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Urban tribalism: negotiating form, function and social milieu in Bedouin towns, Israel

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Abstract

Background: Historically, the tribe was a central pillar of Bedouin society. Recently, the forcibly resettled-Bedouin of Israel's Negev Desert have experienced profound socio-economic transition and change in addition to spatial relocation.

Results: This paper offers a critical examination of the manner in which the tribe has served to inform top-down State-led urban planning, resettlement and housing policies while remaining a vital aspect of Bedouin life.

Conclusions: We suggest that in an ironic twist, these policies have generated a new form of urban tribalism that challenges the development of a "modern," "western" social fabric and practices of citizenship as initially envisioned by State officials.

Background

Prior to resettlement, the Bedouin tribes of the Negev Desert were highly structured and their functions largely in-tact, despite decades of evolutionary change which had occurred under Ottoman and later British Mandatory rule. Such tribes and their nested groups (segments, co-liable groups and extended families, see Marx 1967; Stewart 2012) can be defined, following Cribb (1991) and Gingrich (2001), as a group dominating a territory, maintaining sociopolitical collective identity in which common ancestral descent distinguishes between its members and nonmembers. Within such a collective, kinship ties and adherence to group obligations ensured and strengthened the coherence of social networks. Chief among these was the collective code which directed tribal members' conduct and which equated personal honor with conformity to group interests and unconditional loyalty to the group (Abu-Lughod 1986; Abu-Rabia-Queder 2007; Eickelman 1989; Lancaster 1981).

Following a traditional pastoral economy, Bedouin tribes throughout the Middle East developed mainly as subsistence-based social organizations residing in a semi-arid environment; as such, they lived within a spatially dispersed system dependent primarily upon natural resources. By occupying and defending their territories against competing tribes, members were able to practice semi-nomadic resource extraction on a cyclical basis (mostly seeking pasturage for flocks), as well as access to water reservoirs, wells, and cultivated lands (Hole 2009; Khazanov 1994; Perevolotsky 1987; Salzman 1980).

However, in the wider geopolitical context tribes also have served in more recent times as administrative divisions within the newly-created states in which many found themselves (Marx 2006). States have set up tribal collectives that govern their members as ethnic enclaves, granting or denying certain rights and privileges according to political alignments and interests. Indeed, in recent history complex relations have developed between independent Middle Eastern states in particular (i.e., those formed since WWII), and the Bedouin, as governments have attempted to encapsulate their nomadic and semi-nomadic tribal populations within the broader contexts of the nation-building agenda (for an extensive discussion

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of nomadic tribes relations with states across the Middle East see Chatty 2006 and Szuchman 2009).

For the formerly pastoral nomadic Bedouin tribes of the Negev region, these relations have been particularly acute and contentious. Largely, this was due to the ethno-cultural differences between the predominantly Jewish State apparatus, which sought to pursue its planning interests with limited participation or buy-in from the indigenous Bedouin population. But further, strained relations must also be placed within the wider Israeli–Arab conflict geopolitical context; Israel was created as a state for the Jewish people upon the lands of historic Palestine, home of the Bedouin people, a subset of the Palestinians. Therefore, any State planning on behalf of the Bedouin was by definition likely to be challenging—all the more so given the top-down approach pursued by State planners from the outset (see Dinero and Steven 2010).

Indeed, since the establishment of the State of Israel (1948) the Negev Bedouin tribes were subjected to profound spatial relocations and transitions and with these, social and economic upheaval (for key events in the chronology of Bedouin urbanization see Appendix). In the wake of the Israel's Independence War (1948–1949) some 80–90 % of the pre-state population of approximately 90,000 Bedouin organized in 96 different tribes was displaced to neighboring countries (Marx 1967). Shortly thereafter, the remaining Bedouin were relocated to the northeastern part of the Negev region, an area of 1500 km² designated as the *Seyag* (restricted) zone, and placed under Military Administration. In just a few years, Bedouin society had been socially shattered, spatially displaced, and left with little means to sustain itself economically. Two decades after the initial 'regional concentration' of the population (Shmueli and Khamaisi 2011) the state embarked on a Bedouin resettlement and urbanization program that saw, between 1968 and 1990, the establishment of seven Bedouin towns. This first wave of urbanization was followed by a second wave (since 2000) with the planning of over a dozen additional Bedouin settlements.

While resettlement in the urban environment has indeed produced many changes within Bedouin society, only a cursory glance finds that the literature is replete with examples of the manifest ways in which many of these changes are surely unanticipated and perhaps, undesired from the State's perspective. This is particularly true when examining the so-called "traditional" roles of children, women and elders (see, for example, Dinero and Steven 1997, 2006, 2012; Abu-Rabia-Queder 2006; Ben-David and Meir 1992; Meir 1997; et al.). Meantime however, there is ample evidence which suggests an economic reorientation away from subsistence and agropastoral activities towards a partial integration with the wage-labor market (Abu-Rabia 2000).

Within this era of transition, it is appropriate then to ask, so what of the *tribe*, and of *tribalism*? While Meir (1997), for example, has suggested that following Bedouin sedentarization and urbanization, an important economic shift has occurred as members of this pastoral nomadic society began to move away from tribal collective ideology towards greater individualism, it would seem that during the last five decades, the interplay between tribal systems as an internal sociopolitical organization on the one hand and as a subject of State administration on the other, has continued to shape much if not most of everyday Bedouin urban social and spatial realities.

Given the centrality of tribalism in traditional Bedouin society and in their recent modern life, the following will seek to problematize the role of the 'tribe' within the unanticipated outcomes of the State-induced Bedouin urbanization process. More specifically, we seek here to critically examine the manner in which the 'tribe' has informed State-led urban planning and housing policy over the past five decades.

To this end, our analysis covers three stages in the overall urbanization process. The first stage concerns the planning of Bedouin towns. We highlight the ideals and planning policies that had shaped the physical layout of Bedouin towns through insights gained from interviews held between 2012 and 2014 with five urban planners and architects assigned by the government to plan the towns. A comparison between the produced master plans is also offered to further reveal changing values and planning dynamics over time. In this comparison particular attention is given to elements that address possible tensions between and within the neighborhood (i.e., tribal space) and the urban fabric as a whole (i.e., multi-tribal space). Additional four interviews held with past and present government officials help contextualize the second stage of housing policies, lot allocation and the tribal component in the social organization of the planned towns. The interplay between the physical layout of the towns (as shaped at the planning stage) and their tribal oriented social structure (as shaped in the settling stage) play a significant role in urban Bedouin residency experience. Ten Interviews with local residents, (6 men and 4 women) as well as our own experience working with the community provide valuable insights into the manner in which urban tribalism informs municipal functioning and residents' everyday life.

