

} 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.

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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*.