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مبادرات صندوق إبراهيم

The Abraham Fund Initiatives

The Bedouin Population in the Negev

SOCIAL, DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

Arik Rudnitzky

TRANSFORMATIONS IN AN ERA OF URBANIZATION

Dr. Thabet Abu Ras

Critical reader: Prof. Yitzhak Reiter

MARCH 2012

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Introduction

Bedouin society is a unique social group within Arab society in Israel, constituting more than 25% of the total population of the Negev and 13% of the total Arab population of Israel. Furthermore, their relative proportion in the population has grown rapidly over the years due to the high rate of birth in the community. This population group is the poorest and weakest of any group in Israel.

The standard of living among the Bedouin population, and particularly those residing in the unrecognized villages, is considerably lower than the average standard of living in Jewish localities, lower even than in many Arab localities in Israel. The majority of Bedouin communities lack even basic welfare, educational and health services.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Negev's Bedouins have rarely been included in the Israeli public discourse. Yet political, economic and social changes have raised public awareness of this population group. Today political groups and civil social organizations are showing increasing interest in the Negev region, and particularly in the Bedouin population. This renewed interest derives from the fact that the Negev contains Israel's major land reserves. Moreover, considerable resources have been invested in the region under the auspices of the National Strategic Plan for the Development of the Negev and other plans, for example the plan to move IDF bases to the south.

Resolution of the status of the unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev, primarily though not exclusively, through the Goldberg and Prawer Committees, has been a long and protracted process, and government implementation of these committees' recommendations has also been drawn out. For years the Bedouin population has been neglected and has attracted very little interest on the part of the Israeli government or of Israeli society as a whole. Yet today, public awareness of and attitudes toward the Bedouin population are changing.

These changing trends have exposed major shortcomings in information, facts and figures regarding Bedouin society in the Negev. The Bedouin population is the only group in Israel about which there are no accurate demographic figures. This can be attributed to a number of factors: ongoing neglect on the part of government officials and agencies; the fact that many Bedouins live in unrecognized villages; population registration according to tribes; a high degree of mobility; and marriages to women with no civil status. The purpose of this collection of articles is to fill in the missing information and to present a comprehensive picture of the Bedouin population.

The two articles in this collection present demographic, social and economic facts and figures about Bedouin society. They were written from two different perspectives for a single purpose: to provide a complete picture of this population group. The Abraham Fund Initiatives sees this publication as a basic tool that can serve those involved in developing the Negev and in working with the Bedouin community. The information seeks to expose readers to the problems and distress of a large proportion of Bedouins living in the Negev and to raise awareness of the price this distress has exacted from the entire population of the Negev.

The first article, written by Arik Rodnitzky, describes the social, demographic and economic characteristics of Bedouin society in the Negev region and compares these to the Jewish and Arab populations of Israel. The discrepancies among these population groups emerge from the article's findings regarding the situation among Bedouin society in such areas as employment, education and health. The article also outlines these discrepancies as they are reflected in the economic input of Bedouin society in these areas and others. The article's survey of the facts reveals a harsh picture of ongoing discrimination and neglect that perpetuate the weakness of Bedouin society and place barriers to its progress.

The second article, written by Dr. Thabet Abu Ras, surveys the social and demographic characteristics of Bedouin society in the context of social and political changes. The article describes transformations that took place in Bedouin society in the Negev during an era of rapid urbanization and modernization as well as those resulting from changes in the political map of Israel. The article discusses government policy toward the Bedouin population with respect to society and economics, politics, land and settlement and reviews decisive rulings of the High Court of Justice concerning the Bedouins and the new political awakening in Bedouin society.

We believe that this collection can contribute to the emerging discourse regarding the development of the Negev region and can shed light on the importance of promoting the advancement of Bedouin society while taking into consideration its needs and desires. The Negev is undergoing a period of development and change. We hope that the development of the Negev will be guided by a responsible, socially conscious and inclusive approach that will integrate the growing Bedouin population into the development processes.

I would like to thank the writers for devoting their time and talents to write these articles. Thank you to Prof. Yitzhak Reiter for his critical reading and comments, and special thanks to Maya Popper from the staff of The Abraham Fund Initiatives for preparing the document for printing. It is important to note that these articles express the opinions of their writers and that The Abraham Fund Initiatives does not consider itself committed to or responsible for their content.

Mohammad Darawshe **Amnon Be'eri-Sulitzeanu**
Co-Executive Directors, The Abraham Fund Initiatives



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Tel Aviv University



Table of contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Population and demographics	8
A. Population of the Negev – General statistics.....	8
B. The Bedouin population – Permanent residential townships.....	9
C. The Bedouin population of the diaspora localities.....	11
I. Government policy for regulating the status of the localities in the Bedouin diaspora in the Negev.....	14
II. The Bedouin residents of the Abu Basma, Ramat Hanegev and Bnei Shimon Regional Councils.....	15
D. Age distribution.....	17
E. Fertility and rate of natural growth.....	17
F. Households.....	19
3. Standard of living in Bedouin localities	22
A. Bedouin localities: At the bottom of Israel's socio-economic scale.....	22
B. Municipal services and infrastructure.....	22
I. Infrastructure in the permanent townships.....	23
II. Infrastructure in the unrecognized villages.....	23
C. Lack of welfare infrastructure.....	24
D. Distance from education, health, transportation and consumer services.....	25
E. Inferior standard of living: Exposure to environmental hazards.....	26
F. Ownership of durable goods.....	27
G. Computer, internet and communication infrastructure.....	28
4. Employment, salary and unemployment	29
A. Civilian work force.....	29
B. Salary levels and income groups.....	31

