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Spatial Transformation and Indigenous Resistance

The Urbanization of the Palestinian Bedouin in Southern Israel

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Indigenous peoples share a history of exclusion from the dominant society decision-making processes that directly affect them, including their displacement and relocation, development initiatives, and the process of urbanization. This article begins with a review of indigenous experiences of and responses to urbanization in a number of nation-states throughout the world. It then examines the experience of the indigenous Palestinian Bedouin community in southern Israel, whose traditional lifestyle of land-based seminomadic pastoralism is being replaced by landless, labor force, government-planned urbanization. Issues of key importance to that process are explored, including the historical political context and state-indigenous relations, the conflict over land, and the settler-colonial vision inherent in the conceptualization and implementation of the urban models. Finally, Bedouin responses and resistance to the government's urbanization program are discussed.

Keywords: *forced urbanization; indigenous resistance; Palestinian Bedouin; Israel; colonialism; spatial transformation*

Although modern academic discourse has moved into an era of postcolonialism, New Zealand Maori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) points out that for indigenous peoples, the colonial era has not yet ended. Around the globe, we continue to confront evolving colonial strategies that threaten indigenous ways of life, lands, resources, and knowledge. These strategies run the gambit from extermination, removal, and reservations to assimilation and urbanization. This article begins with a review of indigenous experiences of and responses to urbanization in a number of nation-states throughout the world. It then provides an in-depth examination of the evolving Israeli policies toward the indigenous Palestinian Bedouin community of the Negev Desert in southern Israel, culminating in their forced urbanization.

Introduction: International Perspectives on the Urbanization of Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous peoples share a history of exclusion from the dominant society decision-making processes that directly affect them, including their displacement and relocation,

development initiatives, and the processes of urbanization. One of the major disruptive policies that indigenous peoples around the world have faced is their movement into urban environments. Often proposed as a way to help them, urbanization has not proven to be of much help in improving their overall economic status, and in many circumstances, has left them significantly worse off.

For most indigenous peoples, their relationship to the land is infused with economic, social, and spiritual significance, and as such, is central to their culture and overall way of life. Their urbanization is in most cases a colonial or postcolonial phenomenon. In some cases, however, urbanization predated the European colonial era, such as among the Aztecs in Central and South America, the Mississippians in North America, and numerous peoples in the Arabic/Islamic world (Forbes, 2001; Hourani, 1991; Neitzel, 1999; Swagerty, 2000). The traditional cultural forces that shaped urban planning and development in the precolonial era differed from those that were introduced with European colonization, so for both traditionally nonurban and urban indigenous groups, the level of cultural discord or congruence has been an important facet of the urban experience.

To examine the modern urban experience of indigenous peoples, we must look both at the factors that brought them into the urban setting, and at the development of those urban settings themselves. Some of the factors that drew indigenous peoples to urban areas are similar to those for the dominant population in general, such as the lack of economic opportunities in rural areas and the promise of better employment opportunities in the city, as well as the attraction of obtaining better services. For other indigenous peoples, deliberate official government plans and programs to urbanize them were also an important factor.

Generally, urbanization of indigenous people worldwide has followed Western models that have not been culturally appropriate. Bringing indigenous peoples into Western urban environments, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, is a radical change, potentially disruptive to their entire traditional social, cultural and economic systems. Efforts to recognize and then reduce the incongruence between traditional and Western lifestyles through incorporating indigenous participation at the highest levels of the planning process would be required to form supportive urban environments/economic development programs (Abu-Saad, 2003). A review of the history of indigenous urbanization demonstrates that this has rarely, if ever, been the approach to planning and development for indigenous peoples (Brown, 2001; Crough, Howitt, & Prichard, 1989; Dyck, 1997; Gibson, 1999; Graham & Peters, 2002; Kuper, Watts, & Davies, 1959/1960; Lynch, 1981; Neutze, 2000; Rakodi, 1995; Ross, 1987; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Satzewich, 1996). The colonialization process has excluded them from the circles of power in which such decisions are made, and, as a rule, has neither been understanding nor respectful of their cultures and traditions. Rather, colonial/immigrant planners and policymakers have approached indigenous peoples as an obstacle to be removed from the path of the development of the dominant society, an aberration to be assimilated, or a resource to be exploited.

Native Americans in the United States

Like other indigenous peoples, Native Americans have an intimate and long-standing connection to their traditional lands that transcends the conceptualization of land simply as a means of physical survival or subsistence. Land also ensures the cultural survival of Native peoples as distinct groups and nations, and many Native communities identify their origins as a distinct people with a particular geographic site (e.g., river, mountain, valley), which is a central feature of the group's religious and cultural worldview (Tsosie, 2001).

Both traditional Native relationships to land and traditional settlement patterns were severely disrupted in the United States, because of government policies aimed at the "extermination" of the Indian problem, and the forced relocation of most indigenous peoples onto reservations. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, policies toward Native Americans changed to promote assimilation and dependency, and their land base was further reduced by the federal government (Halverson, Puig, & Byers, 2002; Thornton, 2001).

In the United States, a major component of the effort to redistribute and assimilate Native American and First Nations peoples occurred through urbanization (Halverson et al., 2002). Although it is often assumed that most Native Americans live on reservations, more than two-thirds now live in urban areas (Lobo & Peters, 2001). The urbanization of Native Americans in the United States began in the 1950s, prior to which only 13% lived in urban areas. Beginning in 1952, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) arranged the relocation of thousands of Native American to urban areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Denver, Seattle, Oklahoma City, etc. under the Indian Relocation Act (Harris, 1999; Shumway & Jackson, 1995). As with the earlier policies such as the boarding schools, the aim of the Indian Relocation Act was to assimilate Native Americans into mainstream settler/immigrant American culture (Harris, 1999). Although the first generation of reservation Indians to be relocated by the BIA embraced the chance for economic opportunities that urban areas promised, the government offered no ongoing support in the difficult transition from rural to urban life. In the aftermath, 70% of the relocatees returned to the reservation (Fixico, 2000).

According to Jorgensen (1971), rural and urban areas of Native American settlement remained linked in a satellite-metropolis relationship that tended to perpetuate the underdevelopment on reservations and serve as a push factor for urban migration. Choice land was expropriated from reservations by white settlers. In their study of several southwestern Native American peoples in the early 1970s, Dobyns, Stoffle, and Jones (1975) found that where Native Americans retained control of the land and water resources needed for agricultural production (e.g., the Pueblo people at Colorado River Reservation who traditionally lived in nucleated settlements with an agrarian economic base), they were usually able to maintain their precolonization rural residential patterns and economic bases; but where they lost access to the factors of production, they were

obliged to seek out permanent or occasional wage labor opportunities, which was an impetus for urbanization.

Although the BIA promoted outmoded economic strategies for the reservations, family-run white businesses emerged on the peripheries of reservations. These businesses represented most of the local economic activity, but offered few if any economic opportunities for Native Americans (Harris, 1989, 1999). Furthermore, the physical infrastructure, such as major roads and railroads, was situated so as to serve the white settlers, rather than the reservations. As a result of this multifaceted and protracted process of impoverishment, rural Native Americans were found to suffer from an array of negative socio-economic factors, including low per capita incomes, substandard, overcrowded housing, and malnutrition, all of which were transported with them when they moved from rural to urban areas (Harris, 1999; Jorgensen, 1971).

The migration of American Indians to urban settings belatedly led to the development of urban Indian social service and community organizations, most of which were staffed by whites until the mid-1960s, many of whom had strong assimilationist biases (Jones, 1987). The assimilationist policy failed, however, because external threats forced urban Indians to bond together, rather than to blend into the mainstream. The second generation of migrant Indians tended to stay in the city, and, ironically became the founders of influential political/activist movements, such as Red Power and the American Indian Movement (Fixico, 2000). Native American community-run organizations began to emerge and flourish in the late 1960s and 1970s under the federal New Frontier/Great Society programs, which emphasized more community control of social services. The Indian Self-Determination Act in the mid-1970s made provision for increased local community autonomy and included funds that were earmarked exclusively for Native American communities. During the 1980s, however, federal support for Native American programs was cut back, and block grants were introduced to support social services. This led to financial crises for some community-run organizations, and to a decline in Native American participation and community organization in social service delivery and cultural support and continuity (Weibel-Orlando, 1991). Also, during the late 1980s, there was a marked out-migration of elderly urban Indians back to their rural homes.

Cultural conflicts represent one of the most enduring dilemmas for urban indigenous adjustment and economic mobility in the United States, as second- and third-generation urban Native Americans face hostile schools, neighborhoods and workplaces (Fixico, 2000). Alienation and impoverishment have characterized much of their urban experience. The indigenous population of the United States, urban as well as rural, is still characterized by widespread socio-economic underdevelopment. The Native American population is poorer and at greater risk than the nation's mainstream population. The proportion of Native American families living below the official poverty level is almost 3 times that of all families taken together, and their per capita income is less than half that of whites (Miller, 1998).

However, urbanization has not brought about their cultural demise. Instead, urban Native American communities have become increasingly resilient and resourceful, not only politically and socially, as mentioned above, but also culturally (Fixico, 2000; Lang, 2001). Pan-Indian organizations and traditions that intermix those of reservation and tribal communities have developed in urban areas, drawing together Native Americans from different nations/tribes (Fixico, 2000; Harris, 1999; Lang, 2001). In addition, rather than being cut off from their cultural and social roots in the reservation communities, urban Indians have developed and maintained important symbiotic connections to them. The largest Native American populations are found in urban areas that are close to reservations and that were the focus of Indian relocation under the BIA program (Shumway & Jackson, 1995), and the rural-urban relationship continues to be bidirectional with many urban youth returning to the reservation to learn and practice their traditional ways. Urban Native Americans, in turn, have been key contributors to many of the advancements for Native peoples in recent decades in education, health, land claims, and other struggles, which have directly benefited the residents of the reservations (Lang, 2001).

First Nations Peoples in Canada

The European colonization and settlement of Canada was accompanied by the negotiation of treaties, which, according to Ladner (2001), established the terms of the relationship between coexisting and codependent sovereignties by granting some of the Aboriginal nations' powers to the British Crown or its representative, the colonial government authority, in exchange for specific benefits and rights. As the colonial project proceeded, these treaties were in fact ignored, misunderstood, and obscured by colonial authorities (Ladner, 2001). As characterized by Graham and Peters (2002), the treaties resulted in the transfer of lands to the Crown, with a provision for "reserved lands" and accompanying rights (e.g., hunting and gathering) for Aboriginal peoples. Peters (1995) argues that Aboriginals have historically been "put in their place" in Canada, by means of the reserve system.

