestinian	0.0	3.5	0.4
Arab Muslim	2.9	21.5	12.5
Arab bedouin	0.0	3.5	2.6
Arab Israeli; Arab Palestinian- Israeli; Arab Israeli-Arab	0.0	9.0	1.7
—ARAB total	2.9	37.5	18.5
Palestinian	0.0	0.0	1.7
Palestinian-Israeli	7.8	1.4	1.3
Palestinian Arab	0.0	1.4	0.9
Palestinian Israeli-Arab; Muslim	0.0	4.9	2.6
Palestinian Bedouin	0.0	0.7	0.4
—PALESTINIAN total	7.8	8.4	6.9
Muslim	0.0	0.0	11.6
Muslim Arab	3.9	9.7	14.7
Muslim Palestinian	1.0	2.1	4.3
Muslim Bedouin	2.9	9.0	12.9
Muslim Israeli; Muslim Israeli- Arab; Muslim Palestinian-Israeli	1.0	1.4	6.1
—MUSLIM total	8.8	22.2	49.6
Bedouin	33.3	0.0	3.4
Bedouin Arab	22.5	2.8	3.0
Bedouin Palestinian	0.0	1.4	0.4
Bedouin Muslim	15.7	8.3	9.9
Bedouin Israeli; Bedouin Israeli- Arab; Bedouin Palestinian-Israeli	3.9	6.9	2.1
—BEDOUIN total	75.4	19.4	19.0
Israeli-Arab	2.9	3.5	0.4
Israeli Muslim	0.0	0.0	0.4
Israeli Bedouin	0.0	4.2	0.4
Israeli Israeli-Arab; Israeli-Arab Israeli	0.0	0.0	1.8
Israeli-Arab Muslim	0.0	4.9	0.4
Israeli-Arab Bedouin	0.0	0.0	2.7
—ISRAELI total	2.9	12.6	6.1
Other	2.2	0.0	0.0

Sources: Dinero, S.C. "Reconstructing Identity Through Planned Resettlement: The Case of the Negev Bedouin," *Third World Planning Review*, 21/1, 1999: 19–39; "New Identity/Identities Formulation in a Post-Nomadic Community: The Case of the Bedouin of the Negev," *National Identities*, 6/3, 2004: 261–275, and Dinero, S.C. *2007 Segev Shalom Household Survey*.

ent that this sentiment is slowly on the decline for men and women alike, this contention was found to cut across age, gender, and educational lines.

As for expressed identification in religious (i.e., Muslim) terms, the 1996 survey found that use of one of the town mosques was relatively evenly divided (Table 5.3), with half of the respondents (or, in the case of female respondents, their husbands) attending regularly, and half attending rarely or not at all. Interestingly, the percentage of those surveyed attending the mosque dropped slightly in the year 2000. By 2007, however, the trend reversed itself substantially, with nearly 75 percent of respondents claiming regular religious participation.

Table 5.2. *Do You Feel that You are Treated Equally with Other Israelis?*

	1996 (N=102)		2000 (N=149)		2007 (N=221)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
<i>No</i>	80	72	78	67	69	62
<i>Yes</i>	9	13	15	15	15	23
<i>Don't know</i>	11	15	7	18	16	15

Sources: 1996, 2000, 2007 Segev Shalom Surveys.

Other factors related to religious observance are also relevant here. Those in the 1996 survey who identified as *bedouin* first (more than 75 percent of all respondents), rather than as *Arabs* or *Muslims*, were significantly more likely to be polygynous ($p=.04$). That is, bedouinness and the “traditional” bedouin practice of having multiple wives were clearly interconnected.

Table 5.3. *Stated Regularity of Mosque Attendance/Religious Participation of Respondent/Family Members*

	1996 (N=102)	2000 (N=148)	2007 (N=236)
<i>Regular/frequent</i>	48	42	69
<i>Irregular/never</i>	51	58	25
<i>No response/missing</i>	1	0	6

Sources: 1996, 2000, 2007 Segev Shalom Surveys.

And yet, by 2000, the *bedouin* label was far less significant in terms of its connection to polygynous practice. However, those who were polygynous were found to be *less* likely to identify themselves using the suffix, prefix, or label *Israeli*, preferring the descriptors *Arab*, *Palestinian*, *Muslim*, or *bedouin* instead ($p=.03$).

The 2007 data reveals some interesting twists in this evolving sense of self-identity as it relates to religious practices and behaviors. For example,

those choosing the term *bedouin* as a primary label were found to frequent the mosque more often than those choosing the other identity labels ($p=.03$), most especially those over the age of 40 ($p=.01$). However, the relationship between self-expressed identity and polygyny was to take a turn in the 2007 data. Those in polygynous households were now found to be *more* likely to choose the *Israeli* label as a secondary label ($p=.03$) than the other identity labels, a total reversal from the previous findings. This was especially true for those under 40 years of age ($p=.02$), who are members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.01$), with higher overall household incomes ($p=.05$) in the town.

In other words, “Israeliness,” based upon this piece of data at least, appears to be evolving into an identity of youth and economic success, expressed by these polygynous respondents (see Dinero 2006, for further discussion) in what those in the West might deem a manner of “conspicuous consumption.” Though it is a small N (only 47 respondents), a correlation was also found between those who are polygynous and those who chose an *Israeli* label for their primary identity ($p=.04$) as well. I will return to this issue of Israeli identity in further detail below.

Another way of formally expressing one’s identity or connection to the larger collective is through political party preference (see Shafir and Peled 2002: 91–92; Smootha & Ghanem 2001) and other similar mechanisms such as voting participation. Such indicators, along with serving in the military, may be viewed as signs of “participation in the democratic process” (Al-torki and Cole 2006: 646), or, put another way, as the bedouin’s exercising their sense of citizenship and identity within the larger national, rather than tribal, collective.

It has been documented in the media and elsewhere that during the period of this study, overall Negev bedouin support for the Jewish/Zionist political parties declined significantly, paralleling the pattern found among the other Arab minorities, whose support for the Jewish/Zionist parties has similarly declined during this period (see Ghanem & Smootha 2001). In 1992, for example, 17 percent of the bedouin voted for the Labour Party (Illustration 5.1); in the 1996 election, this number declined to only 9 percent (“Comptroller Blasts Government...,” 6 May 2002). Structural electoral reform in the early 1990s allowed the bedouin to vote for the Arab parties in large numbers thereafter, splitting their preference for Knesset representation—which saw 60 percent support for the United Arab List in 1996 and 72.5 percent for the Arab parties in 1999—and that for Prime Minister, which continued to favor the Labour candidate (Parizot 2006: 184). Choosing from the Arab party lists has increased significantly since the Six Day War (ICG Report 2004: 5), and, in the most recent election in which Likud’s Benyamin Netanyahu ultimately was able to form a ruling coalition

(2009), the Arab parties received virtually all of the bedouin vote (“How They Voted...,” 17 February 2009).

Like party choice, voting participation patterns have long been informed, in part, by a lack of direct bedouin buy-in at the local level. As noted in Chapter 3, Segev Shalom and the other neighboring bedouin towns were not governed by local bedouin officials until the elections of Fall 2000 (see “Four Negev Bedouin towns hold first local polls,” 19 September 2000). Thus, the impact of instituting local control cannot be overstated. The 2000 elections and those that have occurred since have served to give the bedouin direct rule over their own communities and destinies, not only reflecting “rights and recognition” so essential to a communal sense of respect and honor, but, further, they have also provided the community with a new vehicle through which to express their newly developing sense of post-nomadic bedouin identity.

The data gathered in Segev Shalom bear out these contentions. The 1996 voting rate as determined by the survey results (Table 5.4) was quite similar to previous Arab community participation rates. A number of significant correlations concerning voting patterns also were found among the Segev Shalom survey data. Men, for example, were found to be more likely to vote than women ($p=.03$); in some instances, women who voted stated that their husbands coerced them in their voting choices, a phenomenon that has



Illustration 5.1. Arabic and Hebrew Election Poster in a Bedouin Town: “A Strong Israel with Peres”—1996

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

Table 5.4. Segev Shalom Voting Participation

	1996 (N=105)		2000 (N=149)		2007 (N=234)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
<i>Yes</i>	86	63	77	56	61	63
<i>No</i>	13	35	23	44	32	32
<i>Missing/no response</i>	1	2	0	0	7	49

been documented in other bedouin towns as well (Marteu 2005: 281). Also, those whose primary identity label was *bedouin* were more likely to have voted than those with other labels such as *Arab* or *Muslim* ($p=.00$).

Voter participation in the 1999 election in which Ehud Barak was elected Prime Minister found similar, though clearly lower, voting participation rates for men and women alike. That said, those using the *Israeli* identifier were more likely to have voted than others ($p=.01$), although those preferring the label *Arab*, *Muslim*, or *bedouin* voted at relatively high rates as well. Only those using the label *Palestinian*, some of whom are in fact the second and third wives of bedouin men (who are, of course, Israeli citizens), may not be citizens of Israel, and therefore were less likely to have voted than others in the survey.

The 2007 data sheds further light upon these voting patterns. Although a small percentage of the overall population, those choosing *bedouin* as their primary identity label tended to participate more in the electoral process than those using other identity labels ($p=.01$). Those selecting the *Israeli* label, conversely, were *less* likely to have voted ($p=.03$), particularly members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.02$), and those under the age of 40 ($p=.03$). Those stating a preference for the *Israeli* identity label, however, were, predictably more likely to support the Jewish/Zionist parties rather than the Arab or Muslim parties ($p=.01$). This was especially true of those under 40 ($p=.01$) and the Tarabeen ($p=.00$). Lastly, amongst the Tarabeen (though not the Azazmeh), those with higher household incomes had a higher tendency to participate in elections than those from poorer households ($p=.01$).

Finally, among those recent arrivals to the town (arriving within the past 10 years), the Azazmeh respondents were significantly more likely to favor the Jewish/Zionist parties or, even more likely, to state “no party is any good,” when asked which party is best able to represent the interests of the bedouin community. Conversely, newcomer Tarabeen tended to favor the Arab/Muslim parties ($p=.05$). Other than time living in the town, no other factor was found that presented a significant difference between the tribe members’ party preferences.

Voting patterns reflect a general trend toward an increased sense of exclusion and disenfranchisement. Although Parizot has argued that voting

among the bedouin has been used in the planned towns as “an act of resistance” (2006: 195) and an effort to exercise communal will against state interests, it remains the case that the bedouin of the Negev “have limited influence over national politics considering the little weight of their vote” (Parizot 2006: 200). Nationally, it can be said that “most Arabs in Israel have no confidence in government policy” (Ghanem & Smootha 2001), and this can be measured in part in the bedouin sector by looking at Table 5.5. While it is premature to determine any distinct trend in resident responses, overall satisfaction with the government’s ability or willingness to respond to bedouin needs, at least for the moment, has dropped relative to previous responses, and is quite low in any case (roughly one out of four or five respondents).

Table 5.5. *Is The Present National Government Working for the Social/Economic Interests of the Bedouin Community? (Prime Minister During Survey Period in Italics)*

	1996	2000 (N=150) <i>Ehud Barak</i>	2007 (N=236) <i>Ehud Olmert</i>
<i>Yes</i>	n/a	25	17
<i>No</i>	n/a	51	59
<i>Don't know/missing</i>	n/a	24	24

A final survey question concerning political attitudes toward the increasingly popular Islamic parties in Israel further adds to the above data. Respondents were asked to state to what degree they agreed with the following statement: “*The Islamic parties are well-suited to represent the interests of the bedouin community.*” Over half of the Segev Shalom respondents agreed with the statement in 1996 (Table 5.6), and about one-third disagreed with it. While the percentage of males agreeing with this statement rose substantially in 2000, women’s rates of agreement declined.

By 2007, tribe, education, and income all appeared to now inform the rising sense of support for these Islamic parties. Members of the Tarabeen tribe, for example, who preferred the primary identity label of *bedouin*, showed some greater likelihood of supporting the Islamic parties, although the correlation was not that strong ($p=.05$). Education proved a stronger factor, however; *more* educated men were *more* likely to favor the Islamic parties than the less educated ($p=.02$). Those with *higher incomes* in the town were also *more* likely to express such sentiments of support ($p=.00$).

The 2007 data also offers some insights into the characteristics of those respondents who are most likely to view the government in a positive light. The longer one lives in Segev Shalom, for example, the more likely it ap-

pears that a respondent might offer a more favorable view of the National Government's development efforts in the bedouin sector ($p=.03$). This was especially true of women ($p=.01$), low income residents ($p=.04$), and respondents under 40 years of age ($p=.05$). And yet, this does not provide a full picture of the situation there. Some final correlations may shed yet further light on the issue, namely, comparing how respondents in Segev Shalom answered the above questions as compared to those in the neighboring *pezurah* areas. When asked the same questions, several distinctions were found between the residents living in the two residential environments.

Table 5.6. Expressed Belief that the Islamic Parties Can Help Further the Interests of the Bedouin Community

	1996 (N=102)		2000 (N=148)		2007 (N=236)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
<i>Agree</i>	34	78	56	51	51	49
<i>Disagree</i>	46	12	32	27	32	32
<i>Don't know</i>	20	9	12	19	17	19

First, residents of the town were far more likely to express criticism of the government and its bedouin-related policies than those living in the *pezurah* ($p=.01$). Second, it was found that male respondents living in the town also were more likely to express more frequent mosque attendance than those living in the periphery ($p=.02$). That said, male town residents were *less* likely to express support for the Islamic parties than those respondents living in the peripheral settlements ($p=.01$), and both male and female town residents were more likely to state that they feel equal with other Israelis than those living in the periphery ($p=.00$). These statistical correlations each provide an indication of ways in which living in the town is serving as a forum for assimilation as initially envisioned by the state planning authorities. And yet, to a degree, there are also signs of ways in which the towns may be acting as an arena of politicization and further contestation of power in the Negev environment.

Identity as an Expression of Lifestyle and Material Wealth

Overall, the descriptive statistics cited above suggest a shifting sense of identity among the bedouin community of Segev Shalom—which may, to some degree, be a barometer for changes throughout the community as a whole. As noted above, the most obvious change found over the past decade and a half is the fact that increasingly, *bedouin* identity is on the de-

cline, being replaced mostly by expressed identities as *Muslims* and, to a lesser degree, *Arabs*.

As noted, this sentiment is not only measured in terms of the labels with which the bedouin choose to describe themselves, but in terms of their behaviors, attitudes, practices, and beliefs. As a formerly nomadic, now settled, “modernizing” population, the material wealth one has acquired in the resettled environment also says something about who one is, and how one perceives oneself in the ever-evolving global economy. Use of education, healthcare, and other government-provided facilities, all of which were initiated as part of the larger planning agenda, further reveal ways in which change and adaptation play a role in the formulation of the “New Negev Bedouin” identity.

In each survey period, respondents’ choices of primary identity labels say much not only about how they see themselves, but also how such views are shaped by personal life situations in the resettled environment. In some instances, correlations between identity formulation and life circumstances were reaffirmed in follow-up surveys, while in other instances, other findings became apparent.

I have noted previously (Dinero 2004), for example, that those who chose the primary label of “bedouin” had lower incomes than others in the 2000 survey ($p=.01$). As a result, they were less likely to own such non-essential material goods as a DVD/VCR ($p=.04$), car (males, $p=.05$) or TV satellite dish (males, $p=.05$). And yet, despite their economic situation, these respondents were *less* likely to raise or grow crops in the town (olives, fruits, vegetables; $p=.03$) as a means of supplementing their incomes.

In 2007, those respondents who chose the term “bedouin” as their primary identity label were isolated out from the rest of the respondents for analysis. Again, it was found that this group was *less* likely to own a DVD/VCR ($p=.02$), *less* likely to own a car ($p=.01$), *less* likely to own a TV satellite dish ($p=.03$), *less* likely to own a clothes washing machine ($p=.00$), and *less* likely to own a personal computer ($p=.01$) than those choosing the other identity labels. Azazmeh tribal members choosing the “bedouin” label were also *less* likely to own a refrigerator ($p=.01$).

As for attitudes toward local services provision, in previous surveys (see Dinero 1999; 2004), those identifying as “bedouin” rated facilities in the town, such as the health clinics ($p=.02$), the mosque (women, $p=.02$), and other social welfare services ($p=.01$), lower than other respondents. Moreover, those using primary identity labels (*Israeli*, *Israeli Arab*, and *Palestinian Israeli*) were quite similar to those who prefer the primary identity label of *bedouin*. Those using one of the “Israeli” labels were more likely to be critical of town services, such as water service (male, $p=.04$) and the mosque (male, $p=.01$), in previous surveys. Those who used an “Israeli”

identifier were most critical of the town government overall ($p=.01$) and more likely to state that the government's willingness to respond to resident complaints was no different or even worse than in the past ($p=.01$) when the town was governed a Regional Council, *Masos*, headed by a Jewish *Rosh Ha'Moatzah*, Ilan Sagie.

Previous findings (Dinero 2004) found that those identifying as *Israelis* tended to live in the town the longest ($p=.01$), perhaps validating the state's original bedouin town planning agenda of converting the Negev bedouin into "Israelis." Further, at that time, no respondent using the "Israeli" label stated that they came to the town "by force," but rather, stated that they relocated seeking the presumed QOL improvements and opportunities offered by town living.

In the most recent 2007 survey, much of this sentiment was to change, and some clarification appears to now be in order. First, it is becoming increasingly evident that those who identify as *bedouin* and those who identify as *Israelis* have now begun to diverge in terms of their viewpoints, lifestyles, and perceived sense of QOL. A significant difference can now be discerned between those choosing the *bedouin* label and those choosing the *Israeli* label and how they rate service provisions, such as water ($p=.05$); those who view themselves as *Israelis* are more critical of such services in town, especially the Azazmeh ($p=.05$).

Second, as noted above, "Israeliness" is increasingly being equated with success and having "made it," while "bedouinness" seems to be connected increasingly with the sense of what one *lacks* or has *lost*, materially or otherwise. Thus, it was found in 2007 that those choosing the *Israeli* identity labels were also more likely to be employed in wage labor positions than those calling themselves *bedouin* ($p=.04$).

Those who chose the *bedouin* label tend to claim that they relocated seeking a better QOL, or because of a family decision, while those who see themselves as *Israelis* are now more likely to state that they came due to government force, ($p=.02$). This evolving attitude, which was not present in previous survey findings, is especially apparent among the Azazmeh ($p=.02$), and those aged 40 and older ($p=.01$)—that is, the "founding fathers" of Segev Shalom who have been there the longest and are, in truth, the most successful and prosperous. The 2007 data confirm that those choosing the *Israeli* label are more likely to have lived in town longer than the other respondents (11 years or more, i.e., since 1996; $p=.04$).

What then is one to make of all of these findings? As the bedouin move rapidly away from its historic pastoral nomadic roots and into the unknown, it is clear that identity issues—indeed, an internal identity crisis—will continue to plague the community. This evolving sense of who/what a bedouin is will likely take generations fully to be resolved. In the meantime, how-

ever, what is evident by all accounts is the fact that, as a new sense of “bedouinness” and “Israeliness” struggle to gain traction due to the slippery and uncertain nature of what these identities truly connote, what is flourishing throughout the community is a growing sense of Muslim identity, which is manifest in virtually every aspect of Negev bedouin life. As Abu-Saad, et al. affirm, “those unable to identify with the national corporate identity of the state [will] ultimately seek out other corporate identities with which to identify, such as the Islamic movement and Palestinian nationalism” (2000: 59).

While the data from the past surveys reveals that Palestinian nationalism is not strongly expressed in Segev Shalom, the rise of Muslim identity is considerable, and a force that requires further discussion. It is to this topic that I now turn.