C. Employment sources.....	34
D. Unemployment.....	35
5. Poverty	37
A. Incidence of poverty in the Bedouin population of the Negev.....	37
B. Relationship between educational level and incidence of poverty.....	39
6. Education	40
A. General level of education.....	40
B. Literacy.....	41
C. Results of "Meitzav" national standardized achievement tests for fifth and eighth graders.....	43
D. Eligibility for matriculation certificate.....	44
E. School dropout rates.....	48
F. Factors in termination of studies.....	48
G. School infrastructures.....	49
H. Students.....	50
7. Health	52
A. Life expectancy.....	52
B. Infant mortality.....	52
C. Marriages between relatives.....	54
The case of the Al-Sayyid Bedouin tribe.....	57
D. Chronic disease morbidity.....	57
E. Physical limitations and disabilities.....	58
F. Children with special needs and their families.....	59
References.....	61
List of tables.....	64
List of figures.....	66
List of maps.....	66

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the social, demographic and economic factors affecting the Bedouin citizens of the Negev. Research interest has begun to focus on the Bedouin population because they are a culturally unique social group within Arab society. The purpose of this chapter is not to provide a comprehensive survey of the Bedouins living in the Negev,¹ but rather to discuss the major social characteristics that distinguish the Bedouins of the Negev as a unique population group in Israel. To this end, in addition to offering facts and figures about the Bedouin population as a group, this chapter will attempt to position this data in two contexts: In the context of the region in which they reside, by comparing the Bedouin and the Jewish populations living in the Negev, and on the national level, by comparing the Bedouins in the Negev to the general Arab population as well as to the Jewish population in Israel as a whole. The objective is to offer the reader a comparative view of the social status of the Bedouins relative to other population groups in Israel.

The Negev, the arid southern region of Israel situated south of the line running from Qiryat Gat to Ashqelon, defines the boundaries of the geographic comparison. The annual precipitation in the Negev is less than 200 mm. This region contains almost 60% of Israel's land mass (approximately 11 million dunams).

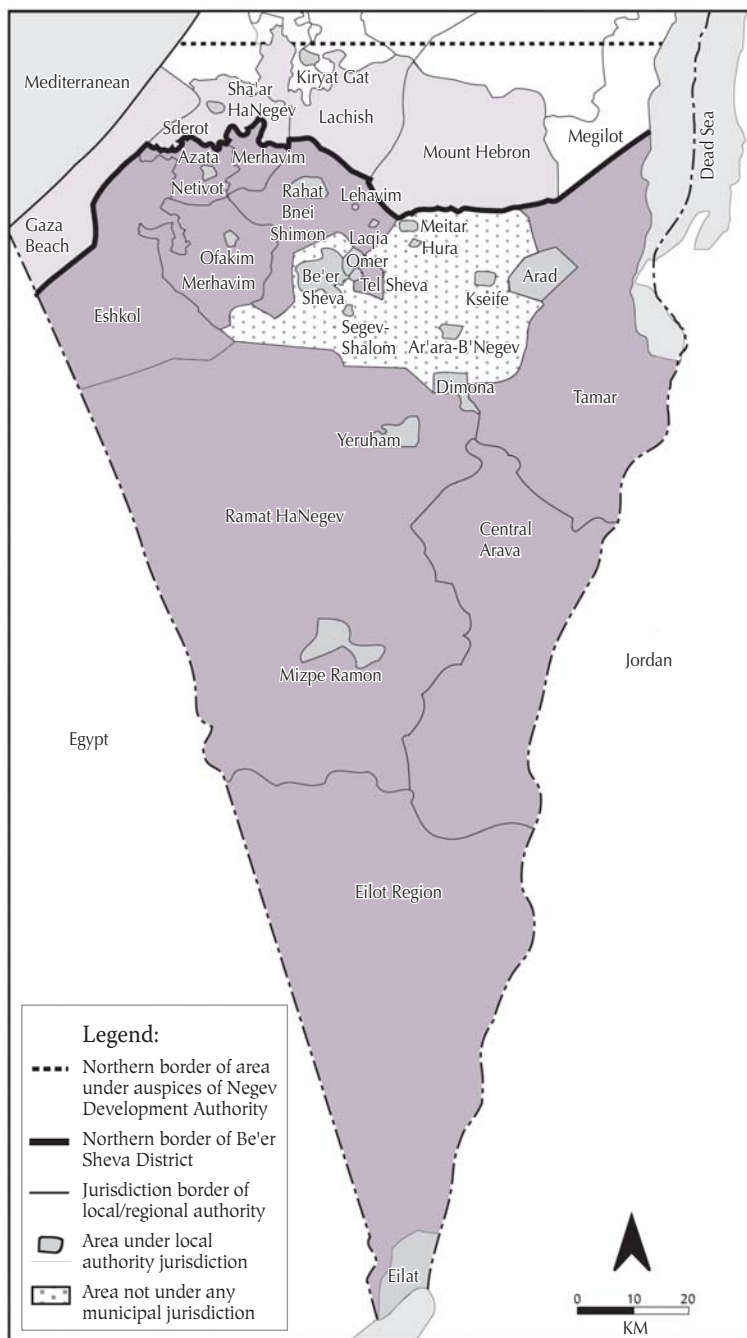
The Negev region includes the municipal authorities of the Be'er Sheva Sub-District and part of the Ashqelon Sub-District. The figures in this chapter refer to the region under the jurisdiction of the Negev Development Authority (see Map 1),² except in cases where otherwise indicated.

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- The author wishes to thank Mr. **Nidal Khamaisi**, a student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Department of Statistics and Operations Research at Tel Aviv University, for his major and useful assistance in updating the data.