The process of Aboriginal migration to urban areas began in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Satzewich, 1991). Whereas in 1951, only about 7% of the Aboriginal population (who include First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples) lived in cities, the 1996 Census revealed that this number had grown to nearly 50% (Graham & Peters, 2002; Kendall, 2001). This population is culturally diverse, representing many distinct Aboriginal cultural groups. According to Graham and Peters, "for contemporary Aboriginal people, the pattern of migration is not one of the depletion of reserves and rural areas as populations move to urban areas. Instead there is circulation between reserves/rural areas and urban areas" (2002, p. 13). Much of the European-immigrant Canadian population is unaware of the extent to which Aborigines have become urbanized, whereas local and national governments have given their particular needs little thought in policy and program decisions (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

Whereas hopes of better economic opportunities and higher quality services have drawn Native people to the city, the city has not always fulfilled its promise of a better life for them. They are markedly disadvantaged in comparison to their non-Aboriginal neighbors. Their educational level is lower, with 48% of urban Aboriginal people not completing high school and 6% obtaining a university degree, compared to 33% and 17%, respectively among non-Aboriginal people. Nearly half of the urban Aboriginal population had incomes below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off, compared to 21% of the urban non-Aboriginal population. In most cities, the poverty rates of Aboriginal people were higher than that of any other visible minority, and in all cities they are over-represented among the poor relative to their population numbers (Graham & Peters, 2002).

The federal nature of governance in Canada has exacerbated some of the problems encountered by Aboriginal peoples in urban settings. When Canada became a federal state in 1867, the federal government was assigned responsibility for the Aboriginal peoples and their land reserves (Graham & Peters, 2002). Each province was given responsibility for the public lands, service provision and municipal administration in its own jurisdiction. Because of this division of responsibilities, federal services provision to indigenous people has historically been limited to those on reserves and denied to those living in urban settings. The provinces, which have administrative responsibilities for the cities, have no direct responsibility for indigenous peoples, and have tended to take the position that Aboriginal people who choose to live off-reserve should be treated as citizens of the province like all others; though this has begun to change in recent years, on a province-by-province basis, with the development of programs and policies for the urban Aboriginal population (Graham & Peters, 2002).

Aboriginal political organizations on the national and provincial levels have become active in the urban context, though because they tend to represent particular Aboriginal groups, there is no general body representing urban Aboriginal people (Graham & Peters, 2002). In addition, there are urban Aboriginal service providers working in the areas of housing and other service and support activities who have knowledge and experience in successful program development and administration. At the same time, these organizations have had very limited involvement in advocacy and policy development because the political Aboriginal organizations view that as their domain. The charitable status of many of the service organizations restricts them from engaging in extensive advocacy work, and/or most service providers are heavily dependent on government funding with complex accounting procedures that spare virtually no organizational resources for advocacy or inter-organizational networking (Graham & Peters, 2002).

Graham and Peters (2002) identified one of the major challenges for urban localities in Canada as that of overcoming the cultural mismatch between Aboriginal and urban cultures, and assisting Aboriginal people to both maintain their own cultures

while at the same time adapting to an urban and industrial way of life. Graham and Peters stated that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples:

. . . found that maintaining Aboriginal cultures and identities was important to urban Aboriginal peoples, but that they faced particular challenges associated with lack of access to people (especially elders), places (especially the land) and practices (especially ceremonies) important to cultural survival. They also faced challenges because of perceived hostility toward Aboriginal cultures in many urban areas. . . . Reinforcing and supporting cultural identities, practices and institutions are also important. (2002, p. 21)

Although there has been a tendency to associate reserves and rural communities with cultural survival and urban communities as places of economic opportunity at the cost of cultural demise, Newhouse (2000) asserts that urbanization of the Aboriginal population is occurring along with the reinforcement of cultural identities. Aboriginal people are reformulating Western institutions and practices to support their culture and identities, so that they can survive as distinct peoples in contemporary societies. As such, Graham and Peters (2002) stress that approaches to changing urban Aboriginal marginalization cannot succeed without attention to creating strong cultural identities at the same time.

Aboriginal peoples in Canada do not share the same level of socio-economic development as the average Canadian, or even have access to the same opportunities. As Dale Booth, Director of Economic Development for the Assembly of First Nations stated, "Measures must be taken to ensure that one of the most successful countries in the world does not continue to have a 'third world' within its borders" (Kendall, 2001, p. 49). Strategies to improve socioeconomic conditions of Natives include improving access to capital, resources, capacity and training, and markets, with emphasis on securing start-up capital, regaining control of lands and resources, developing their own financial institutions, developing partnerships with both native and nonnative businesses, increasing involvement in the global economy, and developing an educated and skilled workforce and a rich entrepreneurial base. But above all, these strategies must not be implemented at the expense of cultural values and self-determination (Kendall, 2001).

Because the economic opportunities will largely occur in an urban setting, which has proven to be the most destructive of these other values, the challenge is to formulate an Aboriginal urban policy that can finally make these goals compatible. More specifically, there is a fundamental need for the federal government to become actively involved with and provide support to all First Nations governments as they deal more directly with their off-reserve people (Graham & Peters, 2002). Creating space for Aboriginal culture and perspectives to contribute to the livability and desirability of the city as a whole, can also be an important key to the future economic development particularly of the Western Canadian cities where the Aboriginal population makes up a significant proportion of the total urban population (Graham & Peters, 2002).

Aboriginal Peoples in Australia

Prior to the European colonization of Australia, Aboriginals lived as nomadic peoples. Because they were hunters and gatherers, they moved seasonally to where food was available. They also moved for cultural reasons, such as attending large meetings of clans or groups of extended families for religious and ceremonial purposes. In addition, individuals moved because they had traditional land ownership rights and the responsibility to look after land that was at some distance from where they usually lived (Neutze, 2000). For Aboriginal peoples, land was, and remains, of central importance as the spiritual and symbolic basis of existence, which emanates throughout local cultures and provides emotional sustenance, aside from its value as a means of physical production or subsistence. The return to ancestral lands and tracks (e.g. traditional pathways) is vital for uniting living groups with their ancestors and sustaining their lives in the future (Yengoyan, 2001).

The British who colonized Australia adopted a doctrine of *terra nullius*, or territory belonging to no one, under which the land was considered to be empty of property rights, so all of the laws, rights and customs that existed before European settlement were disregarded (Howitt, 2001; Minnery, Manicaros, & Lindfield, 2000). Thus, unlike the colonial-indigenous relations in North America, the British colonizers of Australia made no allowance for indigenous sovereignty through the signing of treaties (Gibson, 1999; Howitt, 2001; Yengoyan, 2001). This resulted in major displacement of the indigenous population, and wreaked havoc on their traditional way of life.

As a further result of the European settlement of Australia, many Aboriginals were displaced from their land that was valuable for European farming. These policies culminated in a series of confrontations, massacres and roundups across the continent, with the military becoming involved in hunting and capturing Aboriginals to physically render the land "empty" in keeping with the new colonial maps (Gibson, 1999). When it became evident that the indigenous population was not going to die out, the government decided that it should be separated from the nonindigenous population through the creation of Aboriginal reserves. These church mission or government funded and controlled reserves and settlements were often in remote areas where they would be out of sight and out of mind, and certainly far enough away not to threaten the comfort and livestock of the settlers and those living in the towns (Heppell & Wigley, 1981; Neutze, 2000). The governments and missions placed their indigenous wards in relatively large, permanent settlements, which was the easiest type of living arrangement for them to administer. These settlements included people from very different kinship groups and required services (e.g. water and waste disposal systems) that had not been needed in the traditional Aboriginal settlements, which were both small and temporary (Neutze, 2000).

In the post-World War II period, the government developed assimilationist and integrationist policies, designed to homogenize the Aboriginals into wider Australian society (Crough, Howitt, & Prichard, 1989; Gibson, 1999). Thus, attempts were

made to get Aborigines out of the reserves and integrated into the dominant society by providing them with housing scattered throughout nonindigenous urban areas (Neutze, 2000). As a consequence, much of the Aboriginal population became urbanized; a process which, rather than succeeding to smoothly assimilate the Aborigines into the dominant society, gave rise to a new array of problems in the urban context. As of 1994, 70% of Australia's indigenous population lived in urban areas, whereas 30% lived in rural areas (Neutze, 2000). It remains a distinct sector of the population, which differs from that of the mainstream population of Australia in that it is disproportionately young, poor and unemployed (Minnery, Manicaros, & Lindfield, 2000). Furthermore, indigenous families are 20 times more likely than nonindigenous families to be homeless, and 4 times as likely to live in overcrowded conditions (Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commission, 1994).

Similar to the indigenous urbanization experiences in the United States and Canada, assimilationist policies that inspired the push toward urbanization of the Aborigines failed to destroy the last remnants of indigenous identity. Instead, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the organized Aboriginal land struggle attained national prominence, and a national referendum in 1967 led to the recognition of Aborigines as citizens of Australia (Gibson, 1999). The 1973-1974 Woodward Royal Commission into indigenous land claims eventually led to the passage of Aboriginal land rights legislation at the territorial and national levels, and to the creation of the official federal policy of indigenous self-determination; though the implementation both of the land rights legislation and the self-determination policy have been limited by many constraints (Gibson, 1999; Howitt, 2001). For example, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, which was established in response to the Woodward Royal Commission as an instrument of self-determination to address the critical problems of poverty and marginalization among the Aborigines, became another governmental bureaucracy in which policies and funding priorities continued to be formed by nonindigenous public servants responsible to their minister, rather than to the constituency they served (Gibson, 1999; Rowley, 1986). Because of its shortcomings, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was dissolved in 1989, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was established in its place to advance Aboriginal development and self-determination by delegating decision making to a new structure of regional councils composed of regionally-elected indigenous members (Gibson, 1999). This has resulted in some positive developments, such as the Community Housing Program, which is managed by local indigenous housing organizations.

The broader question of self-directed indigenous development remains problematic. There have been several major criticisms of the ATSIC because: (a) it bases leadership on elected representation, thus excluding traditional Aboriginal political-representative structures under which leadership is not won, but rather earned through knowledge, experience, initiation, and/or age, and possibly based on kinship relations; and, (b) the ATSIC regional council boundaries cross over or amalgamate culturally heterogeneous groups without regard for important tribal

and spatial differences or traditional land ownership (Gibson, 1999; Rowse, 1992). Another developmental problem not resolved by the ATSI structure of regional councils relates to how to operate in the predominantly non-Aborigine urban areas in which 70% of Aborigines live.