Islamicization and the “Inevitability” of a Bedouin Intifada

It has been my contention for some years that, though the bedouin have been cut from their traditional spatial, social, and economic connections with the ongoing resettlement initiative, they have not become integrated into the larger Israeli collective (Dinero 1999; 2004). Rather than align with Jewish Israeli society, the bedouin have been drawn to the Arab and Muslim worlds with which they hold a common sense of social and economic status and identity, built in large part upon shared opposition with the dominant, Jewish Israeli State apparatus.

The issue of Islamicization within bedouin societies in Palestine is not new. Layish (1984) was one of the first to document this phenomenon in the early 1980s in the nearby bedouin community in the Palestinian West Bank. While Layish noted that popular “folk” beliefs and practices “still reign supreme” (1984: 39) and that there was only “superficial orthodoxy” apparent among the bedouin of the Judean Desert at that time, he clearly detected an increasing movement toward the embracing of orthodox Muslim values, ideals, and behaviors, most especially as seen through the increasing reliance and use of the then nascent *shariah* court system. His explanation for this development was straightforward: as these nomads began to settle, they came into more regular contact with orthodox Islam. Further, the more settled bedouin had greater access to formal education, both in their secular as well as religious studies (Layish 1984: 39). Thus, he concluded, “above all what brings the Bedouin closer to orthodox Islam are the exigencies of the modern state” (Layish 1984: 40).

Sheikh Salam Abu-Kalif, Imam of the central mosque (Illustration 5.2) in Segev Shalom since 1992, offers an explanation (28 June 2007) for the

increasing level of Muslim practices, observance, and identity in the Negev bedouin community that parallels Layish's observations nearly 25 years earlier—that is, that the foundation is rooted in the formalized educational opportunities brought about through resettlement. He states:

In 1983, there were no mosques in the Negev bedouin community. People in those days didn't [even] know the mourning prayers to recite when someone died. They were ignorant, uneducated. But around then ten mosques were built [nearly all in the planned towns]. And today there are many, in the towns and outside. The population has grown so much since then. How old is someone born in '83—24, 25?

And these young people, what do they want? They feel the need to connect to the Quran. *Slowly but surely people want to know more, they want to learn, to learn the prayers, to learn how to pray. They want to read* ... Yes, there are some people who still do not understand Islam ... But this is mostly among the older people, those who are illiterate, who are uneducated.

The above quantitative data confirm the Sheikh's point, revealing that the bedouin today are showing an increased sense of identity with the Muslim world through their stated sense of identity, their voting patterns, preferences, and so on.

Further, they are behaving in ways that solidify this connection; mosque attendance, polygyny, veiling in full *hijab* and *niqab* (Arabic: modesty dress, see Chapter 6), and *omra* and *haj* participation have all increased substantially over the past decade, as the bedouin feel a sense of identity and affinity with the greater Muslim world—and, incidentally, they have the ability because of access to global media (El-Jazeera, El-Arabiyya) and improved relations with the Arab states to

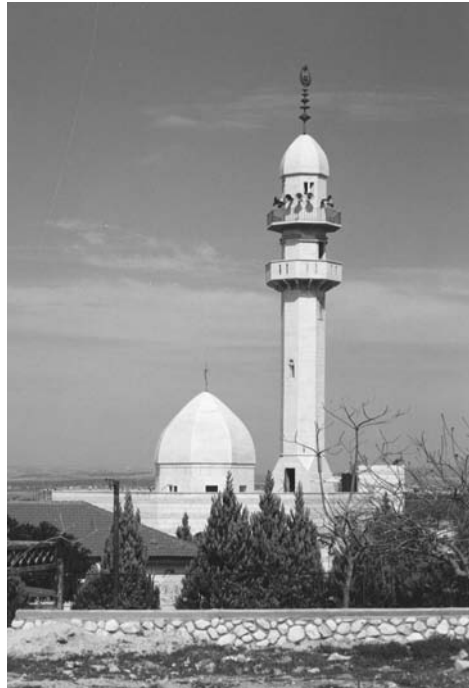


Illustration 5.2. Central Mosque, Segev Shalom

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

interact with neighboring Muslim communities who themselves now espouse a sense of heightened Muslim awareness.

The involvement of the Islamic movement in local bedouin politics, a process that evolved in the 1980s but truly began to develop fully in the 1990s (Marteu 2005: 280) as the research for this book was under way, is both a cause and an effect of these developments. The movement is now able to make inroads into the community as a result of these changes, and in cyclical fashion, it is able to further a more Islamicist, nationalist agenda, which does raise concern when it often presents a perspective that is “alienated and opposed to the character of the State” (Ghanem & Smootha 2001).

Jewish Israelis are, of course, aware of the changes in bedouin social behaviors and values. In some instances, government leaders further add to this dynamic by instilling fear, concern or distrust about the role and growth of the Arab communities (ICG 2004: 19). And yet, rather than see their role in the politicization of the bedouin community resulting in large part from the forced settlement and dislocation of this historically quiescent, insulated population, the state and Jewish citizenry alike have instead begun a campaign of “awareness” in preparation for what is believed to be an inevitable “bedouin *intifada*” (“A Bedouin Powder Keg...,” 8 September 2003; “The Bedouin *intifada*: It’s not if, but when,” 27 May 2004). The rapid increase in the bedouin population, one of the highest in the world, only further adds to their fears and is described increasingly as a “demographic time bomb.” Jewish Israeli media and even a few academics are complicit in this trend, increasingly emphasizing the “non-Israeli” nature of bedouin voting behaviors, rising Muslim behaviors, and the like.

One of the foremost academics in this regard is Professor Arnon Soffer of the Geography Department at Haifa University. In an oft-cited publication (mentioned, for example, in “The Bedouin *intifada*: It’s not if, but when,” 27 May 2004) entitled, “Trends among the Bedouin in the northern Negev—A threat to the entire Negev,” he writes that:

It is no longer possible to postpone addressing the Bedouin problem, unless Israeli leaders are prepared to throw up their hands and relinquish the entire Negev ... In the Negev, there is a combination of the wildest demographics in modern history (and, perhaps, all time) with physical expansion over land to an extent and with audacity unwitnessed until now.

Both of these phenomena have been accompanied by acts of crime and terror. The entire establishment responds to this development with a show of weakness and trembling knees, and does not know what to do. The Bedouin understand all too well, and the Negev has descended into anarchy.

The “anarchy” he refers to may take many forms, all of which, in his opinion, are examples that the “*intifada*” is not “on its way,” but rather, has already arrived (Soffer, 21 June 2007). Burglaries, car thefts, vandalism—what might in the West be referred to as “petty crime”—has taken on nationalistic proportions in today’s Negev. In a particularly well-known case, for example, investigators attributed disappearing road signs in the Negev to bedouin who, they suggested, sought through their theft to either encourage an increase in road accidents, or, alternatively, to smuggle the metal from the signs to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in order to make more Qassam rockets to be used against Israel (“The Bedouin intifada: It’s not if, but when,” 27 May 2004).

Statistics also are bandied about in order to prove the “disloyalty” of the bedouin and their outsider status vis-à-vis the dominant mainstream Israeli society. A Haifa University survey finding, that 42 percent of the Negev bedouin reject Israel’s right to exist (Ghanem & Smootha 2001), for example, is used in the media (“There’s a limit even to Bedouin patience,” 20 March 2002) to further this point, though it is not clear from this finding whether those sampled were town dwellers, those living in unrecognized, “illegal” *pezurah* communities subject to demolition (some 40 percent of the bedouin population), or both.

Thus, while one might argue that such charges of bedouin disloyalty leading to hostility, violence or worse are speculative at best, this sort of paranoia is increasingly commonplace throughout the Negev, if not the country. As a result, policies against the bedouin, all in the name of “security,” are making the lives of the bedouin increasingly difficult, as Jewish Israelis continue to “otherize” them in ever increasing ways.

Beyond official policy, public sentiment is similarly informed by these views. Perhaps the most infamous example of this sentiment is the case of Shai Dromi, a Jewish Israeli rancher who accidentally killed a would-be sheep thief, a bedouin, when he shot at him as he fled Dromi’s ranch in early 2007. In a matter of days, Dromi’s story became an instant cause celebre (“License to Kill?,” 17 February 2007). Hebrew bumper stickers sporting the text “We are All Shai Dromi” were seen throughout the Negev soon after the event (“The Wild South,” 1 March 2007), as support swelled for Dromi’s immediate release from jail for what was viewed as a fully justified act, and not a crime.

One final example of the degree to which Jewish paranoia, “otherization,” racism, or possibly a combination of all of these, is directed toward the bedouin is the publication in the summer of 2008 that a new program had been launched in the Qiryat Gat schools aimed at discouraging Jewish girls from developing “romantic” relationships with bedouin men (“Video: Kiryat Gat...,” 1 July 2008). Designed to warn “innocent” girls about these

“exploitative Bedouin,” a video entitled *Sleeping with the Enemy* was designed and shown by the program creators in cooperation with local police and government agencies in an effort to encourage them to steer clear of this “abnormal phenomenon.” The video explains how girls need to “be careful” of encounters with such men, for, as Chaim Shalom of the Qiryat Gat Department of Welfare Services explains it, “[the Jewish girl] goes to bed with the enemy, and she doesn’t even know it.”

The bedouin are, of course, well aware of how they are viewed in Jewish Israeli society. Saeed El-Harumi, *Rosh Ha'Moatzah* of Segev Shalom, put it simply, stating (28 May 2007): “when they look at us, everything they see that is different [from them] they determine that it is either ‘extreme’ or ‘stupid.’” Kher El-Baz, Director of Social Services in the town, states his view about the “otherization” of bedouin identity more bluntly (3 June 2007; emphasis added):

The way Jewish society sees us is much worse than in the past. This is important in terms of the welfare of my community, as well as the welfare of the bedouin as Israelis, in terms of how they see themselves. It’s like when I go to the airport, and I’m treated a certain way. I very much respect security, I care about security, I need it, I benefit from security, but what they do to us is not about security. They know it and we know it ...

Six or seven years ago it wasn’t this bad, but in the last year or so it’s really gotten worse. This to me is an indication that things in general are worse. And this happens with my credentials. So how is it for others? So our place here, how people feel toward us, is worse I think. Money alone won’t change this, it’s about perception. Things like the media have to also help.

If you are a good Zionist, this situation here shouldn’t be OK. You shouldn’t feel that this is acceptable. Not that some of us are not to blame, but policymakers are the ones who can make the difference ... *No other community in Israel has tried harder to become part of Israeli society than the bedouin—to gain a sense of belonging.* The Jews are drafted, but the bedouin will volunteer for the Army, just to belong. We do this because we want to, not because we have to. So what else can we do? Ask what the bedouin feel about their citizenship these days and you’ll get some ‘weird’ answers.

Though many are cognizant of these prevailing concerns as minority citizens in a Jewish State, this process of “otherizing” has, it seems, taken on a far greater edge in recent days. As Kher El-Baz concludes (3 June 2007):

The Jews are using the fear of Arabs or Muslims to make life here miserable. I ask you, “do I, as a bedouin, have a right to feel like a human being or not?” And furthermore, *Do they see us as citizens, or as enemies?*

There are few answers here, and the trends that appear to be underway amount to a *fait accompli*. Other bedouin informants, for example, are ready to make the Jewish Israelis’ policies and behaviors self-fulfilling prophecies. Perhaps a final statement (6 March 2007) from a 33-year-old named Yusuf who lives in Bir Hadaj, a recently recognized Abu-Basma bedouin settlement some 20 kilometers south of Segev Shalom, may best sum up how many in the bedouin sector see themselves and their newly developing identities as reflected back to them through the looking glass of Jewish Israeli society:

There are over 1,000 people here [in Bir Hadaj] and yet, we have no electricity service. It’s the 2000s, and we are the only people in the world who still have no electricity. How can this be? This is supposed to be a democracy! There is a Jew who lives here in the area who has electricity, water, everything! But the 1,000 bedouin here have nothing. This is a democracy? This is not a democracy. Israel is like Iraq under Saddam. There is no democracy here.

And there is no work here. The Jews say we are all thieves and deal drugs. Yes, it’s true, they are right. And you know why? Because of them! Because we have no choices. Give us all the chance to work and no one will be selling drugs. But when you need clothes and food and you want things like everyone else has, you choose what you have to choose.

I defended this country. I am a citizen—look at this [he says, showing me his *teudat zehut*, his Israeli photo I.D.], you see, it says ‘*Medinat Yisrael*’ [Hebrew: the State of Israel]. But I am really just a guest here. Where can we go? Gaza? There’s a war there. And besides, *this is my country*. I fought them [the Palestinians] in the Army to be *here*—why should I now have to go somewhere else? But we have no future in this country. One day there is going to be a *ha’fla’a* [Arabic: *lit.*, a big party, that is, a battle] between the bedouin and the Jews, or maybe all the Arabs here. You see, there’s just no hope for us.

Data collected in Segev Shalom and the neighboring *pezurah* suggest that for the moment, such views are, fortunately, exceptional. But the level of fear and resentment is growing, and with it, uncertainty has created a sense of anomie that cannot be overlooked. As the previous chapters have

shown, role changes are manifest in every aspect of Negev bedouin society today. But, as the following chapter reveals, none are as relevant, significant or profound as those relating to the changing role of the Negev bedouin woman.

NOTE

*And, thus, the word “bedouin” is in lower case throughout this text, except when quoted.

Chapter 6

The Resettled Bedouin Woman

He who collects more wives begets more men
—Clinton Bailey, *A Culture of Desert Survival:
Bedouin Proverbs from Sinai and the Negev*

As the previous chapter has shown, resettlement has fostered a variety of social changes in Negev bedouin life, manifested within a nexus of mechanisms through which new bedouin identity/identities formulations have begun to emerge. Much of the rapid change associated with the resettlement initiative also has been manifested through the socially and politically contested environment of gender relations and role change. In previous studies (Dinero 1997; 2006), I have analyzed these evolving gender roles in the Negev bedouin community as well as the changing role of marital dynamics, most especially as seen in the rise in polygynous marriage. In this chapter, I strengthen this argument considerably with additional analysis, using quantitative and qualitative data gathered in Segev Shalom in 2007 through both the household survey and a series of Bedouin Womens' Focus Groups (BWFG) developed for this aspect of the study, seeking to define, measure, and further explain these ever-changing and evolving gender dynamics.

What is clear from this material is that, although the role of the woman in the Negev at the end of the research period had shifted markedly in virtually every aspect of social life (home life, educational opportunity, political involvement) since this project began in 1992, the idea of a “women’s rights” agenda on the Western model is limited in bedouin society today. The control of women, their spaces, activities, behaviors, and basic freedoms, remains as yet a primary arena through which political resistance to the state’s mechanisms of power may yet freely be exercised. Thus, one may question whether such resistance, contested over gendered space, can successfully serve to empower bedouin society as a whole if women’s rights are to be sacrificed in the process.

The “Traditional” Nomadic Bedouin Woman

The “traditional” roles of bedouin women have been discussed at length elsewhere (Jakubowska 1988; Fenster 1996; Dinero 1997) and thus, I do not wish to repeat that material here. However, it is necessary to provide some background that will help then to contextualize the nature of gender role change in the resettled communities of early twenty-first century Negev bedouin society.

As discussed at greater length in my previous work (1997), for example, Negev bedouin women historically performed a number of difficult and physically demanding functions (Illustration 6.1) prior to resettlement and urbanization (Marx 1967: 83–84). They helped to build the tent and kept it in order, brought water, fetched wood, prepared food, and carried out a variety of domestic activities.

But, of course, the primary role of the bedouin woman was that of being the biological and cultural reproducer. A central responsibility of the bedouin woman was that of bearing children to add to the labor pool, and her prestige and status was elevated with each birth of a child, most especially, sons (Kressel 1992: 39; Marx 1967: 138). From early childhood, girls were socialized in preparation for the time when they, like their mothers, would marry and continue with this cyclical reproductive process.



Illustration 6.1. Bedouin Women’s “Traditional” Roles—Milking a sheep.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

The value of children in traditional bedouin society was based upon economic, material, and non-material rewards (Meir & Ben-David 1993: 138). Economically, human reproduction in nomadic communities is rational, as a family seeks to “perpetuate itself by maximizing fertility” (Meir 1987: 204). A numeric balance between the number of flocks a family held and the number of children a family bore (Meir 1997: 33) further supported the contention that fertility behaviors among the bedouin were linked directly to their pastoral nomadic lifestyle and labor force needs.

In addition to providing a labor force to meet present demands, children also served as one’s “social security” system upon reaching old age. Bearing children had normative value as well, as a sign of submission to the will of Allah (that is, based on theistic values), and to answer tribal or extended family pressures that are culturally encouraged (Meir & Ben-David 1993: 143–144).

While it is apparent that gender power relations within traditional bedouin society favored males, women in the Negev did lay claim to levels of power and status. This power, however, was primarily exercised domestically within the family unit, and not in the external communal sphere. Some have argued that bedouin women are largely powerless politically and are “marginalized” from the spheres of political power (Marteu 2005: 279). And yet, it is my contention that women have always exercised considerable power, but that this internal strength can be measured through a variety of ascriptive status indices (Dinero 1997: 249–250).

Marriage and the dynamics within a marriage were all components that directly impacted the female realm in pre-sedentarized bedouin society. Just prior to settlement, Marx documented these complex marriage dynamics, through which economic and political power were distributed and exercised as tribal sheikhs vied with one another to increase family size, position, and control of regional area and resources, both in relation to other tribes, as well as in response to the increasing strength of the Military Administration (Marx 1967: 138–141). Further, the mechanisms of “shame” and “honor” were ideally suited to the management, control, and social organization of bedouin society. Girls were socialized not to show any knowledge or interest in sexuality and were secluded from the male realm to the fullest degree possible (Marx 1967: 104), for example; moreover, mothers played a central role in teaching their daughters these strategies for protecting themselves from “shame”—which, when carried to its natural outcome in bedouin society, could in extreme cases even occasion death (Kressel 1992: 43).

Overall, it can be said then that from a popular bedouin legal perspective (that is, not according to *shariah* Islamic law necessarily, but within the rules of bedouin communal law), women’s positions were not to be viewed

as subordinate (Dinero 1997). Still, the ability to seek redress in the *shariah* courts (seeking help with divorce matters, protection from abusive husbands, applying to obtain property upon a father's or husband's death) is a benefit that settled bedouin women did not previously enjoy (Layish 1984: 46). Thus, the literature is clear in emphasizing that women were rarely able to act independently in terms of their reliance upon men. For the most part, their strength and position in bedouin society stemmed from the support system that they provided as mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives.

As the bedouin have been resettled, however, the displacement of this power has shifted, as the genders contest for control over women's bodies and their reproductive capacities. While one major outcome has occurred—the changing role of education among bedouin women has significant bearing upon employment—these developments are in part mitigated by ways in which bedouin women's lives are changing and evolving in the areas of marriage and their freedom of movement and seclusion in the planned town environment.

The Resettled Bedouin Woman 1992–2007— Changing Roles, Changing Futures

As Jakubowska (1988) noted decades ago, the evolving development of an increased desire for social control over women's lives in the Negev bedouin towns appeared to be due to a perceived need to counteract women's closer proximity to non-agnatic males (that is, males who are not close relatives). And yet, what I contended in my more recent work (1997) and what appears to be gaining momentum at the millennium is that a lost sense of continuity and tradition *outside* of the home brought on by the forced resettlement initiative is lending to greater desire for control and the maintenance of traditional behaviors and practices *within* the home.