1 For recent in-depth studies about the Bedouin population of the Negev, see, for example, Ben David (2004), Meir (2006), Abu Saad & Lithwick (2001), Abu-Rabia (2001).

2 The area under the jurisdiction of the Negev Development Authority includes 32 local authorities, as follows: 9 municipalities (7 in the Be'er Sheva Sub-District and 2 in the Ashqelon Sub-District), 11 local councils (all in the Be'er Sheva Sub-District) and 11 regional councils (8 in the Be'er Sheva Sub-District, 2 in the Ashqelon Sub-District and one in the area of southern Mount Hebron). The regional councils encompass 160 localities: moshav and collective moshav localities, kibbutz localities, institutional localities, communal localities, one urban locality and other rural localities. Nuriel & Levinson (2008), p. 15.

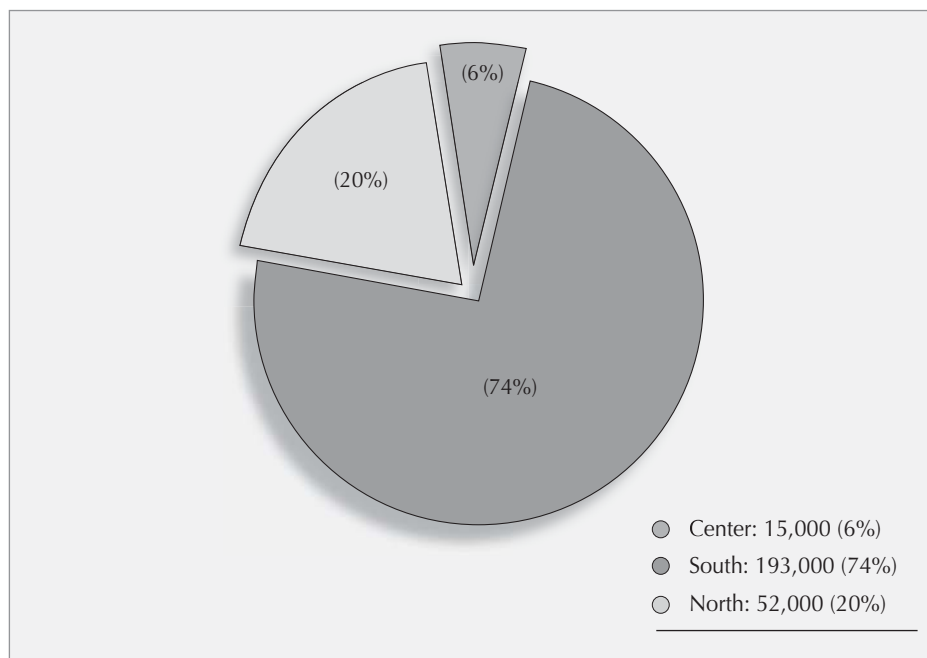
Map 1: Negev geographical region according to municipal districts³



3 Source: Nuriel & Levinson (2008), p. 14. The map shows local and regional authorities under the jurisdiction of the Negev Development Authority.

At the end of 2009, the Bedouin population of Israel numbered around 260,000: 193,000 in the south of the country (Negev), 52,000 in various localities in the north (Galilee and valley regions) and 15,000 in the center of the country (particularly the mixed cities of Lod and Ramle and some of the Triangle region localities).⁴

Figure 1: Distribution of Bedouin population in Israel (2009)



4 There are no definitive figures for the total number of Bedouins in Israel. Although most of the Bedouins in the north live in exclusively Bedouin localities (among them Bu'eine-Nujeidat, Basmat Tab'un, Tuba-Zangariyye and Zarzir), a considerable number of Bedouins in the northern and central regions live in localities with ethnically mixed populations: an ethnic mixture of Arabs and Jews (such as Lod and Ramle) or a religious mixture of Muslims, Christians and Druze (the city of Shfar'am and the localities of Bi'na and Abu Sinan). Moreover, individual Bedouins or separate Bedouin neighborhoods can also be found in religiously homogeneous localities with all-Muslim populations (for example, the cities of Kfar Qassem and Qalansawe in the Triangle region).

Furthermore, as will become apparent, there are also no definitive figures for the number of Bedouins living in the Negev. Most of the Bedouins live in localities established especially for them by the government. Nevertheless, significant numbers still live in villages whose municipal status is not recognized by the government (known therefore as "unrecognized villages"), and a smaller number live in Jewish localities in the Negev. Still, the fact that the Bedouins in the Negev, unlike those in the north and the center, live in a distinct geographic area that is for the most part defined and separate from the rest of the Negev's population enables data collection and research.