We will conclude with the contention that rather than to be broken down, tribal/sub-tribal interests, values and priorities continue to be strengthened and reified in the urbanized Negev Bedouin context. As such, tribal interests ought to remain a high priority issue for policy makers in Israel. Like other aspects of "traditional" Bedouin life, the tribe is here to stay, at least for the foreseeable

future. Our analysis suggests that successful planning begins with the old adage that planning “with” communities rather than “for” them usually produced more effective, long lasting results.

Negotiating tribalism in bedouin urban planning

The term Negotiation is not used here in its generic sense; meaning a dialogue between the government, planners and the Bedouin community with the intention of resolving points of difference and reaching a mutually beneficial outcome. Rather, by using the term Negotiation we suggest that the manifestation and meaning of Bedouin tribalism had undergone a process of adaptation in light of urbanization and its particular construction of urban form, function and social milieu. Thus, urban tribalism in Negev Bedouin towns is explored below through the dynamics of three consecutive stages: planning, settling, and residency of the in-migrants. The planning stage is analyzed mainly through the outline master-plans produced over the years for Negev Bedouin towns by State-contracted architects and urban planners. Coupled with insights gained from planners involved in the planning process and from government officials from the Southern District Planning Administration Office at the Ministry of Interior, the analysis seeks to reveal the changing ideals and planning policies that had shaped the physical layout of the towns.

The second stage, housing policies and the settling in the planned towns, is mediated through governmental institutions set up especially to address Negev Bedouin affairs. Following the end of military administration in the mid-1960s, this role was taken up by the Israel Lands Administration (ILA), formerly a branch of the Ministry of Agriculture. In 1986 the Administration for the Advancement of the Negev Bedouin (AANB) was established within the ILA as the main governmental body charged with negotiations over Bedouin land ownership claims and overseeing the development of Bedouin towns including the formulation of housing policies and allocation of housing lots for prospective residents. Since 2007 the AANB became The Negev Bedouin Settlement Authority (NBSA) and was placed under the directorship of the Ministry of Construction and Housing. It is with regard to AANB/NBSA's role in housing lots allocation that the dynamics of the towns' social structure, as an overlay on the planned physical layout, is most influenced. Analysis of the forces generating these dynamics is based on interviews carried out with officials from the AANB/NBSA, policy papers, as well as interviews held with Negev Bedouin towns' municipal managers and residents.

Environmental, material, social, cultural, political and psychological dimensions all contribute to Negev Bedouin experience and practices of urban residency

(Ben-Israel 2009; Karplus 2010). However, below we seek to focus on but one dimension, namely the challenges and opportunities that arise from the interplay between the layout of the towns (as shaped at the planning stage) and their tribally-oriented social structure (as shaped in the settling stage). Local residents known to the authors as community leaders provided valuable insights into the manner in which urban tribalism informs municipal functioning and residents' experiences.

The Bedouin towns' physical layout and structure are primarily a product of top-down government decisions, actions and state-led formal planning which was implemented within the context of the state-building processes discussed above, combined with “bottom-up” public initiatives and responses of an internally colonized population from below. Informed by the Planning and Building Law of 1965, Israel's planning process is hierarchical and statutory. Under the purview of the Ministry of Interior, planners assumed continuity whereby outline schemes at the national level guided district master plans, which in turn determined the parameters of local outline plans that enable the production of detailed building plans and ultimately the assignment of building permits (Alterman 2001).

After weighing several alternatives for Bedouin urbanization and encapsulation including resettlement in mixed Arab–Jewish cities (such as Jaffa, Lydda and Ramla) or possible absorption into the regional capital city of Be'er Sheva (Porat 2009), seven Bedouin towns were planned and built between 1969 and 1991: Tel Sheva, Rahat, Segev Shalom, Kseifa, Arara, Laqiya and Hura (Fig. 1). Prior to their establishment the government determined such details as the number of settlements to be built and their general location, and authorized the relevant ministries and the ILA to proceed with statutory planning and site development (Israel Government 1962, 1973, 1978). In accordance with these decisions and within the parameters of the valid national outline scheme (N/O/S/6 1975) the District Master Plan (D/M/P/4 1982) was amended to account for the new settlements. At this decisive stage, Bedouin settlements were designed for the first time in terms of exact location, character and permitted land-uses.

Once the amended District Master Plan was approved by the National Planning and Construction Council (whose members are appointed by the Minister of Interior) a number of state bodies among them the Ministry of Development (1953–1974), the Division of Planning Administration at the Ministry of Interior, and the ILA formulated tenders for architects and urban planners for the production of local outline schemes and detailed building plans. The tenders provided important guidelines for professional planners by identifying the target

