

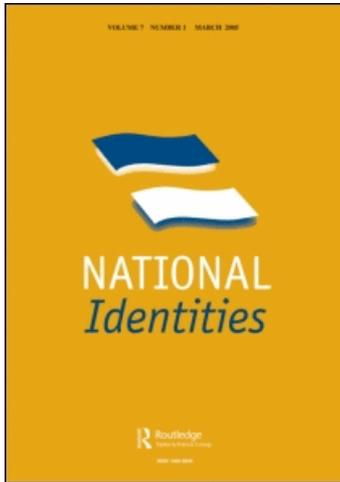
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### New Identity/Identities Formulation in a Post-Nomadic Community: The Case of the Bedouin of the Negev

Steven C. Dinero <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Philadelphia University, USA

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## *New Identity/Identities Formulation in a Post-Nomadic Community: The Case of the Bedouin of the Negev*

STEVEN C. DINERO, *Philadelphia University, USA*

**Abstract** *Research conducted by the author in the mid-1990s found that while the bedouin culture and lifestyle in Israel's Negev Desert has been altered significantly as community members were resettled in stone houses, surrendered their camels for automobiles and entered the wage labour workforce, an expressed 'bedouin' identity remained strong. Indeed, it was found that rather than integrate the bedouin into the Jewish-Israeli social mainstream, coerced settlement only served, if anything, to Arabise and Islamicise communal identity. Using evidence gathered in 2000 in the planned bedouin town of Segev Shalom/Shqeb, this study serves as a follow-up analysis of more recent changes found in bedouin identity formulation. The data will reveal that 'bedouin' identity remains, but that it is on the slow decline. In its place, two new identity/identities matrices have formed: the Arab/Palestinian/Muslim matrix and the bedouin/Israeli matrix. It will be shown that these expressed identity/identities matrices are not randomly chosen or expressed, but rather have evolved out of the social, economic and political environments within which the settled Negev bedouin community is situated.*

**Keywords** Negev bedouin; Palestinian Israelis; sedentarisation; Arabicisation; Islamicisation; former nomads; identity formulation

### **Background to the Study**

I first addressed the relationship between resettlement and identity formulation and expression among the post-nomadic bedouin of Israel's Negev Desert in 1999,<sup>1</sup> using data gathered in one of the bedouin towns three years earlier, in 1996. These data revealed that following resettlement, the Negev bedouin have undergone a great deal of social and economic change that has, in turn, impacted their sense of self-identity.

Using data gathered in the same site four years later (2000), the purpose of this article is to serve as a follow-up analysis of the previous findings. I will seek to determine how and to what degree contentions made previously continue to hold true. At the same time, I will also address how and in what ways expressed identity has changed in the community during this period. Finally, I will speculate upon future issues of identity/identities formulation and expression, particularly in light of the outbreak of the *al-Aqsa Intifada* only two months after the 2000 data were gathered. Before addressing the specific issue of identity formulation and expression, however, a brief history of the Israeli resettlement initiative is needed to help explain the past century of transition within the bedouin community.

The Negev bedouin were once a pastoral nomadic community of Arab Muslims raising sheep, goats and camels while moving in an annual cycle over 4,000 square kilometers of land. Immediately after Israeli independence in 1948, the bedouin were placed under Military Administration and physically concentrated by the Israeli Government into the *seig*, a reservation-like region of about 1,000 square kilometres near the city of Be'er Sheva.<sup>2</sup> In the mid-1960s, the government's resettlement efforts were further intensified through the establishment of bedouin new towns within the *seig* region. The government sought to settle the bedouin permanently in these towns in order to end their pastoral-nomadic practices<sup>3</sup> and provide public services to the community including electrification, running water and sewerage, schools, health clinics and social welfare programming. At the same time, living outside of these towns in either mobile tent or semi-permanent shack settlements was deemed illegal.

Although the resettlement initiative faced resistance in its early phase, bedouin settlement rates have accelerated in recent years. Indeed, in only the last decade (1990 to 2000), the number of bedouin living in one of the seven towns has shifted from about 45 per cent to nearly 60 per cent of the total population.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the mobility of those who are still nomadic is increasingly limited by the state. Thus, as Meir states succinctly in the aptly entitled volume, *As Nomadism Ends*,<sup>5</sup> the Negev bedouin community had, by the late 1990s, been swept by change over the past several decades, 'carrying [them] to the present cultural point where only the remnant of pastoral nomadism is left'.<sup>6</sup>

Economically, the bedouin transition away from pastoralism and toward wage labour has occurred with some difficulty. While many cease pastoral activities upon relocation to town, the ability to acquire wage labour positions remains problematic. The bedouin experience high levels of wage labour unemployment.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, when employed, very few bedouin men are found in professional positions (women rarely work outside the home, although this too is changing).<sup>8</sup> In a survey I conducted in the mid-1990s, for example, 20 per cent of able-bodied bedouin men aged between 18 and 55 were unemployed, and 9 per cent were retired. A total of 52 per cent were working in the areas of construction, as cab/bus drivers, as agricultural workers on *kibbutzim* or *moshavim*, or as factory workers. About 7 per cent worked in business, and another 7 per cent worked in 'other areas'. Thus, only slightly over 5 per cent of those surveyed worked in 'professional' occupations requiring higher-level skills or education.<sup>9</sup>