2. Population and demographics

A. POPULATION OF THE NEGEV – GENERAL STATISTICS

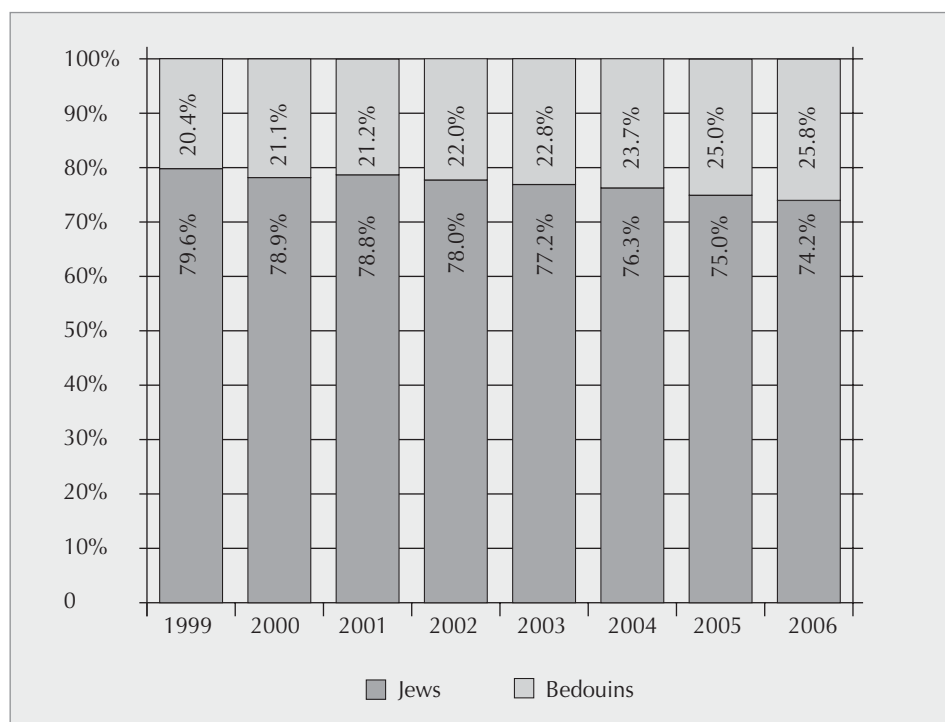
According to figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2009 the Bedouin (Muslim) population of the Negev numbered 192,800, representing 27.4% of the total population of the Negev (around 702,600). In 2009, the Bedouin citizens of the Negev constituted 15.6% of the total Arab population of Arab citizens Israel (1,239,230 not including the 296,370 Arab residents of East Jerusalem).⁵

An examination of the growth rate of the Negev population in recent years according to religion reveals a major difference between the Jewish population and the Bedouin population. According to figures from the *Negev Statistical Yearbook*, the Jewish population of the Negev grew by only 6.9% from 1999 to 2006 (from 420,600 at the end of 1999 to 449,500 at the end of 2006). During the same period, the rate of growth among the Bedouin population was 45.2%, a figure 6.5 times greater than the growth in the Jewish population (from 107,700 at the end of 1999 to 156,400 at the end of 2006). One reason for this discrepancy is the particularly high rate of natural growth in the Bedouin localities compared to the Jewish localities. (For further details, see Section 2.E: Fertility and rate of natural growth). Another major factor is the especially high rate of negative migration from the Jewish localities in the Negev. In Jewish local authorities such as Dimona, Yeruham and Mizpe Ramon where the population is constantly diminishing, natural growth has not managed to balance out the negative migration.⁶

5 Figures on the Bedouin population and on the overall Arab population in Israel were taken from: *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010 (No. 61)*, Table 2.1, Table 2.6. Figures on the Arab population of East Jerusalem were calculated based upon: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem 2007/2008*, Table 11c. The Arab residents of East Jerusalem are classified as "permanent residents" and not as "citizens," and for this reason were not included in calculating the total number of Arab citizens in Israel.

6 Nuriel & Levinson (2008), pp. 22-23. These figures do not include non-Jewish residents who are not Bedouins.

Figure 2: Distribution of Negev population by religion (1999-2006)



B. THE BEDOUIN POPULATION – PERMANENT RESIDENTIAL TOWNSHIPS

According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures, at the end of 2009 the population of the seven permanent Bedouin townships in the Negev was 129,210 (constituting 67% of the Negev's Bedouin population). Around 40% lived in the city of Rahat, which has become the second largest city in the Negev, larger than Qiryat Gat, Eilat, Dimona, Netivot, Ofaqim, Arad and Sderot and second only to Be'er Sheva.

Table 1: Selected demographic figures on the population of Bedouin and Jewish local authorities in the Negev⁷

Locality	Total # of residents (thousand) (2009)	% Age 0-14 (2008)	% Age 0-19 (2008)	% Age 65 and over (2008)	Rate of natural growth (2008)	Median age (2006)	% of families with 4 or more children (2006)
Rahat	51,687	52.7%	63.9%	1.6%	3.7%	13	56%
Tel Sheva	15,203	53.2%	64.9%	1.4%	3.8%	13	57%
Ar'ara-B'Negev	12,038	48.9%	62.3%	1.3%	3.4%	14	59%
Kseife	16,768	52.3%	63.6%	1.5%	4.0%	13	53%
Hura	16,600	49.4%	60.3%	2%	3.6%	14	64%
Laqia	9,591	47.7%	57.9%	2.1%	3.4%	15	56%
Segev-Shalom	7,323	50.8%	62.3%	1.5%	3.7%	14	60%
Total / Average	129,210	51.3%	62.8%	1.6%	3.6%	13.7	58%
Be'er Sheva	194,260	22.6%	29.6%	12.2%	1.0%	32	14%
Qiryat Gat	47,430	24.4%	32.5%	11.5%	1.1%	30	13%
Eilat	47,416	24.8%	30.5%	6.9%	1.6%	27	7%
Dimona	32,439	25.4%	33.5%	9.9%	1.1%	29	18%
Netivot	26,710	37.5%	45.8%	6.3%	2.4%	22	30%
Ofaqim	23,998	29.1%	38.2%	9.4%	1.6%	26	23%
Arad	23,671	22.3%	30%	15%	0.6%	34	22%
Sderot	20,730	24.4%	31.7%	9.7%	1.3%	29	12%
Yeruham	8,111	29.9%	37.4%	8.8%	2.0%	27	25%
Meitar	6,162	27.3%	36.3%	6.7%	1.2%	29	9%
Omer	6,492	22.5%	29.5%	15.1%	0.8%	38	19%
Lehavim	5,807	25.6%	36.2%	4.8%	0.8%	28	8%
Mizpe Ramon	4,741	33.3%	39.3%	8.5%	2.3%	27	17%
Total/Average	447,667	25.0%	32.3%	10.6%	1.2%	29.1	17%

⁷ Source of figures for 2009: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Localities and their Population – End of 2009*. Can be retrieved from www.cbs.gov.il/ishuvim/yishuv_2009_information.xls. The other figures were taken from Maximov (2010) (see http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications10/local_authorities08/pdf/h_print.pdf) and from Zibel (2009) (see http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/newhodaot/hodaa_template.html?hodaa=200924244).