To summarize this review, indigenous peoples in settler states such as the United States, Canada, and Australia continue to occupy subordinate and disadvantaged positions within the dominant societies. Many have become urbanized in search of better economic opportunities. However, social indicators have shown that even in urban contexts in relation to nonindigenous peoples, indigenous peoples have lower incomes, lower rates of labor force participation, higher rates of unemployment, lower rates of life expectancy, lower levels of general health status, higher rates of incarceration in federal and provincial prisons, and higher rates of welfare dependency (Kendall, 2001; Satzewich, 1991). The causal factors associated with Native underdevelopment are numerous and complex, including loss of land and sovereignty, cultural genocide, lack of education, and job market discrimination. Removal and alienation from traditional lands, through extermination and then assimilation programs (including urbanization) were undoubtedly major factors leading to Native economic and cultural decline. According to Notzke, "It is difficult if not impossible to overemphasize the importance of land to Aboriginal people. Land is one of the most important (if not the most important) sources of self-identification for native people" (1994, p. 173). Former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Ovide Mercredi said, in relation to the social problems that plague many First Nations communities that, "This is what happens when you take people off their land. They become totally dependent on the other society for their well being, and this is a powerless position that breaks their spirits" (Kendall, 2001, p. 48).

Nevertheless, the assimilationist thrust of the indigenous urbanization programs has, by and large, failed. Urban indigenous communities have retained connections to their rural communities and have developed new means of affirming their identities and cultures in the urban context. In addition, they have developed political organizations that have played a key role in placing indigenous issues on the national agenda and advancing the process of decolonization vis-à-vis the dominant society.

The Colonial Legacy in Palestine/Israel among the Indigenous Palestinian Bedouin

Throughout the Middle East, the indigenous desert-dwelling Bedouin have formed an integral component of Arab society. As the Arab world went through the colonial and formally "postcolonial" eras, no community was so dramatically affected as that of the Bedouin. This was particularly true of the Palestinian Bedouin community in

Israel. In addition to the changes brought about by global processes of “modernization,” this community was greatly affected by the European-based Zionist movement to settle Palestine, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, and the subsequent transformation of the indigenous Palestinian Arab population into a minority in a Western/European-oriented, Jewish state. The following sections review the colonial roots of the central vision of the Zionist movement, and then focus on the indigenous Palestinian Bedouin community of the Negev Desert in southern Israel and its experiences of displacement, restriction and urbanization in the Israeli settler state.

The Colonial Roots of the Zionist Policy to Settle Palestine

The Zionist movement began in Europe in the late 1800s with goal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. It was based on the premise that Palestine was a territory that belonged exclusively to the Jewish people because of their presence on the land during biblical times. The Jewish settlement of Palestine was thus presented as an ideological and moral project that also provided a solution to the dilemma of anti-Semitism that had plagued the Jews in their European Diaspora communities (Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). At the same time, it developed in the era of and under the auspices of European colonialism, and adopted many of the same attitudes toward colonizing lands and their indigenous peoples. Edward Said (1978) used the term “Orientalism” to describe and critique the European outlook on the world of its colonial adventures. Primarily, he critiqued the way in which the Western economic, political, and academic powers developed a dichotomized discourse in which an inherently superior West was juxtaposed with an Eastern Other according to terms and definitions determined by the West itself. Orientalists created an image of the Orient as separate, backward, silently different, irrational, passive, and characterized by despotism and resistance to progress. Because the Orient’s value was judged in terms of, and in comparison to the West, it was always the Other, the conquerable and the inferior.

Orientalism lent crucial support to the colonial endeavor of a “superior” Europe conquering and bringing enlightenment, progress, and civilization to the inferior (if not even subhuman), unenlightened inhabitants of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas, and Australia. This was evident during the British Mandate rule over Palestine (1920 to 1948), and in the positive attitudes of European/British leaders toward the European Jewish settlement of Palestine. For example, when the question of the potential injustice of displacing indigenous Palestinians to establish a Jewish state in Palestine was raised, Winston Churchill responded:

I do not agree that the dog in a manger has the final right to the manger, even though he may have lain there for a very long time. . . . I do not admit that a wrong has been done these people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher grade race, or at any rate, a more world-wise race . . . has come in and taken their place. (Prior, 1999, p. 192)

European colonialism both supported and shaped the thinking of the Zionist founders, including the father of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, who stated that the Zionist movement aspired to establish a permanent “enclave of European culture in the midst of the barbarous East” (Morris, 1998, p. 43). European Orientalist depictions of Palestinian Arabs as less than fully or equally human were replicated by the European fathers of the Zionist movement. For example, when the head of the colonization department of the Jewish Agency asked Chaim Weizman what he thought about the indigenous Palestinians, Weizman was quoted as saying: “The British told us that there are some hundred thousand Negroes [*kushim*] and for those there is no value” (Masalha, 1997, p. 62). The Zionists also portrayed Palestine as a “land without a people, for a people without a land” (Masalha, 1997). Great efforts were required to make this fictional depiction of the country a reality, since at the time of the First Zionist Congress in 1897 the primarily agrarian Palestinian Arab community constituted 95% of the population, and owned and cultivated most of the country’s arable land, whereas Jews constituted only 5% of the population and owned 1% of the land (Khalidi, 1992; Prior, 1999). The Zionists strove both to achieve a Jewish majority by promoting Jewish immigration to Palestine and to transform it into a Jewish state by giving it an exclusively Jewish character. David Ben-Gurion described exactly what he and his fellow Zionists meant by a Jewish state:

When we say “Jewish independence” or a “Jewish state” we mean Jewish country, Jewish soil, we mean Jewish labor, we mean Jewish economy, Jewish agriculture, Jewish industry, Jewish sea. We mean Jewish safety, security, independence, complete independence, as for any other free people. (Lustick 1980, p. 88).

Because, to the early Zionists, the Palestinian Arabs represented a non-European, inferior other, their overwhelming numbers in the future Jewish state represented a significant obstacle to their quest to establish a sovereign Western-oriented Jewish state. A prominent Zionist leader, Israel Zangwill, drawing from the Orientalist discourse of the British regarding the indigenous Palestinian Arabs, wrote:

If Lord Shaftesbury was literally inexact in describing Palestine as a country without a people, he was essentially correct, for there is no Arab people living in intimate fusion with the country, utilising its resources and stamping it with characteristic impress; there is at best an Arab encampment.” (Masalha, 1997, p. 62)

Such pronouncements by leading Zionists promoted the notion of an empty territory—empty, as Masalha explains, not necessarily in the actual absence of inhabitants, but rather, in the sense of a “civilisational barrenness,” which was then used to justify Zionist colonization, and the delegitimization of the native population as a people, belonging to that particular place (Masalha 1997; Prior, 1999).

Impact of the 1948 War and the Israeli Military Government

The events immediately prior to, during and after the 1948 war resulted in the exodus/expulsion of more than 80% of the Palestinian Arab population in Israeli-held territory (Masalha, 1992; Morris, 2004; Pappé, 2006). Senior Zionist statesman, Chaim Weitzman, declared this Palestinian exodus “a miraculous simplification of Israel’s tasks” (Lustick, 1980, p. 28), though given the many Zionist plans dealing with the issue of transfer, there is little that is miraculous about this dramatic demographic transformation (Masalha 1992; Prior 1999). Revisionist Israeli historians, such as Simha Flapan (1987), Ilan Pappé (2006), Avi Shlaim (1995), and Benny Morris (2004), concluded that although Ben-Gurion was careful not to go on record as supporting the “transfer” of the Palestinian Arabs, his ultimate aim to evacuate as many of them as possible from the Jewish state was revealed by the variety of means he used to achieve this purpose. The most decisive of these was the destruction of more than 400 entire villages and the eviction of their inhabitants even if they did not participate in the war. This included the expulsion of roughly 80 to 85% of the indigenous Negev Palestinian Bedouin population to the surrounding territories/countries (West Bank, Gaza, Jordan), which reduced their numbers of 95,000 in 1947 to approximately 11,000 by the end of the 1948 war (Alafenish, 1987; Falah 1989; Yiftachel 2003, 2006). Of the original 95 tribes inhabiting the Negev, only 19 remained in sufficient numbers to receive official recognition from the Israeli government (Falah, 1989).

The Israeli authorities imposed a military government on the areas of the country that had large indigenous concentrations. The regulations of the military government typified traditional imperialist attitudes for dealing with the native population of a colony. They gave the authorities extensive and extremely rigorous powers, and their enforcement resulted in the nearly complete loss of individual freedoms and property rights. They impinged on virtually every aspect of life, from control over freedom of speech, movement, the means of transportation, and freedom of press to the expropriation of property (Jiryis, 1976).

The most notorious of the military regulations regarding indigenous Palestinian rights to property was article 125, which granted

. . . the military governor the power to proclaim any area or place a forbidden [closed] area . . . which no one can enter or leave without . . . a written permit from the military commander or his deputy . . . failing which he is considered to have committed a crime. (Jiryis, 1976, p. 17)

Using these expanded powers, the Israeli authorities closed most of the land in the Negev to the Bedouin, and forbid them from migrating seasonally with their herds

and cultivating their lands (Lustick, 1980). Twelve of the 19 Negev Bedouin tribes were removed from their lands, and the whole population was confined to a specially-designated restricted area (called the *Siyag*) in the northeastern Negev, which was known for its low fertility, and represented only 10% of the territory they inhabited before 1948 (Falah, 1989; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). In addition, the military regulations imposed on the Bedouin isolated them from the Palestinian Arab population in other parts of Israel, and required them to obtain special permits to leave their designated sections of the restricted area to access jobs, education, markets, health care services, etc. (Marx, 1967). These restrictions represented a form of forced sedentarisation, which virtually ended their traditional way of life.

During the tenure of the military government, the authorities also took great care to prevent the migration of the indigenous Bedouin out of the restricted area. Bedouin men who were given permits to work in the Jewish sector were not allowed to bring their families with them, thus ensuring their return to the restricted area. Even within the restricted area, a Bedouin of one tribe could not visit the area of another tribe without the permission of the military governor (Marx, 1967). The Israeli authority's record during this period was one of intimidation and violence, in which collective punishment against the Negev Bedouin was common. Falah (1985) documented several massacres, as well as several cases of expulsion of Bedouin after the establishment of the state. Jiryis (1976) maintained that, "More than any other group, the Negev Bedouin suffered the full and unrestrained harshness of military rule." (p. 122). As one indigenous Bedouin Shaykh stated:

The land expropriation and the forced expulsions without compensation or the right to return . . . brought the Bedouin to a situation which [was] difficult both psychologically and materially, and to a lack of security unlike anything they had previously known. (Lustick, 1980, p. 13)

Subsequent to their transfer to the restricted area, the indigenous Negev Bedouin were largely neglected by planning authorities for 20 years. No residential, agricultural, or economic development plans were prepared for this region. As a result, over the course of 20 years, dozens of Palestinian Bedouin villages were formed. The seven tribes that originally lived in the restricted area settled on their own lands, while those who had been transferred to the restricted area by the government settled in the areas in which they had been placed. These settlements were characterized by tin shacks, cabins, or tents because no permanent building activity (e.g., stone or concrete structures) was allowed in the restricted area (Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). These "spontaneous" (from the perspective of the State planning authorities) villages were denied recognition by the government, and as a consequence, were also denied basic infrastructure and services, such as electricity, running water, and roads (Abu-Saad, 2000; Marx, 2000; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006).