For example, as I noted previously, “while men's lives are increasingly impacted by external interactions, the division of realms (domestic sphere/external sphere) based upon gender and age persists, and seclusion and social restrictions on women remain largely in place” (1997: 254). *Haram* (Arabic: the separation of women and men through forbidden spaces, places, and acts therein) is strongly emphasized in order to ensure marriage with other agnates; separation is particularly strong in urbanized bedouin society, where it seeks to further a continuity of traditional gender roles (see Kressel 1992: 31–35) and the perpetuation of family alliances through marriage ties. Moreover, issues of honor and shame have been seen to take on even greater importance among those Arab groups who remained within Israel's borders following their military defeat and the creation of the Jewish State,

which are manifested by the desire to “preserve the symbols of manhood” by exercising control over female family members’ *ird* (Arabic: chastity/honor; see Shokeid 1993: 435).

Meir concurs, arguing that sedentarization has led to the further seclusion of women, more so than was the case in the nomadic environment (1997: 43). Thus, it is his contention that the social position of women has “deteriorated considerably” as a consequence of the sedentarization initiative (Meir 1997: 161).

“Middle aged” women have particular difficulties in adjusting to urban life (Degen 2000). While older women tend to retain traditional behaviors in the towns (Illustration 6.2) and strive to live as they once did in the tent environment (raising/managing livestock, making food products, etc.; Degen 2000: 110), those aged 20–40 tend to be caught up in the challenges of negotiating through and between the different milieus in which they must bridge the generational, spatial, and cultural divisions that separate their mothers, children, husbands, and friends.

While the very causes of the stresses now being placed upon bedouin women can easily be traced to the changes brought on by the sedentarization initiative, it is within the urbanized context that social welfare services have been developed to address the newly arising needs of today’s bedouin, especially bedouin women. Such services, social workers explain, at one time followed a more “Western, feminist model,” which failed to consider



Illustration 6.2. Baking Pita on the Patio of the Villa.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

the true-life circumstances and experiences so many bedouin women were undergoing. These programs have since been redeveloped in order to better include “the family, the tradition ... those who are most influential among the men in the family, perhaps the sheikhs. The women don't have the life experience to operate on their own, so we have to work within the extended family to help them” (Goren, 7 May 2007).

Awareness and use of the social services designed to help address these concerns is predicted by education, and it is the women of the towns who are the most educated (El-Krenawi 2004: 53, 61). According to El-Krenawi, women in the planned towns use healthcare services more often and regularly than women in the *pezurah* (2004: 46). Such correlations were found to be true in Segev Shalom as well and are part of a larger picture of the manifest changes and developments now taking place among resettled Negev bedouin women.

As Figure 6.1 reveals, while literacy rates among men have obviously risen, the rate of female literacy has risen to a far greater extent and is now nearly equal to that of men. As suggested in Chapter 4, education is a primary indicator of female empowerment in Negev bedouin society. Abu-Rabia-Queder, the first bedouin woman to receive a Ph.D., has argued (2006) that educational opportunity for bedouin women is not equal to that offered to men, insofar as women are expected to attend gender-mixed institutions while also protecting their honor and reputations. Given this virtually impossible challenge, many simply drop out before reaching graduation. Thus, she contends, the “modern state offered Bedouins [sic] an education as part of the modernization process, [but] it did little to consider the needs of the women or the community's traditional values” (Abu-Rabia-Queder 2006: 14).

There is no question that, from the outset, the state has done little to consider the specific concerns or needs of the bedouin community within the context of its planning initiative. And yet, all statistics suggest that bedouin women are accessing the accoutrements of “modernity,” (to use Abu-Rabia-Queder's terminology) at heretofore unseen and perhaps unanticipated levels (Figure 6.2). Employment outside of the home follows a similar pattern to changes in access to formal education and literacy. At one time, bedouin women rarely if ever worked outside of the home, and few if any drove an automobile, further limiting their mobility. By 2007, however, this situation had changed considerably, and employment rates for women had skyrocketed, while male rates remained virtually unchanged (Figure 6.3).

That said, a number of distinctions found in the 2007 data must still be noted concerning the differences found within Segev Shalom, and throughout bedouin society, as the resettlement initiative and its various impacts take root. With regard to education, for example, especially among those

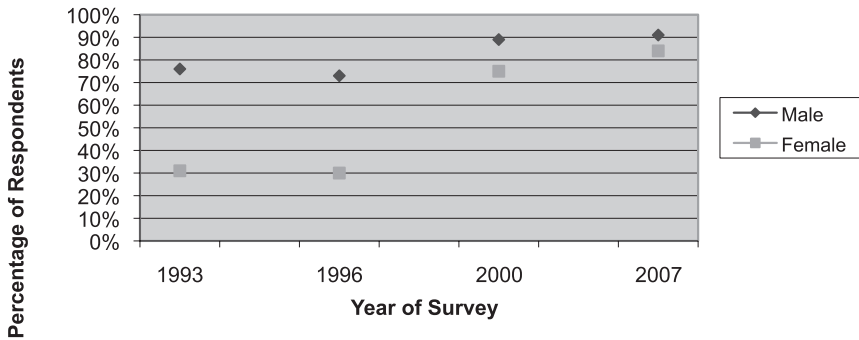


Figure 6.1. Percentage of Adults (Male/Female) Literate in at Least One Language, Segev Shalom.

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

residents under the age of 40, men still are found statistically to be more educated than women ($p=.03$). However, women with high school degrees live in higher income households, regardless of whether they themselves work outside the home or not ($p=.00$). I will return to the role of education in polygynous marriages below.

As for employment, men are far more likely than women to be employed outside the home ($p=.00$). As for the women who do work outside the home, they have a much greater likelihood of working inside Segev Shalom, and not the Jewish sector, than men ($p=.00$), especially women under 40 years of age ($p=.00$). Lastly, women in town who were married were *less* likely to be employed than men who are married ($p=.00$); no such correlation was found among single respondents, however.

Put a different way, married men were more likely to be employed according to the survey findings, while women, once married, are less likely to work outside of the home. And yet, having children in the home does not serve as a predictor for whether a married woman works outside the

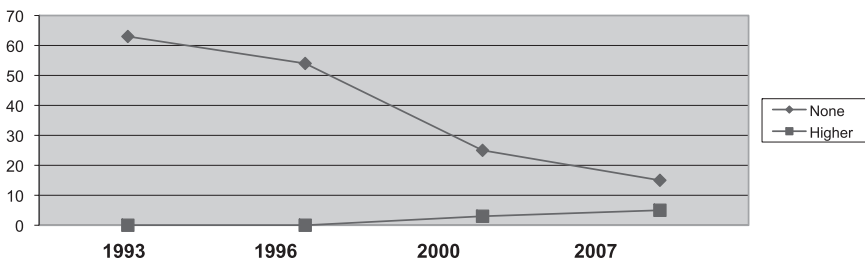


Figure 6.2. Women Accessing Higher Education vs. Those with No Formal Education.

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

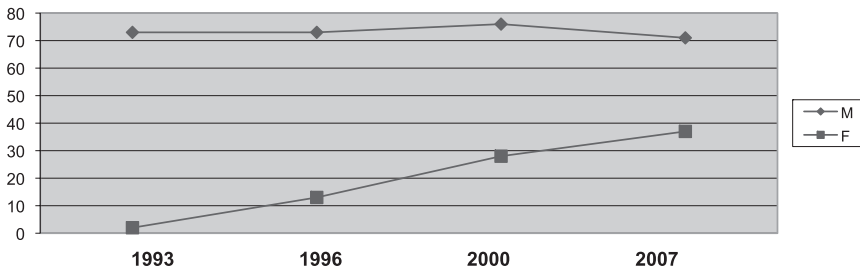


Figure 6.3. Segev Shalom Residents Employed Outside the Home (Male/Female).

Sources: 1993, 1996, 2000, 2007 Surveys.

home. However, the 2007 data did reveal that *men* with small children had a *greater* likelihood ($p=.02$) of being employed than men who did not have small children (this was not found for fathers of older children, however).

Previous studies have shown that employment rates were statistically higher among men in the planned settlements when compared to those living in the unplanned and unrecognized settlements of the *pezurah* (El-Krenawi 2004: 34). The 2007 Segev Shalom and *pezurah* surveys conducted for this study do not fully confirm this argument, however. While it is confirmed that unemployment is higher in the *pezurah* overall as El-Krenawi contends (2004: 61), data collected for this study were only able to statically verify the greater likelihood of women living in the planned towns engaging in some sort of wage labor ($p=.02$). Male employment rates did not vary significantly between the two settlement areas according to the data, at least for this study.

New Veiling and Polygynous Marriage— Retrenchment, Empowerment or Both?

As I noted previously: “improvements in women’s lives rely as much upon male attitudes and expectations as upon the women themselves. Women’s empowerment will remain hindered so long as male bedouin resettlers remain reticent to cooperate and support the women’s development program efforts” (Dinero 1997: 258–259). Over the past two decades, it is apparent that two processes are under way that have major ramifications for the lives of the resettled Negev bedouin woman. On the one hand, the development indices shown above are indisputable. Bedouin women today are more educated, literate, and in many instances, are now working outside of the home in record numbers.

Some bedouin women, mostly the young, now drive, something that was not seen as recently as the late 1990s. In effect, women today are exercising a degree of independence and mobility that allows them literally and figuratively to chart the course of their own lives, something that was unheard of when this study was initiated. As Kher El-Baz, a social worker who knows the community well, puts it, “Ten years ago [in the late 1990s] men and women would never be seen sitting together in meetings in Be’er Sheva. Now this is happening all the time. It’s just hard to believe” (3 June 2007).

Perhaps of greatest significance from a Western perspective, the fertility rate in bedouin society is slowly but steadily dropping—from 9 children per woman in 2003 to 7.6 children in 2005—the largest drop in fertility rates recorded in the country (“Statistics bureau reports...,” 14 January 2008). Not only is this a signifier to feminists that women’s lives are “improving,” but it is also a confirmation of the scholarly literature and its contention that, over time, the resettlement initiative would “create modernity” in the Negev bedouin sector as the rationale for bearing numerous children diminished (Meir 1997: 40, 122).

And yet, concomitant with these developments are trends that appear to be equally strong and of equal relevance, namely, the embracing of what much of the Western feminist literature might define as a retrenchment of bedouin women’s social development. A strengthening, if not rising, level of polygynous practice (see Abu-Rabia et al. 2008), increasingly numbers of women donning the veil (in full *hijab* and *niqab*), and related aspects of changes in personal family life suggest that bedouin women today are taking on not so much “traditional” bedouin practices, but, rather, neo-traditional ways in which to interact with the ever-changing social and political landscape in which their lives are a central feature.

These evolving phenomena are an increasingly common development recognized in the literature that suggests that with sedentarization, Middle Eastern bedouin have become increasingly gender-segregated (Cole 2006: 382). As Abu-Rabia-Queder notes, post-nomadic women throughout the Middle East and North Africa have experienced similar levels of lost freedom of movement, such as the Awlad Ali of northwest Egypt (2006: 8). Awlad Ali bedouin women do not perceive that this change, such as the expectation that they must now veil more than in the past, is *forced* upon them by anyone, least of all by men (Abu-Lughod 1986: 159). Part of the rationale behind the need for greater levels of veiling in town simply extends from the fact that there is a greater likelihood (far less prevalent in the nomadic environment) that a woman, once outside of her stone house, might encounter kin and non-kin males in whose presence modesty is expected (Dinero 1997: 255).

In effect, modesty dress in the geographically concentrated and dense bedouin environment allows women to move about more freely. Moreover, “they can’t be recognized, it provides total anonymity” (Goren, 7 May 2007). The *hijab* and *niqab* provide a “portable tent” of sorts to sedentarized bedouin women, extending their mobility beyond the limits of the four walls of their homes. Hanna Papanek used the term “portable seclusion” several years ago when referring to modesty dress (as noted in Abu-Lughod 2002); it is my purpose here to alter this verbiage in order to suggest that *hijab* does not keep bedouin women “back,” as “seclusion” may suggest, but rather, allows them to step forward in order to move about freely in urbanized bedouin society and, increasingly, in Jewish Israeli society as well.

Thus, the *hijab* can be seen as a small but essential response to globalization and Westernization (Macleod 1991), and the forces that it is presently bringing to bear, socially, culturally, economically, and politically, upon bedouin society. In an age of the Internet, satellite dish television, and the compressed time and space created by these and other transportation and communications technologies, the proximity of outside influences at times can be overwhelming. As Goren, a Segev Shalom social worker for decades, summarizes the situation well (7 May 2007):

The youth no longer fear being shunned by the family. They don’t value the rules and traditions. So in the past, the boys would go looking for Jews, Russians [for “inappropriate” purposes]. Now they will approach bedouin girls.

They are all watching TV now, and they have cell phones. I knew an adolescent girl who was totally veiled. She lived in the *pezurah* [near Segev]. But she had a cell phone, and she would talk with strange men. This is what is happening now, they think about sex and drugs. She would watch “Sex in the City” on her television. In time, she was murdered. They never found her body, or who did it. So here they are sitting in the middle of no where, but they have “New York” in their tents.

Saeed El-Harumi, Segev Shalom *Rosh Ha'Moatzah*, offers a similar anecdote with a less violent outcome (28 May 2007): “In Segev Shalom there was a girl, maybe 18 or 19 years old. She wore short sleeves and skirts, not dressing modestly. Now she is 29, and still no one will marry her. Do you see? There are some [basic] rules that everyone must follow.”

El-Harumi adds, however, that the trends he sees toward increasing levels of veiling in Segev Shalom, most especially since the late 1990s, are also a reflection of changing signs of fashion that can be seen in any small community. “The [dark black] *abaya* that you are seeing here today, for

example, is what they see on the *haj*. They bring it back with them; it is not [originally part of] bedouin culture, it is Saudi culture” (28 May 2007).

Throughout Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and much of the Arab Muslim Middle East as well as Europe, donning the *hijab* is in many instances a fashion statement more than, or at least in addition to, its being an affirmation of one’s religious convictions (“In vogue, hijab style,” 30 June 2007). In other words, while donning *hijab* has in the past been viewed as something intended to discourage drawing attention to one’s appearance, a trend is under way in which some women are using this indigenous form of clothing to express themselves both as respectable and honorable daughters of the *umma* (Arabic: Muslim community), but also as an expression of themselves as individuals with their own personal identities.

As I noted previously (see Dinero 2006: 886), scholars have interpreted the meanings and purposes surrounding the donning of the *hijab* and similar “traditional” practices in a multiplicity of ways that need not be repeated here. Further, I have argued that: “polygynous marriage, veiling, and other Muslim family observances have long been viewed by Western feminists as signs of patriarchy, male control and oppression. Some of the recent literature, however, suggests that Western feminists’ views of these behaviors are themselves Orientalist in nature. Rather than signifying female subjugation, such practices in the post-colonial era can, these authors argue, express anti-Western or anti-imperialist values and ideals” (2006: 883).

And yet, while this remains my belief, a proviso is now in order, for such views are themselves embedded with Western or class bias. It is one thing for the outside, formally schooled observer to academicize a topic such as polygyny, for example, and quite another to hear and feel the pain experienced by one’s friends as they struggle with the reality that another wife is about to enter into their family structure, irretrievably impacting their relationship with their spouse. In other words, I seek here to better situate bedouin women’s changing worlds somewhere between the Western feminist’s “oppression narrative” (Abu-Lughod 2002) and the empowerment narrative I sketched out previously, by listening to and incorporating the perspectives of several women from Segev Shalom about the neo-traditional developments now occurring in their community.

Rather than to try to speculate from above about what resettled bedouin women think about polygyny, increasing levels of veiling, and other changes now occurring in Segev Shalom (and throughout the bedouin community), I initiated the creation of two Bedouin Women’s Focus Groups (BWFG), which were held in Segev Shalom on 9 and 29 May 2007. Ten women were selected for the BWFG from various walks of life, using a snowballing sampling methodology (two were mother and daughter, for example).

The conversations for each session took place in one of the women's homes in the town over tea, coffee, cola, and snacks, and each "officially" lasted two hours. I was present during both sessions, but both were facilitated by a bedouin woman, Amira Abu-Kueider, a non-resident who is bilingual in Arabic and Hebrew. I was not certain if my presence would hamper the discussion or affect it in any way, but quickly found that after a few introductory moments, the women carried on as if I was not in the room. In both instances, I did in fact leave early; Amira noted afterwards that the discussion continued hours after my departure with little notice of my absence.

The women, all of whom were married, but one, who is divorced, ranged in age from 20 to 54. Some had as much as a high school education plus some college (Rhonda, 31; Fatma, 31) to as little as a second grade education (Wadha A., 50). Sabra, 43, had the most children (eleven); Injut, 28, though married, has no children.

All wear head coverings, though none wear a face veil. When asked about their views of the new veiling now taking place in Segev Shalom, there were nearly as many reactions and rationale for donning the veil as there were women in the room. Delal, 37, Rhonda, and Sabra said that they believe that modesty dress is an indicator or a reflection of one's religiosity and is a founding principle of Islam. Houla, 20, stated that she felt it was simply a fashion statement and nothing more. Wadha A. suggested that modesty dress is simply "traditional" dress worn because of custom; Injut concurred, but then added, "but that's also connected to being a Muslim." Fatma added that, "[*hijab*] makes our lives here easier—I put on *hijab* and I can go anywhere."

Interestingly, the attitudes toward veiling did not appear to follow any particular generation pattern. Wardha, 30, for example, called the new veiling "a beautiful thing; it's fine." Iman, 28, responded that, "I support the women who are now taking on the full *hijab* [i.e., black *abaya* including *niqab*; see Illustration 6.3]—though I wouldn't do it personally." But perhaps the strongest opinion on the subject came from Wadha B., the 54 year old divorcee who, when married, was the first wife in a polygynous family with two co-wives. Wadha B. did not graduate high school, but she did study until the ninth grade. She is the mother of five children, and she has lived in Segev Shalom for fifteen years, having moved there from the neighboring Azazmeh region. She states: "I don't like this change, and no, I do not support what is happening. There is nothing in the Qur'an that requires this!"

While an increase in the donning of modesty dress can easily be observed, if not documented per se, simply by walking down the streets of Segev Shalom or spending time in the central marketplace, polygynous marriage is more easily quantified. Of those household representatives who stated in 1996* that they were married, 31 percent were living in a

polygynous household (N=95). In 2000, this number remained essentially unchanged, dipping slightly to 29 percent (N=119). According to the 2007 survey results, this figure rose slightly to 32 percent (N=214), that is, one-third of the households in town. It is statistically lower than the figure determined in the neighboring *pezurah* however, where nearly half, 48 per-



Illustration 6.3. One of Many Young Women who don Full *Abaya* and *Niqab* in the Streets of Segev Shalom—2007.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

cent of the survey respondents, were living in polygynous households in 2007 ($p=.04$).

Thus, sedentarization has not led to the elimination of polygyny in the Negev and, in truth, it has served to provide much of the impetus for it as the desire for larger families with more children increasingly informs social behavior (Abu-Rabia et al. 2008: 33). Among other bedouin communities in the Arab Middle East, settlement has correlated with an increase in polygynous marriage as well (Cole 2006: 383). A substantial literature has developed on the bedouin of the Negev alone, much of it sharply critical of the fact that polygynous marriage is yet thriving, despite the fact that it is, according to many authors, a “dysfunctional” marital system, with varying levels of harm inflicted upon the co-wives, children, and even husbands of the families involved.

El-Krenawi, for example, contends that in general, polygynous families in the Negev must worry more about food security than monogamous families (2004: 39). His work with Slonim-Nevo also traces a great deal of familial stress to home economics, that is, to the belief that the economic situation is better for monogamous families overall, as is a higher rate of employment for husbands in monogamous families (El-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo 2003: 41). In their sample, though monogamous men were more likely to be employed, this was not found to be statistically significant (El-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo 2003: 47). (This was the same situation found in the 2007 Segev Shalom sample.) In their sample, too, polygynous men reported feeling slightly better about their economic situations than monogamous men (El-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo 2003: 47); this was found to be the case of Segev Shalom where the polygynous families with higher incomes outnumbered the monogamous by a few percentage points (23.1 percent vs. 20.5) as well as in the *pezurah* (30 percent vs. 23 percent). In neither case was this difference found to be statistically significant, however.