Rahat, with a population of 51,687, is the largest Muslim city in Israel. According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures, at the end of 2009 the number of Muslim residents in Rahat exceeded the number in Nazareth, the largest Arab city in Israel with a population of 72,167, of whom around 70% (50,230) are Muslims.

Table 2: Five largest Arab cities in Israel⁸

City	Population (end of 2009)	Annual rate of natural growth (2008)
Nazareth	72,167	1.8%
Rahat	51,687	3.7%
Um El-Fahm	46,053	2.5%
Taibe	36,492	2.2%
Shfar'am	36,219	1.8%

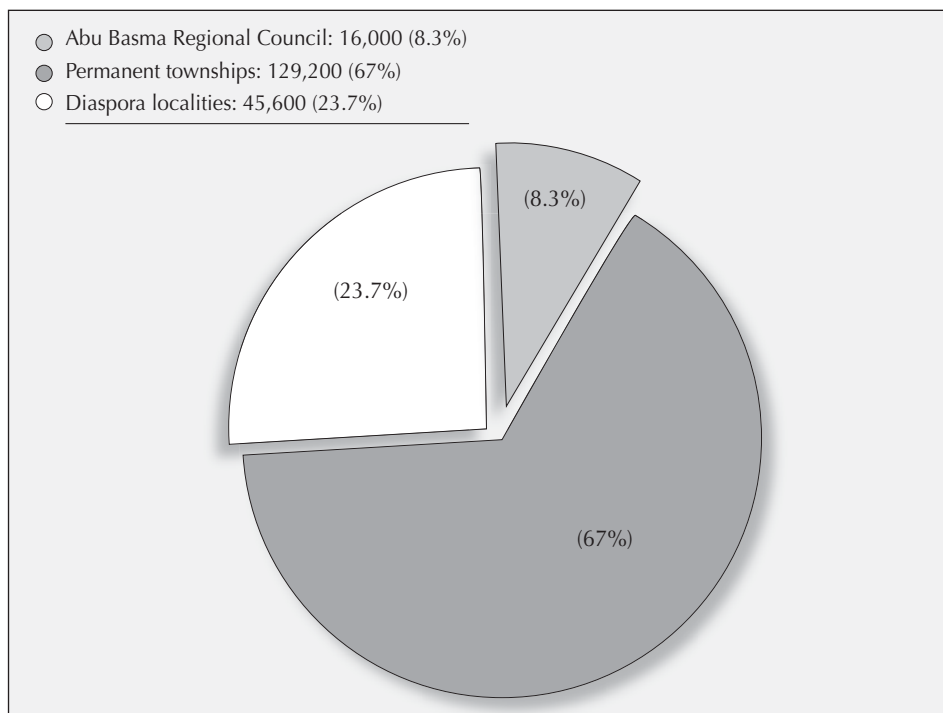
C. THE BEDOUIN POPULATION OF THE DIASPORA LOCALITIES

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, at the end of 2009 around 45,600 people lived in the localities comprising the Bedouin diaspora (23.7% of the Bedouins in the Negev). The term "diaspora" refers to the Bedouin tribes whose residential communities have not yet been officially recognized by the government (and have therefore been termed "unrecognized villages"). Some of these localities are situated in the jurisdictional area of the Ramat Hanegev and Bnei Shimon Regional Councils.

Around 16,000 people (8.3% of the Bedouin population of the Negev) live in localities in the Abu Basma Regional Council. These localities, which prior to a decade ago were included in the diaspora, have in recent years been recognized by the government and granted official municipal status. (For further details, see Section 2.C.II below.)

⁸ Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2009), *Localities and their Population – End of 2009*. See Note 7 above.