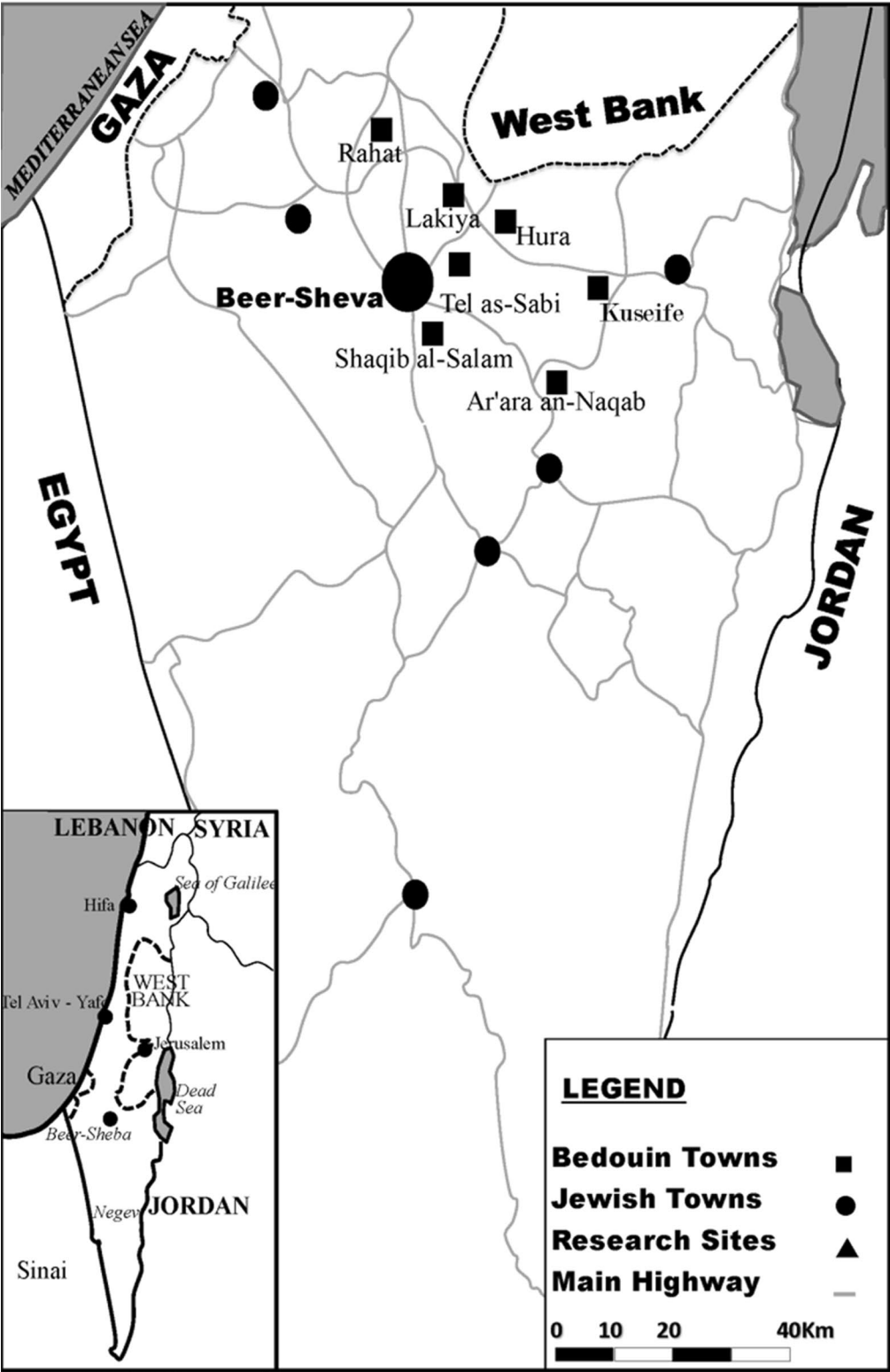


Fig. 1 Bedouin towns in the Negev

population (referring to certain tribes residing in a given area within the Seyag zone), and by stipulating the necessary outputs such as demarcation of the settlement boundaries, projections of population growth and the allocation of different land-uses for residency, public spaces and facilities, employment and roads. This was carried out without the involvement or participation of the future Bedouin residents themselves (Meir 1997) yet with officials' assurance that their social needs would be met in the internal layout of the planned settlements (Fenster 1993).

Aiming to counter the development and geographic sprawl of dozens of the organic, tribally-structured villages which were arising throughout the Negev as the Bedouin began to abandon their tents for semi-hard walled domiciles (Dinero and Steven 2013), state officials insisted on relocating the entire society into the seven planned towns, offering these as the "only accepted form of Bedouin settlement" (Atzmon 2013). Thus, Bedouin resettlement efforts took on a certain sense of hastiness and immediacy; emphasis was placed on rapid provision of housing lots, and settlement proceeded apace in close tandem with the production of comprehensive local outline schemes and, though at times, even preceded them relying instead on smaller-scale ad hoc neighborhood-level detailed building plans (Rafaeli 2010; see discussion on Tel Sheva in Frenkel-Horner 1982; Porat 2009 and on Rahat in Golan-Yoel 2013). Indeed, as Table 1 suggests, Bedouin resettlement to Tel Sheva, Rahat, Segev Shalom, Arara and Hura commenced a decade or more *prior* to their actual final statutory approval, only further complicating the process of family relocation.

This chronological gap, in part due to the arduous and years-long process of comprehensive scheme production and approval, raises a number of questions concerning the tension between neighborhood-oriented planning and the seemingly a posteriori planning of a comprehensive urban structure. More specifically, we may ask to what degree this neighborhood-level detailed planning

represented disparate ad hoc solutions for resettlement needs of the various tribes and families being coerced into the resettlement sites or rather, conversely, is indicative of a government which sought to forcibly mesh together urban-level land-use components to structure a comprehensive, homogenous urban fabric? In a similar vein, to what degree did local outline schemes represent a structured urban fabric or rather, the compiled products of disjointed neighborhood plans? And finally, in relation to inter-urban comparisons, does the apparent difference between the local plans for the seven Bedouin towns reflect the bottom-up approach tailored for Bedouin social needs—or rather, something else entirely?

Local outline schemes and detailed building plans of the seven Bedouin towns (available at Israel's GIS portal, <http://www.govmap.gov.il>) offer insights into the ideals and planning approaches that generated the urban physical layout as they relate to the neighborhood/tribe versus the pursuit of tribal integration via urban integration, i.e., planning oriented towards town unity rather than neighborhood cohesion. In particular, three features found here bring to light different planning approaches which address possible tensions between and within the neighborhood and the urban fabric as a whole. These features include the layout of residential areas and their relation to one another, the location of public spaces, and the arrangement of arterial thoroughfares within the intra-urban road network. Such insights hold value in understanding the degree to which tribalism played a role in the planning process of state-induced Bedouin urbanization policy.

In Rahat and Segev Shalom housing lots were commonly arranged concentrically around neighborhood cores reflecting a typology of spatial segregation with little, if any, direct inter-neighborhood connectivity. Such conceived urban form where housing lots form a cohesive and defined residential area encapsulated and bordered by open spaces and/or main roads was not accidental but rather was aimed at supporting ILA's housing policies (discussed in detail below) offering each prospective group of urbanizing Bedouin its own "private" area within the town (Atzmon 2013; Ben-David 1993; Fenster 1993, 2005; Golan-Yoel 2013).

Tel Sheva, Kseifa, and Arara present a different residential arrangement commonly oriented towards a more continuous urban fabric and the intermeshing of neighborhoods. In these arrangements roads funnel traffic through neighborhoods (e.g., Tel Sheva) and no clear boundaries such as additional roads or topographical barriers are found between them (e.g., Arara and Kseifa). It would seem that the last of the Bedouin towns to be established, Laqiya and Hura, were both planned to offer a certain degree of neighborhood segregation while still

Table 1 Dates of Bedouin towns initial settlement and approval of comprehensive local outline schemes

Town	Initial housing lots allocation and settlement	Statutory approval of comprehensive local outline schemes
Tel Sheva	1967	1986
Rahat	1971	1989
Segev Shalom	1979	1991
Kseifa	1982	1991
Arara	1982	1993
Laqiya	1985	1988
Hura	1989	1999

maintaining overall cohesive urban structure through direct passage between neighborhoods.