Overall, these authors contend that there are more conflictual relationships and disagreements in polygynous families than in monogamous families (El-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo 2003: 71). Thus, they assert that arguments between wives, and between children and other co-wives who are not their mothers, are common (El-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo 2003: 43). And yet, more wives in polygynous marriages feel that their husbands do not discriminate amongst his wives than they feel that he does discriminate (36 percent vs. 41 percent; El-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo 2003: 43). Two-thirds of the men in El-Krenawi’s and Slonim-Nevo’s study reported that they do not believe that they discriminate among their co-wives (El-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo 2003: 50).

Still, what is key to their study is that the ability of the family to function well falls upon the women, most especially their sense of well-being, their

economic status, and so on. “Women in polygamous families and women whose families’ economic situation is tough report more problematic family functioning” (El-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo 2003: 62). That is, polygynous families function best when economic resources are readily available, when these resources are equitably shared, and when a spirit of cooperation, and not competition, informs the relationships among and between a husband, his co-wives, and their respective children. And given that more often than not, such resources appear to be scarce at best, such families, most especially women and children, are, they contend, likely to “suffer a great deal of difficulty” (El-Krenawi & Slonim-Nevo 2003: 72).

Elbedour et al. (2002) are less willing to jump on the “polygyny is obviously bad for women” bandwagon. They also note that a number of “risk factors” associated with polygyny prevail—marital conflict, marital distress, and the absence of the father in the home being the primary causes of concern (Elbedour et al. 2002: 258–259). They also suggest that financial distress often exists in polygynous families, and that a relationship can be seen between polygyny and poverty (Elbedour et al. 2002: 260).

And yet, it is their contention that part of what is often left out of the calculus when evaluating polygyny is the role of culture in a given society. “In communities where the practice of polygamy is valued and frequently practiced, no negative stigma prevails, which, in turn, may provide a buffer from the adverse stressors associated with polygamous marriage” (Elbedour et al. 2002: 265). As I have argued elsewhere (Dinero 2006), the literature is replete with a variety of studies from throughout the Middle East, northern and sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere, all of which offers counterarguments to the contention that polygyny is economically stressful to the family structure. On the contrary, such families, as will be seen below in the case of Segev Shalom, represent not the weakest and poorest among a community, but rather, the wealthiest and the most powerful.

Socially, on the other hand, polygynous marriage is becoming increasingly problematic for Israel’s Negev bedouin women. As women become more educated and more familiar with alternative lifestyles, they are less receptive and willing to accept certain impositions upon them that they feel may unjustly limit or jeopardize their freedoms, individuality, power, or quality of life. Social Worker Goren explains (7 May 2007):

I think the women themselves [now] see polygamy as oppressive. This is new. In the past, other wives were seen as extra help. It was very functional. Today, there is jealousy—who is the favorite—each wants their own house and things, and men find it hard to support each equally, as Islam demands. This is especially true for the poorer men.

Bedouin men marry very young because the marriages are arranged. When they are older, they find someone they actually love; they choose for themselves. *Some* of the violence—and I wish to be careful here—could even be connected to this early marriage.

Goren's views on the relationship between arranged and love marriage echo Ben-David's words on the topic some years back (as cited in Dinero 2006: 908). The quantitative and qualitative data gathered in Segev Shalom sheds further light on this issue as well, although the relationships between a family's economic status, employment, education of spouses, and marital structure (monogamy versus polygyny) is not so easily unraveled.

According to the previous data gathered in Segev Shalom, polygyny correlated most strongly with time spent living in the town, age, employment status, income, and political party identification. Early findings (Dinero 1996) suggested that polygynous Azazmeh tended to be some of the least educated, poorest residents in the town; polygynous Tarabeen, however, tended to be wealthier, with religious motivations informing, at least in part, the rationale behind their polygynous marriage choice. Those identifying as "bedouin" were more likely than any others to be part of a polygynous household.

The 2000 data added to this profile. Education and literacy were primary correlates once again, as were two economic elements, the raising of crops and animals. As for identity, however, those preferring the "Israeli" moniker or related versions ("Israeli Muslim," "Muslim Israeli," and so on) were *least* likely to be part of a polygynous household.

The 2007 data added a rich, full, and varied complement of significant factors to these findings. Much of the data confirms previous findings while some is in direct contradiction, suggesting that the community is yet in flux and that as the town grows, attitudes have shifted—and will likely continue to shift—as residents' social and economic circumstances evolve.

Overall, it can first be said that age is a—perhaps *the*—definitive factor in distinguishing polygynous marriages from monogamous ones in Segev Shalom, where older residents are far more likely to have two or more wives than younger residents ($p=.00$). This was especially true among poorer residents ($p=.00$). Wealthier families who are also polygynous tended to be members of the Azazmeh tribe, and not Tarabeen ($p=.03$).

Polygynous families in town now are more likely to have lived in the town the *longest* ($p=.00$); this may suggest that these are the same families who came to the town over a decade ago with certain social values, but that the younger generation is less likely to share these values. Again, this was especially true of those with lower incomes ($p=.00$), most especially

members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.01$)—i.e., the founding fathers and co-mothers of Segev Shalom.

The 2007 data suggested that overall, the polygynous are less educated ($p=.03$), especially those with lower incomes ($p=.02$). Polygynous Tarabeen have less education than those Tarabeen with more education ($p=.03$). Polygyny correlates with being less literate ($p=.01$), especially among the poorer town residents ($p=.00$). The Azazmeh who are polygynous are especially likely also to be illiterate ($p=.02$).

The data confirm that socially, the polygynous families of Segev Shalom tend to be less educated, less literate, and older than the rest of the town residents. Economically, too, the data suggests that the bedouin are beginning to follow a model in which polygyny correlates with the weaker attributes of today's changing bedouin community, rather than its strengths.

Similar to the previous findings, polygynous residents in 2007 were more likely than the other residents to own animals ($p=.01$), especially those with low incomes ($p=.00$). The polygynous were more likely to raise crops ($p=.05$), also most especially those with low incomes ($p=.04$).

Interestingly, those who are polygynous are less likely to own various material goods, such as a telephone ($p=.01$). This was especially true of the Tarabeen ($p=.03$), who, as above, differ from the Azazmeh in a variety of social and economic arenas. Polygynous residents were less likely to own a satellite dish ($p=.05$), especially the Azazmeh ($p=.03$) and those under the age of 40 ($p=.03$). Polygynous households were also less likely to own a washing machine ($p=.03$), especially members of the Tarabeen tribe ($p=.03$). Lastly, the polygynous families with low incomes were less likely to own a VCR/DVD player ($p=.00$), especially members of the Azazmeh tribe ($p=.04$).

Needless to say, the ownership of these goods is, in and of itself, of no particular academic interest. But given that these items each comprise small components of the developmental enterprise, their ownership (or lack thereof) offers an indication of general economic success or deprivation among polygynous bedouin families. And yet, for the most part, these are luxury/non-essential items; no correlation was found, for example, between refrigerator ownership and marriage type.

Although these various factors offer a variety of aspects of polygynous activity and behavior in the town, the strongest predictors of polygyny found were not income, education/literacy, tribe, or signs of material wealth. Rather, the strongest predictors (after age), using multivariate linear stepwise regression (SPSS 13.0), was years living in the town ($p=.009$) and animal ownership ($p=.041$). Those bedouin living in the town the longest were the most likely to be polygynous; these tend to be older residents, of course, who, one could argue, most reluctantly came to the town.

They are holding onto behaviors such as polygyny and livestock rearing because these are the signifying elements of bedouinism, of nomadism, and of who it is/was to be a Negev bedouin. Bedouin men who seek additional wives do so because of and despite the economic stresses it places on the family unit as a whole, for, ultimately, the *social* value of taking on a second (or third or fourth) wife far outweighs the economic costs that such families often experience.

And for many bedouin men, most especially the Azazmeh of Segev Shalom, taking on a second wife is simply a sign of economic success, a “trophy wife” as it were, that signifies one’s position and status that one strives to attain within the bedouin community. As is found in some circumstances in the West, not all bedouin men, given the economic circumstances of the towns (let alone the *pezurah*), are presently in a situation where they can truly afford the expenses associated with conspicuous consumption—and yet social forces press them to pursue the option nonetheless.

It was conveyed to me anecdotally that bedouin women today are “far more demanding” and have higher expectations than in the past. Prospective wives, particularly those who have a *teudat zehut* (Hebrew: identity card proving they are Israeli citizens and, thus, one does not have to go through the challenges and difficulties of bringing a wife into Israel from Jordan (Parizot 2004) or the Palestinian Territories (Goren 2007), have a great number of material wants, and are simply less willing to live in the *pezurah* when they now have the town option.

Discussions during the BWFG sessions concerning life in the *pezurah*, and attitudes toward polygyny in general, confirm this contention. Of the ten women in the group, three had come from Jordan, one was from Gaza/Palestine (though she had lived in the *pezurah*), one had grown up in Segev Shalom, and the remaining five had moved to the town from the *pezurah*.

In general, views of life in the *pezurah* were pragmatic and, for the most part, not very positive. Rhonda, who moved to the town from Jordan eleven years ago, stated that: “in the town it’s better than outside. We have electricity and water. We are protected from the weather.” Iman, who came from Jordan two years later, added: “I prefer the town to the desert. Everything is possible here for the children. There are schools, etc.” And Fatma, who came to Segev Shalom from Jordan 10 years ago, concurred: “It’s easier living in town. We have schools, stores, clinics, things we need here.” Injut, who grew up in town and so has never lived in the *pezurah*, but, like the other women in the group, has many relatives who do, offered that: “Women are better off in the town because here we have access to all the conveniences of daily life.”

Those who actually had lived in the *pezurah* offered differing views about their lives there. Sabra, who has lived in town for seventeen years,

stated that: "I lived in the *pezurah* for ten years. It was very difficult for me there. It is much better living here." Added Wardha, who has lived in town for eight years: "I too lived for eight years in the *pezurah*. It was difficult to wash clothes, to cook, everything. In the town there are services, things we need. Everything for daily life is here."

And yet not all of the women who had actually lived in the *pezurah* spoke about the experience in negative terms. Still, it appears that those who spoke positively about the *pezurah* tended to be older women who spoke in nostalgic, less pragmatic terms about their day-to-day lives there. Offered Delal, who has lived in town for thirteen years: "I preferred living in the *pezurah*. There, I could feel free, I could breathe." Wadha B. echoed these sentiments, adding: "In the *pezurah* I felt free. Here in town I feel suffocated." Perhaps Wadha A. expressed the sentiment of many when she concluded that: "outside town we lived a calmer life. But here in town, we can have electricity and the other things we need to live."

When the subject of polygynous marriage in bedouin society was raised, there was some discussion among the women about its role in the community today, but disagreement was far more muted than on any other topic. Only one woman, Delal (age 37), stated that she supports the institution of polygyny, and believes that "it can sometimes serve to benefit the family and community." Wadha B., who has lived in Segev Shalom for twenty years and is the daughter of a prominent Azazmeh sheikh who has a number of wives and children, was willing to offer that, "if there is a 'reason,' well OK, but otherwise, no I don't accept it!" Added Houla: I don't support it, except under 'special circumstances.'" While the question of what these "reasons" or "circumstances" might be was not directly referred to at first, as the discussion continued for some time, Sabra finally exclaimed, "OK, this is acceptable, but only in special situations, such as when a woman is barren."

Still, the rest of the women in the group were unanimous in their animus toward polygynous marriage. Injut stated that: "I don't like [polygyny], this I just don't accept." Rhonda agreed, adding that, "this has nothing to do with being religious." Some women in the BWFG went a step further, not only questioning the value of polygynous marriage, but, in fact, condemning it outright. Wadha A, the former first wife, said that, "I see this as a 'blemish,' a wound upon our society." Fatma and Wardha went further, both stating at various times during the conversation that, "I don't believe in this at all—it's forbidden!"

But perhaps Iman summarized the issue in the most telling way. She is 28 years old and has a ninth grade education. She is the mother of six children and was, for two years, a first wife until her husband divorced the second co-wife. When the issue of polygyny was raised, she spoke up im-

mediately. “I am against it,” she stated without hesitation. “In fact I think the Christians have it right: one woman, one man. That’s it!”

There was a momentary silence in the room and then the sound of stifled gulps of air. Everyone took quick sips of their tea.

Conclusions

I wish to conclude this chapter by echoing the sentiment of Abu-Lughod (2002), Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006), and others who state that observers must not accept the idea that feminism and the rights of women are Western concepts to be viewed in opposition to Islam and its nationalist virtues. An analysis of the present-day developments in the Negev suggests that the contested space of gender is developing into an area of tension and conflict in the regime within which the bedouin must negotiate, interact, arbitrate, and above all else, survive. The above findings, in particular the material culled from the focus groups and informal discussions, reveals that if there is one issue that signifies a red flag for future difficulty and conflict within Negev bedouin society and culture, it is the ever-evolving role of the sedentarized bedouin woman.

The resettled woman of the Negev today is at the crossroads of bedouin society, bridging the worlds of the tent and the town, the *pezurah* and Segev Shalom, the world of their grandmothers and the world of their daughters. These are geographies of honor, modesty, and seclusion, and simultaneously and concomitantly, geographies of globalization, open borders, and interactions with the Jewish, urban, settled consumerist cultures and societies within which they are now so permanently situated and entrenched.

On the one hand, there are now more opportunities available to bedouin women in the Negev than ever before in the areas of education and employment; on the other, many bedouin men—fathers, brothers, uncles—have never felt more fearful, more vulnerable, or more insecure as the role of the bedouin woman changes so quickly before their very eyes. States Segev Shalom Social Services Director El-Baz states (3 June 2007):

This community is changing so rapidly, perhaps most especially in the past ten years. I don’t like how the community has dealt with women’s issues, or with kids or the elderly. I think it’s happening too fast ... Our mistake is that we want our community to become Western in two days ... but it’s a process. [But here] it’s random, not really planned. Our role [in providing social services in Segev Shalom] is to facilitate change, to develop services for this change—but are these top down or grass roots? Well it’s both, it’s confusion.

The changes then, which are manifest in the daily lives of the sedentarized Negev bedouin woman, largely mirror the changes manifest in the community as a whole. These changes in many ways serve as the bellwether for the bedouin community; as bedouin women's roles evolve, so does the entire society, and its future social and economic development along with it.

NOTE

*Reliable data is unavailable from the 1993 survey.

Chapter 7

Bedouin Tourism Development Planning in the New Economy

The camel is the family's father
—Clinton Bailey, *A Culture of Desert Survival:
Bedouin Proverbs from Sinai and the Negev*

The bedouin of the Negev Desert have undergone considerable social and economic change since the Israeli Government forcibly began concentrating and then resettling them over the past four decades, in the process altering their lifestyle away from pastoral nomadism. During this same period of resettlement, a small but growing tourism industry has been developed in the area around the marketing of “traditional” Negev bedouin nomadic culture.

As my previous study on the topic suggests (Dinero 2002), this sector has been dominated historically by Jewish Israeli entrepreneurs, who sought to express a narrative not of post-nomadic bedouin life in Segev Shalom, the other planned towns, and the unrecognized communities—that is, as it is presently lived and experienced—but rather, of an Orientalist’s version of a glorified, romanticized past that has been largely erased by today’s political realities.

In the first decade of the 2000s, however, a counter-trend began to develop in the region. Organizations such as the NGO *Bustan* created what they called “Unplugged” tours and other related activities, which sought to show the visitor the “real” situation in the Negev, and to encourage political action on the community’s behalf. In essence, they made such issues as poverty, private suffering, and human tragedy attractions for tourist consumption. Such tours act as agents of an increasingly global trend, “voluntourism,” which seeks to inspire “well-intentioned” outsiders to learn about what is happening in a particular locale, and then, more importantly, to act on behalf of those who, presumably, are incapable of mobilizing independently because they are too small, too weak, and too dependent upon their governments for financial, political or other types of support.

More recently, bedouin entrepreneurs have been developing their own tourism-related businesses in the Negev, through which they seek to present a counter-narrative to that offered previously in other venues. Though most are quite new on the tourism scene and all are relatively small in size, these vendors are economically empowering to the individual owners, employees, and the bedouin community as a whole, allowing the bedouin to speak for themselves about who they are, and how they want outsiders to perceive the social, economic, and political forces that now formulate the circumstances comprising their post-nomadic existence.

The “Perpetrator” Narrative: The Noble Desert Savage

Previously and at some length, I have detailed the use of tourism in the perpetuation of a Disneyfied, Orientalistic image of the bedouin as the “Noble Desert Savage” (Dinero 2002). In brief, this phenomenon may be situated within a form of heritage tourism that commoditizes “exotic” native culture, but is premised upon the assumption that the experiences being consumed are entirely “real” and “authentic.”

But, in truth, the experiences and images marketed through heritage tourism are decontextualized. As I have noted: “the marketing of culture through the packaging and selling of the tourist product leads to a loss of communication or understanding between the host [native] and tourist populations. Instead of destroying misconceptions between the two ... tourism perpetuates them and often creates new prejudices” (Dinero 2002: 71).

It is from this perspective then that I have argued that the packaging and marketing of Disneyfied images of native cultures has both internal social and economic costs for local populations, and has the potential simply to reinforce and to reify stereotypes while solidifying the position of native peoples into a proletariat class periphery. Moreover, heritage tourism takes on a particularly insipient nature in permanently colonized lands (the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand provide ideal examples). For here, former colonizers may foster the creation and perpetuation of images of local peoples that validate their colonization, in what Nash has called a neocolonialist tourism superstructure (1989: 43; 1996: 64). Colonizers—sometimes with native complicity, I might add—seek here to emphasize the primitive or savage nature of the remnants of the native community, in an attempt to rationalize and justify their conquest of the “wilderness,” human inhabitants included (Dinero 2002: 71).

The “Negev Bedouin,” as constructed by the Israeli tourism industry throughout the 1980s and to a far greater extent in the 1990s, was most clearly articulated in a handful of specific forums. These included the

realms of the developing Negev Desert ecotourism industry, the “Bedouin *Shuk*” (Hebrew: market), located on the Eilat Highway in Be’er Sheva, and the Joe Alon Museum of Bedouin Culture located at Kibbutz Lahav. Throughout these and related environments, a narrative was constructed, primarily by Jewish Israeli entrepreneurs—with bedouin Israeli staff in many instances along side them helping to perpetuate the story—which followed the colonizer’s justification/validation paradigm, promoting a “Noble Desert Savage”-type image (Dinero 2002: 90), which is very similar to the “Noble Savage” imagery of the American West. What distinguishes this image is its regional context, associated with, among other stereotypical nineteenth century attributes, harem girls, camels, snakecharmers, and thieves (Dinero 2002: 73).

A typical experience, for example, included on the itinerary of virtually every American Jewish youth group trip to Israel (including the United Synagogue Youth [Conservative Movement], the North American Federation of Temple Youth [Reform Movement], the National Conference of Synagogue Youth [Orthodox Movement], the B’nai B’rith Youth Organization, Young Judaea, Habonim Dror [Labor Zionist Movement], and Birthright) is to visit a “Bedouin Tent” for tourists. These venues are located throughout the Negev, although those near Eilat, itself a tourist destination, are especially popular (Illustrations 7.1, 7.2). There, these youth can ride camels, drink sweet tea, smoke water pipes, and be waited on by a veiled woman named “Fatma,” living, as it were—for a few hours at least—as if they were on the Hollywood set of a 1950s movie. The bedouin are simply part of the production, mysterious props concealed in some bizarre, surreal, staged drama in which these students are both actors (i.e., the producers) and consumers of “traditional” drink, music, stories, and the like. And if they remain long enough that “traditional bedouin food” is served, they can be assured that it is indeed kosher (i.e., that Jewish dietary laws are observed; see Dinero 2002: 88).