In terms of social modernity and changing value systems, statistics gathered in the mid-1990s reveal these processes to be at play as well. In Segev Shalom/Shqeb, one of the smallest of the planned bedouin towns, the percentage of residents accessing publicly provided services rose consistently during the 1990s. The greatest change measured concerned education, where the percentage of high-school aged children actually in school rose from only 73 per cent in 1992–1993 to 92 per cent in 1996–1997;<sup>10</sup> this figure reached nearly 100 per cent during the 1999–2000 school year. Similarly, by the mid-1990s, 100 per cent of those surveyed stated that they and their families used some or all of the town's health care facilities.<sup>11</sup>

Another measure, ownership of electronic goods, has also risen substantially over the past decade. The fact that 100 per cent of those surveyed in 2000 own televisions may say little about bedouin social development or the permanence of one's residence in a particular location, as many tent-dwellers also own televisions. However, most Segev Shalom residents also own large appliances such as refrigerators (88 per cent) and clothes washing machines (82 per cent), further evidence of recent changes in bedouin values and priorities.

Thus, in the final analysis, one can see that today, the majority of the 120,000 bedouin in the Negev<sup>12</sup> live in permanent stone homes, spending their free time watching television and conducting activities similar to other Israelis. Most adult males have ceased pastoral activities, and instead pursue wage labor occupations, while their children attend local schools.

### Theoretical Framework for Bedouin Identity Analysis

The theoretical framework within which bedouin identity formulation and expression will be addressed here is premised upon a differential in social group positioning. My contention is that ethnic and religious differences between the dominant Jewish-Israeli society and the Arab minorities, when combined with a power struggle over land and resources over the past several years, provide the context within which to analyse resettled Negev bedouin identity in today's Israel. Following Blumer,<sup>13</sup> the basic elements of this environment include a sense of dominant group superiority, a sense that the subordinate group is 'intrinsically different and alien', a sense of rightful claim to land and other resources, and a perceived threat from the minority group that members of the subordinate group may challenge the dominant group in an attempt to achieve parity. As Bobo<sup>14</sup> notes, the fear of such desires to challenge or threaten the group positioning *status quo* also feeds into the perpetuation of prejudicial attitudes, in the present case on the part of the Jewish state towards its minority Arab populations.

I use this framework in order to argue that the resettlement planning initiative was designed not merely to settle the bedouin population in fixed geographic locations. Rather, bedouin town planning teams have long played a key role in bringing the state and the community together in order to reduce political tensions and conflicts between the two, seeking to integrate the bedouin into Israeli society through improved services and a higher living standard. Their plans have included increased control of bedouin mobility, for example, via formal health and education provision, as well as water, sewer and electricity access.<sup>15</sup> They have also sought to alter social structures, implementing policies that encouraged decreased family size and monogamous marriage.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, resettlement and identity formulation are, it may be argued, linked directly in communities such as the Negev bedouin due to direct connections that root the community to the lands upon which they have traditionally lived. Both individual and tribal identification relate to territoriality. Traditionally, tribal decent groups had a common claim to territory, a place to dwell, and a place to graze their animals;<sup>17</sup> this communal use of resources was central to tribal organisation.<sup>18</sup> The loss of territory by the bedouin during the resettlement initiative has clearly lent itself to a greater tribal and cultural consciousness. This loss places a great degree of strain upon the maintenance of kinship lineages; the future of the very existence of the bedouin tribe has become tied to land settlement in the minds of resettled and spontaneously settled bedouin alike.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, territoriality and individual awareness in the modern settlement may be viewed as a combination of Middle Eastern structures and Western modes of living coming together in an attempt to re-establish social order in a new spatial environment.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, such values and actions are more socially acceptable in the urban realm. Changes in employment opportunities, the value of education as a tool for upward mobility and communal integration into the national economy – each of which are furthered in the urban realm – also contribute to this process.<sup>21</sup> Thus, it is the contention here that the resettlement programme has sought to actively alter not only the geography

of the bedouin communal structure, but their economic, political and social bearings as well in an effort to 'debedouinise' the community, converting it into a de-politicised, non-threatening, proletariat class. As will be argued below, verbally expressed identity, religious and political party affiliation and voting patterns are but a few signifiers of how and in what ways such a process has proven successful.

### Historical Foundation of Traditional Identity Formulation

I have addressed the traditional Negev bedouin social components and divisions elsewhere,<sup>22</sup> and need not repeat this background here. Suffice it to say that historically, identity/identities formulation among the Negev bedouin was situated within two interrelated contexts. At the 'micro' level, identity formulation stemmed from one's place within one of three different allied groups:<sup>23</sup> *'Arab* (tribesmen), *fellahin* (peasants) and *'Abid* (Blacks). Members of the *'Arab* are recognised by the others as the 'True' bedouin of the region, with the most noble heritage. These tribes originated in the Arabian peninsula, most arriving in the Negev beginning in about 1799.<sup>24</sup>

Ethnicism in bedouin society may be demarcated by the arrival of the *fellahin* to the Negev in the nineteenth century. They, as well as a community of Blacks who at one time served as slaves to the 'True' Bedouin, were viewed by the 'True' as socially inferior.<sup>25</sup> This increased heterogeneity of a previously homogenous society, combined with greater population pressure on the land, created new political tensions and competition from within for scarce resources. Thus, 'a class structure [gradually] emerged, which was manifested by economic inequality, social differentiation and polarisation, and further spatial separation'.<sup>26</sup> This stratification continued to strengthen throughout the twentieth century.