The second feature of our analysis concerns public spaces (parks and playgrounds, education, health and cultural facilities) and their integration within the layout of the towns. The generative role of public spaces in the development of social interactions among urban residents has been widely discussed elsewhere (cf. Iveson 1998; Mitchell 2003; Walzar 1986). Public spaces often engender contestation over 'the right to space' as power relations may endeavor to regulate who is 'in' or 'out' of place' in public space (Cresswell 1996; Mitchell 1995, 2003). Fenster (2009) study of the central park in Rahat, for example, suggests that it is a 'forbidden' place for women due to the risk of unwanted encounters with men outside the tribal group. Nonetheless, the basic idea of universal access associated with these spaces offers residents the opportunity to meet and interact as a community across familial, gender, socioeconomic and ethnic divides. Such opportunity is dependent, in part, on the location of public spaces. When these are aggregated together to form one or more urban centers they facilitate greater interaction among residents, whereas decentralized, neighborhood-based public spaces may contribute to intra-urban social encapsulation and segregation.

The Bedouin towns' outline schemes facilitate the integration of different land-uses within the urban structure. While in all neighborhoods lots were earmarked for kindergartens that exclusively cater to their young residents, other public facilities (schools, youth and cultural centers, and healthcare clinics) were aggregated to form a number of central hubs for adjoining residential areas. These centers make it necessary for residents to leave their neighborhood in order to obtain public services. The exception for this layout is found in Segev Shalom, where planners created such centers with the intention of availing public facilities at the neighborhood level. With regard to open public spaces (parks and playgrounds), in most towns land was set aside for central and ring parks at the urban level for the purpose of joint activities and social interaction. Segev Shalom is once again the exception as its parks are purposely planned to provide a clear boundary between neighborhoods.

The third feature articulated in the plans of the Bedouin towns and which offers insights on the tension between neighborhood-oriented planning and a comprehensive urban orientation is the arrangement of arterial thoroughfares within the intra-urban network of roads. Tel Sheva has no designated arterial and its roads share a similar hierarchical level within the network, reinforcing the perception of a continuous urban fabric. Segev Shalom on the other hand was planned with a clearly tiered network comprised of cul-de-sac streets, neighborhood

collector roads and a central arterial road framing of each neighborhood as a discrete area. While Rahat, Kseifa, Hura, Arara and Laqiya do present a tiered network of roads, theirs is arranged around residential clusters rather than discrete neighborhoods.

Returning to the questions posed above, Jewish planners from outside of the community (i.e., non-Bedouin) were tasked with the challenge of bringing a series of ad hoc-produced neighborhood-specific detailed building plans together under unified urban outline schemes (Rafaeli 2010). Such schemes were aimed at attaining a cohesive functional urban structure for the existing neighborhoods while enabling the future development of the towns. Both Atzmon (2013) former head of the AANB and Amit, who produced Rahat's master plan (cited in Golan-Yoel 2013, 46), expressed their vision that urban growth would sprawl into open spaces between neighborhoods giving a more cohesive shape to the towns layout.

Further insights may be gathered from a comparison between the seven towns in terms of chronological development in planners' approach to the tension between 'neighborhood-oriented planning' in which the family and tribe played a stronger role and a posteriori planning of a 'comprehensive urban structure'. Such comparisons suggest a process of oscillation between two structural concepts, namely a cohesive urban fabric and settlements which more closely resembled the organic Bedouin use of space, dominated by segregated neighborhood clusters.

Tel Sheva, the first established Bedouin town, was planned with an urban fabric in mind offering continuous residential structure, centrally located public spaces and non-hierarchical road network. While this had mirrored the government's rural-to-urban, "tradition-to-modernity" concept, it also generated great opposition from the Bedouin who were reluctant to relocate to a town that inadequately preserves socio-spatial practices of tribal segregations (Dinero and Steven 2010). Keeping Bedouin opposition in mind, the planning of Laqiya and Rahat, the next towns to which an outline scheme was produced, were both oriented toward maintaining neighborhood spatial segregation reinforced by a hierarchical road network, yet with central public facilities and parks that provide residents with opportunities to interact and share activities. Shortly thereafter Segev Shalom's outline scheme offered the concept of segregated neighborhood clusters, decentralized public spaces and a hierarchical road network. While the concept was not followed through in the planning of Kseifa, Arara and Hura, all three towns offered a flexible morphology incorporating features of both partial separation and urban cohesive integration.

However, in an environment of 'planning oligarchy' (Meir 1997) and the formal mechanics of modern

‘procedural planning’ (Fenster 1999) the Bedouin had little if any access to information and power in decisions relating to the towns’ planning process. Thus, such contraction may be attributed more to the articulation of Jewish urban planners’ conceptualizations of the ideal Bedouin town (and the supervising government bodies) than to a local, community-based, bottom-up planning or to methodologies of participatory planning by a disempowered minority (Dunski 2012).

The production and statutory approval of the towns’ plans and schemes advanced in concert with their actual settlement. The development of housing policies and the process of resettling Bedouin in the towns, overseen by the ILA and the AANB/NBSA included physical infrastructure development (e.g., roads, water-supply and swage-systems) and the marketing of housing lots. In a deeply contested move (Swirski and Hasson 2006), a significant portion of housing lots in Bedouin towns were subsidized and offered to Seyag’s residents on the condition that they waive laid claims to ownership of traditional lands and leave their villages (cf. ILA 2002, Decisions no. 932; 2004, no. 996; and 2005, no. 1028;). Further subsidies and relocation incentives were granted to organized groups that met these terms and were willing to relocate en masse.

Development of the towns’ social configuration was for the most part a combined result of both government housing policies and Bedouin internal social dynamics. During the 1950s within the Seyag area, territories that were historically associated with certain clans and their tribes saw the continued growth of pre-1948 Bedouin villages whose communities were based on tribal affiliation. At the same time, new villages were spontaneously established by other, post-1948 internally displaced refugee Bedouin tribal groups (Abu-Rabia 1994). Thus when the government began in the mid-1960s to formulate its Bedouin urbanization and resettlement policy, it aimed to transform the socio-spatial reality of dozens of tribal Seyag villages with an annual growth rate of 5.3 % and population of over 20,000 Bedouin (Porat 2009).