Thus, the Negev bedouin are presented by tourism vendors, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, guidebooks, and others (Dinero 2002: 75–76) as inscrutable; like the camels that they ride, their lifestyle and culture is wild, raw, untamable, and part and parcel of an expansive and unknown desert wilderness that appears unwilling to succumb to the demands and expectations of development and modernity (2002: 82). From the faces hidden behind the veils to the tents in which they dwell, all is presented as hidden, mysterious, and exotic, and bordering on the edge of erotic discourse.

What is significant about this narrative, of course, is that by extension, it places the onus of economic and social development of the bedouin in the modern era squarely upon the shoulders of the community itself, which is viewed as having complete agency over the present state of affairs. Through



Illustrations 7.1 and 7.2. The “Bedouin Tent” Outside Eilat.
Source: Photos by Steven C. Dinero.



the promotion by tour vendors of these seemingly harmless, romantic, “Lawrence of Arabia”-type images, a political point is being expressed: “If the bedouin are not developing, *if* the planned towns are failing, *if* adequate wage labor employment is a problem, *if* health, education, and welfare are all areas of struggle—well, what do you expect, anyway? Look at their culture, will you?! The State is doing the best it can!” And, of course, the added corollary to the narrative is this: “Any improvement you do see—well, you have the State to thank for it.”

Thus, it has been my contention that: “the Israeli Jewish agenda of settling the land and controlling its borderlands, when combined with the aim of developing its growing capitalist economy, are central to the construction of Bedouin society as a tourist attraction. When viewed within the context of neocolonialism, this process may be seen similarly as the final piece of a programme of resettlement and proletarianization of the Bedouin which has been taking place in the Negev now for over five decades” (Dinero 2002: 91). And yet, despite what appears to be part of a narrative of colonization and conquest, it is also my belief that the bedouin involved in Jewish tourism ventures have actively succeeded in playing a role in shaping and forming the agenda of how others perceive who and what they are, what their culture was and is becoming, and that “it would be a mistake to present the situation in the Negev today as one of total Bedouin victimization” (Dinero 2002: 90).

Still, an alternative narrative has arisen in Negev tourism since the year 2000, which is attempting to do just this. Striving to provide a corrective to the “bedouin as perpetrator” narrative, which places the blame for slow bedouin development upon such rationale as primitivism, barbarity, and various other cultural obstacles, this newly evolving narrative shifts the focus, placing the blame upon the state, and presenting the bedouin community as weak, disempowered, and impoverished victims.

The “Victim” Narrative: A Call for “Voluntourism” in Segev Shalom and Elsewhere

While Karl Marx’s “Theory of Commodity Fetishism” appears to hold true in the consumption-oriented global economy, it has long been believed that there are some things that can never be bought or sold—that is, converted into commodities—and these might include poverty, suffering, pain, and the like. Recently, however, there is evidence to suggest that even these negative abstract conditions can, under certain circumstances, be marketed to those open to their consumption in the ever-expanding global tourism marketplace.

John Hutnyk, for example, in his book, *The Rumour of Calcutta*, put this concept forward in the mid 1990s by suggesting that poverty serves as a particularly attractive tourist product for “well intentioned” Western youth, who are drawn to places such as India in order that they might carry out some sort of charity aid work there as a part of their backpacking/eco-trekking agenda. It is his contention that Western tourism has grown in Calcutta in recent years not *despite* the existence of impoverishment and pain found in the city, but *because* of it.

He argues that Western travel guidebooks oriented to the young “budget traveler” play a particularly central role in the production of a version of Calcutta as a city of extremes, of social and economic stresses that feed the tourists’ appetite for the bizarre, the different, and the exotic. Moreover, he states that these young tourists themselves serve to produce/reproduce this imaged Calcutta by telling/retelling stories that reaffirm and confirm the realities of what might be called an imagined and constructed “exotiscap” (Hutnyk 1996).

Over a decade later, a similar phenomenon appears to have spread, and is now at play in the slums of some of Africa’s capitals. In Nairobi’s Kibera slum, for example, journalists, curious and concerned Westerners, and others can take “pity tours” (“Slum Tourism...,” 9 February 2007), where they can participate in paid walks to observe the poorest of the poor as a leisure-time activity. At the same time, it is presumed that such “tours” can lead to *action and support* of those who are in the greatest need of assistance. Theoretically, the tours raise awareness of local concerns; tour operators return a percentage of their payment to each participant to donate to a cause they have seen on their tour, “such as a health or school project.”

It is somewhat questionable whether such tourism truly aids those in need or perhaps is designed simply to ease the consciences of those who participate (Lancaster 2007). “While all recognise the potential for good from such attention, plus the pressure it puts on the government and others to help slum-dwellers, most [Kibera slum-dwellers] said tangible benefits so far [are] few, while the embarrassment factor [grows] every day” (“Slum Tourism...,” 9 February 2007). The resentment toward such tourism based upon personal suffering is understandably palpable:

They see us like puppets, they want to come and take pictures, have a little walk, tell their friends they’ve been to the worst slum in Africa ... But nothing changes for us. If someone comes, let him do something for us. Or if they really want to know how we think and feel, come and spend a night, or walk round when it’s pouring with rain here and the paths are like rivers.

The Kenyans are not alone in sponsoring such “slum tours.” The commoditization of poverty and suffering for tourist consumption by various entrepreneurs in the industry, Kenyans included, usually comes with a charge, and includes the following partial list (Table 7.1) of examples (“Poverty Tourism,” 4 February 2008):

Table 7.1. “Slum Tours” Throughout the Developing World

- Mumbai, India
Reality Tours and Travel half day \$8, full day \$15
Source: realitytoursandtravel.com
- Johannesburg, South Africa
Imbizo Tours half day \$57, full day \$117
Source: imbizotours.co.za
- Nairobi, Kenya
Victoria Safaris, half day \$50, full day \$100
Source: victoriasafaris.com
- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Favela Tour half day \$37
Source: favelatour.com.br
- Mazatlán, Mexico
Vineyard Ministries free
Source: vineyardmcm.org
- Cape Town, South Africa
Nomvuyo’s Tours half day \$97, \$48 per person for groups of three or more
Source: nomvuyos-tours.co.za

So-called “poorism” (see Lancaster 2007) and its related trend, “vol-untourism” (see, for example, Winerman 2006), provide a context for the construction of a bedouin tourism counter-narrative that began to develop in the Negev in the early 2000s largely in response to the narrative of the Noble Desert Savage. In this narrative, the bedouin are presented as the battered, impoverished, and disempowered victims of the Jewish conquest, concentration, and resettlement of their community. Their plight is great, and therefore they are in great need of help and support from concerned observers able and willing to speak out against the injustices being foisted upon them. Such a narrative, which like any discourse may hold some elements of truth, nonetheless presents the bedouin in a manner that is in many ways emasculating and suggesting of a population “in distress”; a tension appears then both in the tourism literature and in the tour experiences

themselves between presenting the bedouin as disempowered and weak, and yet striving simultaneously to show them as a strong, proud community that is yet functional and whole.

Bustan, a nongovernmental organization at the forefront of seeking to speak on behalf of Negev bedouin rights, has developed a series of tours and workshops that well fit this dichotomous dynamic. On the one hand, *Bustan* is one of very few organizations willing to take the time and effort to provide outsiders with a perspective that is more informed than what might otherwise be received through the more mainstream tourism outlets. Moreover, their goal is to serve as a catalyst for action; as a result of experiencing one of their tours, it is their hope that participants will become active in the bedouin rights movement in some type of capacity. Yet, on the other hand, one must problematize the content of their presentation as well, for it too, like poorism, may have unintended consequences. The goals of *Bustan's* tours, according to the NGO website make this apparent:

Negev Unplugged Tours offer hands-on examination of sustainability and the impact of development on the Negev and its people. Through Negev Unplugged Tours we've reached at least 2,500 people in past three years. Expansion of settlement projects, a toxic waste incinerator, polluting industrial zones, an airport and other environmental hazards are spawning unchecked in densely populated regions. As a geographical and cultural periphery, this insidious development is out of the public eye. If action is not taken to combat this highly-politicized overdevelopment, the situation will grow exceedingly worse, likely instigating social, political and environmental disaster [in] the Negev.

BUSTAN believes that change is rooted in knowledge and awareness of facts created on the ground, as an antidote for the ignorance, disinformation and apathy so rampant in today's society.

BUSTAN engages diverse groups to take part in Access vs. Excess tours: human rights activists, environmentalists, authorities and policy makers, experts and academics. See background on two of BUSTAN's tours revealing the stark reality of unrecognized villages and recognized townships, Jewish settlements and industrial zones. (<http://www.bustan.org/negevunplugged>)

Devorah Brous, founder and former Director of *Bustan*, emphasizes that emotion and education play key roles in the implementation of the "Unplugged" tours. In essence, the foundation of the tour concept is the belief that tourists are in fact students, and that once a student learns something,

they will want to go out and “use” that information. I quote her at length (2 July 2007):

Most of those on the tours are Jewish. We also get human rights delegations who are not committed to any particular faith or religious background. What I think attracts the ‘typical’ participant first of all is that we use English. Our website is accessible to them. We also try to show that there are two narratives, you can’t just show the bedouin narrative. You have to allow the Jewish leadership to have their say. It doesn’t serve us to demonize them. We need to listen to them, to hear their part of the story ...

We are trying to create a format for ‘citizen diplomacy,’ to meet with decision-makers. We are trying to create a mechanism then to pressure them in the decisions they are making. We want to make them more conscious of our policies [here in Israel, and that they] are understood abroad, and also to listen to the bedouin side of things ...

So I provide access to getting inside these governmental offices, to hearing answers instead of getting ‘prepared food, already chewed.’ *So we are trying to have real experiences here, not contrived ones.* There is some self-selectivity in who participates. We are not in the mainstream. This works for us and against us. We aren’t included in a lot of NGO fairs and other activities that would better publicize and get the word out on what we are doing—we’re not that type of organization. People who get to us, who find us, usually through word of mouth, not mainstream channels. They come looking for us—we don’t go looking for them.

In order to get a better understanding of who the participants were and how the “Unplugged” tours were carried out, I was a participant observer in just such a full-day excursion on 12 July 2007. The tour bus departed a meeting area near the Be’er Sheva bus station at about 9:00 AM, and did not return to Be’er Sheva until about 6:00 that evening. The cost was 25 NIS for food and 50 NIS for the bus, or roughly US\$18.75/person. There were twenty-five people in the group, of whom five or six were Jewish Israelis, most from north of Be’er Sheva. The rest tended to be tourists from the United States and elsewhere. Many came because they “had heard about the bedouin situation, and wanted to see it first hand.”

The tour had four stops. First, the group went to Segev Shalom. A series of speakers introduced the topic at hand, and then a speaker from “BIMKOM,” a planning organization long involved in bedouin concerns, provided the primary remarks about the resettlement initiative, the unrecognized settlements, the differences between the two areas, and similar issues. The presentation was well informed but at times exaggerated certain

ideas in order to make a point, suggesting (erroneously) in one instance, for example, that the first bedouin towns “were planned in a grid pattern with gardens.” Although “both narratives” were to be presented, no mention was made during this particular tour* of any benefits that had been fostered by the resettlement initiative; nothing was said, for example, concerning the developmental role of the towns in life improvements and in the standard of living of many in the bedouin community, despite the fact that the meeting took place in the Segev Shalom Middle School.

From Segev Shalom, the group continued on to a private farm in the desert owned by a Jewish family practicing subsistence and organic farming. There, a discussion ensued about how and why Jews are able to live independently on the land, but Arabs are not. The Jewish farmer pointed out that he also does not own the land where the farm is located, that his presence there is tenuous at best, and that it is likely that soon he will be forced out at the state’s behest. At this point, the purpose of the visit to the farm became somewhat cloudy, and the group soon departed.

From there, the tour continued on to the *pezurah* villages of Hiram/Attir, where some houses had recently been demolished by the state as the areas are “unrecognized” by the state. Crammed into a small room, the group heard a series of recounts of how the demolition had occurred, the slander that had been used against the bedouin villagers during the act, and the outrage and pain experienced by the community. The tension in the room was palpable, as a bedouin man in his thirties holding his small child, his face reddened, explained how he had just been called up for *miloim* (Hebrew: reserve army service)—this, at the very time when his country had just betrayed him. His anger was clear, and he verbally attacked the state, the soldiers who carried out the demolition, and the entire Jewish Israeli population for supporting such a contemptible government.

As the majority of tour group members did not speak Hebrew, all of this had to be translated. The translator, a *Bustan* guide, chose his words carefully, but those in the room who understood Hebrew quickly realized that not all of this vitriol was being translated verbatim. Some of the Jewish Israelis took umbrage that the translator was glossing over the meaning rather than honestly representing what was being said. Angry outbursts were exchanged all around and many called for a more complete translation that clearly represented the man’s sentiment. Thus, his words were more appropriately and correctly translated into English.

The room still filled with murmurs about what had just been said, the group settled in for a traditional bedouin lunch. The family of the man who had just spoken served the food.

Thereafter, we took the bus to the area where the houses in question had been demolished. As the tour guide gave a vivid description of how the

demolition had occurred, the tour group members took photographs of the destroyed homes (Illustration 7.3). Several children ran about, posing in front of the detritus, as village elders sat in the shade of crushed tin and cement nearby to avoid the midday heat. The voyeuristic nature of the act was unmistakable. The bedouin guide who took us there, perhaps cognizant of the manner in which this very recent trauma had now become spectacle, placed the moment in a slightly different light, suggesting that “it’s good that the kids see that while it was the Jews who destroyed these houses, it is also Jews who now come here to support us, and to show concern.”

We again boarded the bus and continued on to the planned bedouin town of Hura for a final debriefing. A circle of chairs was formed in the Community Center, and each participant was asked to share his or her feelings and thoughts about the day. *Bustan* Director Brous facilitated the meeting.

In general, the discussion centered upon a narrative of “loss.” Many of the participants spoke about “losing culture,” although there was little talk of what the culture was that the bedouin were losing. Very few tour group members seemed to know anything about the bedouin beyond the fact that there was a conflict between them and the state. The tour appeared to reinforce the participants’ understanding of the conflict, but it was limited in teaching them anything about the bedouin community at large. Further, they were exposed to an exceptional minority group, namely, those who have recently experienced the trauma of a housing demolition. They had very little exposure to bedouin living “normal” lives.



Illustration 7.3. Photographing Grief, Hiram/Attir—July 2007.

Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

For example, immediately before the debriefing, the *Rosh Ha'Moatzah* of Hura came to welcome the group to the town. He spoke for about ten minutes, and yet, he said virtually nothing about Hura itself, about the planned towns, about living there, or about its development and success—despite the fact that Hura is the most successful of the planned towns, is the wealthiest of the seven, has the highest education rate in the Negev bedouin community, the highest number of residents in the professions, and so on. Instead, in the few minutes he had to talk, he spoke solely about what had happened to the houses at Hiram/Attir.

As the debriefing concluded, Brous noted that listening to suffering must inevitably lead to the question “What do we do now?”—that is, the tour’s orientation was clearly designed with the expectation that each participant would formulate a personal plan of action. By this point, some in the circle literally had tears in their eyes and many were choked up with emotion as they spoke. The room’s dynamic had taken on the atmosphere of a prayer meeting, as each individual in the group stood and testified about what they felt they had experienced hours earlier. “Tell others!” Brous exclaimed as each tour member spoke, “don’t just experience this one day. You must *act* upon what you have experienced.” Thus, the idea of placing well-intentioned tourists into a crucible environment, and then drawing out of them the strength to move forward and to *act*, was reinforced. By the time everyone left for the bus, all appeared to be exhausted, yet invigorated in the belief that they were now empowered to enable some sort of change.

Significantly, *Bustan* is not the only organization that is carrying out such tours, although it was the first to do so and does more of this work than any other agency. In January 2008, the United Jewish Communities—a well-established, mainstream organization comprised of Jewish professionals, nearly all of whom had been to Israel several times working in donor capacities as representatives of the Jewish Federation and other charitable sectarian and private funding agencies—participated in a “Study Trip” to teach their membership about Arab issues in Israel, including bedouin concerns. Under the auspices of the “Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues,” these seventy participants of mostly professional American Jews were not predisposed to the ideals that an “Unplugged” tour participant might possess. And yet ironically, the outcome of participation appears comparable. Jeff Klein, one of the members of the North American delegation, notes (16 January 2008):

I expected that all Arab communities would be the same. I didn’t know anything about the bedouin, though I knew people who had visited one of those ‘bedouin tents’ where they had a fun time. We spent one day in Segev Shalom and then a nearby ‘unrecognized’ settlement. Who ever heard

of that—‘unrecognized?’ We had all been [to Israel] so many times—none of us knew what this was or had ever even heard of it. [In Segev Shalom] we met with [*Rosh Ha'Moatzah*] Saeed El-Harumi, [Social Services Director] Kher El-Baz, and others. Much of the briefing centered upon the lack or inadequacy of infrastructure, health, education, and jobs. They told us about their industrial zones, and how they are not used.

I feel like I've been with the wrong tour guide for the past twenty-five years. It was really an eye-opening experience. We saw massive amounts of poverty. But on top of that they aren't given any services, any opportunity. These things aren't provided by the Government, and then their culture is also holding them back. There is such a disparity—we met some [bedouin] doing so well, yet some have not thrown off the cloak of tradition.

There is really a lot of inequality. Our news gets filtered ... you come back and you say ‘is this democracy? How do you have a democracy without equal rights?’ It's like taking a can opener and opening your head to all this. In the past, I would have never thought of telling people to give money to Arab concerns in Israel. But in partnership, this is how change can occur there. I keep saying, “so we're back—what can we do *now*?”

Such attitudes of *action* are at the very heart of the “voluntourism” experience, and yet once again the participant's response is based on perhaps forty-eight hours of exposure to the bedouin issue. This is not to say that “voluntourism” and “poorism” in the Negev bedouin environment do not serve positive roles, for clearly they do; it is surprising just how little really is known among Jewish Israelis and outsiders alike about the bedouin experience, and these sorts of ventures are designed to fill that void. At the same time, these experiences, like the examples noted above, commoditize suffering, albeit for what many might consider worthwhile goals and outcomes.

Still, the “pain and poverty” narrative is not one that many Negev bedouin willingly embrace. Rather than be viewed as sympathy cases, Negev bedouin entrepreneurs are increasingly developing their own ventures in the industry, with a narrative that seeks to blend the romantic notions of the bedouin past with some of the present-day concerns, but in a context of strength and pride, not victimization. It is to these tourism vendors that I now turn.

In Search of Authenticity: The Bedouin are “Doing it” for Themselves

On 4 July 2007, *YNet.com*, one of Israel's premiere online news sources published in both Hebrew and English, proclaimed bedouin tourism's in-

dependence with a full-length, feature article. Rarely has any of the Israeli media ever given the bedouin such prominent, largely positive attention. What made the coverage all the more notable was that many of the vendors and businesses noted in the article were bedouin-owned and operated ("A Bedouin Welcome," 4 July 2007). Further, the article offered begrudging recognition that tourism offers the bedouin economic opportunities that are simply lacking in most of the other sectors of the Negev economy:

In the urban settlements there is no opportunity to continue traditional agriculture, mostly raising sheep and working the land for personal consumption. Therefore, thousands of families, who were not able to adapt to an urban lifestyle, find it difficult to sustain themselves with dignity. Unemployment is on the rise, as is crime and violence. The difficult economic situation and embitterment lead to demoralization and religious and political extremism.