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

At the 'macro' level of the Negev bedouin world, one may identify two groups, *al-'Arab* (the bedouin community as a whole) and *al-Yahud* (the Jews). Significantly, one need not embrace the Jewish religion or be an ethnic Jew in order to be in the realm of *al-Yahud* – that is, anyone not inside the collective is an outsider, seen to pose a potential threat to group members. Just as bedouin attitudes toward the Jews well typify their minority status, Jewish attitudes toward the bedouin similarly fit Blumer's dominant group paradigm. Historically, the Arabs of Israel including the bedouin have held separate identities compared to Jewish-Israelis. The inability to access 'Israeliness' in a nationality sense due to the separate status held by Israel's Arab citizens is in part a reflection of an existing system of inequality and seclusion that has plagued the community since the creation of the State.<sup>27</sup>

The issue of Israeli identity, of who is or is not an Israeli, is not easily unravelled. Jews who see Israeliness as an extension of Jewishness (or vice versa) by definition exclude the minorities from the equation altogether. Issues related to the Jewish symbolism of what is in truth a binational state, such as the National Anthem and the flag, offer Jewish-Israelis a sense of identity that by definition excludes the Arab communities. Moreover, as will be

elaborated further below, the idea of one seeing themselves/being seen as 'Israeli' also may be moving toward a class distinction, at least as it is beginning to become manifest within the bedouin community. This is significant, stemming from an effort on the part of Israel's planners to use the resettlement sites as socialising agents, drawing together a number of 'Arab tribes, as well as *fellahi* and 'Abid groups, each of which would reside in its own separate neighborhood.<sup>28</sup> States one former planner, 'we wanted to take the *hamulas* [sub-tribes], put them each in their own neighborhoods in the town, and eventually have them mesh and become one town, without the previous divisions'.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, it is clear that an additional goal of the programme has been to effectively separate the bedouin from the rest of the Arab community in the region.

### Summary of the 1996 Data Findings and Comparisons to the 2000 Data

In the summer of 1996 and again in 2000, I implemented a household survey in Segev Shalom to determine and quantify bedouin identity/identities expression in the resettled setting. The town of Segev Shalom is located about four kilometres southeast of Be'er Sheva, and initially experienced considerable difficulty in attracting residents when first created in 1979. The settlement proved to be slow in coming into its own as a viable bedouin town, and only began to attract residents after a re-commitment to its development was made with the creation of a governing body in 1986 (the Masos Regional Council) to help further its growth. And yet by 1989, the town still only held 500 residents.<sup>30</sup> About 200 to 300 bedouin families numbering some 1,800 people came to the town in the early 1990s. By 1996, this number had grown to a population of 2,800,<sup>31</sup> still a small minority of the El-Azazma tribe for whom the town was built. Indeed the population of the El-Azazma tribe living in unrecognised areas outside the town in the late 1990s was nearly triple the population of the town itself.<sup>32</sup> By 2000, however, the population of Segev Shalom had surpassed 3,500 and was rapidly approaching a total of 4,000 residents.<sup>33</sup>

The first survey for this study was undertaken 1–15 July 1996, and the second 9–23 July 2000. The survey instrument (see Appendix) and data collection methodology used were virtually identical in both survey years. In both instances, for example, the instrument was created by myself, but with the assistance of bedouin and Jewish academics and policy-makers. With slight variations, the questions asked in both years, and even the verbiage used to ask the questions, were nearly identical. In both years, I hired and trained local bedouin students to assist me in carrying out the house-to-house data collection. The women were chosen especially for their ability to speak with younger female respondents who often are prohibited by their husbands, fathers or brothers from speaking with male strangers such as myself.

Of the randomly chosen 140 household heads selected for the study in 1996, 102 (73 per cent) were available and willing to provide information for the survey. Thus, 36 per cent of Segev Shalom's 280 households situated in the three neighbourhoods existing at that time are represented in those survey results. In 2000, the town had grown to 480 occupied dwellings (comprised of stone houses, shacks and tents) in five neighbourhoods. A random sample of 180 dwellings from these neighbourhoods was again taken, with 150 household heads found at home and agreeing to speak with the survey team member during the survey period (83 per cent of those approached). Therefore, about 31 per cent of the town's households are represented in the 2000 statistics.

TABLE 1. Stated preference for identity labels

	1996 (N=102)	2000 (N=144)
Bedouin	33.3	0.0
Bedouin Arab	22.5	2.8
Bedouin Muslim	15.7	8.3
Bedouin Israeli-Arab; Bedouin Israeli	3.9	6.9
Bedouin Palestinian	0.0	1.4
Bedouin total	75.4	19.4
Muslim Arab	3.9	9.7
Muslim bedouin	2.9	9.0
Muslim Palestinian	1.0	2.1
Muslim Israeli; Muslim Israeli-Arab	1.0	1.4
Muslim total	8.8	22.2
Arab Muslim	2.9	21.5
Arab Israeli; Arab Palestinian Israeli	0.0	9.0
Arab Palestinian	0.0	3.5
Arab bedouin	0.0	3.5
Arab total	2.9	37.5
Palestinian-Israeli	7.8	1.4
Palestinian Israeli-Arab; Palestinian Muslim	0.0	4.9
Palestinian Arab	0.0	1.4
Palestinian bedouin	0.0	0.7
Palestinian total	7.8	8.4
Israeli-Arab	2.9	3.5
Israeli-Arab Muslim	0.0	4.9
Israeli bedouin	0.0	4.2
Israeli total	2.9	12.6
Other	2.2	0.0

Sources: S. C. Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity Through Planned Resettlement: The Case of the Negev Bedouin', *Third World Planning Review*, 21/1, 1999, pp. 19–39; 2000 Segev Shalom Household Survey.