Based on a government sponsored study that identified certain sub-clans and tribes as the most ready for resettlement and urbanization (Zohar 1979), the initial policy called for the establishment of three towns for 3 of the 4 sub-clans of the largest Bedouin clan—the Tiyaha. Tel Sheva would be established for 2 tribes of the Qudeirat sub-clan (Abu-Rqaiyiq and Al-Asam), Rahat for a tribe of the Hukuk sub-clan (Al-Huzaiyil), and Kseifa for a tribe of the Dhullam sub-clan (Abu-Rabi’a). A decade later the government established 4 additional towns—Segev Shalom, Arara, Laqiya and Hura, each for a different Negev Bedouin sub-clan (Fig. 2).

Underlying the resettlement policy was the idea that the towns reproduce within a compact urban setting the Seyag’s territorial organization of clans, sub-clans and tribes. ILA and AANB/NBSA resettlement efforts proceeded by marketing housing lots within designated tribal neighborhoods ensuring as much as possible that internal tribal organization would be maintained (Fig. 3). Taking also into account future housing needs, and mirroring the customary practice of wed sons to build their homes adjacent their father’s, detailed building plans permitted the construction of more than one residential unit per lot. This made it possible for extended-family complexes to gradually form within the tribal neighborhood.

Bedouin who claimed ownership to traditional lands were reluctant to abandon their villages and lands and participate in the government’s resettlement and urbanization project. However, the fellaheen Bedouin (descendants of migrant landless peasant villagers who aligned themselves with the Bedouin as sharecroppers during the 19th century; see Dinero and Steven 2010) had perceived resettlement in the towns as an opportunity to gain liberation from feudal-like relations under the landlord Bedouin, as well as valued assets in the form of subsidized land lots. The fellaheen Bedouin therefore were the first to settle in the established towns in what Ben-David and Gonen (2001) refer to as differential urbanization process. Eventually with higher compensation for settling land claim and heavy pressure on Seyag residents to relocate (through denial of municipal services and risking house demolitions there) increasing number of Bedouin resettled in the towns. Both Bedouin and fellaheen Bedouin insisted that housing policy would enable residential separation between the two groups and facilitate the development of tribally exclusive neighborhoods.

By the mid-1990s Bedouin transition from rural villages to the seven towns decreased measurably (Krakover 2002), owing much of the increase in urban population thereafter to natural growth. As established neighborhoods were meeting their capacity, young families’ need for housing solutions was partially answered with town expansion projects and the planning of new neighborhoods. Marketing of residential lots in this second generation of urban development did not target, as previously done, tribes or sub-tribes, but rather extended families of several households that together formed an extended family housing-complex in what became tribally heterogeneous neighborhoods (Abu Sahiban 2012; Cohen, 2012). Based on data gathered from Atzmon (2013), Fig. 4 portrays the social configuration or degree of neighborhood tribal homogeneity in each of the seven Bedouin towns. While all neighborhoods are internally divided into extended family residential complexes, the