Colonization through “Judaization” of the Land

For the Bedouin, as for many other groups of indigenous peoples, the connection to the land goes deeper than Western conceptions of property ownership. As Shamir (1996) stated:

Several accounts indicate the complexity of the relationship between the Bedouin and the Negev’s land. Historically, Bedouins had their own legal mechanisms for deciding land ownership disputes and for acquiring, leasing, selling, inheriting, and marking a given area’s boundaries. The single most important point in all these accounts is the strong role that land ownership plays in constructing meaning and power in the lives of the Bedouins. The land is said to contain the personality of its owner and as such cannot be taken away even with changed circumstances or long periods of absence. (p. 235).

In traditional Negev Bedouin society, land was essential to basic economic survival, as well as to the social, cultural and religious framework of the community. Under Israeli rule, however, all of the land of the Negev was declared state land, and registered in its name, including some 1.2 million-2 million dunams owned and cultivated by the Bedouin Arab community (Abu-Saad, 2000; Falah, 1983, 1989; Lustick, 1980; Marx, 2000; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). Israel recognized virtually no indigenous land rights, both because most Bedouin did not have the written land ownership documentation which was required by the Israeli legal system (Shamir, 1996; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006), and because in most popular and academic Israeli accounts of the Negev desert, it was depicted as an empty space in which the Bedouin were only rootless nomads. Shamir (1996) explained that, as such:

Accounts of the relationship between Bedouins and land are almost entirely absent from Zionism’s “official story.” A host of historians, geographers, reporters, engineers, policymakers, and educators emphasize the rootless character of Bedouin life and describe the Bedouin as lacking the fundamental and constructive bond with the soil that marks the transition of humans in nature to humans in society (hence, for example, the distinction between “planned” and “spontaneous” settlements). One aspect of this official story emphasizes the emptiness of the Negev, whereas another aspect discovers the Bedouin nomads as part of nature. Both aspects ultimately converge into a single trajectory: an empty space that awaits Jewish liberation, and a nomadic culture that awaits civilization. (p. 236)

The Judaization of the land in Palestine has its roots in pre-1948 Zionist settlement methods that attempted to create contiguous chains of segregated Jewish localities, particularly in areas with an indigenous majority, such as the Galilee and the northeastern Negev (Yiftachel 1999b). Settlement in these regions was considered one of the valued achievements of Zionist activity. Because the Negev represented nearly 50% of the country’s total landmass, the northern portion of which (some 2,560,000 *dunums* or 640,000 acres) consisted of good soil suitable for irrigation, it was central to the Zionist settlement project. As David Ben-Gurion stated:

Negev land is reserved for Jewish citizens, whenever and where ever they want. . . . We must expel Arabs and take their places . . . and if we have to use force, then we have force at our disposal not in order to dispossess the Arabs of the Negev, and transfer them, but in order to guarantee our own right to settle in those places. (David Ben Gurion in a letter to his son, Amos, 5 October 1937; UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Report, 2003, p. 5)

After the establishment of Israel, the Judaization of “empty” land became official government policy, as noted in its first national plan in 1952:

Modern nations all over the world attempt to decentralize their population, so they do not become dependent on central congested cities. . . . In Israel this task is more urgent but also easier . . . because unlike Britain, we do not require to move existing populations, but simply settle new immigrants in the country’s *empty regions* [emphasis added]. Israel can thus decentralize its population to the north, Jerusalem corridor and Negev regions, as part of the only rational way to develop this country. (Yiftachel, 2003, p. 28)

In some respects the entire country became a frontier, and the glorification associated with settling the frontier assisted in the construction of a unified national Jewish identity, as well as in the actual conquest of the physical space in which that identity could be territorially constructed. These frontier regions were often internal places within the State, with predominantly indigenous Palestinian populations, over which the government attempted to assert its hegemony (Yiftachel 1999b). The Negev continued to be a major Zionist frontier icon, the Jewish settlement of which was passionately called for by Zionist leaders. Israeli’s first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, claimed that:

The people of Israel will be tested by the Negev . . . only by settling and developing the Negev can Israel, as a modern, independent and freedom-seeking nation, rise to the challenge that history put before us. . . . All of us—[Zionist] veterans and [new immigrants], young and old, men and women—should see the Negev as their place and their future and turn southwards. (Yiftachel, 2003, pp. 28-29)

The conquest and settlement, or Judaization of the land entailed its “de-Arabization.” Thus the relationship between the Palestinian Bedouin and their land was almost entirely expunged from Zionism’s official story. Following the war of 1948, David Ben-Gurion appointed a committee whose job was to provide Hebrew names to all places, mountains, valleys, springs etc., in the Negev. In a letter addressed to the members of the committee, Ben Gurion wrote the following:

We have to remove the Arabic names for political reasons; as much as we do not recognise the political ownership of the Arabs over the land we also do not recognise their spiritual ownership [of the land] and their names. (Benvenisti, 1997, p. 8-9)

The ongoing land expropriations that followed the initial wave of indigenous expulsions were (and continue to be) done through legal channels and were therefore transformed into an “acceptable” and “modern” way of cleansing the space in the Negev. In 1950, the Transfer of Property Law made the government custodian over the property of “absentee owners” many of whom were absentees because the Israeli government had removed them from their lands and forbid their return (Lustick, 1980). Then, in 1953 under the Land Acquisition Law, which was modeled after the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 and which did not officially recognize Bedouin landholdings, the state of Israel expropriated 93% of the Negev land (Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). It is important to note that it was only after the creation of the state of Israel that the old Ottoman land categories (of the Turkish empire) became powerful and effective means for expropriating land and denying the Bedouin access rights to communally shared grazing lands. No compensation was offered for these confiscated lands, as the land was required for “positive development needs.” Consequently, thousands of Bedouin who were not occupying their lands—as a direct result of their forced transfer to the restricted area—lost all of their rights to their land. In the meantime, the lands became a new home for the Jewish agricultural and urban settlements.

Moreover, the classification of Negev Bedouin lands as “state lands” gave their confiscation an unprecedented permanence because of the unique pattern of land ownership established in Israel. The Israel Lands Administration (ILA) administers state lands in Israel jointly with the Jewish National Fund (JNF), an international nongovernmental organization representing the interests of the Jewish people worldwide, rather than the interests of all citizens of the state of Israel. The awarding of quasi-governmental powers to the JNF with regard to “state land” administration in Israel has had grave consequences for the indigenous Palestinian population. As Yiftachel explained:

Israel created an institutional and legal land system under which confiscated land could not be sold. Furthermore, such land did not merely become state land, but a joint possession of the state and the entire Jewish people. This was achieved by granting extraterritorial organizations, such as the Jewish National Fund, the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Federation, a share of the state’s sovereign powers and significant authority in the areas of land, development and settlement. The transfer of land to the hands of unaccountable bodies representing the “Jewish people” can be likened to a “black hole” into which Arab land enters but cannot be retrieved. . . . Israel’s Arab citizens are currently prevented from purchasing, leasing, or using land in around 80% of the country. (Yiftachel, 1999a, pp. 372-373)

After the military government (and all of its restrictions on indigenous movement) was abolished in 1966, some Bedouin attempted to reclaim or return to their lands. This required the Bedouin to bring their land claims to an Israeli court and justify them under the Israeli legal system that had been superimposed on their territory and land holding traditions. The Bedouin raised four arguments as proof of their

ownership of the land: (a) that they worked and cultivated the lands for a long period and were in possession of official tax as well as traditional documents; (b) the Turkish government purchased approximately 2,000 dunums from the Azazmah tribe in 1900 to build the town of Be'er Sheva, thereby proving the Bedouin claims to the land; (c) the fact that the Israeli authorities recognized the purchasing claims of individual Jews in the Negev before 1948; and (d) that the Israeli authorities recognize Bedouin land ownership, but only when they agree to sell it to the state (Falah, 1989).

Because of the policies of Judaization of the land, the Palestinian Bedouin's attempts to win recognition for their historical land rights through the Israeli justice system have been unsuccessful. The court offers no protection for their lands. For example, in 1974 when the Al-Hawashleh family challenged the confiscation of 36,000 dunums (9,000 acres) of their land to establish the Jewish town Dimona, the court ruled that this land belonged to the state. Furthermore, the court accepted both arguments made by the state: firstly, that the Bedouin as nomads had no attachment to the lands and so could not possibly own them; and secondly, that these were state lands that the Bedouin had invaded (Al-Hawashleh, 1974).

Despite the government's unrelenting Judaization/de-Arabization land policies, the Bedouin continue to resist the confiscation of their land, and the tension involving Palestinian Bedouin land ownership remains a central issue. Ninety five percent of their land claims, covering approximately 800,000 dunums, have not been settled (Mena Commission, 1997). Half of these lands are in areas settled by Jews. The compromises reached so far between Negev Palestinian Bedouin and the state account for only 30,000 dunums. This low figure reflects the slow pace of the Israeli legal system, but also the on-going Palestinian Bedouin resistance to the next stage in the evolution of state policies, which attempted to link the settlement of land disputes with their relocation and urbanization (Yiftachel, 2003, 2006).

Forced Urbanization

In the late 1960s, the government formulated a program for the resettlement of the Negev Bedouin population into planned, urban-style settlements. The core rationale for the program of urban settlements was based on the ideological nature of spatial planning in Israel (Falah, 1989; Gradus & Stern, 1985; Kimmerling, 1982; Marx, 2000). Dispersion of the Jewish population throughout the land continued to be one of Israel's major national planning goals. Furthermore, Bedouin's widely dispersed settlement and extensive land use even within the restricted area, not to mention their land ownership claims, represented an obstacle to the ongoing Zionist conquest and cultivation of "frontier" desert areas (Gradus & Stern, 1985; Marx, 2000; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). Thus, the governmental plan to remove the Bedouin population from the land and settle them in higher density towns was designed to further decrease the

extent of their claim on the land and to stem their “spontaneous” settlement activities (Falah, 1989; Law-Yone, 2003; Marx, 2000; Shamir, 1996; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006).