The selection of respondents was also virtually identical in both studies. Clustered sampling was used to be certain that residents from all town neighbourhoods were surveyed. Although the two neighbourhoods that were first built – *alef* and *bet* – are home to the majority of town residents, a proportionally relevant part of the population in the other town neighbourhoods who had only recently moved to the town was surveyed as well. Logistically, this sometimes meant that the surveyors spent more time in the newer neighbourhoods, but completed fewer questionnaires. Houses in the newer neighbourhoods (*gimmel*, *dalet*, *hey*) are typically several metres from one another, do not necessarily have roads connecting them in a linear fashion, are built on hillsides and by wadis, and thus are often difficult to reach.

Survey respondents were first asked to provide a one- or two-word definition of themselves and their families (Table 1). While it is clear that the term '*bedouin*' was the primary identifying label for over three-quarters of the survey respondents in 1996, with one-quarter choosing alternative primary labels and over 20 per cent not including the term '*bedouin*' as either a primary or even a secondary term of identity, this was no longer true by 2000. The term '*bedouin*' had been replaced, mostly by the term '*Arab*' (nearly 40 per cent), although '*Muslim*' was also chosen by more than 20 per cent of respondents.

The term '*Israeli*', alone or as a suffix or prefix to an identity label, was barely mentioned by survey respondents in 1996, short of the 2 per cent who chose it as a secondary label. Similarly the term '*Israeli-Arab*', the identity label of choice utilised

TABLE 2. Do you feel that you are treated equally with other Israelis? (percentage)

	1996 (N=102)		2000 (N=149)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No	80	72	78	67
Yes	9	13	15	15
Don't know	11	15	7	18

Sources: S. C. Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity Through Planned Resettlement: The Case of the Negev Bedouin', *Third World Planning Review*, 21/1, 1999, pp. 19–39; 2000 Segev Shalom Household Survey.

TABLE 3. Frequency of mosque attendance (male respondents and female respondents' husbands) (percentage)

	1996 (N=102)	2000 (N=148)
Regular attendance	48	42
Irregular/no attendance	51	58
No response	1	0

Sources: S. C. Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity Through Planned Resettlement: The Case of the Negev Bedouin', *Third World Planning Review*, 21/1, 1999, pp. 19–39; 2000 Segev Shalom Household Survey.

TABLE 4. Residents' satisfaction with religious service provisions (percentage)

	1996 (N=102)	2000 (N=141)
Satisfied	47	65
Dissatisfied	47	35
No response	6	0

Sources: S. C. Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity Through Planned Resettlement: The Case of the Negev Bedouin', *Third World Planning Review*, 21/1, 1999, pp. 19–39; 2000 Segev Shalom Household Survey.

throughout Israeli media and government circles, was only cited by 6 per cent of the survey respondents as either a primary or secondary identity label. Four years later, the identifier is still not used a great deal, though it was chosen by more than 10 per cent of the survey respondents.

Regarding Segev Shalom residents' sense of belonging to the larger Israeli collective, the respondents' answers (Table 2) confirm that the vast majority of those surveyed in 1996 (and again in 2000) did *not* feel that they receive equal treatment under the law, despite the fact that they are Israeli citizens. This contention was found to cut across age, gender and educational lines.

As for expressed identification in religious (i.e., Muslim) terms, the 1996 survey found that use of the town mosque was relatively evenly divided (Table 3), with half of the respondents (or, in the case of female respondents, their husbands) attending regularly, and half attending rarely or not at all. Interestingly, the percentage of those surveyed attending the mosque dropped by the year 2000, though not enough to yet determine if a trend is under way. In general, the town also appeared in 1996 to be split evenly in terms of attitudes toward these services (Table 4). Data from 1996 were conducted soon after

TABLE 5. Voting participation in the 1996 and 1999 elections (percentage)

Did you vote?	1996		1999	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	86	63	77	56
No	13	35	23	44
No response	1	2	0	0

Sources: S. C. Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity Through Planned Resettlement: The Case of the Negev Bedouin', *Third World Planning Review*, 21/1, 1999, pp. 19–39; 2000 Segev Shalom Household survey.

the construction of the building, thus lessening somewhat the strength of the information gathered. By 2000, satisfaction rates had increased considerably.

Other factors related to religious observance are also relevant here. Those in the 1996 survey who identified as '*bedouin*' first (more than 75 per cent of all respondents), rather than as '*Arabs*' or '*Muslims*', were significantly more likely to be polygynous ( $p=0.04$ ) – that is, bedouinness and the traditional bedouin practice of having multiple wives were clearly interconnected. And yet, by 2000, the '*bedouin*' label was far less significant in terms of its connection to polygynous practice. However, those who were polygynous were found to be less likely to identify themselves using the suffix, prefix or label '*Israeli*', preferring the descriptors '*Arab*', '*Palestinian*', '*Muslim*' or '*bedouin*' instead ( $p=0.03$ ).