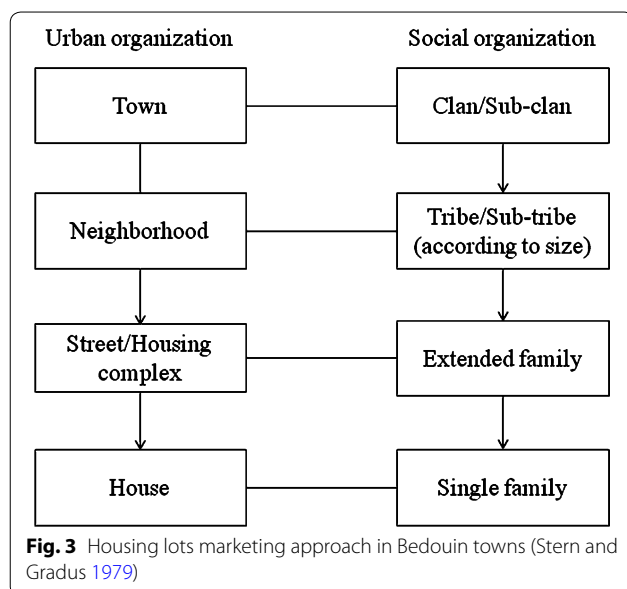
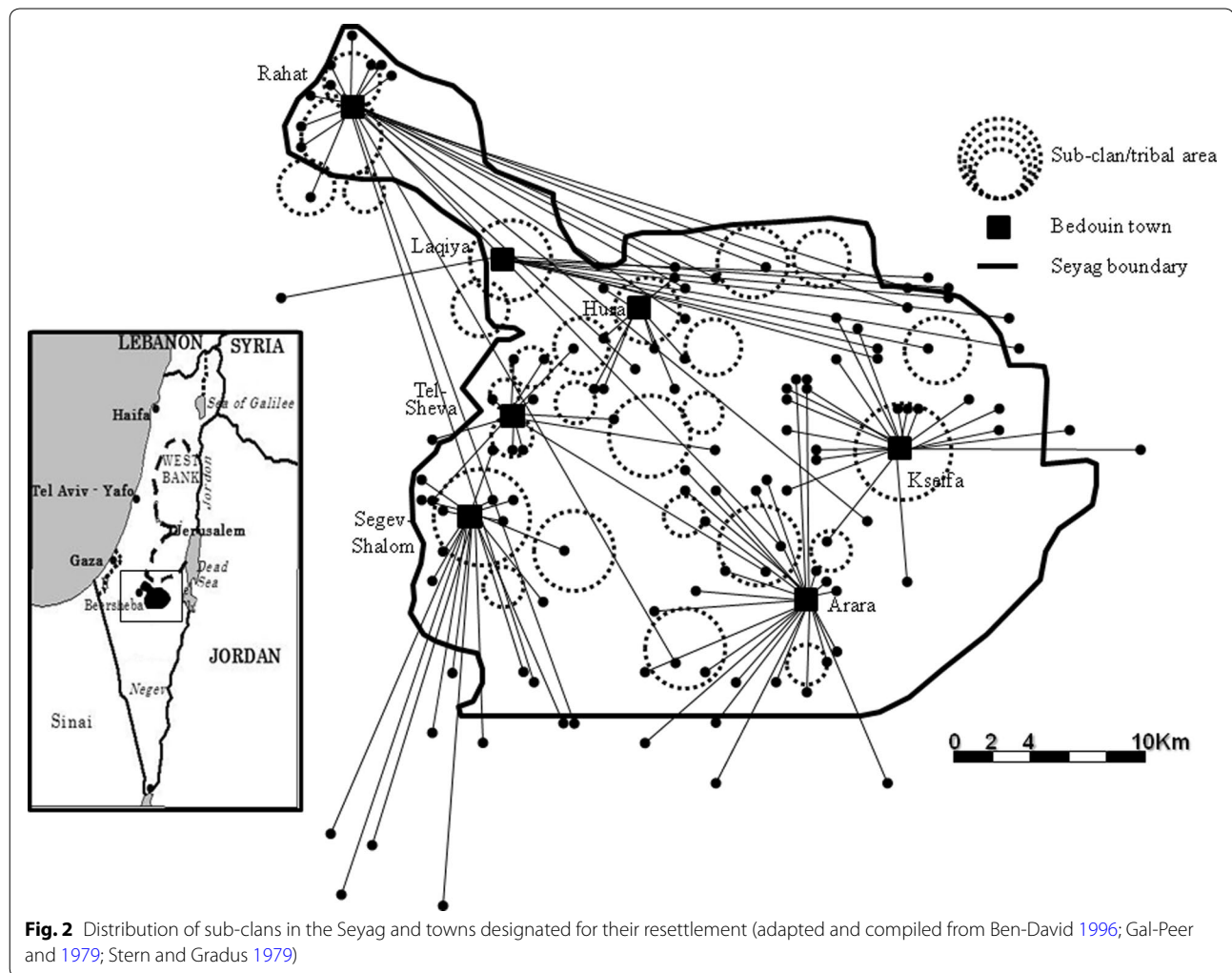
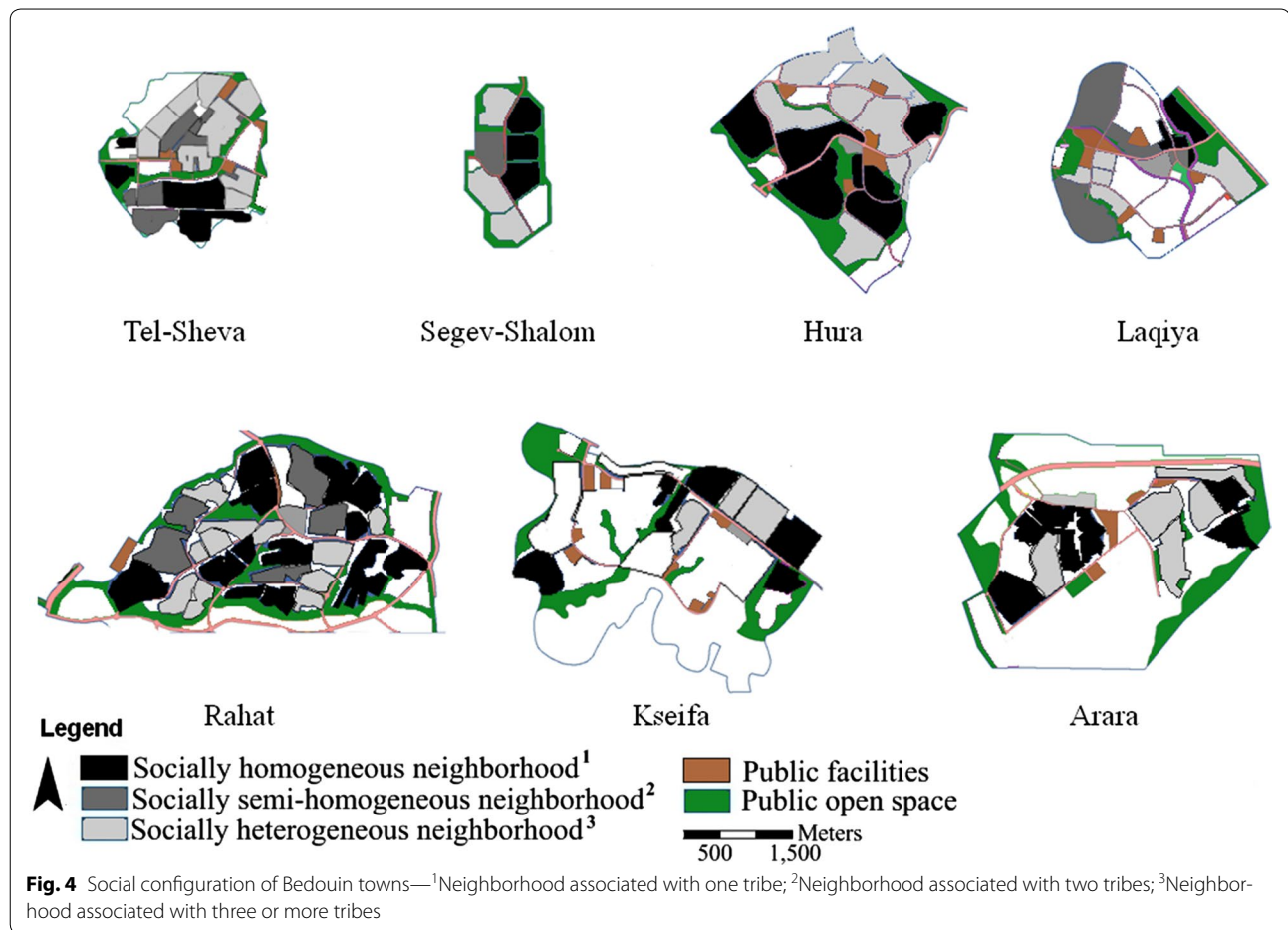


figure brings to light the significant degree of social-tribal encapsulation prevalent at the urban level.

During the five decades since the establishment of the first Bedouin town of Tel Sheva Bedouin urban population grew many folds (from only 150 residents in 1970, to 6300 in 1980, 35,200 in 1990, 73,000 in 2000, and 113,400 in 2010) currently accounting for about 60 % of all Bedouin residing in the Negev (Negev Bedouin statistical data book 2011). For many of the residents, those who experienced the rural to urban transition first hand, resettlement in the towns meant acclimation to a new social and physical environment, foreign and at times at odds with the traditional and spontaneous village settings they had left behind. As shown above, some socially oriented considerations of tribal segregation were incorporated into the towns' planning and settling process. However traditional mechanisms of socio-spatial self-organization that gradually brought into shape rural residential complexes, private and public spaces, spatial



ranges of mobility, and enabled economic and other everyday activities were replaced by externally conceived modernistic creations of compact and uniform, rigidly zoned and spatially segmented urbanity.

Negotiating tribalism in Bedouin urbanity

A number of aspects associated with the Bedouin rural to urban transition and the interplay between the physical layout of the towns (as shaped at the planning stage) and their tribal oriented social structure (as shaped in the settling stage) play a significant role in urban Bedouin residency experience. The Bedouin towns both allow for in-group (Bedouin) versus out-group (Jewish) reification and concretization; at the same time, within the towns, tribal structures are (re)aligned, solidified, and further maintained.