On another level, by the 1960s, the rapidly developing Israeli economy required growing numbers of workers (Marx, 2000). As such, the unskilled Bedouin workforce, who would no longer have the land resources to maintain their traditional livelihood in urban-style towns, could participate as low-wage workers in the industrial and economic development of the Jewish towns in the Negev. As Moshe Dayan stated during his term as the minister of agriculture in 1963:

We should transform the Bedouins into an urban proletariat—in industry, services, construction, and agriculture. 88 per cent of the Israeli populations are not farmers, let the Bedouins be like them. Indeed, this will be a radical move which means that the Bedouin would not live on his land with his herds, but would become an urban person who comes home in the afternoon and puts his slippers on. His children would be accustomed to a father who wears trousers, does not carry a Shabaria [the traditional Bedouin knife] and does not search for head lice in public. The children would go to school with their hair properly combed. This would be a revolution, but it may be fixed within two generations. Without coercion but with governmental direction . . . this phenomenon of the Bedouins will disappear. (Shamir, 1996, p. 231)

The government-expressed rationale for this policy has been multifaceted and often cast in the benevolent light of desiring to “modernize” the Bedouin and enable more efficient provision of services. This rationale is belied by the fact an explicitly urban and highly concentrated settlement model was selected that represented the complete destruction of the Bedouin’s traditional lifestyle. If the goals of the government were in actuality only to modernize and provide the Bedouin with services more efficiently, both aims could have been achieved by planning small agricultural villages or cooperatives with a land base (such as the Jewish *moshavim* and *kibbutzim*) for the Bedouin. This would have coincided with Bedouin demands for their own development, and would not have required the complete alienation from their land and traditional lifestyle that urbanization entailed.

There were, in fact, strong cultural factors that made urban settlements unattractive to the indigenous Palestinian Bedouin. As Law-Yone (2003) explained:

Hierarchies of space based on tribal social structure were replaced by repetitive lots of uniform size, shape, and orientation. Gradations of proximity, enclosure, and openness of the desert were replaced by the spatial logic of European urban form. New and strange definitions of private and public spheres were grafted onto a society that had its norms, which were no longer considered valid. (p. 181)

The common indigenous experience of space being “appropriated from indigenous cultures and then ‘gifted back’ as reservations, reserved pockets of land for

indigenous people who once possessed all of it" (Smith, 1999, p. 51), was taken to the extreme with the government's urbanization plan for the Bedouin. In 1965 the Housing Ministry launched the first town, Tel Sheva, by building 49 small houses (70 square meters) on 400 square-meter lots each (Lewando-Hundt, 1979). Each Bedouin family was to receive a renewable 49-year lease for the lot; at the same time, they were expected to sign away all claims to land owned in the past. The houses were built in a linear pattern, extending out on both sides of a central commercial area, consisting of a few shops, a school and a clinic (Al-Kodmany, 1999; Gradus & Stern, 1985; Marx, 2000). The small houses were unsuitable for large families with an average number of 8 to 9 children, and the high density of the town itself stood in conflict with the Bedouin's traditionally widely-dispersed settlements. From the Israeli government's perspective, the high density advanced the Zionist aim of reduced indigenous land requirements/control, as well as the economic goal of more cost-efficient service provision. These considerations took priority over concerns about how gravely the high-density urban model disrupted the Bedouin's traditional way of life, socially, culturally and economically.

The predominant Bedouin response was refusal to move to Tel Sheva. Because of the failure of this initiative, the Israeli government planners who initiated a second settlement, Rahat, in the early 1970s, made a limited effort to take some Bedouin lifestyle and cultural factors into account, while still maintaining an urban model and advancing the Zionist aims of reducing the amount of land occupied by the Bedouin. In this second town, Bedouin tribes were placed in different sections of the town according to their traditional relations, territorial distribution, and willingness to move. Each street and lane was identified with an extended family, and its households were concentrated on adjacent lots (Falah, 1983, 1985; Gradus & Stern, 1985; Marx, 2000; Stern & Gradus, 1979). Furthermore, instead of providing small lots with small two-room houses, as was done in Tel-Sheva, the Ministry of Housing allowed people to purchase/lease a "large" vacant lot (800 square meters) for each household within an extended family. The Bedouin were then free to build their houses according to their own budgetary resources, and household and social needs. The planning model used in Rahat was extended to new neighborhoods that were added to Tel-Sheva, as well as to the additional five planned Bedouin towns that were established during the 1980s and 1990s (Arara BaNegev, Kseiffa, Segev Shalom, Hura, and Laqiya; See Table 1).

Over time, the Bedouin families who had been rendered landless by the removal from their traditional lands and relocation to the restricted area, as well as those who had been landless before 1948 or were affected by a new wave of displacements in the 1980s, moved to the planned urban settlements. For the Bedouin without land, moving to the towns was preferable to their ambiguous, temporary status on lands classified as state land or, according to Bedouin law, land belonging to another family/tribe (Abu-Saad, 2001; Marx, 2000). This process has moved slowly, for as Marx (2000) explained:

Table 1
Year of Establishment and Population of Bedouin
Government-Planned Towns in the Negev, June 2006

Town	Year Founded ^a	Population in 2006 ^b
Rahat	1972	39,600
Tel Sheva	1968	13,200
Arara BaNegev	1981	12,300
Kseiffa	1982	10,100
Hura	1989	9,700
Laqyia	1990	8,200
Segev Shalom	1984	6,400

a. Marx, 2000

b. Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006

Whereas the planning model adopted in Rahat and replicated in subsequent towns succeeded in reducing some of the socio-cultural barriers related to allocation of space that had caused the first model to fail, it did not address the employment needs of the population. With no local industry, local employment was non-existent beyond small grocery shops and work for the local government councils. The planned Bedouin towns never became more than dormitory communities with large numbers of men leaving very early in the morning for their places of employment and returning late at night. A survey commissioned by the Rahat Municipality in 1997 found that of the 66% of men over 18 who were employed, fully 64% worked outside Rahat in construction, trucking, industry, agriculture, and services. (p. 113)

Furthermore, aside from the provision of basic services (water, electricity, telephone hook-up, schools, and clinics), the towns lacked essential urban characteristics. In his 2002 report, the State Comptroller reported that none of the Bedouin towns had a completed sewage system, despite the fact that the towns had been in existence for many years, and that thousands of families had already paid for establishing this essential system. In four of the seven towns (Hura, Laqyia, Tel-Sheva, and Arara BaNegev) the sewage system was not operational at all. In the words of the State Comptroller:

Reasonably paced implementation of development and infrastructure in the Bedouin towns has not been carried out for many years. The settlements were populated with minimal infrastructure, and subsequently the level of resources invested for establishing and completing the infrastructure was insufficient, particularly with regard to sewage systems, streets and sidewalks. As a result of the many years of neglect in investment in the infrastructure, the settlements are suffering from great negligence. Moreover, there is a severe shortage in the domain of public institutions (e.g. recreational facilities, community centers, libraries, etc.), as well as public parks, sports fields, etc. (State Comptroller Report, 2002, p. 109)

Unlike neighboring urban settlements in the Jewish sector, they also lacked intra- and inter-city public transportation services, banks, post offices, public libraries, public parking lots, recreational and cultural centers, and so on. Rahat, the largest town, with nearly 40,000 inhabitants, is the exception and has one bank, one post office, and a cultural center (Abu-Saad, 1995, 2003; Lithwick, 2000; Swirski & Hasson, 2006).

Governance in the Planned Bedouin Towns: Perpetuating Dependence and Underdevelopment

The seven Bedouin towns in the Negev are among the youngest government-established towns in Israel, with their local governing bodies being established between 1980 and 1990. All of their local councils were headed by nonresident Jewish mayors appointed by the Interior Ministry for many years, because the Bedouin weren't considered capable of governing themselves in their new urban context. It is the standard procedure of the Interior Ministry to appoint a council ostensibly of professionals for an initial period (e.g., until the next local council elections, scheduled nationally every 4 years) in all newly established towns to facilitate their initial development. One of the first appointed mayors to head the Bedouin town of Laqiya previously worked for the military administration over Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, making one wonder just what type of professional skills the Interior Ministry deemed were essential to establishing and developing a Bedouin town. Furthermore, the initial period of an appointed council in the case of the Bedouin towns stretched on for more than 10 years in all cases, until the Bedouin inhabitants of the towns themselves challenged it in the Israeli High Court, and the High Court ordered the Interior Ministry to allow the Bedouin towns to hold local elections. The first elections for local authorities in Rahat and Tel Sheva were held in 1988 and 1992 respectively, whereas elections in the remaining five Bedouin local authorities were held in 2000, again only after the involvement of the High Court.

Despite the formal apparatus of locally elected government, it is not possible to talk about self-governance or autonomy in the Bedouin towns for a number of reasons. First, their access to and control over land is so circumscribed that they barely have enough land to meet the needs of their local population growth by replicating the same high-density urban model, but cannot begin to consider any other development or land use options. This further underlines the fact that the government rationale for urbanizing the Bedouin had more to do with Judaizing the land than modernizing the population. As Swirski and Hasson (2006) explained:

The Bedouin urban localities are characterized by small areas of jurisdiction. . . . Although the population of these localities constitutes 16% of the total population of the Be'er Sheva subdistrict, their area of jurisdiction (60 sq.km.) makes up just 0.5% of the area of the subdistrict, which covers 12, 945 sq. km. . . .

These facts are particularly striking when Bedouin localities are compared with Jewish ones: Dimona, whose population is smaller than Rahat's (33,700 and 34,100 residents, respectively in 2003) has an area of jurisdiction of 30.6 sq.km.—3.5 times that of Rahat (8.85 sq.km). Omer, whose population is around half of that of its Bedouin neighbor, Tel Sheva, has an area of jurisdiction which 2.7 times that of Tel Sheva. (p. 58)

Second, the budgets of the government-planned towns are the lowest in the entire country (Lithwick, 2000; Razin, 2000; Swirski & Hasson, 2006). One of the main reasons for this is that the low socio-economic status of the Bedouin living in the towns, together with the lack of local economic activities, translates into a very low income from property and local business taxes. Extra budgetary support from the government, despite often-voiced official concern for improving the conditions and attractiveness of the towns, has not been sufficient to alter the fact that the Bedouin towns' budgets remain the lowest in the country. Furthermore, governmental authorities have done nothing to address the clear need for large-scale investment in the educational and economic infrastructures or to generate local places of employment, even though a detailed development plan for the seven towns, created through a joint Bedouin-university initiative, was submitted to the government (Abu-Saad & Lithwick, 2000). Such investment would generate a higher level of self-funding, and could thus be translated into greater capacity for independent indigenous development, but the national government's lack of support for any such initiatives suggests it prefers the present status quo of urbanized Bedouin who remain impoverished and dependent.