Another way of expressing one's identity is, of course, though political party affiliation and other similar mechanisms such as voting participation and political party preference. The 1996 voting rate as determined by the Segev Shalom survey results (Table 5) was quite similar to previous Arab community participation rates. A number of significant correlations concerning voting patterns were also found among the Segev Shalom survey data. Men, for example, were found more likely to vote than women ( $p=0.03$ ); in some instances, women who voted stated their husbands coerced them in their voting choices. Also, those whose primary identity label was '*bedouin*' were more likely to have voted than those with other labels such as '*Arab*' or '*Muslim*' ( $p = 0.00$ ).

Voter participation in the 1999 election in which Ehud Barak was elected prime minister found similar, though clearly lower, voting participation rates for men and women alike. That being said, those using the '*Israeli*' identifier were more likely to have voted than others ( $p=0.01$ ), although those using the labels '*Arab*', '*Muslim*' or '*bedouin*' voted at relatively high rates as well. Only those using the label '*Palestinian*', some of whom are the second and third wives of bedouin men (who are Israeli citizens) may not be citizens of Israel, and therefore were less likely to have voted than others in the survey.

A final survey question concerning political attitudes toward the increasingly popular Islamic parties in Israel further adds to the above data. Respondents were asked to state to what degree they agreed with the following statement: 'The Muslim parties are well-suited to represent the interests of the bedouin community.' Over half of the Segev Shalom respondents agreed with the statement in 1996 (Table 6), and about one-third disagreed. While the percentage of males agreeing with this statement rose substantially in 2000, women's rates of agreement declined.

Overall, the descriptive statistics cited above suggest a shifting sense of identity among the bedouin community of Segev Shalom. As noted above, the most obvious change

TABLE 6. Belief that the Islamic parties are well suited to address the interests of the Negev bedouin community (percentage)

	1996 (N=102)		2000 (N=148)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agree	34	78	56	51
Disagree	46	12	32	27
Don't know	20	9	12	19

Sources: S. C. Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity Through Planned Resettlement: The Case of the Negev Bedouin', *Third World Planning Review*, 21/1, 1999, pp. 19–39; 2000 Segev Shalom Household Survey.

found between the 1996 and 2000 data is the fact that, increasingly, 'bedouin' identity is on the decline, being replaced mostly by expressed identities as 'Arabs', 'Muslims' and, to a lesser degree, 'Israeli'. On closer inspection, these identities may be deconstructed further. In the following section, I will use chi-square analysis ( $p < \text{or} = 0.05$ ) in order to further examine the numerous associations that may be found between expressed identity and the social, political and economic situations, views and attitudes of the 2000 Segev Shalom Household Survey respondents.

### Analysis of the 2000 Segev Shalom Survey Data

As was the case in 1996, survey respondents' choices of primary identity labels say much not only about how they see themselves, but also how such views are shaped by personal life situations in the resettled environment. Those who chose the primary label of 'bedouin', for example, had lower incomes than others in the survey ( $p=0.01$ ). As a result, they were less likely to own such non-essential material goods as a video recorder (vcr) ( $p=0.04$ ), car (males,  $p=0.05$ ) or satellite dish (males,  $p=0.05$ ). And yet, despite their economic situation, these respondents were less likely to raise or grow crops in the town ( $p=0.03$ ) as a means of supplementing their incomes.<sup>34</sup> As for political attitudes, those identifying as 'bedouin' rated facilities in the town such as the health clinics ( $p=0.02$ ), mosque (women,  $p=0.02$ ) and other social services ( $p=0.01$ ) lower than other respondents. Still, they were less likely overall to express a preference for the Islamic political parties ( $p=0.02$ ).

Those using primary identity labels such as 'Israeli', 'Israeli-Arab' and 'Palestinian-Israeli' were quite similar to those who prefer the primary identity label of 'bedouin'. For example, they also are less likely to raise crops ( $p=0.03$ ). Male respondents choosing such a label are also more educated than other respondents ( $p=0.04$ ). Unlike those who identified as 'bedouin', however, those using the 'Israeli' identifier are able to afford material goods like a vcr ( $p=0.03$ ). Still, most associations suggest similarities, rather than differences, with those using the 'bedouin' label. Those using the 'Israeli' label are, like the 'bedouin', more likely to be critical of town services such as water service (male,  $p=0.04$ ) and the mosque (male,  $p=0.01$ ). Indeed, those who used an 'Israeli' identifier were most critical of the town government overall ( $p=0.01$ ), more likely to state that the government's willingness to respond to resident complaints was no different or even worse than in the past ( $p=0.01$ ) when the town was governed by a regional council (Masos) headed by a Jewish mayor (Ilan Sagie). Perhaps most significant, those

identifying as 'Israelis' tended to have lived in the town the longest ( $p=0.01$ ), a validation of Israel's original bedouin town planning agenda of converting the Negev bedouin into 'Israelis'. Still, no respondent using the 'Israeli' label stated that they came to the town by force, but rather, they said they came seeking the presumed opportunities that town living offered. Nor did any respondent using the 'Israeli' label choose the secondary label of 'Palestinian'.

As noted, those using the identifiers of 'bedouin' and 'Israeli' appear to be quite similar compared to those identifying as 'Arabs', 'Muslims' and/or 'Palestinians'. Chi-square analysis revealed that such labels do indeed correlate ( $p=0.01$ ), especially among men ( $p=0.00$ ). By compressing these five labels into just two categories, the picture of how Segev Shalom residents see themselves comes into greater focus. In general, those calling themselves 'bedouin' or 'Israelis' have lived in the town the longest ( $p=0.04$ ). They are more critical of the government ( $p=0.01$ ) and its services, yet do not favour the Islamic political parties ( $p=0.03$ ). They are also less likely to frequent the town mosque ( $p=0.05$ ). Those choosing the 'Arab' 'Muslim' and/or 'Palestinian' identity labels, on the other hand, have lived in the town for a shorter period of time (generally less than 6 years), are less critical of the government and its services, frequent the mosque and support the Islamic parties in Israel.