Figure 3: Distribution of Negev's Bedouin population by type of locality (2009)⁹



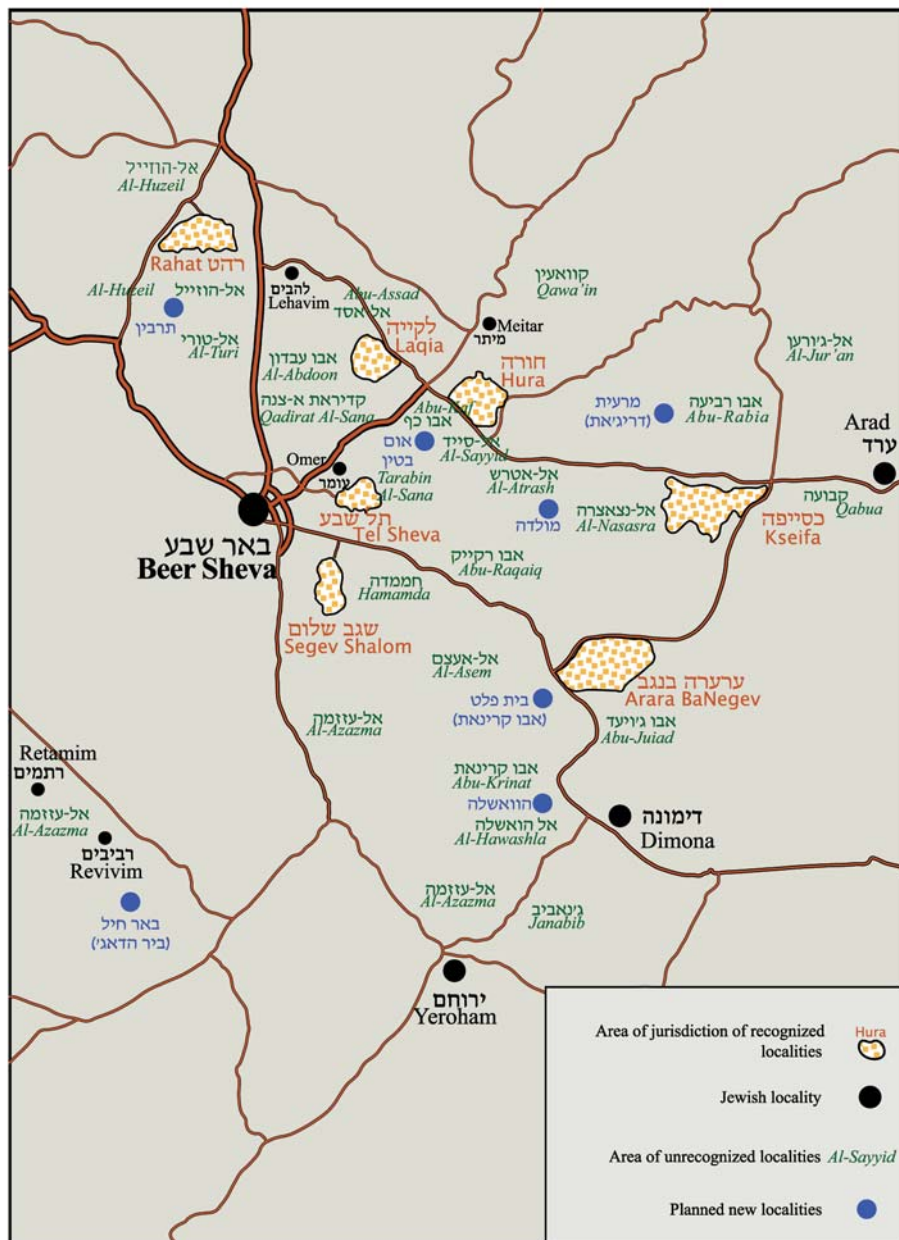
9 For the source of data on the permanent townships, see Note 7 above. Source for data on localities in the diaspora: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010 (No. 61)*, Table 2.6, Table 2.12. The data on the Abu Basma Regional Council was taken from the website: <http://abubasma.org.il>.

In addition to the official figures published by the Central Bureau of Statistics, there are alternative figures regarding the number of people living in the localities of the diaspora, and particularly in the unrecognized villages in the Negev. According to data from a survey conducted by The Galilee Society – The Arab National Society for Health Research and Services – the number of residents of the unrecognized villages in the Negev as of mid-2007 was 60,640, representing 38.7% of the Bedouin population of the Negev. See: *The Palestinians in Israel: Social-Economic Survey 2007 – Major Findings* (Shfar'am: The Galilee Society, Rikaz & Al-Ahali, December 2008), Table 5.4, p. 79 (Hereinafter: *The Galilee Society Survey 2007*), [Arabic and English].

In contrast, the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev (RCUV), which since its establishment in 1997 has become the representative body of the Bedouin diaspora localities in the Negev, estimated the number of people living in the 45 villages at more than 84,000, representing around half the Bedouin population of the Negev. For more details, refer to Physicians for Human Rights – Israel: <http://www.phr.org.il/default.asp?PageID=42>.

It should be noted that the figures provided by The Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev also included the localities in the Abu Basma Regional Council that have only recently been recognized by the government and therefore have been included in CBS statistics. This is the source of the discrepancy between the official statistics and those provided by other sources.

Map 2: Permanent townships and unrecognized village regions (by tribe*), 2004¹⁰



* A number of unrecognized villages are included in each tribal region. The name of the tribe is determined according to the Population Registry of the Ministry of the Interior.

¹⁰ Source: Levinson & Yogev (2004), p. 16.

I. Government policy for regulating the status of the localities in the Bedouin diaspora in the Negev

In November 2000, the government announced a new policy regarding the unrecognized Bedouin villages. The government decided to recognize nine of the 45 unrecognized localities and to establish a local authority to administer them. This decision removed the stipulation that the provision of services to the population was conditional upon settling the land issue and determined that the residents of the unrecognized localities would participate in decision making regarding their places of residence. In 2003 the Ministerial Committee on the Non-Jewish Sector submitted a comprehensive plan for the Bedouin population of the Negev. One of the sections of this plan referred to the establishment or institutionalization of seven new Bedouin localities for the residents of the Bedouin diaspora. The Abu Basma Regional Council was established in 2004 to amalgamate the villages in the Bedouin diaspora and provide them with municipal services, including education and welfare. (For further details on Abu Basma, see below.)¹¹

In recent years, the government has made a series of decisions with the purpose of officially regulating the status of the unrecognized villages of the Negev Bedouins, or alternatively of setting up new permanent townships for the residents. In April 2008, in accordance with the government's decision, the National Planning and Building Council of the Interior Ministry approved the establishment of a new permanent township in the Avdat region for the Al-Azazma and Janabib tribes in the Bedouin diaspora (This locality was not included in the Abu Basma Regional Council). The Interior Ministry's Director-General, Aryeh Bar, explained that establishing this locality was "part of government policy to quickly resolve the issue of the unrecognized Bedouin settlements in the Negev, which do not enjoy the advanced services and quality of life necessary for them to advance and partake in the life of the state and the prosperity of the Negev."¹²