Education, health, and social welfare services in the Bedouin towns are supplied by and controlled through national government channels, and as with other governmental provision, receive minimal and often insufficient funding given the scope of the needs (Abu-Saad, Lithwick, & Abu-Saad, 2004; Golan-Agnon, 2006; Jabareen, 2006; Swirski & Hasson, 2006). Many small (and even competing) nongovernmental organizations dealing with a wide array of issues have sprouted up in the Bedouin towns in the past few decades. However, the fact that, in most cases, both their organizational missions and their funding sources are determined by members of the Israeli majority, has tended to cripple their ability to develop indigenous models of service provision and support in the urban context, or to begin confronting issues of decolonization.

Integrated Exclusion

At the same time that the governmental urbanization policy was actively being pursued to "modernize" the Bedouin so that they could be integrated into the Israeli labor market and society, the government-planned Bedouin towns were being excluded from the broader development plans for the region. In several key regional plans, both for the Negev and for the Be'er Sheva metropolitan area, (including the 1972 District Plan, the 1991 Negev Front strategy, the 1995 Be'er Sheva Metropolitan Development

Plan, and the 1998 renewed District Plan), the areas of Bedouin towns and unrecognized villages were either left blank, as if they were nonexistent, or designated for public uses such as sewage plants, recreational forests, or industrial zones (Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). Important new infrastructure developments such as the new Trans-Israel Highway, recently improved rail facilities and even inter-city bus services have taken virtually no account of the Palestinian Bedouin towns and their needs.

The systematic underdevelopment of the government-planned Bedouin towns is evident from the official government document ranking local authorities in Israel according to a socio-economic index (Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2002), which places the seven towns at the bottom of the list (Table 2).

By way of contrast, the neighboring Jewish towns (Omer, Metar, and Lehavim) rank among the highest in the country. The regional capital city, Be'er Sheva, ranks at 115, just more than half way down the list. Dimona, one of the poorer development towns,¹ ranks considerably below Be'er Sheva, whereas Arad, one of the more "successful" development towns, ranks slightly higher.

Whereas the urbanization of the Bedouin suited the policy goal of reducing the Negev Bedouin's de facto use of and control over land resources, it is clear that no real attempt has been made by the state to integrate the new Bedouin towns into the national infrastructure in a viable and meaningful sense. Neither were they given sufficient resources for independent development because Israeli government policy toward the indigenous Palestinian minority has consistently aimed at maintaining their dependence on the Jewish economic and power structures to maximize the state's control over them (Lustick, 1980). As such, the towns the Israeli government planned for the Bedouin, bear less resemblance to urban centers of economic, educational, service, and social activity than they do to the typical colonial model of reservations, only with urban-style density, built to ensure that the land is reserved for someone else.

Governmental Dismantling of Traditional Villages

More than three decades after the initiation of the urban resettlement program, the total Negev Bedouin population numbers approximately 200,000, and makes up 25% of the regional population, but only about half of the Bedouin live in the government-planned towns. The numbers of those refusing to move to the government-planned towns has grown to nearly 100,000 people, constituting Israel's most marginal and deprived community (Abu-Saad, 2000; Shamir, 1996; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006).

Because of Bedouin resistance to the urbanization program, the Israeli government has placed numerous pressures on the inhabitants of unrecognized localities in an effort to coerce them to move to the government-planned towns (Abu-Saad, 2005; Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin, 1999; Swirski & Hasson, 2006; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). The unrecognized villages and hamlets are denied services such as paved

Table 2
Socio-Economic Ranking of Bedouin and Neighboring
Jewish Localities in the Negev

Locality	Rank	
Bedouin Towns	Kseiffa	1
	Rahat	2
	Tel Sheva	3
	Segev Shalom	4
	Arara BaNegev	5
	Hura	7
	Laqiya	8
	Jewish Towns	Beer Sheva
Dimona		82
Arad		119
Metar		201
Omer		209

Note: 1 denotes the *lowest* ranking among the 210 local authorities in Israel.

Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2002

roads, public transportation, electricity, running water, garbage disposal, telephone service, community health facilities, and so on. Bedouin in the unrecognized villages are also denied licenses for building any sort of permanent housing. All forms of housing (except for tents) are considered illegal, and are subject to heavy fines and demolition proceedings (Abu-Saad, 2005; Falah, 1989; Maddrell, 1990; Shamir 1996; Yiftachel 2003, 2006). From 1992 to 1998, a total of 1,298 buildings were demolished and 869,850 NIS (approximately \$220,000) in fines were paid, because of the “illegal” status of these buildings (Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin, 1999). This phenomenon is ongoing, with demolition of hundreds of houses over the past few years (Ginsburg, 2003; Ibrahim, 2004). Following is an example of this policy.

In September 14th [2006], the bulldozers belonging to the South District Planning and Building Committee accompanied by police forces demolished two houses in Fouura’ Village in the Naqab. The police forces came in the morning, ordered the village resident not to leave their houses and demolished the two houses later on for being built without permission. As a result, twenty people were left without adequate housing.

What makes it strange is that the village was in the past an unrecognized village but recently it obtained recognition. Still, this did not prevent the authorities from demolishing the two houses. This by itself proves that the status of these villages—whether they were recognized or unrecognized—does not change the authorities’ treatment and proves that the claim of the state that the house demolition is a result of the status of the village being unrecognized is not true (Arab Association for Human Rights, 2006, p. 6).

The unrecognized villages are denied their own representative authorities and have no official local councils. The effect of this is that they are denied two clear rights, a local authority to provide them with basic services, and the right to elect local representatives.² The majority of residents of the unrecognized villages live in areas devoid of any municipal authority. Even those who do live in an area under a municipal authority, such as those villages within the jurisdiction of Jewish regional councils such as, Bnei Shimon and Ramat Hanegev, do not receive services from these bodies or vote in their elections. Rather, the residents of the unrecognized villages are governed by a number of administrative structures and units set up especially for the Palestinian Bedouin. These include most notably the Bedouin Advancement Authority, the Bedouin Education Authority and the Green Patrol.

The Bedouin Advancement Authority

The Bedouin Advancement Authority (BAA) was established in 1984, and controls the planning and policy development and implementation for the Bedouin community in the Negev. Despite the benevolent-sounding name, the Bedouin community is the only community in Israel to have a special office charged with their development. In this respect it differs from the other Palestinian Arab communities in Israel, most of which were sedentary towns and villages long before Israel's establishment,³ and have apparently been contained and controlled to the policymakers' satisfaction through normal government channels. The Palestinian Bedouin in the Negev have persisted in presenting a unique challenge to colonial government policies because of their relatively widespread dispersion and resistance to the plans for their urbanization. Thus, all state funding for the Bedouin community comes through the BAA office. Even the municipalities of the recognized localities get their budgets through the BAA, rather than directly from the various state ministries (e.g., Interior, Housing, Infrastructure, etc.), as is the practice with all other localities (including other Palestinian Arab localities) in Israel.

Administratively, the BAA is a subunit of the Israel Lands Administration, which indicates the hidden agenda behind the benevolent name. It receives a large budget to buy land from the Bedouin community, but generally the money goes back to Jerusalem unused.⁴ In addition to land resources, the BAA has absolute control over providing access to water for the Negev Bedouin in unrecognized villages. These villages are not connected to the national water system but their inhabitants are given access to water at very high prices in designated central locations, from which they must transport the water to their homes in containers. The BAA operates a very restrictive water policy, using this as another means of encouraging people to leave their land and move to the seven government-sanctioned towns.

The BAA also has a monopoly on all planning for the Bedouin community. Thus it is responsible for opening new neighborhoods in the seven towns, or establishing new towns. In short, no development may occur for any Negev Bedouin community, whether recognized or unrecognized, if not sanctioned and carried out by the BAA.

The Bedouin Education Authority

The 45 unrecognized villages lack municipal bodies that would normally provide education services. These services are instead provided through the Bedouin Education Authority (BEA), which was established by the Ministry of Education in 1981. The BEA is responsible for the building, maintenance, and renovation of the schools and kindergartens outside of the government-planned Bedouin towns. It is also responsible for bussing 12,000 schoolchildren to these 16 schools and 70 kindergartens, as well as to the high schools in the planned towns (because there are no high schools in the unrecognized villages).

Rather than developing the educational services within the unrecognized villages, the BEA primarily works to control the community, awarding services on a discretionary basis as part of the politics of patronage, so that these services are not provided as a right, but as a favor that is dispensed to those who are loyal and withheld from those who are not. This patronage overrides even the planning regulations and results in the provision of services in a manner that is ineffective and irrational (Abu-Saad, 2001, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Since its inception, the BEA was run by Jewish directors who worked for the benefit of a close network of clients, and acted in the interests of controlling the community through the provision of education facilities. The patronizing and control-oriented attitude of the former BEA director, Moshe Shochat, is well documented. When questioned in an interview given to *The Jewish Week* in July 2001 about the deficiencies in education services within the unrecognized villages, he characterized the community members who were organizing to improve their school services as "blood-thirsty Bedouins who commit polygamy, have 30 children and continue to expand their illegal settlements, taking over state land." When questioned about providing indoor plumbing in Bedouin schools, he responded: "In their culture they take care of their needs outdoors. They don't even know how to flush a toilet" (Berman, 2001). In response to a public Bedouin outcry and lawsuit brought against the Ministry of Education and the BEA director, the Ministry of Education's initial response was that it appreciated the BEA director's work with the community and had no authority to dismiss him. On the basis of an internal investigation, the Ministry of Education later announced that it planned to dismiss the BEA director, not because of his racist statements, but rather because of financial irregularities in his administration (Adalah, 2003). Thus, it is clear that the primary role of the BEA is to serve as another means of control over the community, rather than to provide educational services in a manner that is respectful of and responsive to the needs and concerns of the community. Changes have been proposed for moving the BEA out of the Ministry of Education, and transferring the responsibility for educational services to a newly established regional council for the Bedouin (Abu-Basma Regional Council, 2005) with responsibility for all service delivery to the unrecognized villages. Because at the time of this writing, the BEA still has a Jewish director, it is

unlikely that anything will change with regard to the manner or level of educational service provision to the unrecognized villages.

The Green Patrol

The Green Patrol was established by the Israeli government in 1976 as a paramilitary unit to pressure the Bedouin to move into the urban settlements. Officially, the Green Patrol is located in the Environmental Affairs Ministry, but it operates through a committee of directors-general with representatives of the Israeli military, the JNF, the Agriculture Ministry, the Defense Ministry, the Interior Ministry, the Construction and Housing Ministry, and the ILA. In addition, the Green Patrol's funding comes from five different governmental and nongovernmental bodies: the ILA (49%), the JNF (12%), the Agriculture Ministry (13%), the Defense Ministry (26%), and the Mines and Quarries Unit of the Ministry of National Infrastructure (1%). This is operational funding earmarked for routine supervisory activities. Before each specific policing operation, the unit sends a funding request to the body on whose behalf it is acting (Swirski & Hasson, 2006; Tabibian-Mizrahi, 2004). In practice, therefore, the Green Patrol operates in the name of the government body on whose behalf and funding it acts.