Perhaps the most telling statistics are found in the responses to three questions concerning whether the respondent would encourage a friend to relocate to the town ten years ago, five years ago and today. Those male respondents who identify as 'Israelis' or 'bedouin' would have encouraged friends to relocate ten years ago (1990), while those calling themselves 'bedouin', 'Arab', 'Muslim' or 'Palestinian' would not have ( $p=0.00$ ). And yet, these same men would have been more likely than the 'Arab'/'Muslim'/'Palestinian' group to discourage friends from relocating only five years later ( $p=0.01$ ). That said, the percentage of all residents who would have encouraged a friend to relocate ten years ago (1990), five years ago (1995) and today (2000), grows from 17 per cent to 32 per cent to 61 per cent. Thus, though residents (especially those identifying as 'Israelis' and 'bedouin') are critical of the town, its government and its services, this does not mean that they do not see the town as an ideal place for themselves and others like them to reside. On the contrary, these statistics suggest that most residents increasingly believe that Segev Shalom is, all things considered, not a bad place to live and raise a family. When compared to previous data,<sup>35</sup> such views suggest significant change is presently taking place in the resettled Negev bedouin community.

### **Identity/Identities Formulation and Expression in 2000: A Re-evaluation**

Based upon the 1996 data, it was my contention that 'while the bedouin have been cut from their traditional spatial, social and economic connections with the ongoing resettlement initiative, they have not become integrated into the larger Israeli collective. Rather than align with Jewish Israeli society, the bedouin have been drawn to the Arab and Muslim worlds with which they hold a common sense of social and economic status, built in large part upon shared opposition with the dominant, Jewish Israeli state apparatus.'<sup>36</sup> And yet, it is now clear that some modification of this conclusion is in order.

While a process of Arabicisation and Islamicisation is occurring in the bedouin community concomitant with the debedouinisation process brought on by resettle-

ment, it is also apparent that Israeliness is also being expressed to a greater degree than in the past. What is particularly significant about this expressed identity, however, is that it may be seen less clearly as a social distinction and more strongly as an economic and political distinction – that is, one's striving toward economic betterment and participation in the political process of the state brings on the ability for one to 'become Israeli'. In other words, the state's resettlement agenda may be succeeding to a certain degree in encapsulating some Negev bedouin, whose long-term settlement in the town now allow them to participate in Israeli society in ways that were unachievable in the pastoral-nomadic economic and geographic setting. That it is these same bedouin who are most critical of the government and its services only further confirms their sense of belonging to the larger collective, and their desire to improve their lot still further not by stepping outside of the system (as the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza wish to do), but rather by challenging the *status quo* from *within* Israeli society. As high-school headmaster and Segev Shalom Local Council Member Muhammad El-Hamamdi stated in 1996: '[Today], there is more of a sense of "Israeliness". I am an Israeli, this is our place, our home.'<sup>37</sup>

As is often the case in Israel, events on the ground change rapidly, particularly since the 2000 survey was conducted. The outbreak of the *al-Aqsa Intifada* in September 2000 has had considerable impact on all Israelis, Jews and Arabs alike. Demonstrations by Israel's Arab communities in support of the Palestinians during the summer and fall of 2001, and the deaths of several of the demonstrators at the hands of the state police that resulted, were pivotal moments in relations between the state and its Arab minorities. The Arab boycott of the national elections in January 2003 by more than one-third of potential voters<sup>38</sup> provides further evidence of the developing rift between the state and the minority communities.

Whether and how these and similar events will be reflected in the future in terms of bedouin self-identity formulation and expression remains to be seen. In any case, it remains the contention here that Negev bedouin identity and a connection to the broader Israeli collective will continue to be linked most directly to domestic concerns – that is, to the community's social and economic conditions and treatment by the state. It is clear that a substantial part of the community still sees itself as disenfranchised and separated from mainstream Jewish-Israeli society. For this portion of the bedouin community, the ability to access 'Israeliness' in total will remain a fleeting goal. Yet for others, the opportunities that town life has to offer has begun to impact their abilities to educate their children, hold a wage labour position and play a role in the development of their community. For these bedouin, the act of becoming Israeli has become a reality.

Thus, it may be contended that the resettlement project has played a key role in fostering the fracturing of the community into a number of economically and socially defined sub-groups with contending political interests and agendas. Although the implications and ramifications of these changes are as yet blurred, what is clear is that expressed identity, religious participation, party affiliation and voting patterns offer a barometer for helping to further evaluate the increasingly heterogenous nature of Negev bedouin society in the early twenty-first century.