One of the most prominent government decisions for regulating the status of the unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev was taken in January 2009, when the government decided to adopt the recommendations of the report of the Commission for the Regulation of Bedouin Settlements in the Negev headed by retired Justice Eliezer Goldberg (the Goldberg Commission). The government determined that the solution to the issue of Bedouin settlement in the Negev would be based upon "formulating a policy that would take into account the

11 Svirsky and Hasson (2005), pp. 27-28.

12 Chai (April 2, 2008), Establishment of permanent Bedouin township in the Negev approved, *Ha'aretz* (Hebrew).

needs of the Bedouin population, its claims to land rights, the needs of the state and available land and financial resources."¹³

II. The Bedouin residents of the Abu Basma, Ramat HaNegev and Bnei Shimon Regional Councils

Among the recommendations, the Goldberg Commission ruled that the unrecognized villages must be incorporated into the existing residential framework in accordance with the recognition policy that led to the establishment of the Abu Basma localities.¹⁴ Consequently, some of the localities in the Bedouin diaspora that until recently had been defined as "unrecognized villages" began gradually to achieve official recognition, as manifested in their inclusion in areas under the jurisdiction of the regional councils.

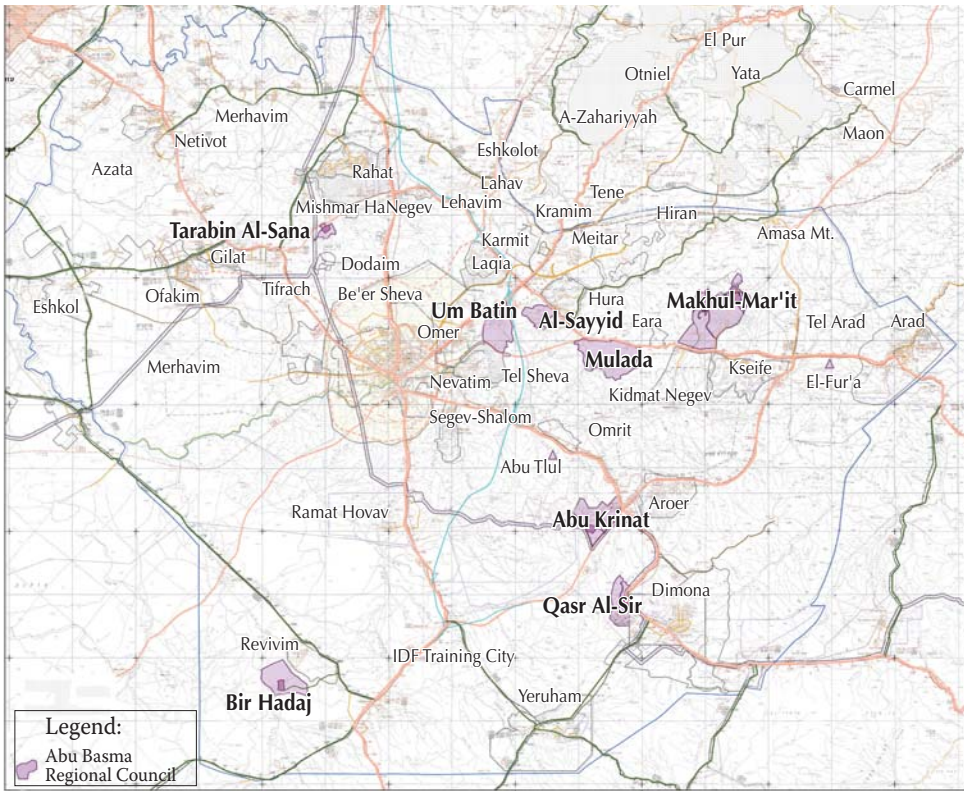
According to figures from the Abu Basma Regional Council, the jurisdiction includes ten localities with a total population of over 16,000. Nine of these are Bedouin localities: Abu Krinat (pop. 2,700), Um Batin (pop. 3,500), Mulada (pop. 1,000), Makhul-Mar'it (pop. 1,500), Qasr Al-Sir – Al-Hawashla (pop. 3,000), Al-Sayyid (pop. 3,500), Tarabin Al-Sana, Bir Hadaj and Kohla (no population figures for the last three localities). Another locality under the jurisdiction of Abu Basma is Drijat (pop. 1,000). The residents of this locality, Arabs who are not Bedouins, are farmers originating from the Mount Hebron region.¹⁵

13 Government Decision No. 4411 dated February 18, 2009 on: *Report on Policy Proposal for Regulating Bedouin Settlement in the Negev (Goldberg Commission)*. For full text, see: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Secretarial/Decisions/2009/01/des4411.htm>.

14 See *Goldberg Commission Report*, p. 32, paragraph 108. The full report can be retrieved from: <http://www.moch.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/770ABFE7-868D-4385-BE9A-96CE4323DD72/5052/DochVaad.aShofetGoldbergHebrew3.pdf>.

15 See the Abu Basma Regional Council internet site: <http://abubasma.org.il>. It should be noted that no exact figures exist on the number of Bedouins living in the area under the jurisdiction of the Abu Basma Regional Council. According to data from a survey conducted by The Galilee Society, at the end of 2007 the jurisdiction area included eight localities, including Drijat, with a total population of around 23,000. See: *The Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 347.