The State of Israel, which concerned itself with settling the Bedouin in permanent homes, did not concern itself with helping them continue on this road. Not with appropriate infrastructure, nor with preparing the Bedouin for alternative livelihoods. The tourism branch is an example, one of many, of the unrealized potential that is hidden in Rahat and in other Bedouin villages. ("A Bedouin Welcome," 4 July 2007)

For such a small country, it may seem rather odd that places like Rahat, a city of 50,000, are still considered obscure getaways when Tel Aviv is only an hour or so away. Still, much of the Negev has long been ignored by Israelis as a desirable tourist destination, but rather, is seen as that area that is "on the way to Eilat." As the *YNet.com* article suggests, this dynamic is beginning to change, and with it, the birth of bedouin tourism, though it remains an admittedly small sector of the Negev economy, has slowly but surely arrived.

One of the bedouin tourism sites highlighted in the article is *Ohel Ha'Shalom* ("The Peace Tent"), owned and operated by Ibrahim El-Afenish in Rahat (<http://www.ohelhashalom.co.il>). The tent opened in early 2006 and is a family business comprised of El-Afenish's wife, his children, and himself. The tent/restaurant is expansive, clean, and beautifully designed. And yet, the site is off the beaten track just outside Rahat, and signage directing one to the location is small and obscured. Unless one is actively looking for the "Peace Tent," it seems unlikely that anyone would accidentally stumble upon it. No Jewish youth groups make their way to "The Peace Tent," according the proprietor. This is not surprising, as it is actually located *within* an Arab town, an environment that is off-limits for many such tours.

El-Afenish estimates that, initially, the majority of the tourists who visited, perhaps 80 percent, were in fact Israeli Jews. Very few were foreign tourists. Still, he contends, the purpose of his business, beyond the obvious economic incentive, is to tell the story of his people, in effect providing a corrective to the aforementioned “perpetrator” and “victim” narratives:

I bought this tent for the business. It's *real*, you don't see these around any more. There are very few around, and very few businesses like mine. We teach about bedouin culture here. Our *rababa* player is the best in the Negev. We serve tea, coffee, pita, *labaneh*. We teach them about *how we are now*, the transition that's taken place. We have people in the professions now. We talk about the advancement of bedouin women, how the girls are educated, and some even have businesses. In Rahat, for example, there is a florist, and she has 7 girls working for her. There are hair salons for brides. There are DJs and photographers. You can't compare it to years ago.

We haven't had many tourists since we first opened—maybe 300. They come from all over the country, the center, the north. Teachers, retirees. What do they know of us before they come? That we are thieves and robbers! That's all that is communicated here, and so when they arrive here they know little else about us, about who we really are.

But today there are not many tourists coming at all. Maybe 10 percent of my business is tourists now. This American singer [Peter Yarrow from Peter, Paul and Mary] came a few months ago and sang here and the children really enjoyed that. But most of my business now is with the people from the city (Rahat) who come here for their weddings. (El-Afenish, 5 July 2007)

Just east of Rahat on Route 40N (the road connecting Be'er Sheva with Tel Aviv and Jerusalem), “Abu Youssef” is the proprietor and owner of the “Bedouin Hospitality Tent and Restaurant.” The site has been there since 2000 and is staffed by two additional assistants. Abu-Youssef estimates that 5 percent of his customers are foreign tourists, 80 percent are Jewish Israelis, and 15 percent are local Arabs, that is, bedouin. The emphasis of the place is the production of homemade foods that are natural, with no preservatives added, and with no artificial ingredients. His motto is to prepare and serve food “like it once was.” In essence, the restaurant is very similar to a small health food emporium, and yet it is located in the northern Negev Desert. Notes Abu-Youssef over a lunch of freshly baked pita sandwiches soaked in olive oil that he just made moments earlier on his gas-powered *saj* (Arabic: stove for making pita):

We [are] located in a strategic place. There are tourists coming from the Dead Sea, from Eilat, and from Sde Boqer. We are in the middle. People who come here want to see something *authentic*. The Jews who stop in are interested in the natural foods, the non-packaged foods that aren't made by Strauss [a major food manufacturer in Israel]. They are looking for something special. So it's not just the foreign tourists who come here. People might stop in for olive oil, but then they see the cheese or something else. Or they stop to eat in the restaurant but then buy something packaged. So they stop for one thing, but they leave buying more.

We try to present something *authentic* about ourselves. We created this little library here in the corner for people to read about us [bedouin] while they eat, so they can learn about us. If someone comes here and the food is good and it's clean, the service is good, we smile—they will come back. They will tell others about us too. There is a story here. It's not just the food here though this is important. There aren't many *authentic* places like this that have what we have. The place itself is part of the story, to sit here, to drink the coffee or the tea, it's all *authentic*. The taste of the food is all a part of it. The trees out front, the olives, all of this is part of what we are.

Much of what I sell here comes from my land. I know that the water is clean, the land is good. How could I live crammed into a 500 m² house and be able to grow these products? So yes, there is a connection between what I have here and my land and my culture as a bedouin. (Abu-Youssef, 4 July 2007)

A third and final example of bedouin tourism entrepreneurship is “Suleiman’s Shiq,” owned and operated by Suleiman El-Hrenik (Illustration 7.4) in the small, unrecognized *pezurah* village of El-If’dai, a community with fewer than 200 residents, which is about twenty minutes north of Mitzpe Ramon. The residents of the village are all members of the Azazmeh tribe and, in theory at least, should relocate to Segev Shalom. Pressures are increasingly coming to bear on the community to resettle in town.

Suleiman has run his tourist *shiq* since the early 1990s (Illustration 7.5). He estimates that he hosts approximately fifty tourists each year, most Jewish Israelis, though he notes with pride that some over the years have been from the US, many having first visited Petra in Jordan. The tent is large enough to hold “up to one hundred visitors at once,” however. Though he recently put in a small paved parking area and a flush toilet outhouse, “Suleiman’s Shiq” is, perhaps, as “authentic” as Negev bedouin tourism can get. So too is his life experience as a Negev bedouin, and his perspective on the

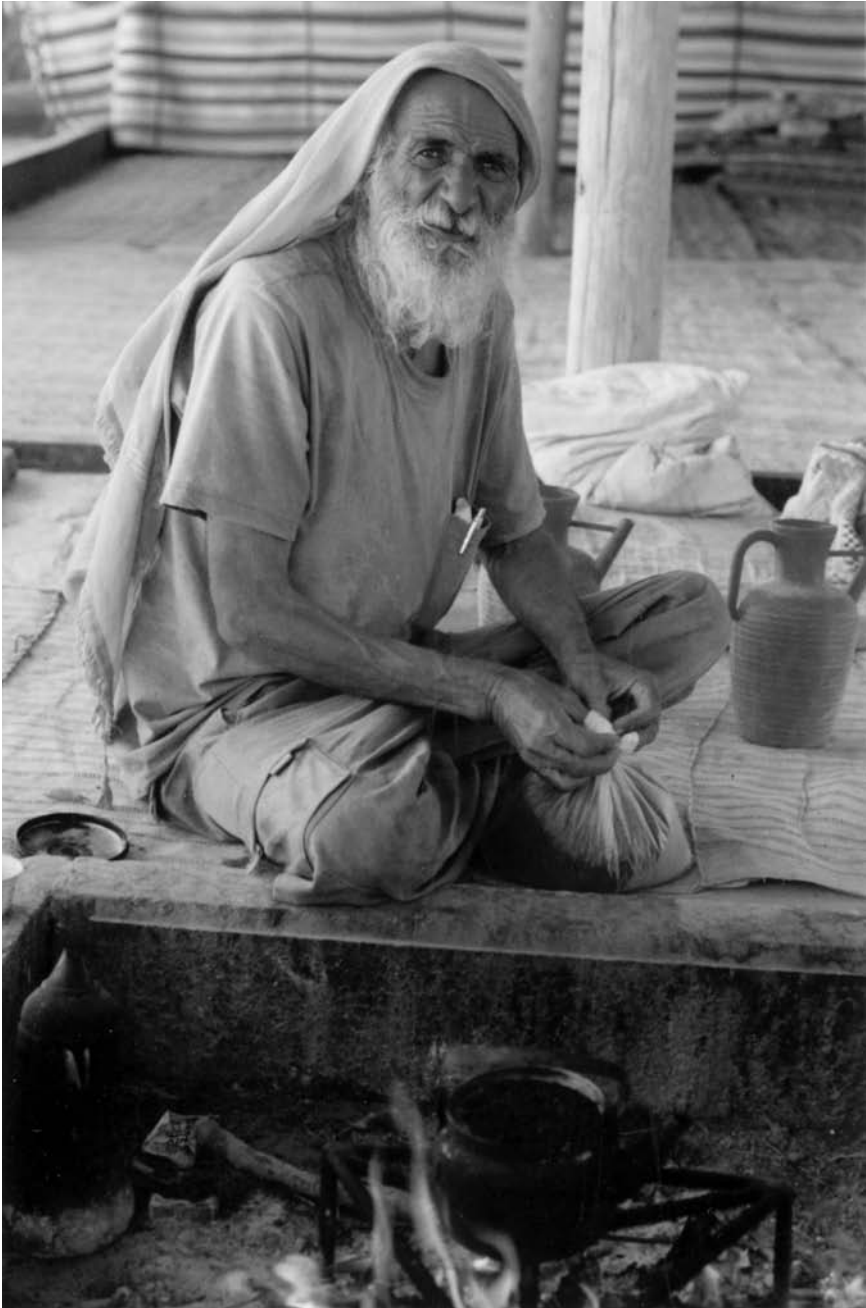


Illustration 7.4. Suleiman El-Hrenik Making Tea for the Author—2007.
Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

present-day circumstances of what it means to live in twenty-first century Israel. As such, I quote him at length, translated but purposely left without edits that would remove the redundancy and cadence of the narrative:

We are the original bedouin. We have sheep, goats, camels, everything here. We make pita on the *saj*. We have tea, coffee, *lebaneh*, humus, and bread that we cook right in the fire. We slaughter a sheep for our guests right here. It is a family business—I run it. We take the people out to see the [local] area. They can sleep here in the guest side of the tent if they wish. We have a kitchen here, and I have set up bathrooms for them. Everything is all set up to receive them. They can come here and see how everything is open. This is how we live, not in a stone house [in town]. That's no way to live, we can't live like that.

Everyone is welcome here to learn about us. We want [the tourists] to understand that we want to live here freely. They are welcome to come—*ahalan w'sahalan* [Arabic: Come in, welcome]—and see how we live. This is how we live, how we always have lived—not in a stone house. My [real] job is working with my animals. But we can't live here freely, [because] the Government won't let us live. They want us to live in a stone house and we don't want these things. We're bedouin, we don't want to live in a stone house. If we did, then we would leave here. *But we're bedouin, this is how we live.* In Mitzpe [Ramon] and other places they can live in stone houses, but that's not for me.

The Government wants to change our lives. I can't live in a stone house, a house that's closed in! That's not the life of a bedouin! We [bedouin] do everything in this country, we are guards, we serve in the army. We just want to be left alone. But they want to destroy our houses. There is a demolition order on my son's house right now! If they destroy our homes, where will we go, what will we do? I am a bedouin! I have chickens, camels, goats, sheep! I can not live in a city! If they destroy my home, what will I have?! We are bedouin, not Arabs! The Arabs live right next to each other, on top of each other. We can't live like that. We just want to live out here and be free!

I was in the Yom Kippur War, in the Tank Corps, under [former Prime Minister] Ariel Sharon. There were seven Azazmeh in the unit, myself, Sheikh Ouda—you know him?—and five others. We were there, in Egypt, fighting in Sinai, in '73. Yes, I was there, look at this beard [he says showing the grey]! And now look at me! Look at this situation! Everything here is a *belagan* [Hebrew: chaos, turmoil]. This country treats me like this. It makes trouble for me and my family all the time, wanting to destroy our

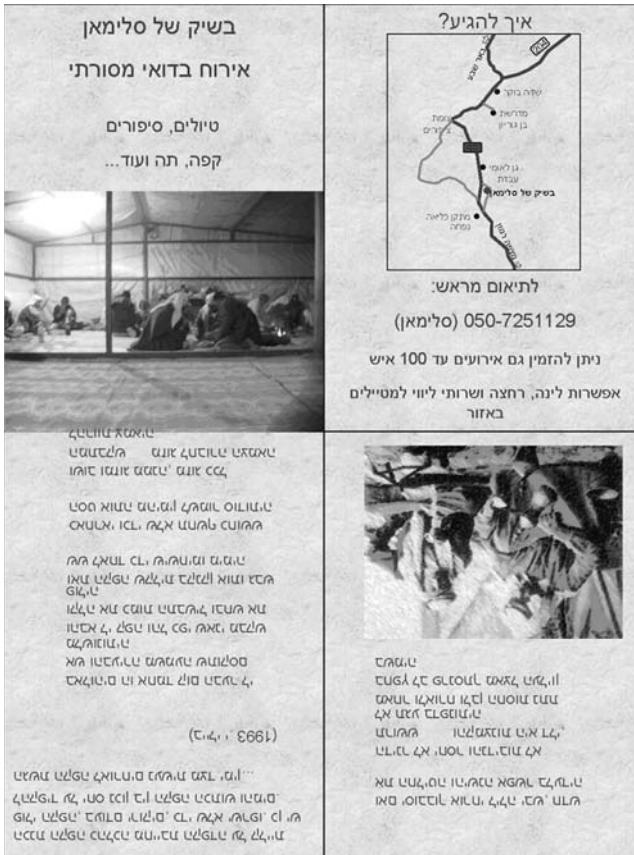


Illustration 7.5.
Hebrew Tourist Brochure:
“Suleiman’s Shiq.”

homes, wanting to destroy our lives. This country is shit! (El-Hrenik, 9 July 2007)

Conclusions

Suleiman El-Hrenik’s words and deeds embody the pursuit of authenticity for which the bedouin tourism industry in the Negev Desert hungers. El-Hrenik is not the “Noble Desert Savage,” nor is he a “Noble Victim.” Rather, he is a proud and active participant in his own fate, and he is using tourism to communicate his perspective to anyone who will listen. And yet his story—what may arguably be one of the most “genuine” and “authentic” that can be heard amid the cacophony of voices in the tourism industry today—is barely heard, as he keeps his enterprise small and unabashedly

low-key, and is located literally and figuratively on the periphery, far-removed from the beaten path.

It is, of course, a perverse irony that voices such as that of El-Hrenik are often drowned out, and that the Disneyfied images of bedouinism overshadow realities that for many may simply be too ugly or difficult to face. But this process is common and global; as my colleagues and I have found elsewhere (Dinero et al. 2006), these images in time threaten to overtake the real, replace the real, *become* the real.

Hobbs (1996) noted that though tourism is increasingly embraced among the Sinai bedouin and is seen as a positive force, both socially and economically, in the region, tension has developed between bedouin entrepreneurs and their Egyptian, non-bedouin, competitors:

Already there is an explosion of ersatz *bedouin*-tent restaurants run by Egyptians in the desert northwest of the Sharm ash-Shaykh tourist resorts. The Muzayna complained that these restaurants were false, because the people who were hosting tourists in them were not *bedouin* and because the facilities included not only wool tents but also brick and cement gateways, outbuildings, and parking areas that were unnecessary, unsightly, and unnatural.

Similarly in the Negev, the Bedouin Heritage Centre in Rahat never did attract an adequate market and as a result, failed; the Joe Alon Centre at Kibbutz Lahav, on the other hand, continues to draw thousands of visitors annually from Israel and abroad (Dinero 2002: 86).

Still tourism, particularly ecotourism (Dinero 2002: 75), is an economic sector with a great deal of promise in the Negev, as it has shown particular expansion since the early 1990s. As hubs of this expansion, the planned bedouin towns, it is contended by most regional planners and government officials, offer particular possibilities and opportunities. Many see Segev Shalom as one of, if not the major bedouin economic centers in the Negev by 2020. This development cannot be founded solely upon tourism alone, of course, but must be nurtured and concretized internally and externally through both planned and market forces. It is to this confluence of conditions, and to the future possibilities that Segev Shalom might theoretically enjoy in this newly evolving Negev economy, which will be addressed in the eighth and final chapter that follows.

NOTE

*Due to some last-minute cancellations, no government officials offered their perspective during this particular tour.

Chapter 8

Segev Shalom—A City on the Edge of Forever?

People like to romanticize the bedouin lifestyle. They spend time with us, but they still write based upon their initial expectations, the fantastic things they hear about us. Even bedouin academics end up writing about the fantastic side of bedouin culture; they take things that do exist, but they exaggerate them. So people don't realize how we're developing, how our society has changed.

—Muhammad (Abu-Tarek) Hamamdi, Segev Shalom, Israel,
10 December 1992

The issues raised in the preceding chapters now bring me back to the question, once again, of the role of planning in the bedouin sector today, and how/if/whether it is even reasonable or fair to believe or to expect planning to be the interlocutor in resolving what appears, prima facie, to be such an intractable set of political, economic, and social problems in this minority sector. In order to answer this question, I wish for the moment, and for the sake of deconstructing what is so clearly a highly charged issue, to change the subject (though in truth I am doing nothing of the kind), to an area that is seemingly unrelated: the world of science fiction. Using the realm of fantasy as a momentary digression, I will then return to the issue at hand, and will argue that the bedouin condition today could easily be viewed as just as “disorienting” (see Dinero 2009) and multi-layered in some ways as an experience out of an episode of Rod Serling’s 1960s television series, *The Twilight Zone*.

Conceptualizing Multiple Visions of Possible Futures

The genre of science fiction and the realm of New Town Planning are not very far apart. As Kumar (1987) cogently argues, notions of utopianism and the belief that human beings are capable of controlling and socially engi-

neering the physical environment can be traced as far back as Greek and Roman times—if not sooner. From the moment humans began to believe that Utopia not only existed, but that they also could play a role in making such environments an actual reality, the earliest beginnings of Planning were born.

In humanity's desire to control the environment, to master natural and social forces through the planned community, however, unanticipated consequences are, some writers have suggested, seemingly inevitable. Thus, whether it be Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *1984*, or various other novels, which became required fare in high school English classes across the United States in the latter part of the twentieth century, the message is clear: "Be careful what you wish for." As Kumar shows through his analytically critical lens, many (though certainly not all) Utopian visions as presented by these and other authors quickly degrade into the dystopian malaise that comes from the realities of human behavior and circumstance. That is, Planning can go just so far—human beings are not programmable robots.

This conceptual framework is developed further in Kumar's discussion and critique of B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two*. Kumar notes that Skinner's work reflects an ideology of humans striving to control and to manipulate one another—that is to say, that relations between individuals are based largely upon the desire to persuade and influence, and that we should "not fear control, but make of its exercise a science for the improvement of the human condition" (1987: 372). Such a science, needless to say, might be called "Planning." And yet, he notes that there is an inherent contradiction in such efforts that renders Planning ineffectual, or at least, impractical, by its very nature. He writes:

There can be, in a strict sense, no 'planning for the future,' for planning can be only in terms of current realities and current knowledge. In the face of an unknown future, the only hope lies in preserving as many varieties of thought and practice as are compatible with survival. We do not know, but one or some of these practices may turn out to be the successful response in an altered environment. But such practices are necessarily, in the present, inefficient and 'irrational,' and as such, anathema to the benevolent elite. There is therefore a persistent tendency, in a society governed by a rationalizing elite, to suppress or eliminate them. With every such suppression the species or society launches itself further along the path to extinction. (Kumar 1987: 377)

In other words the only way, one might conclude, that Planning can be successful under these assumptions is to know ahead of time what the out-

come will be—and if the outcome is a given, then why does one need to plan? Is the outcome not “inevitable”? Or put differently, are there multiple futures or just one, already predetermined, set, and immutable? For, only if there are multiple possible outcomes can Planning play a role in influencing what the future in fact will hold.