*Correspondence:* Steven C. Dinero, Philadelphia University, School of General Studies, Philadelphia, PA 19144, USA. E-mail: DineroS@philau.edu

## Notes

1. Steven C. Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity Through Planned Resettlement: The Case of the Negev Bedouin', *Third World Planning Review*, 21/1, 1999, pp. 19–39.
2. That is, about 1,000 square kilometres; see Dan Boneh, 'Facing Uncertainty: The Social Consequences of Forced Sedentarization among the Jaraween Bedouin, Negev, Israel'. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brandeis University, 1983.
3. Boneh, 'Facing Uncertainty'.
4. *Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin, No. 1* (Beer Sheva: Center for Bedouin Studies and Development & Negev Center for Regional Development, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 1999) (Hebrew/English).
5. Avinoam Meir, *As Nomadism Ends: The Israeli Bedouin of the Negev* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).
6. Meir, *As Nomadism Ends*.
7. See, e.g., A. Meir and J. Ben-David, 'Welfare Support for Israeli Negev Bedouin Elderly Men: Adaptation during Spatioecological Transformation', *The Gerontologist*, 33/3, 1993, pp. 308–314.
8. S. C. Dinero, 'Female Role Change and Male Response in the Post-Nomadic Environment: The Case of the Israeli Negev Bedouin', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29/3, 1997, pp. 248–261.
9. Adapted from Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity'.
10. S. C. Dinero, 'Planning in a Post-Nomadic Bedouin Town: An Update and Follow-up Assessment of Development and Change in Segev Shalom, Israel', *Scottish Geographical Magazine: The Journal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society*, 114/2, 1998, pp. 66–75.
11. Dinero, 'Planning in a Post-Nomadic Bedouin Town'.
12. *Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin*.
13. See L. Bobo, 'Prejudice as Group Position: Microfoundations of a Sociological Approach to Racism and Race Relations', *Journal of Social Issues*, 55/3, 1999, pp. 445–472.
14. Tovi Fenster, 'Participation in the Settlement Planning Process: The Case of the Bedouin in the Israeli Negev'. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics, 1991.
15. Dinero, 'Female Role Change'.
16. Emanuel Marx, *Bedouin of the Negev* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Press, 1967).
17. Boneh, *Facing Uncertainty*.
18. Boneh, *Facing Uncertainty*.
19. Avinoam Meir, 'Territoriality among the Negev Bedouin from Nomadism to Semi-Urbanism'. Paper presented at the Conference on Tribal and Peasant Pastoralism, Pavia, Italy, 1992.
20. Longina A. Jakubowska, in Ya'akov Eini and Ezra Orion (eds), *The Bedouin: Papers and Articles* (Be'er Sheva: Ben Gurion University/Midreshet Sde Boqer, 1988) (Hebrew/English).
21. See Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity', for a full discussion.
22. Marx, *Bedouin of the Negev*.
23. Clinton Bailey, 'The Negev in the Nineteenth Century: Reconstructing History from Bedouin Oral Traditions', *Asian and African Studies*, 14/7, 1980, pp. 35–80.
24. Avinoam Meir, 'Nomads and the State: The Spatial Dynamics of Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces among the Israeli Negev Bedouin', *Political Geography Quarterly*, 7/3, 1988, pp. 251–270.
25. Meir, 'Nomads and the State'.
26. David Grossman, *Sleeping on a Wire: Conversations with Palestinians in Israel* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1993).
27. Fenster, 'Participation in the Settlement Planning Process'.
28. Quoted in Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity'.
29. *Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin*.
30. *Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin*.
31. *Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin*.
32. Eran Razin and Harvey Lithwick, *Background Studies for the Bedouin Urban Project* (Be'er Sheva: Ben Gurion University Center for Bedouin Studies and Development, 2000). Available online at: [www.bgu.ac.il/bedouin/mainframew.htm](http://www.bgu.ac.il/bedouin/mainframew.htm) (accessed 14 April 2004).
33. S. C. Dinero, 'Resettlement and Modernization in Post-Nomadic Bedouin Society: The Case of Segev Shalom, Israel', *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 15/2, 1996, pp. 105–116.
34. Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity'; Deborah F. Horner, 'Planning for Bedouin', *Third World Planning Review*, 4/2, 1982, pp. 159–176.
35. Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity'.
36. Quoted in Dinero, 'Reconstructing Identity'.

37. Arab Association for Human Rights, *Weekly Review of the Arab Press in Israel*, 107 (29 January–4 February), 2003. Available online at: www.arabhra.org (14 April 2004).

## Appendix 1.

### Segev Shalom/Shqeb Public Opinion Survey Questionnaire (1996 & 2000; English version)

*Begin saying*, 'I'm going to ask you a series of questions for a research study concerning Segev Shalom/Shqeb. The way that the survey works is that if you don't know an answer, please feel free to tell me. If you don't wish to answer a certain question, please tell me that also. The information from this survey will be used solely to assist Dr. Steven Dinero's ongoing research concerning Shqeb. All information provided will be anonymous, and cannot and will not be attributed to you. Your name will not be used in any way in this research and your answers will remain confidential.'

