

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 *pezurah*]. 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).

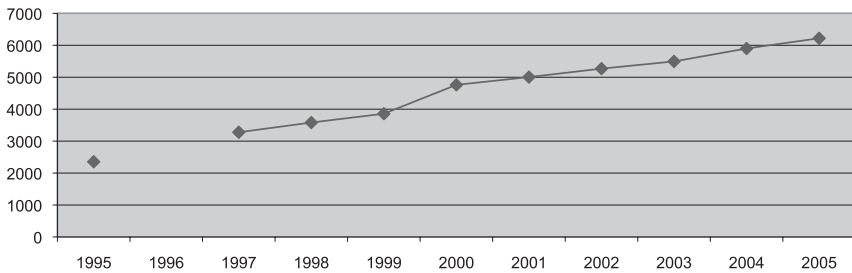


Figure 2.1. Segev Shalom Population Increase Averaging 387 Resettlers/Year, 1995–2005.

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 *suq*, 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 *suq*), 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?