These include, for examples, tribal heterogeneity and residential segregation that directly relate to the socio-spatial composition of the towns, as well as certain aspects of tribal homogeneity and conformity across neighborhoods and residential spaces. While traditional and spontaneous villages are associated, often

exclusively, with a particular tribal community and its territory, Bedouin towns absorb multiple tribal communities, each with its own spatial enclaves. Such enclaves strengthen, on the one hand, intra-tribal cohesion and on the other hand inter-tribal segregation, turning the urban landscape into a fractured space of disassociated communities (El Asam 2012). They also bring to the fore inter-tribal relations and socio-cultural practices that bear on residents' intra-urban ranges of mobility, as right-of-access to residential areas and public facilities within them is granted according to tribal affiliation (Al Huzil 2012).

Dinero has argued that the forced de-territorialization of the Bedouin was, *prima facie*, an attempt to also "de-Bedouinize" the community (2010: 123–27). This meant, in effect, to both separate the Bedouin from the land, and to also break down tribal affiliations, orientations, and identities—relative to one another in terms of who they are, Arabs and Muslims, and who they are not, Jews. And yet, he shows, such affinities and tribal affiliations have been further concretized in the new town setting; tribe and background remains an especially pronounced social

and economic indicator in the urban setting (see Dinero and Steven 2010 throughout).

Segregated neighborhoods allow residents to preserve a strong tribal identity and through such identity what Sack (1986) classifies in his study of human territoriality as a 'social definition of spatial relations'. As the decision to move to the towns is mostly taken in the framework of the extended family or tribe and is conceived in utilitarian terms of improved quality of life and access to services (though other factors include forced resettlement, Dinero and Steven 2010) residents' spatial affiliation or sense of place continues to be informed by tribal membership. Hence rather than adopting a Western-oriented urban citizenry identity, residents' socio-spatial orientation is maintained through the social unit of the tribe and the spatial unit of the neighborhood. When residents migrate to new heterogeneous neighborhoods opportunities arise for the construction of new socio-spatial orientations based on more individualistic urban identities (Abu Sahiban 2012), but also as studies show may birth a growing sense of placelessness (Ben-Israel 2009; Karplus 2010).

Residents of the heterogeneous neighborhoods need also adjust their everyday conduct having lost the safe zones of tribally segregated space. Of great concern is the preservation of women's chastity and privacy as well as the need to manage frequent social interactions among neighbors outside the kin-group who share the residential area. Mechanisms of avoiding conflict through the reduction of unwanted interactions (both face-to-face and through line-of-sight) include spatial and temporal channelling of movement that regulate mobility (Al Huzil 2012), and different forms of seclusion ranging from high fences around residential lots to strict dress code for women (the veil being a symbolic form of seclusion).

Given such difficulties, it is not surprising that surveys of urban Bedouin attitudes toward housing policies (Abu-Saad et al. 2004) suggest that 70 % of residents favor tribal segregation. The reason being, as conveyed by our interviewees, is that living among extended families ensures property and personal safety as well as group integrity (Al Huzil 2012; El Assam 2012). Yet, in the tribally heterogeneous urban environment, maintaining tribal cohesion and collective codes of uncompromising group loyalty and mutual responsibility raises another challenging issue. Abu-Saad et al. (2004, 105) note that "when extended families were concentrated in one small area [tribally segregated neighborhoods], sometimes even small conflicts, such as disagreement between school children, would spark a much larger and more serious conflict involving the entire extended families". As often the case, when such conflicts spiral into lethal blood-feuds, barricades and roadblocks are set-up

between and across neighborhoods to prevent unwanted encounters. In extreme situations, entire neighborhoods are abandoned as hundreds of residents seek temporary refuge in other Bedouin towns or villages, school children are prevented from attending tribally integrated schools, and municipal services grind to a halt.

The 'tribe' as illustrated above, had informed (to some extent at least) local outline schemes and detailed building plans conceived by architects and urban planners, was a major organizing consideration in the settling process of Bedouin towns, and continues to have a significant impact on urban residency experience. So much so, that the modern urban scheme of flows between private and public areas, between neighborhoods and town centers turned into a fragmented tribal space, an urbanity of segregation, disconnection and exclusion. Under agropastoral economy the tribe as a social organization fulfills a vital role as a subsistence-enabling territorially-associated collective, where, through occupancy and defense of a collective territory tribal members gain direct access to land, water and pasture resources.

The rural-to-urban transition has presented itself as a move from land-based economy to wage labor making this traditional role seemingly obsolete (Meir 1997; Karplus 2010). This however is not the case. The tribe has adapted its role to the urban environment and continues to provide its members with important social safety nets and benefits. On the neighborhood level extended-family and tribal members support each other in house construction through financial aid, materials and labor. Similarly, as many residents struggle daily with unemployment and persistent poverty (Abu-Bader and Gottlieb 2009); isolation, extreme poverty and homelessness are averted by the sharing of resources among extended-families (Abu-Saad et al. 2004). In the tribal neighborhood children are safe to play under the watchful-eye of neighboring family members, and the elderly and people with disabilities are cared for and closely integrated within the community (Abu Bader 2010).

However it is perhaps on the urban level and in municipal politics that the tribe comes through in its greatest extent as a source of collective power. In 1989 Rahat was granted a local council independent municipal status and held its first local elections. This was followed for Tel Sheva in 1993 and for Kseifa, Segev Shalom, Arara, Laqiya and Hura in 2000. Since then and every 5 years the mayor's office and council seats in the Bedouin towns became an arena of inter-tribal struggle for control over the municipality and its resources. When residents come to the ballot in local elections as Ben-David and Gonen (2001) argue, the tribal element overrides liberal and democratic notions of 'the greater good' or candidates' qualifications and abilities in favor of much narrower

kin-group interests. Nassasra (2013) a resident of Laqiya colorfully describes such politics saying “here, everyone knows that if you run a donkey from a large enough tribe to office, it will win the elections”.

There are a number of important advantages for the tribe or tribal coalition that controls the local council, as the governing body sees itself foremost accountable for the advancement of its own electorate. First, the municipalities are a significant employer in Bedouin towns and the jobs they provide for their tribal members offer much needed reliable income. In particular, the municipalities have great influence on the selection of teachers and other kindergarten and school employees (currently numbering ~4000, Negev Bedouin statistical data book 2011). While these are formally recruited by the ministry of education on a strict basis of personal qualification, the ministry often exercises extreme flexibility in favoring the municipalities’ candidates even if these are underqualified (Abu-Saad 2013). Municipal tenders for civil engineering works, school transportation, waste disposal and sanitation services and provision of goods are another area where tribal members can gain from the loyalty of successful council candidates (Abu Sriharan 2012).