#### PERSONAL:

1. Sex \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Age (approximate if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Marital status: **a)** single **b)** married **c)** divorced **d)** widowed  
**3a. If married**, no. of wives you/your husband has \_\_\_\_\_
4. No. adults in household including you \_\_\_\_\_
5. Tribe: **a)** El-Azazme **b)** Tarabeen **c)** other
6. No. children in household age: **6a.** 0–4 \_\_\_\_\_ **6b.** 5–13 \_\_\_\_\_ **6c.** 14–17 \_\_\_\_\_
7. No. children attending school age: **7a.** 0–4 \_\_\_\_\_ **7b.** 5–13 \_\_\_\_\_ **7c.** 14–17 \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do any attend school outside Shqeb? **a)** yes **b)** no
9. Your highest grade completed \_\_\_\_\_
10. Your father's highest grade completed \_\_\_\_\_
11. Your mother's highest grade completed \_\_\_\_\_
12. Are you literate in at least one language? **a)** yes **b)** no
13. How long have you lived in Shqeb (years)? \_\_\_\_\_

#### ECONOMIC:

14. Are you presently employed? **a)** yes **b)** no
15. How many other adults in the household are employed? \_\_\_\_\_
16. What type of job do you do? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Your job location:
  - a)** Shqeb **e)** the Palestinian Territories
  - b)** a nearby Bedouin area/town **f)** other
  - c)** Be'er Sheva/another Jewish city
  - d)** moshav/kibbutz
18. Which of the following describes your annual household salary range?
  - a)** <15,000 NIS **b)** 15,000–25,000 NIS **c)** >25,000 NIS
19. Do you raise any animals (chickens, donkeys, horses, goats, sheep)?
  - a)** yes **b)** no
20. Do you raise agricultural crops (olives, vegetables)?
  - a)** yes **b)** no
21. Which of the following dwelling types do you own?
  - a)** house **d)** tent-shack
  - b)** *machsán* (self-built, plaster wall) **e)** tent
  - c)** shack (self-built, tin/wood)

22. Which of the following items do you own?  
 a) telephone      b) auto      c) tv      d) vcr  
 e) clothes washer      f) satellite dish      g) fridge

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER SERVICES:

23. What is your source of electricity?  
 a) public utility      c) none  
 b) wire to neighbor/relative      d) other
24. How would you rate the electricity service in town?  
 a) excellent      b) good      c) fair      d) poor
25. Are you connected to the town's running water supply?  
 a) yes      b) no
26. How would you rate the water service in town?  
 a) excellent      b) good      c) fair      d) poor
27. Type of human waste removal owned:  
 a) no facility      b) pit latrine/outhouse  
 c) non-flush toilet      d) flush toilet      e) other
28. How would you rate the cleanliness of the public areas of the town such as streets, open lots, school grounds?  
 a) excellent      b) good      c) fair      d) poor
29. Where does your family go for health care?  
 a) Segev's *Tipat Halav* or *Kupat Holim*      c) other *Kupot Holim*  
 b) Be'er Sheva's *K'H* for Bedouin      d) Soroka Hospital  
 e) private doctor      f) don't go to the doctor  
 g) other
30. How would you rate the quality and ease of access to Segev Shalom's health services?  
 a) excellent      b) good      c) fair      d) poor
31. What additions or changes to the present system of health clinics would most benefit you and your family? \_\_\_\_\_
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32. Do you or your family utilise any social welfare services in Shqeb such as programming for women or the elderly, sport for youth, counseling, etc.?  
 a) yes      b) no      c) don't know
33. Regardless of whether you personally utilise these services, how would you rate the social welfare services in town?  
 a) excellent      b) good      c) fair      d) poor
34. How often do you or your family utilise the religious services provided at the town mosque?  
 a) always      b) often      c) not often      d) never
35. What religious services do you or members of your family utilise (prayer, Quranic study, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_
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### CONCLUDING QUESTIONS:

36. Which of these statements best summarises your primary reason for moving to Shqeb? (choose only one). 'My family moved to Shqeb ...'  
 a) because of a family decision or to follow other family members.'  
 b) due to government force.'  
 c) because of the public services available in town.'  
 d) to improve my quality of life.'  
 e) none of these

37. Which of the following terms do you feel best describes you?

- a) Arab      d) Israeli      g) Palestinian-Israeli
- b) Muslim    e) Palestinian      h) other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Bedouin    f) Israeli-Arab

37a. Which additional term, if any, do you feel best describes you?

- a) Arab      d) Israeli      g) Palestinian-Israeli
- b) Muslim    e) Palestinian      h) other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Bedouin    f) Israeli-Arab      i) none of these applies

38. Did you vote in the recent election? a) yes      b) no

39. Do you believe that the present national government can fulfil the social/economic development needs of the bedouin community?

- a) yes      b) no      c) don't know

40. Which party's platform do you believe best represents bedouin interests?

41. How would you respond to the following statement?: 'The parties whose platforms are Islamicist in nature are the best choice for representing the interests of Israel's Arab population.'

Do you:

- a) agree      b) somewhat agree
- c) somewhat disagree      d) disagree      e) don't know

42. Do you feel that you are treated as an equal Israeli citizen under the law?

- a) yes      b) no      c) don't know

43. In general, how satisfied are you with the social and community planning initiatives taking place in the bedouin sector? \_\_\_\_\_

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44. How has your life changed since relocating to Shqeb? Are things better or worse?

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45a.\* Would you have recommended relocating to Shqeb to a friend or family member 10 years ago (1990)?

- a) yes      b) no      c) don't know

45b.\* Would you have recommended relocating to Shqeb to a friend or family member 5 years ago (1995)?

- a) yes      b) no      c) don't know

45c.\* Would you recommend relocating to Shqeb to a friend or family member today (2000)?

- a) yes      b) no      c) don't know

46. Is there anything you wish to add concerning the questions asked, or any other issues not covered by the questions you wish to discuss?

**Conclude with:** 'On behalf of Dr. Dinero, I want to thank you for your time and cooperation in the undertaking of this survey. Your assistance is very much appreciated.'

\* Appeared on the 2000 Survey only.