Perhaps one of the most well-known examples in which such concepts were presented and addressed was during an episode of the popular *Star Trek* television series, *City on the Edge of Forever* (1967; StarTrek.com). In the episode, the crew of the *Starship Enterprise* steps through a “time portal” and in so doing goes back in time to the 1930s. There, they meet a social worker, Edith Keeler, who, they discover, will play a key role in history. In the “first version” of history, she dies after being struck by a car; due to the crew’s presence in the past, however, they save her from the oncoming car and the accident is averted. As a result, in the “second version” of history, she lives, and soon thereafter plays a role (inadvertently) in the Nazi conquest of Europe and soon thereafter the rest of the world. Thus, the *Starship* crew discusses and determines their role in the situation; they plan what they can and *cannot* do before determining that they must return to the ship and step through the “portal” an additional time in history *before* the car accident was to occur. This time they purposely stand idly by as the car approaches, for in order for the “original” version of the future to be restored, a better future for all of humanity, themselves included, *Edith Keeler must die*.

How then might one reconcile the views, ideals, and fears expressed within the fantasy world of science fiction with the purview of New Town Planning? While both may think in utopian terms, planners must plan for the unanticipated, as contradictory as that may sound. They must think not only of what they *want* to occur, but what is also *likely* to occur, that is, to consider a variety of scenarios, a variety of futures. For in truth, like the multiple pasts of Edith Keeler, there are also multiple futures. Planners who believe that the present is fixed, that there is only one way to view things, and that there are not a myriad of ways of seeing, ways of knowing, and ways of understanding the present, are also predestined and predetermined to believe that there is only one possible future, that this future is already a given, and that present constraints are also future barriers. Not only are such people particularly uncreative and culturally insensitive, but I would go a step further by suggesting that they are not really planners; they are bureaucrats.

In the present case, when accusations fly and charges are made about the failures inherent in the bedouin new town initiative, it is, more often than not, the bedouin who are accused of being the most “fatalistic” about life, the most sanguine and resigned to whatever outcomes the future may

hold. But Israel's planners do not have this luxury, and there are a number of plans in the works for the Negev being discussed and in various stages of implementation. And yet, what appears to be true about all of these plans is that once again, the concerns of the bedouin are not considered as central to the Negev planning agenda. Yet clearly, bedouin concerns must be addressed—for the good of the bedouin as well as for the good of the state—if the future is to be a utopian dream and not a dystopian nightmare. More to the point, as I will argue in greater detail below, the town of Segev Shalom, as one of the more successful of the first seven planned towns, can and must play a central role in the future development of the region.

Planning for the Bedouin of the Negev in the Twenty-first Century

Concerns over development of the Negev Desert, some 60 percent of Israel's land base excluding the West Bank, are hardly new. Israel's Founding Father and first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, was a staunch believer in the potential of the Negev and had long believed that the future of the State of Israel was to be found there. His home in the Negev community of Sde Boqer was a testament to his commitment and belief in desert living.

Many believed, following the return of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt as a part of the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1979, that this signaled a likely shift in policy and a refocused commitment to investment and development in the Negev. A similar sentiment was anticipated upon the Israeli military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, and pending negotiations for a resolution of the Palestinian crisis.

And yet, as the land mass of the State of Israel becomes increasingly smaller, the assumption that the Negev will grow in importance, and that, once and for all, investment will finally come to this peripherally and greatly overlooked region has not come to fruition. Nonetheless, since the year 2000, a number of governmental plans have been disseminated that seek to guide the future planning and development of the Negev region. Projects such as the construction of Route 6, a North-South transit corridor connecting the Negev to the Tel Aviv-Haifa-Jerusalem urban agglomeration/city-state, have given the residents of the south reason to believe that their future may be a brighter one than historically has been the case.

For example, a new district plan for the Negev region, which explicitly addressed bedouin concerns, was approved by the government on 23 January 2000. Among this plan's goals was the desire to more effectively "integrate the Bedouin population in the south" (United Nations Economic and Social Council document, <http://www.unhcr.ch>). Although most of the

plan's initiatives were oriented toward the Jewish sector, the government did seek, for example, to increase the geographic area of Rahat and of the six other recognized towns.

The bedouin response to this plan, however, was to petition Israel's Supreme Court, contending that it did not reflect the community's need to maintain a balance between rural and urban settlements in the bedouin new town system. Only with the 2004 proposal to create the Abu-Basma settlements, and the recognition on the part of Israel's planners that such a balance was essential to bedouin social and economic development (see Moshe, 15 February 2007, Chapter 2), would this issue finally begin to be addressed.

An alternative plan put forward by Abu-Saad and Lithwick of Ben Gurion University that same year (2000) sought to include the agricultural sector within the urban development context, given its historic and cultural significance in bedouin economic and social development. And yet, the authors suggested, "there are significant potential benefits to be derived in many of the [bedouin new] towns from a concerted and high-powered effort to *modernize* the agricultural base of the Bedouin economy ... What we are proposing in particular are hi-tech applications for agriculture" (Abu-Saad & Lithwick 2000: 45; emphasis added).

Overall, the primary emphasis of their plan was centered upon an economic development agenda, which, they believed, would be acceptable to both the bedouin and Jewish communities (Abu-Saad & Lithwick 2000: 24–25), and which was premised upon the concern for "economic viability" of the towns:

Without jobs and businesses, incomes are low, the tax base is virtually non-existent, and very little can be done by the towns to help themselves. This makes them dependent on [the] government, whose policies when forthcoming have been seen to be more a source of the problem than the solution. The inevitable conclusion is that the heart of any approach to urban policy must lie [in] an economic development strategy. (Abu-Saad & Lithwick 2000: 21)

Abu-Saad and Lithwick enumerated several "preconditions" for this development, which include, among other inputs, improvements to regional transportation links, communications links, energy development, and greater human resource/labor development (most especially through improvements in bedouin education) and investment in job creation (2000: 28–35). They also called for further investment in urban infrastructure, roads, and housing. Essentially, they sought what amounted to an overhauling and retooling of the entire bedouin town.

The centerpiece of this economic development initiative was to view the bedouin towns as economic “poles.” Using a revised version of Central Place Theory, which provided the foundation of Israel’s Jewish new town initiative, this plan used the seven existing towns (and, presumably, extrapolating further, the nine that have since been added under Abu-Basma), as centers of growth, development, and innovation, which would eventually trickle out in spider-web like patterns to the surrounding areas.

The end result, as envisioned both in the generic theory and in the plan put forward here, was to develop a bedouin town network supported by these economic poles within which everyone could benefit, thrive, and grow. Thus, Rahat, it was suggested, would perform a major role as an Administrative center in such a network, while Tel Sheva might perform the role of “Economic Pole” (Abu-Saad & Lithwick 2000: 46–48). The smaller towns had other roles they might play as well. Nevatim Airfield, built in the context of the Tel Malhata project, remains a military base, but if/when it would finally be converted into a civilian facility as has been discussed over the years (Abu-Saad & Lithwick 2000: 50), nearby towns, especially Arara and K’seifa, could benefit, as these towns emphasize such economic sectors as produce processing and packaging.

In a later publication, Lithwick again repeated this emphasis upon the need for transportation and communication links, particularly focusing on the need for “regional development,” in which the bedouin towns would be encouraged to “develop strong linkages with nearby Jewish towns and rural settlements, and most importantly with Be’er Sheva” (2002: 16). While such an emphasis of interaction with Jewish Israeli communities makes a great deal of sense—as one of the greatest weaknesses of the bedouin town initiative is the degree to which this settlement system is virtually separate from Jewish Israel and both, one might contend, would be strengthened by greater integration with the other—such emphasis also creates further dependency between the bedouin community and the Jewish sector, as there is no parity between the two at present and further integration is unlikely to change this.

Further, he reiterated that the civilian use of Nevatim as a hub for transportation would benefit the entire Negev and would likely serve as a significant center for job creation, especially for the nearby bedouin communities of Arara and K’seifa (Lithwick 2002: 25). And yet once again, a classically ironic situation would arise, in which the bedouin who were forced off of their traditional lands and who now live in the communities that were created as a result of the construction of the Air Force base would have the opportunity to work at the very same facility.

To be sure, these plans have some merit, suggesting, for example, the need to create a “Marshall Plan” for the bedouin community (Abu-Saad

& Lithwick 2000: 16), drawing in major capital investment to the region at a time when many Jewish Israelis barely give the community a second thought. And yet, nowhere in such plans is there any recognition that the towns are independent actors or that they are home to separate families and tribes with different and sometimes competing and conflicting views and interests; the ideas expressed seem to assume that, like the Jewish development towns of the 1950s and 1960s, a command economic approach can be presented to the population and can be used, in effect, to economically and then, in time to socially, integrate and assimilate the bedouin in order to address some of the Jewish Israelis' concerns, such as the "demographic explosion" (Lithwick 2002: 10). Moreover, little recognition of the role of market forces is made, and yet as was seen above (Chapter 3), it is these forces that appear to be making the greatest impact in the economic development of communities, such as Segev Shalom, today.

More recent plans for the Negev released in mid decade (2000–2010) similarly seek to address the growing "bedouin problem." "Blueprint Negev" is a project of the Jewish National Fund, a quasi-governmental agency entrusted with the primary responsibility of holding and facilitating the development of Israel's land base. Through the use of \$4 billion of investment, the plan seeks to draw 250,000 new residents to the Negev, to reside in twenty-five new communities by 2015. These include English-speaking communities for North American immigrants who have not learned Hebrew. In the "Blueprint's" 12-point plan, one, point eleven, concerns the bedouin, noting that "improving the educational and economic opportunities for the Bedouin must be addressed" (JNF.org). It should be noted that the destruction of the homes at Hiram/Attir (see Chapter 7) was implemented in the context of the building of one of the new settlements under JNF's "Blueprint Negev" initiative.

The "Daroma 2015 Plan" also offers a comprehensive master plan for the social and economic needs of the Negev region, Jewish and bedouin residents alike. It is centered upon the premise that by drawing a "strong population" to the Negev from the center of the country over the next decade (i.e., 2005–2015), development can be generated, the likes of which have not been realized in decades of previous planning (Swirski 2007: 95).

The plan is premised upon the assumption that with new transportation and communications links now being developed (improved rail services, Route 6, and the like), new Negev communities offering large lots, expansive houses, and amenities will provide a draw; one will be able to access and afford to live a comfortable lifestyle not easily found in the country's center, yet will also be able to commute into the Tel Aviv conurbation each day for work and other needs that desert living cannot meet. The plan has been called the "most comprehensive" effort to foster Negev regional de-

velopment in recent years (Swirski 2007: 101). Thus, three goals will be accomplished simultaneously: 1) the population will be drawn away from the Tel Aviv-Haifa-Jerusalem conurbation; 2) the Negev will get a needed economic “shot in the arm;” and, 3) the Jewish population in the Negev will be increased in order to offset the rising Jewish/Arab demographic imbalance caused by the high bedouin birthrate.

In other words, the concerns of the 1950s and 1960s, which fed into the creation of the “Development Towns,” are once again at play in the “Daroma 2015 Plan.” In this new initiative, however, the utopian ideology feeding this planning initiative is not one of Socialist Labor Zionism (building the state, absorbing immigrants, developing Israeli identity through the demanding efforts of working the land). Rather, the “Daroma 2015 Plan” is premised upon an ideology of privatization, individualism, and bourgeois capitalist consumerism.

As for the role of the bedouin in this plan, 1.8 billion NIS (\$450 million) was earmarked for infrastructure to the seven original planned towns, plus those of the Abu Basma localities. No money was designated for the unrecognized towns (Swirski 2007: 88). Moreover, the “Daroma 2015 Plan” identifies the bedouin as the source of the Negev’s environmental difficulties (as opposed to the Ramat Hovav Industrial Site, a notoriously hazardous area that is in the news on a regular basis (see, for example, “Bad Air in Base City,” 18 March 2008) due to its numerous accidents and violations of Israeli environmental law). This, it is contended, is because of their high birthrate, low socioeconomic status, and spatial expansion.

Blaming the bedouin for the Negev’s environmental problems is difficult to understand, notes Swirski:

given the fact that since the establishment of the State of Israel, the wide open spaces of the Negev have [been] altered almost beyond recognition as a result of activities undertaken by *Jews*: the construction of roads, landing strips, high tension wires, urban housing projects, army camps, firing ranges, sites for chemical and radioactive waste, exhaust fumes from vehicles and aircraft, jeep tours, and so ... it is hard not to interpret [this] focus on the Bedouin, of all people, as an expression of racism or, alternatively, as the reflection of a desire common to many government bodies: to force the Bedouin to abandon their lands and move into a small number of recognized localities. (2007: 85-84)

Indeed, one cannot feel that, if nothing else, such emphases blame the victim, not the perpetrator, of so many of the Negev’s present-day difficulties. It is virtually impossible to separate the challenges the bedouin face from those faced by the regional prospects of the Negev as a whole. For

decades, the region has been viewed and treated as the literal and figurative trash bin of the State of Israel—the region one must tolerate driving through on the way to Eilat—and the bedouin, as its peripheral minority residents, were doubly damned as a result. While some aspects of these various plans put forward for the Negev may hold some promise, the fact that there is no one single, regional development initiative for the area, but rather a hodgepodge of programs, sponsored by differing agencies with different agendas and with no singularity of purpose, gives one pause. Beyond this, the primary planning agency for the bedouin is the Bedouin Authority, which falls between the cracks of all of these agencies. Thus, the bedouin community may be excused for being skeptical—or worse—of state planning motives, experiencing a nagging sense of *déjà vu* as yet another set of new plans is announced out of Tel Aviv or Jerusalem that purportedly include a “bedouin development component.”

Finally, so long as the forty-plus communities of the so-called “*pezurah*” remain illegal, unrecognized, and lacking in many of the most basic of public services, including high schools, fully operating health clinics, running water, sewerage, electricity, and paved roads, no member of the bedouin community—whether residing there or in one of the planned towns—will trust or believe that the state truly recognizes the rights of this minority community. While there is no doubt that those yet residing in the *pezurah* are often distinguishable from those who have relocated in a variety of ways, ultimately, the Negev bedouin community is one community, albeit much divided based upon tribe, *hamula*, and the like. By helping to foster development in these communities (including in many cases full legalization and the provision of all municipal services in recognition of the need for far more towns than the present number, given the community’s growing population), the entire bedouin settlement system—planned and unplanned alike—can be strengthened. This is not a counterintuitive argument. For unless and until the *unrecognized* communities’ concerns are resolved in a manner that is viewed as fair and equitable by the community at large, including government recognition of historic land ownership, if, when and wherever possible, the success of the *planned* bedouin town initiative as a whole will remain jeopardized.

Future Prospects for Segev Shalom and Recommendations

The economic and social development planning for Segev Shalom/Shqeb, Israel, must be placed within the context of the comments noted above. If the town’s future is a captive to its present—a product of its past—then why even bother to plan? But *if*, alternatively, there are multiple possibili-

ties, and numerous potential futures, and *if* each outcome depends upon what Israel's State planners, Negev regional planners, Segev Shalom *Roshei Ha'Moatzah* (Hebrew: Heads of Council, i.e., "Mayors"), Local Council members, residents, and other interested parties do now—today—then the future of Segev Shalom may not be what it used to be.

Abu-Saad and Lithwick, for example, note that Segev Shalom's close proximity to Ramat Hovav may (ironically) have possible *positive* ramifications. They suggest that the town may be able to take advantage of its location by developing "environmental industries," such as recycling (2000: 50), a sector that is increasingly drawing interest in Israel today.

Moshe Moshe (15 February 2007) adds that the town's location has other benefits. He points out that the road just north of *Shekhuna Bet* that leads out to the Industrial Zone is eventually going to be extended (see Map 2.1) and will, once some informal/non-recognized bedouin settlements near Emek Sarah are removed and the residents relocated, join up with the cut-off road that bypasses Be'er Sheva to the south and eventually links up with Route 25. This will, in effect, connect the Segev Shalom Industrial Zone with the Emek Sarah Industrial Zone, as well as the other economic activity (much of it automobile related) located throughout the southern side of Be'er Sheva on the southern side of the Dimona Road.

He points out as well that a car inspection site has been developed in Rahat and it has transformed the city's economic base.

There's an office to have your car tested, and it's even open on Shabbat (Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath when shops in Jewish Israel are closed). Today, if you're in the Negev, you go to Rahat for car repairs, and believe me, you can't get in there. It's filled with Arabs and Jews too, filled with cars. There's a million people in there. And ten meters from the testing center are the repair garages. So if something's wrong with your car you can immediately have it taken care of and go back for the test. And you can get your groceries and clothes [in the nearby market], all at the same time. That's the way it's going to be in Segev Shalom, plain and simple. That's the way it's going to be five or ten years from now.

Ilan Sagie of the Ministry of the Interior reinforces this perspective (24 March 2007). He suggests that:

the town's location, it's proximity to Be'er Sheva, gives it an advantage. There's less unemployment, people can find work easier, and they are closer to centers of industry in Be'er Sheva. There's another advantage to Segev Shalom that they haven't exploited yet, and that's the fact that as close as Segev Shalom is to Be'er Sheva, Be'er Sheva is also close to Segev

Shalom. What do I mean by that? That if they would just take advantage of it, they could bring to Segev Shalom the idea of a *shuk* (Hebrew: marketplace) on Shabbat (Hebrew: Jewish Sabbath; Saturday), a bedouin *shuk*, an Oriental *shuk*. In Segev Shalom, there's a much better chance of success with such a thing than there is with any other bedouin settlement. In the other settlements in the area they don't have very good reputations. If you are in Be'er Sheva, would you go to Tel Sheva? You wouldn't because it has a bad reputation. In Segev Shalom, there's a better reputation, from the perspective of the Jews, I mean. They're less afraid to travel there. But that, in my opinion, is something that [the residents of Segev] haven't yet taken advantage of.

And lastly, Ilan Yeshuran of the Bedouin Authority confirms this sentiment (10 May 2007). He states: "Segev Shalom is unique. It is built for a single tribe, the Azazmeh. Its proximity to Be'er Sheva is very important. The other towns, other than Tel Sheva—are much further away. Some would say [being further out] is a good thing, but for Segev Shalom, they benefit by being like Omer and Meitar, a part of Metro Be'er Sheva. It's convenient to reach, [and thus] to bring industry there as part of Greater Be'er Sheva."

In general, Segev Shalom's reputation among government officials and within the bedouin community alike is a positive one. But the town cannot function alone. Rather, it is part of a rapidly growing community of minority Israelis who today are experiencing considerable social and economic need—and the outlook for tomorrow is no different. But what is quite clear is that the community enjoys a comparative advantage in a number of areas, and that these areas can and must be exploited for the good of the bedouin, as well as for the state within which they are an increasingly significant minority group.

First, while historically, the bedouin labor force was largely weak and uneducated, this is beginning to change. Not only are bedouin men accessing skills and training equal to their Jewish counterparts, but bedouin women are beginning to acquire these skills as well. This is not to suggest that the need to continue to work toward the betterment of improvements in bedouin education are not huge, but it is to suggest that the bedouin are accessing a higher quality education and higher levels of education every year, and that the number of those who are educated but are unable to use the skills they have acquired and are not finding their education an asset are, in fact, growing—and for the state, it is this issue that is already becoming a long-term liability. To think then of the bedouin as weak and uneducated herders is to underestimate their potential, both for the positive contribution many can make to the economic development of the society as a whole

or, alternatively, for the negative impacts that such a highly educated and yet disgruntled population can have upon society as large.