Formally, the Green Patrol is presented as a body meant to preserve nature, oversee state lands, and protect them from "squatters." In a document written by the Knesset Information and Research Center, it is described as:

The unit that operates to prevent squatters and trespassers from impairing land title in various ways such as flocks trespassing on pastureland, unauthorized mining and quarrying, settlement without a permit, erecting buildings in breach of the law, taking possession of land by means of cultivation, stealing water, dumping refuse, destroying vegetation, and so on. The Unit also undertakes its own actions to gain possession of land and to ensure that suitable activities are undertaken on the land so as to prevent trespassing, and allocates tracts for various needs, principally grazing" (Swirsiki & Hasson, 2006, p. 43)

In pursuit of its duties, the Green Patrol acts to police, harass, and evict the Bedouin living outside the urban settlements (Abu-Saad, 2000; Hazleton, 1980; Swirsiki & Hasson, 2006; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). Herd sizes and grazing areas are very tightly controlled and the Green Patrol confiscates flocks found in violation of the restrictions. In addition, their tactics include destroying Bedouin dwellings, crops, and trees that are considered illegal by the Israeli authorities. Although the destruction of crops was usually carried out by tractors, this practice was raised to new heights in February 2002, when the Green Patrol used crop dusters to spray herbicides over and destroy 12,000 dunums (3,000 acres) of wheat fields. The decision to destroy the Bedouin crops was made during a meeting of officials from the Ministries of Agriculture and of Infrastructure, the Green Patrol and the Israeli Land Administration. They claimed that

by tending to their agricultural lands, the Bedouin were trespassing on governmental land (Association for Civil Rights in Israel, 2002; Cook, 2002; Ornan, 2002; Yiftachel, 2003, 2006). Such action was taken again in March 2003:

On 4 March 2003 the ILA sent two airplanes loaded with herbicides to spray 1,500 dunums (375 acres) of crops being grown by the villagers of the unrecognized village of Abda. Ten children playing in the fields were covered by the toxic spray. Several of them needed treatment for shock after they and their parents thought they had been the victims of a chemical gas strike from Iraq. The ILA had not told the villagers of Abda that they were coming to destroy the crops, nor that they would be sending planes armed with herbicides. Elderly people and children who were in the fields were also sprayed. Village residents immediately evacuated those children to the closest clinic at Mitzpe Ramon (a nearby Jewish locality), but the doctor refused to receive them until the [Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages] Vice President contacted the Ministry of Health and Kupat Holim [health fund]. (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Report, 2003, p. 14).

This method of crop destruction was again used on April 2, 2003, when airplanes sprayed another 1,300 acres of wheat crops with herbicides (Cook, 2003).

Organized Community Resistance

In 1997, the Palestinian Bedouin who lived in the unrecognized villages formed their own regional council as a grassroots community movement, which drew up and submitted its own plans for regional development to the Ministry of the Interior. The Interior Ministry did not accept the proposed plan of the Council of Unrecognized Villages for more appropriate, rural settlement models, and has remained intent on going ahead with the same unsuccessful urban model with only superficial improvements, but it faces serious and organized resistance from the Bedouin community. The first level of resistance is that people en masse are refusing to move to the planned towns, despite the many coercive measures used against them. In addition, they are expanding their dwellings to meet the needs of their natural population growth, as well as building small business and other community structures (mosques, soccer fields, etc.). Many have begun building more permanent structures (e.g., cinderblock and stone houses, rather than tin shanties), and their response to house demolitions is to rebuild rather than to relocate. Furthermore, as will be discussed in more detail in the following section, the government has drawn up plans for "recognizing" and developing some of the unrecognized villages, but as it has become clear that the government still intends to resettle their inhabitants in high-density urban style around government-constructed service centers, people are refusing to cooperate with the plans and insisting on an agricultural-based development model.

As a second level of resistance, various local Bedouin community organizations, along with nation-wide organizations representing the indigenous Palestinian minority, have begun launching proactive legal action by finding cracks in the Israeli legal structure that can be used to oppose the discriminatory practices driven by Judaization policies that contradict the tenets of law and governmental responsibilities to its citizens (Yiftachel, 2006). For example, during the 1990s, the government's responsibility to provide compulsory education to all children from ages 3 to 16 was used in successful appeals to the Israeli High Court to obtain permission for building preschools and supplying electricity (generator-powered only) to elementary schools in the unrecognized villages. At the same time, the High Court denied appeals for building high schools in the unrecognized villages. In addition, a lawsuit brought against the Ministry of Health to have public maternal and child health care clinics was successful and resulted in the opening of such clinics in some of the unrecognized villages (see <http://www.adalah.org/eng/legaladvocacyoverview.php> for further details). More recently, the High Court ruled that the planners of the new regional Be'er Sheva metropolitan plan must make an official commitment to include Bedouin concerns, opinions, and representation in the planning process though in the Bedouin community, there is quite a bit of skepticism about how this will actually be done, and what will actually be done, because their request for agricultural villages was denied, and they were told they had to "be more realistic." In addition, the decision to expand the municipal boundaries of the Jewish town of Omer by annexing the land owned and occupied by Bedouin in several adjoining unrecognized villages was challenged in the High Court, with the result that the expansion was nearly totally canceled (Yiftachel, 2006). Since 2000, however, there have also been a number of failed efforts to use the legal route, with for example, the denial of appeals to provide a point for obtaining drinking water to an unrecognized village, and to provide electricity to cancer patients and others with life-threatening illnesses in unrecognized villages.

The third level of resistance to develop was the formation of an alliance of local Bedouin community and Jewish-Arab nongovernmental organizations called the Forum Together for Equality and Growth. This alliance coordinates a range of self-help and NGO programs for community empowerment, education, and legal representation (Yiftachel, 2006).

In light of the Negev Bedouin's continued resistance to the government's urbanization policies, the role of Green Patrol and other paramilitary measures are gaining increasing importance in the governmental effort to de-Arabize the land of the Negev, in some cases directly targeting the leaders of the Bedouin resistance (Cook, 2003; UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights Report, 2003). These measures, which are being intensified under the current government, perhaps foreshadow a fallback to the days immediately before and after the 1948 War when military measures were used to "empty" the land for Jewish settlement.

“Final Closure”: Sharon’s Plan

In January 2003, the government presented its 5-year plan, (also known as Sharon’s Plan) for developing the Negev and bringing “final closure” to the Palestinian Bedouin land issue. The plan, of which Sharon was the main author, involves the establishment of seven to eight new Bedouin towns (“recognition” of some unrecognized villages), based on the same concentrated urbanization models as the existing towns, and 14 new Jewish settlements. Jews will be offered large subsidies to encourage them to move from the densely populated center of the country to settle the Negev. Land will also be made available to Jewish settlers for the establishment of large, individual ranches and farms, for which the provision of subsidized water and electrification has already been approved by the government (Cook, 2003; Rotem, 2003)

With regard to the proposed Bedouin towns, in December 2003, the Interior Minister set up the Abu Basma Regional Council to serve them. Other regional councils in Israel (serving Jewish populations in small, low-density agricultural communities) have jurisdiction over specific contiguous territories where the communities they administer are located. In sharp contrast to this, the Abu Basma Regional Council only administers the specific government-allotted area of jurisdiction of each of the Bedouin townships within the Council, but has no control at all over the land in the substantial contiguous area between the townships (Swirski & Hasson, 2006). The appointed mayor of the regional council is Jewish (as are those holding the influential positions such as the treasurer, the director of the education department, the advisor for employment, the civil engineer, the mayor’s top administrative assistant, etc.). As with the existing planned Bedouin towns, the pace of development is moving very slowly, in part because even though the Bedouin are happy to have their villages recognized, they do not agree with the development model of high-density urban townships. By June 2005, the director of the Interior Ministry’s Southern District reported that the planning process and logistics for moving people had only reached an advanced stage for one of the eight towns (Swirski & Hasson, 2006).

The broader Sharon plan also includes a comprehensive strategy to remove the Bedouin in the unrecognized villages from their lands by intensifying the use of coercive measures, such as home demolitions, land confiscation, and forced eviction. The overall plan, with a budget of 1.175 billion NIS (more than \$250 million), allocates 395 million NIS (a full third of the total budget) for massive reinforcement of the officials and bodies responsible for enforcing planning and construction ordinances in the Negev. The plan includes: the establishment of an interministerial administration within the Israel Police force headed by a senior police officer to coordinate the enforcement of the land laws; the establishment of a new police unit and of special forces with 108 officers to implement government policies vis-à-vis the villagers living on their lands and to carry out demolition orders; the allocation

of additional funds to the Green Patrol for more personnel, along with new powers to operate against villagers not only in restricted areas (e.g., closed military zones and nature reserves), but also in their own living areas and lands; the allocation of an additional funds to the Ministry of Interior for enforcing planning and construction ordinances in the Negev, which effectively means intensifying the policy of house demolitions; and, the allocation of additional funds to the courts and Ministry of Justice in the Be'er Sheva District to accelerate the processing of demolition orders, including a special unit in the State Attorney's office with 10 established posts (including 6 positions for prosecutors), special court sessions and private lawyers hired by the Ministry of Justice solely to prosecute the residents of the unrecognized villages, requiring them to prove their land ownership to the court's satisfaction (Swirski & Hasson, 2006; UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights Report, 2003).

In classic colonial style, the Sharon Plan was developed without the participation of the Bedouin inhabitants of the unrecognized villages. In response to this plan, the former head of the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages, Jaber Abu-Kaf (2000-2004) stated:

There is much noise and talk about "solving" our land problem and investing in the Bedouin sector, but the essence of the this plan is still to move us off our lands and to continue to control us as aliens, refugees or simply unseen in our own homeland. (Yiftachel, 2006, p. 208)

The current Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, who was then the Minister of Industry and Trade, and Deputy Prime Minister, was also in charge of the ILA and had responsibility for the implementation of Sharon's Plan. With regard to Bedouin input into the plan, Olmert stated:

We are talking about evacuating [the Bedouin] to the new seven towns that we are building for them. . . . We will conduct contacts with them [the Bedouin], however, I assume that they will absolutely oppose [the plan]. We will not be deterred from implementing the decision, because there is no other way we can meet our goals. If it [the plan] required the Bedouin's agreement, it would never be given. It is a question of the government's determination to implement its decisions. (Koren, 2003, para. 3)

The Forum Together for Equality and Growth (alliance of local Bedouin and Jewish-Arab NGOs) sent a detailed letter to Prime Minister Sharon, critiquing the inequities, inherent violence, and non-participative nature of the plan, and suggesting alternative proposals for Negev development and resolution of the land conflict that would treat the Bedouin with equity, as citizens of the state (see Appendix for full text of the letter).