A third advantage relates to the development of the towns’ physical infrastructure and the provision of services. Bedouin municipalities are ranked continuously at the bottom of Israel’s local councils’ socio-economic index (Central Bureau of Statistics 2012). The underdeveloped state of their local economies affects the ability of municipalities to meet the urban-wide demand for the development and maintenance of public infrastructure and services. Given inadequate municipal funds the predicament of governing body officials where to pave roads and sidewalks, develop playgrounds, parks and commercial areas, build new kindergartens, schools or mosques and maintain such infrastructure is answered by the transfer of scarce resources to their own socio-spatially segregated tribal neighborhoods (Karplus 2010). Such uneven-development further atomizes the urban landscape and everyday residents’ urban experiences along neighborhood and tribal fault lines.

Conclusions and directions for further research

The enduring resilience of tribalism in the urban setting owes much to its continued role in providing a committed network of mutual aid as well as offering its members, as in traditional agro-pastoral settings, the potential of gaining access and controlling economic resources in an environment of scarcity and competition. We suggest that both tribal and individualistically based social organizations are ‘institutional alternatives’ (Salzman 1980) between which Bedouin society may shift in response to pressures and exigencies. Contrary to established

criticism against the culturally insensitive, procedural top-down planning of Bedouin towns (cf. Dinero and Steven 2010; Fenster 1999, 2005), we argue that the conceived and planned modernistic layout of the towns, their social heterogeneity, population size and density as well as the move from rural agro-pastoral to urban wage-labor economy had indeed presented Bedouin tribes with a more individualistic centered alternative for social organization.

And yet, to date, the latter has not been adopted due largely to housing policies that informed the settling stage of the rural to urban transition. Early on, and in response to Bedouin requests, the AANB began designating neighborhoods to specific tribes and housing lots were offered according to tribal affiliations. While such practice may have facilitated the initiation of Bedouin urbanization and was in line with government policy of mass resettlement, it also placed substantial challenges on the development of an urban society according to the western-ideals that informed urban planning.

The inherent tensions such housing policy had created between form, function and social milieu make residents’ everyday experiences a far cry from that envisioned ideal of a modern urban society. Ethnic, religious, and other aspects of difference found between Israel’s dominant Jewish-centered planning establishment and the Bedouin community at large have created challenges which, though perhaps not unique to the Negev case, certainly impact it in ways which are relevant and, to a great degree, extraordinary.

On a more general level, the potential conflicts between the processes of top-down planning and bottom-up adaptive reactions raise fundamental questions of the role of architects and urban planners: to what degree can formal planning incorporate distinct understandings of social and spatial organization? And, what ethical boundaries, if any, should be placed on top-down planning as an agent inducing local reactions and social transformations. Such considerations are important not only in relation to Negev Bedouin processes of urbanization but also on very different contexts of cross-societal planning initiatives.

The issue of urban tribalism is a significant one in Israel not only with regard to the challenges facing the residents of the established seven towns but also vis a vis the current resurgence of old state policy of resettling the Negev Bedouin in governmentally planned towns. For the past two decades, Bedouin subaltern insurgent civil action (Meir 2005), and a number of state committees and study reports (Duchan 2010; Goldberg Commission 2008; Prawer Report 2011), have led to the recognition that there is a need to establish more settlements for Bedouin residing in the Seyag area.

Eleven new settlements earmarked for specific tribes are currently at various stages of planning for populations ranging between 1000 and 5000 residents each. Tenders released in 2013 by NBSA seek further planning and settling solutions for the rest of the nonurbanized Bedouin. This population of ~50,000 currently resides in 34 formally unrecognized traditional and spontaneous villages and dozens of smaller extended-family farms and hamlets within an area of 1160 km². According to the tenders, planning and resettlement solutions may include new neighborhoods in one of the seven Bedouin towns or establishing new independent settlements. However, the latter option is contingent on not being in conflict with land-use and zoning constraints informed by the district master plan (NBSA 2013) leaving very little room for its actual materialization.

Further research is essential in order to evaluate these evolving phenomena. As the resettlement agenda now approaches the 50th year of its inauguration, it is only appropriate that planners, scholars, and indeed the Bedouin themselves now look back in order to assess how far they've come—and for that matter, how much further they've yet to go.

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Appendix

See Table 2.

Table 2 Key events in Bedouin urbanization chronology 1948–2010 (adapted from Ben-David 2004)

Year	Event	Effect
1948	Israel takes control of the Negev	Migration of most Bedouin to Jordan and Egypt due to flight or deportation Establishment of military rule over the Bedouin Relocation of the remaining Bedouin to the <i>Seyag</i> zone
1948–current	The growth of non-formal villages by Bedouin in the <i>Seyag</i> zone	Considered by government as unauthorized settlements these settlements are denied services and under threat of demolition
1966	End of military rule	Freedom of movement beyond the <i>Seyage</i> boundaries. Greater education and work opportunities
1967	Establishment of Tel-Sheva, the first Bedouin town	Initiation of planned, governmentally induced re-settlement
1971	Establishment of Rahat	The intensification of urbanization
1979	Establishment of Segev-Shalom	The intensification of urbanization
1980	Parliament enacts the "Peace Law" in conjunction with the peace accord between Israel and Egypt	Relocation of 5000 Bedouin from Tel el-Maleh Planning of new settlements for the relocated Bedouin Government offers compromise and compensation to Bedouin issuing native title claims
1981/2	Execution of the "Peace Law"	The establishment of Kseifa and Arara for the Bedouin to Tel el-Maleh
1985	Establishment of Laqiya	The intensification of urbanization
1989	First local election in Rahat Establishment of Hura	The transfer of local authority to residents' hands
1993	Local elections	The transfer of local authority to residents' hands in Tel-Sheva Second elections in Rahat
1994	Rahat is officially announced as a city	Rahat reaches 20,000 residents, indication of the deepening urbanization process
1995	Government outlines a new plan to resolve Bedouin land claims tying compensation with urbanization	Plan rejected by the Bedouin as inadequate
1996	Establishment of the "Regional Council of Unrecognized Bedouin Villages" NGO	Bedouin offer a plan of their own to resolve land claims as well as gain government recognition of 45 non-formal villages
2000–current	Government agrees to recognize 11 Bedouin villages, granting them formal status and initiates their planning	11 villages are incorporated under a formal regional council headed by a Jewish appointed mayor

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