Second, bedouin healthcare provision has come a long way since the days of the *siyag*—and also has a long way to go. Privatization in the healthcare arena is something that must be considered in the long-term planning concerns of the bedouin. As more wealthy and more successful bedouin are able to acquire higher quality care, a bifurcated system is now developing in which those who can afford healthcare are getting the specialized treatment needed in such unique living environments, while those who cannot are competing for poorer quality care in regional clinics, or worse, are reliant upon the Soroka Hospital Emergency Room in Be'er Sheva as their primary care giver. This is not good for the bedouin in the long-term, nor is it good for the state.

Third, infrastructural development in the towns is far better than in the past. And yet once again, superficial changes will not do. Efforts must be made to make the bedouin towns clean, attractive, and worthy of being referred to as “towns,” and not “slums,” “ghettos,” and the like. Basic services such as regular trash pickup can go a long way in making the towns magnets to resettlers, rather than ill-designed “Bantustans” that provide all of the elements of disincentive (high taxes, high unemployment, limited lands for flocks), and few of the elements paralleling similar towns of similar size in the Jewish sector.

But above all, planners must be willing to dream. Why not, for example, use the comparative advantage that these communities have, namely, the strong social, cultural, and economic ties with the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza (Palestine), Jordan, and to a lesser degree the Sinai (Egypt)? Farsighted planning would consider and encourage these ties as well, rather than to discourage and dismiss them out of hand as unrealistic or farfetched—or worse, dangerous.

One area of cooperation and economic development can be found in the travel and desert tourism industry. Were the Nevatim Air Base privatized as Abu-Saad and Lithwick have suggested (2000: 28), for example, rather than the state continuing to pursue a policy to further encourage greater militarization of the Negev (“Bad Air in Base City,” 18 March 2008), visitors from around the world could, in theory, fly directly to the Negev rather than into Tel Aviv’s Ben-Gurion Airport. Further development and expansion of Israel’s rail and bus service out of Be’er Sheva offers numerous tourism and trade-based potential as well.

In other words, Be’er Sheva might be developed into a hub through which visitors could travel to various destinations in the frontier of the Negev and beyond; connecting flights, trains or buses would take visitors

throughout the nearby Middle East to capitals in Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, and possibly elsewhere. The Negev, in other words, literally would connect Israel to the Arab/Muslim world, and the bedouin community would play a key role in that process.

As but one example, not long after the signing of the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty, the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed a joint venture with Jordan in 1997 centered on the shared Jordan River Valley (i.e., the JRV; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997). In brief, the proposal stated that: “the objective of this project is to maximize benefits to the tourism industry in both countries while maintaining the regions archeological and environmental integrity. A pre-feasibility study conducted on the projects estimates that, given the number and diversity of attractions in the region, tourist stays to the region can be lengthened to an average of two to three nights.” The idea of the project was to draw in visitors to spend more time in the southern regions of both countries, and to enjoy the wealth of attractions for local and international tourists that were to be found on both sides of the river.

A number of bedouin tourism opportunities were included in the proposal. For example, it was suggested that the Nabatean Spice Route, an historic trade route that passed through what is today Israel and Jordan, be developed by the two countries as a joint initiative. The route passes through Avdat and other renowned bedouin regions in the Negev, as well as parts of Jordan and the Sinai. In the proposal, it was noted that: “alongside the sites it will be possible to set up lodging facilities and restaurants which recreate the ambiance of the region’s history. Centers featuring Bedouin culture and lifestyles can be incorporated into the tourist development of this area.”

Clearly such an enterprise requires substantial financial support and upfront economic inputs. The Ministry projected that US\$119 million in public funding would be required for this project, with an additional US\$166 million worth of investment coming from private sources. More to the point, no joint venture such as this is possible without goodwill; while such opportunities are numerous in the Negev and while the bedouin can play a key role in their development, none can occur without a welcoming political climate. At the same time, however, such enterprises can foster good relations, adding value to an already worthy endeavor. Thus, although two new border crossings between Israel and Jordan were created soon after the signing of the treaty to facilitate travel across the Valley, little has been done, like much of the planning between Israel and her neighbors, to facilitate regional cooperation (Ezrahi 2003: 21).

One final recommendation then need not rely upon other regional actors, although it is the contention here that its success would be improved

through regional cooperation. Significantly, however, it does not require a change in bedouin cultural ideals, huge educational inputs, or other constraints. What it does require, however, is some imagination, and a willingness to think beyond the confines and limitations of today's circumstances. But more significantly, it requires a re-ordering of land-use priorities, at least in the Northern Negev region, which may be delineated by Bir Hadaj to the southwest and Dimona to the southeast.

Lithwick and Abu-Saad have noted that Segev Shalom has potential in the area of "Agricultural Development" (2002: 52, 73), an acknowledgement of the strong connection that the Azazmeh hold to their flocks and to the land. What is notable, however, is that whenever agricultural production and herding are referred to, the assumption is that one is referring to sheep and goat holdings (see, for example, Abu-Rabia 1999; Degen 2000). Rarely if ever does one see the potential in camel herding or production and yet, I would contend, this sector may provide a niche market well suited to bedouin economic and social development interests.

The retention of flocks and a resistance to undertake dry farming has often been seen as a limitation, as the Azazmeh were the last to surrender their animals and many still retain flocks despite living in an urban environment. It is notable also that Segev Shalom—and its as yet largely empty Industrial Zone—is ideally located at the confluence of the Eilat Highway and the Dimona Road, along which a substantial number of non-recognized bedouin towns are located, all of which hold flocks of various sizes, comprised of sheep, goats—and camels.

Increasingly, the camel (Illustration 8.1) has come to be viewed in the Negev by many as a problematic animal and a nuisance more than anything else, with questionable purpose or use, and has been at the center of more than one controversy due to a number of traffic accidents involving wayward, untethered animals ("Negev: Car Strikes Camel...," 11 September 2007). And yet, many bedouin continue to retain them, for cultural if not economic purposes.

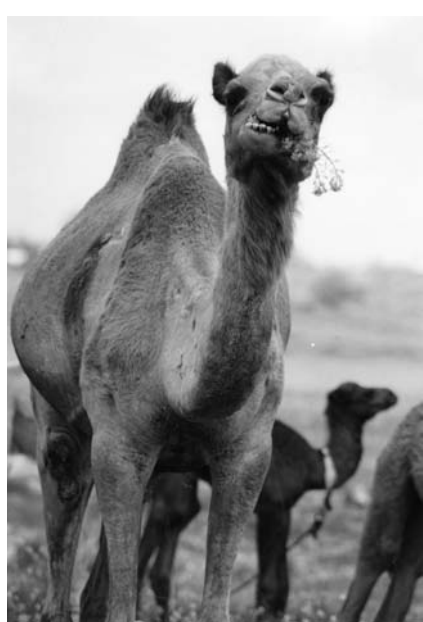


Illustration 8.1. Could This be the Face of the Future?—Tel Sheva, 2007.
Source: Photo by Steven C. Dinero.

The plan I wish to propose, the genesis of which can most closely be associated with Ben Gurion University physiologist Reuven Yagil, is to return to the use of the camel as one possible foundation of bedouin economic support and livelihood—a foundation that many never left. Yagil's three decades of research and consultancy on behalf of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) is centered upon one basic premise: that camel milk and dairy products offer developing communities in desert environments, where camels are culturally appropriate, physical well-being and, simultaneously, the potential for substantial profits in the form of marketing and sales.

According to the FAO, for example, camel's milk has three times the vitamin C and up to 10 times the iron content of cow's milk. In recent years, camel milk has cost about a dollar per liter in African markets, and it is believed there is the possibility of a global market for camel dairy products worth \$10 billion ("Milking the Benefits from Camels," 21 April 2006). Thus, Yagil has traveled throughout Africa and Asia meeting with local herdsman and entrepreneurs in an effort to both research the "medicinal" properties of camel dairy products, but also to encourage the further development and possible commercialization of camel milk production ("Camel Milk Transforms Mauritania's Herding Lifestyle," 20 August 2007).

There are limitations and uncertainties that must be considered, however. The camel population of Israel dropped somewhat between the early 1990s and the late 2000s; in 1990, the FAO reported the population at 10,000 (though others reported as high as 20,000; see "Israel's Dr. Dottle...," 23 May 2007); this number has recently stabilized to somewhere around 3,000. Still, Yagil suggests that these numbers have begun to increase slightly as camels are "smuggled in from Sinai for an extremely low price" (22 March 2008).

Degen (25 March 2008) concurs, estimating that there are about 2,500 camels in the Negev region. He notes, however, that "the number today is a very rough estimate from Veterinary Services of the Ministry of Agriculture [as] many Bedouin do not vaccinate (register their camels) and there are [also] many ... that are smuggled in from the Sinai." As for how many camels are being raised in planned settlements as compared to those in the *pezurah*, Degen notes that it "is not easy as well [to determine this number]. I would say there are more in the *pezurah*—my estimate [is] about 60–70 percent."

Given this camel population decline relative to the past, Yagil has sought to pursue the possibility of fulfilling the increasingly high demand for camel dairy products locally by formulating a joint program with Jordan. Like Israel, Jordan has experienced a precipitous decline in its camel population throughout the 1990s, numbering over 30,000 in 1991 to somewhere be-

tween 5,000–13,000 by 2000 (Awawdeh et al. n.d.). According to Hussein Migdadi of the National Center for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer, University of Jordan (30 April 2008), the exact number of camels in the country is unknown. A general consensus, however, is that the total number is 8,000 head (20 percent are male). Further, he offers that “the potential for camel dairy production in Jordan is 360kg milk/head/year” and that “more attention nowadays [is being] directed to camel raising and breeding, and especially activities regarding nutrition and manufacturing the product” as camel milk in Jordan is fetching “the highest prices.” He concludes with the speculation regarding developing the camel dairy industry that, “yes, I think through official and preplann[ing] there is potential.”

Thus, a joint project would take advantage of the strengths, skills, and collective herds of the two bedouin communities, those in the Negev and those of southern Jordan, and would use the camels not only in dairy production, but also to “carry tourists over ancient desert highways, including the ‘spice route from Petra to the Mediterranean’” (“Desert Dessert,” 1 September 1999).

And yet, such a project to this point has faced resistance. As Yagil explains it, “the Jordanians are keen but not our [Negev] Bedouin. They refuse any control set up concerning the number of camels [they may utilize],” (22 March 2008). Despite his efforts over the years, he contends that “the Bedouin are very ‘touchy’ when you suggest camels. ‘Is that all we are fit for?’ ... [They say] that for them the camel is like a TV—you sit and [just] watch them.”

Nancy Abeiderrahmane, the entrepreneur and developer of the Mauritania-based camel dairy *Tiviski*, also encountered some uncertainty and resistance when she initiated her now very successful and internationally recognized camel dairy in Nouakchott, noting that she did not fully appreciate or understand the concerns of the camel herders of North Africa. She notes: “I did not realize how bad it was that there was a traditional reluctance to sell milk, you would call it a taboo ... selling milk in the desert is considered miserly. It is considered mean and they say it leaves poverty as a heritage. Anyone who has any pride would never dream of selling milk. I suppose it is like water and air. Something God gives and you share it around, you do not sell it” (“Camel Milk Transforms Mauritania’s Herding Lifestyle,” 20 August 2007).

The question is whether, like the nomads of Mauritania, the post-nomadic bedouin of the Negev might seek to create such an enterprise (which may also include meat sales), the reluctance and skepticism that Yagil experienced among some sheikhs in the 1990s notwithstanding. It is clear that in today’s Negev, the bedouin are increasingly moving into the fields of medicine, engineering, law, and numerous other professions. And yet, not

all are able to nor do they have the desire to make such a transition to the professions. The world of business—in this case a business that has cultural and historical associations that offers potential inclusion with a number of sectors both within the planned town and *pezurah* communities—is a direction that many bedouin, given the opportunity and support, can pursue today, not in ten or fifteen or twenty years.

Perhaps there is already reason for cautious optimism. Degen notes that he has witnessed increasing bedouin interest in recent years in developing camel milk products, albeit on a small scale. He notes that “a plant making skin cream from camel milk has opened up at Kibbutz Lahav and the product is being marketed in Europe (through German agents)” (25 March 2008). In addition, a small enterprise has been developed by a bedouin woman in Tel Sheva called “*Bat Midbar*” (Hebrew: “Daughter of the Desert”), in which she makes soap and other related products out of camel milk. As of 2007, however, her market was limited to Israeli buyers.

Ultimately, this business idea may face some initial skepticism or even prove to have limited interest or success. But weak economic development in the Negev bedouin sector over the last several decades has shown that though there may be no single silver bullet that can be used to address the concerns of the bedouin community, a variety of possibilities ought to at least be considered. Just as Jewish society is economically and socially stratified, so too is the bedouin community, and a multiplicity of ideas and opportunities recognizing this diversity should be considered. At a time when the Negev bedouin community is struggling economically while experiencing drastic social change, it is the planner’s responsibility—and opportunity—to at the very least, pose the most hypothetical and yet powerful of queries: “What if?”

Conclusions

The purpose of this book is not to be overly nostalgic or romantic about the past, to criticize the powers of globalization, or to blame the government of the State of Israel for every woe that exists in the bedouin community in the Negev today. Rather, the goal here has been to examine and assess how, over forty years after the resettlement initiative was created and nearly thirty years after Segev Shalom was developed, this unique and aggressive planning project may be evaluated.

The previous pages reveal that the answer is at best mixed. On the one hand, there is no doubt that in numerous ways, social and economic measurement indices all seem to point skyward. The bedouin community is in many ways a healthier, stronger, more educated community than it has ever

been in recorded history. The bedouin Quality of Life today is, by and large, higher than ever before.

Ask most bedouin community members on the street how they or their families are fairing, however, and the answer almost to a person will not be positive. While the state can see this initiative as “successful,” showing numerous signs of “development” and “modernization,” many of the bedouin community members themselves would describe the resettlement initiative thus far in terms of “failure.”

The previous pages also suggest that this could have been avoided. More community member buy-in from the start, a greater sense of planning *with* the bedouin rather than *for* the bedouin, a greater sense that the community was being resettled for their own good and not the good of the state and in the context of a land-grab—these reasons and more help to explain the present malaise that is the resettlement initiative in the early part of the twenty-first century. The question is, can this planning initiative be salvaged, and if so, how?

I have attempted in this chapter to offer some possible solutions and ways out of the rat’s maze that is bedouin planning in Israel today. As a non-bedouin and non-Israeli, I am both advantaged and disadvantaged; I am able to see things in perhaps a light that the players themselves cannot see, for they are simply too close to the issue to be truly objective. On the other hand, as an outsider to the issue, I am not fully experiencing what it means to be a bedouin in Israel today—or a Jewish administrator in a government office, for that matter. And thus, there are elements of the picture that I can never fully appreciate.

Still, there is one thing that I, as an outsider, can attest to after fifteen years of studying the growth and development of Segev Shalom, and that is this: the mistrust, fear, and yes, hatred that can be found between the government and Jewish people, on the one side, and the Negev bedouin community on the other, is both palpable and is only growing. It was somewhat apparent in the early 1990s when I initiated this research; fifteen years on, it is everywhere, as thick and as toxic as is the black smoke that billows out of the factories at Ramat Hovav each day. And it is just as poisonous. During the period that I undertook this study, relations between the Jews and the bedouin of Israel seemed to worsen by the day, concomitant with improvements in education rates, access to healthcare, and so on. As the aforementioned statistics suggest, such correlations are not coincidental, nor are they easily ignored.

Thus, Israel’s planners have a considerable role and responsibility to play in the years ahead, for they must begin finally to understand that in the bedouin community, settlement in one of the planned towns may suggest “victory” from the state’s perspective, but it is nothing of the sort from the

bedouin's perspective. Rather, settling in a town such as Segev Shalom is in truth viewed as a *loss*, something which in time may change, but for the moment at least, is still stigmatized with the sense that the community has surrendered, has given up its lands, its pride and independence, its social and economic systems, its way of life—indeed, its very identity. True, this is something that is now being carried out, especially among the younger generations, voluntarily and with increasing alacrity.

Still, this phenomenon is not yet something a bedouin—any bedouin—should be expected to celebrate or fully embrace without a certain degree of trepidation. Having been the “Stranger in a Strange Land” themselves numerous times over the millennia, the Jewish people should understand this.

POSTSCRIPT

Miami Beach, Florida—18 May 2009

It has been nearly two years since I last spent time in the Negev conducting intensive research on the bedouin community. During that time, life continues for everyone in this study; timely discussion of this subject is, as with most things in the Middle East, like aiming at a moving target.

On this day, I am walking down the beach with Kher El-Baz, Director of Social Services in Segev Shalom. He and I are both in Miami—more than 10,000 km from his home in Tel Sheva—for the same reason, namely, to attend the convening of a small conference devoted to Negev regional development. The day is perfect, in the high eighties though rather humid. White puffy clouds hang just above the horizon beyond the azure Atlantic. Sunbathers abound, and we stop and ask one if he will kindly photograph us with the tourist hotels of South Beach in the background. The photo is surreal; we are still in our dress shoes after all, and do not exactly look like we are prepared for a day at the beach.

Finally, we find a Starbucks and sit at an outdoor table in the stiff breeze as a front begins to slowly move in. Sipping our steaming coffee, we reminisce about the first time we met, nearly 20 years ago in West Mt. Airy, a neighborhood of Philadelphia, not far, coincidentally, from where I now teach. We retell the story once more: how Kher borrowed a mutual friend's car the day we met, only to have the car and his many belongings in its trunk stolen from right in front of their home. We laugh now—though we certainly were not laughing then.

Our conversation weaves back and forth from the past to the present, and from the “personal” to the “professional,” in a seamless fashion. We talk of family and friends, work and school. He notes that Amir Abu-Mu'amar has again been elected for a five-year term this past November (2008) as *Rosh Ha'Moatzah* of Segev Shalom, replacing Saeed El-Harumi. His election just followed the death of his father Sheikh Ouda, who passed away in early 2008 at a very ripe old age—96.

Amir is taking over at a time when, in Kher's opinion at least, Segev Shalom is showing increasing signs of economic growth. He notes that that the

town has succeeded in its bid to acquire a number of positions in the newly developing labor force for the new military base, *Ir HaBahadim* (Hebrew: City of the Training Bases), to be built just south of Be'er Sheva. As the name implies, *Ir HaBahadim* will be more of a new town in the Negev than merely a base, designed to house the Israel Defense Force's Armaments School, Logistics Training School, Military Police, as well as providing a variety of essential facilities for a population of between 10,000 and 20,000 servicemen and women. This will translate into numerous jobs, though Kher notes that virtually all of that will be available to the bedouin in the low-skilled, lower paying fields (laundry, food services, etc.). It was noted at the conference by one civic agency representative whose goal is to increase non-discriminatory practices (such as hiring) in the workforce that high security jobs in particular will not likely be availed to bedouin community members.

Kher adds that the poultry processing plant that was previously only in the planning stages is nearly completed in Segev Shalom as well, and will be up and running, employing perhaps 450 employees, by early 2010. Once the plant has achieved full operating capacity, it is believed that this number may double, and that female employees will likely be a significant part of its labor force, given the close proximity of the Industrial Zone to *Shekhuna Bet*.

"So," Kher asks me as we head back toward my rental car, the sky beginning to darken in anticipation of a terrific early summer storm, "when are you coming back?" "Soon," I respond as I distractedly mull over the past few hours of discussion, my mind racing in anticipation of yet further study of what lies ahead for the bedouin of the Negev in general, and Segev Shalom in particular, "*Insh'Allah*, very, very soon."

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