Conclusion

Indigenous peoples around the world have survived concerted efforts to exterminate, isolate, and assimilate them out of existence. Ironically, the effort to assimilate them through urbanization has created a new generation of indigenous people, with the unique skills, capabilities and inside knowledge required to better carry on the struggle for survival as indigenous communities, as well as to better use the systems, structures, and resources of mainstream society for their people's development. They have faced many coercive pressures and attacks on the cultural, social, economic, and political foundations of their societies, and yet have survived. They have undergone the breakdown of traditional social structures, only to adapt and rebuild new social structures—particularly in urban areas. Thus, despite the many negative aspects of the government-planned urbanization of the Negev Bedouin in Israel, if the story of indigenous survival worldwide is any indication, they too will survive, with their identity and connectedness to their history, heritage, and land.

In the 60 years that have passed since Israel's establishment, there has been little or no change in its land policies, despite its lack of success in completely removing the indigenous presence from the land. According to official government policy, the Bedouin residing on and using their traditional lands are invaders and criminals. This is clearly and openly declared by major Israeli Jewish political figures, from current Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, to Parliament member and head of the "Israel is Our Home" political party, Avigdor Lieberman. While Minister of Infrastructure in 2002, Lieberman (himself an immigrant from the former Soviet Union) stated:

We must stop [the Bedouin's] illegal invasion of state land by all means possible. The Bedouin have no regard for our laws; in the process we are losing the last resources of state lands. One of my main missions is to return the power of the [Israel] Land Authority in dealing with the non-Jewish threat to our lands. (Cook, 2002, p. 2)

The indigenous Palestinian Bedouin have no rights to "state lands," despite their "formal" status as Israeli citizens, because "state lands" are in actuality "Jewish lands," and they are reduced to the illegitimate and dehumanized status of "the non-Jewish threat." After more than half a century as citizens of Israel, they remain illegal invaders, and a threat to the vision of Zionism. A Palestinian Bedouin activist, protesting against Israel's land policies described them as such:

Only in one instance shall the Bedouin Arabs get their full and equal rights in the Jewish State: only if miraculously we'll stop occupying, needing or using any land. Then we shall receive what we truly deserve—full air rights. (Minutes of meeting with Avraham Burg, chairman of Israeli Knesset Protocol, 6 December 1997; Yiftachel, 2003, p. 175)

What has evolved over the past 50-some years, is the resistance of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. Within the past 10 years throughout the country, indigenous Palestinian human, civil, and legal rights organizations have developed that are beginning to document the needs and develop channels for resistance using the legal and civil mechanisms of Israeli society with some measure of success. The Negev Bedouin, who have shown the tenacity typical of the Palestinian people to withstand efforts to remove them from their land, even in the face of great adversity, have also begun to organize their resistance to displacement through the development of their own (albeit unrecognized by the government) regional councils.

The governmental response to this resistance, particularly under the leadership of former Prime Minister Sharon, and current Prime Minister Olmert has been to intensify the use of coercive measures to achieve its goals. The very existence of the indigenous Palestinian Arab people has been an anathema to the Zionist movement since its inception, and will remain so until the Palestinian people cease to exist, or submit to a diminished, highly controlled existence that somehow ceases to violate Zionist sensibilities. Because neither of these scenarios seems likely, what is likely is an ongoing and increasingly conflict-ridden deadlock between the Israeli government and the Negev's Palestinian Bedouin for as long as it is unable to relinquish its colonial goals of Judaizing and de-Arabizing the land, and refuses to listen to indigenous voices, or to represent the interests of all of its citizens equally.

In addition to the question of how indigenous people will adapt and respond to the changes imposed on them by mainstream society, we must ask how mainstream society will adapt and respond to the reality of indigenous peoples' persistent survival and their place in modern nation-states. The prominent legal interpreter for Native Americans, Felix Cohen, wrote that indigenous rights were the "miner's canary of democracy," referring to the practice of miners carrying a caged canary down into the mine as a test for oxygen levels or poisonous gases. If the canary experienced respiratory distress or died, the miners were warned that the air was bad. In the same way, as nation-states seek to construct democratic and just societies, the state of indigenous rights will serve as a test case of their success (Champagne & Abu-Saad, 2003). Indigenous peoples will continue the struggle to preserve their cultures and their rights, against which nation-states will be tested for their tolerance and universality. Indigenous peoples worldwide have shown a readiness to negotiate with nation-states to create more multicultural and democratic societies. Although the urbanization of indigenous peoples has been detrimental on some levels, on other levels it has empowered them with new skills for carrying on the resistance. New levels of pan-indigenous cooperation at the regional, national and international levels have also been empowering, and may serve to facilitate more successful negotiations between indigenous communities and nation-states, and result in more equitable, productive, consensual, and democratic relationships between nation-states and indigenous peoples.

Appendix

Mr. Ariel Sharon
 Prime Minister
 Jerusalem
 4 May 2003

Dear Mr. Ariel Sharon,

**Subject: The 5-Year Plan for the Negev Arab
 Bedouins until 2007 in the Negev**

The Forum *Together for Equality and Growth* of non-governmental organisations and representative organisations, of Jews and Arabs, who are all working for the development of the rights of the unrecognised villages' inhabitants, and for the growth of the Negev for Jews and Arabs together.

We commend the development budget allocation for the seven planned towns and we commend the recognition and development of any villages which do not rely on a process of concentrating the rest of the inhabitants of the unrecognised villages into these newly recognised areas. We are deeply disappointed that the suggested plan on which the Cabinet will vote does not provide the vital recognition and services for the villages' inhabitants. Rather this plan proposes land confiscation, population removal and transfer, and the concentration of the Bedouin into confined areas.

Critical Deficiencies of the Plan

The Plan was prepared without the participation of the residents of the villages and the proposed evacuation runs contrary to their needs and wellbeing, which are centered on the lands they live on.

The new powers of the Green Patrol to operate against villagers within their own living areas and land is a dangerous invasion of their rights to their property.

The increase in the budget of the Interior Ministry will be implemented by force, which will mean an increase in house destructions instead of the planning and building investment solutions which would satisfy the needs and the way of life of the residents.

The establishment of a Police Unit and Special Forces who would implement the Plan amounts to a criminalisation of villagers because they live on their land.

The plan proposes claims funded by the government in courts activated by the government, against the rights of residents to live on their land.

The plan proposes the establishment of new individual farms, land reservations, and other settlements on land which is currently unrecognised villages. The government

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Appendix (continued)

is giving the clear message that these new farms will be Jewish and will replace the existing villages and their inhabitants.

We protest against the provision of a budget allocation for the Israeli Land Authority to compensate the villagers who are uprooted and moved off their lands. This provision of a budget is no compensation at all for population transfer. We add once again that 25% of those who live in the Negev are Arab Bedouins and that they live on 2% of the Negev's land.

Finally, we must protest the establishment of any local municipality for the villages which are recognised without the participation and agreement of the residents. This concern follows the letter addressed by The Regional Council of The Unrecognised Villages (the Regional Council) to the Interior Minister, Mr. Eli Yeshay on 29/10/02.

We present the following proposals for the Cabinet, to ensure the government of Israel provides equally and acts for the common good of all residents of the Negev.

Proposals for the Cabinet Decision:

As a first step, to establish a local municipality on the model which the Regional Council proposed in *Development of Municipal Authority for the Arab Bedouin Unrecognised Villages in the Negev* which was submitted to the Interior Ministry and the planning institutions and was a response to the plan of Mr. David Cohen (the Director of the Ministry of Interior regional office).

Providing all services without any relation to the Land Settlement, by establishing 20 Services Centers for the 45 different villages on their land. These Services Centers should be established immediately, as a first stage by Exceptional Permit which is within the authority of the Interior Ministry. The established municipal authority will represent the residents and will be responsible for providing services.

To freeze the House Demolition measures by Recognition of all building and until both sides come to agreement and the village's zoning maps are authorised.

To implement immediately the Ministerial Committee for Bedouin Affairs decision from 28/2/00 which froze the Tama 24/4 Plan that had suggested planning towns such as Mareit. We also propose the closing of the Bedouin Authority for Development, in part because it is the only authority of its kind in Israel.

To cancel the areas of the following villages: Al Mazra, Qatamat, Al Mitaher, Al Bat, Khelah, Sa.wea and others from the announcement of the military area. This is according to maps which were prepared by the Regional Council and presented to the Defense Ministry.

To change amendment 6 in the population registration (address registration) law and to register residents' addresses according to their historical villages. This is

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Appendix (continued)

how residents were registered at birth until 1974, and is discussed in the Regional Council plan *Development of Municipal Authority for the Arab Bedouin Unrecognised Villages in the Negev*.

To implement the agreement of January 2001 between the Regional Council and the Ministerial Committee for Arab Affairs, which was signed by the head of committee, the former Minister Mr. Matan Vilnay.

We convey our thanks in advance for your cooperation,

Sincerely,

Oxfam GB, Al Ahali, Bimkoum, Jewish Arab Centre for Economic Development, New Israel Fund, Arab Centre for Alternative Planning, Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Arab Association for Human Rights, People and Land, The Follow Up Committee for Arabs in Israel, The Follow Up Committee For Education, Mossawa, Shatil, 'Adalah, Ta'ayush, Coalition for Co-existence in the Negev, Rabbis for Human Rights, Physicians for Human Rights, Sikkuy, The Regional Council for the Unrecognised Villages-Negev

Notes

1. Developments towns are "frontier" towns that were established by the government to increase the Jewish population in border regions or regions with large Palestinian populations (e.g., western Galilee, northern Negev). They were typically populated with Middle Eastern and North African Jewish immigrants, and tend to have a low socio-economic status. As such, they receive generous development budgets and other economic benefits from the government. Given the Zionist basis for their "development" status, it goes without saying that none of the new Bedouin towns established by the government in the same region were accorded the same status or privileges.

2. The Decree for Local Councils includes two key provisions: Firstly, that it is the Council's task to concern itself with offering municipal services according to the needs of the residents. According to the Local Council Law, one of the tasks of a local authority is to establish and maintain services, enterprises and institutions, which to its knowledge offer benefits to the public. Similarly, according to Article 3 of the Local Council Law, those who have the right to be elected are those who at the determining day, and for 6 months previously, have maintained their place of residence in this area.

3. The small Bedouin population in the Galilee that makes up a small minority of the Galilee's Palestinian population is dealt with through the same channels as the other Palestinian Arabs in the region.

4. According to the 2001 State Comptrollers Report, of the NIS 148 million reserved for buying land from the Bedouin in 1999, NIS 131 million was returned to Jerusalem, and NIS 9 million spent on administrative purposes.

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