Map 3: Localities in the Abu Basma Regional Council (2010)¹⁶



All the localities in the Ramat Hanegev and Bnei Shimon Regional Councils are Jewish localities, though many Bedouin diaspora regions come under their area of jurisdiction. According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures for the end of 2008, around 53% of the residents of the Bnei Shimon Regional Council (6,360) and around 20.5% of the residents of the Ramat Hanegev Regional Council (1,291) are Bedouins.¹⁷

16 Source: Copy sent to the author by the Abu Basma Regional Council, February 2010.

17 Maximov (2010).

D. AGE DISTRIBUTION

The Bedouin population of the Negev is quite young compared to the Jewish population and to the general Arab population. According to 2007 figures, the percentages of those aged 0-14 and those aged 0-19 among the Bedouins of the Negev are two or more times greater than the corresponding percentages among the Jewish population. The median age of the Bedouins in the Negev, particularly among those residing in the unrecognized villages, is significantly lower than the median age for the Arab population in general and less than half of the median age for the Jewish population.

Table 3: Age distribution according to geographic region and population group (average for 2007)¹⁸

Geographic region	Negev			Entire country	
	Bedouins: General	Bedouins: Unrecognized villages	Jews	Arabs	Jews
% aged 0-14	55.8%	59.6%	25.6%	39.9%	25.8%
% aged 0-19	66.4%	66.6%	33.2%	49.9%	33.4%
% over age 65	1.3%	1.3%	10.7%	3.4%	11.7%
Median age	12.9	11	29.9	20	30.9

E. FERTILITY AND RATE OF NATURAL GROWTH

The rate of natural growth among the Bedouin population of the Negev has always been significantly higher than the rate for the general Arab population and for the Jewish population of Israel (with the exception of the ultra-Orthodox population, to be discussed subsequently). Natural growth among the Bedouin population is high due to particularly high fertility rates. The overall fertility rate of the Bedouin population of the Negev is almost twice as high as that of the general Arab population and two-and-a-half times higher than the rate of the Jewish population.

18 Figures on the Bedouins in the unrecognized villages of the Negev are up to date as of the end of 2006 and were taken from *The Galilee Society Survey 2007*, Table 5.6, p. 81. The other figures were taken from: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2008 (No. 59)*, Table 2.10. Data about the Negev refer to the Be'er Sheva District.

Table 4: Overall fertility and rate of natural growth by geographic region and population group (2009)¹⁹

Geographic region	Negev		Entire country	
	Bedouins	Jews	Arabs	Jews
Overall fertility	5.7	2.8	3.5	2.9
Rate of natural growth	3.8%	1.4%	2.4%	1.5%

For comparison purposes, the highest rate of natural growth recorded in Israel is in localities whose residents are all ultra-Orthodox. According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures for the end of 2008, the highest annual rate of natural growth (6.1%) was recorded in the city of Modi'in Illit, followed by El'ad (5.1%), Betar Illit (5.1%), Immanu'el (3.6%), Qiryat Ye'arim (2.9%), and Rekhasim (2.8%). The size of the population in these six localities (125,700 at the end of 2008) was similar to the size of the population of the seven permanent Bedouin townships in the Negev (see Section 2.B above). Furthermore, a particularly high annual rate of natural growth (compared to the overall Arab and Jewish population) was recorded in cities that have a decided ultra-Orthodox majority, such as Beit Shemesh (3.3%, pop. 76,100) and Bene Beraq (2.9%, pop. 153,300).²⁰

According to figures for 2005, the rate of natural growth of the Negev Bedouins (4.3%) was twice that of the Arab population of the Galilee (2.1%) and very high compared to that of the Triangle localities (2.5%) and of the mixed cities (2.3%).²¹ The following figure also points to the particularly high rate of natural growth of the Bedouin population of the Negev compared to the rest of the Arab population: In 2005 the total annual number of natural growth (live births minus deaths) among the Negev Bedouins was practically equal to the total natural growth among the Arab population of the Triangle region: 6,764 people compared to 6,837 people, respectively. During the same year, the total Bedouin population of the Negev was only slightly more than half of the population of the Triangle region: 143,740 compared to 253,217, respectively.²²

In view of the fact that the Bedouin population of the Negev is homogeneously Muslim, as is the Arab population of the Triangle, it can be concluded that the large discrepancy in rate of

19 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010* (No. 61), Tables 2.4, 3.11, 3.13. Overall fertility is defined as the number of children a woman is expected to give birth to during her lifetime.

20 Source: Maximov (2010). Union of Local Authorities in Israel – 2008 (Publication No. 1414), Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of the Interior, Municipal Services and Development Department, Municipal Research Field, September 2010. See: http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications10/local_authorities08/pdf/h_print.pdf.

21 Khamaisi (2009), p. 42.

22 Ibid, p. 36.

natural growth between the Negev Bedouins and the Arab population of the Triangle region is not necessarily the result of religious factors but rather of cultural factors unique to Bedouin society. Ben David (2004) notes that one of the reasons for the high rate of natural growth among the Bedouins is the desire of the group (tribe, *hamula*/clan, extended family) to make itself stronger so it can withstand power struggles. The constant fear of any group is that it will have to defend itself against a concrete or potential enemy, and the prevalent view is that reinforcing the size and organization of the group will serve as a deterrent. In this context Ben David also points to the practice of polygamy (a man having more than one wife) in Bedouin society. His research found that in 2002 the rate of polygamy among the Bedouin population of the Negev was 30%. The significance of this figure is that practically every third Bedouin man has at least two wives. Ben David concluded that only through polygamy can a maximum number of children be born and that one of the purposes of polygamy is to produce children.²³

F. HOUSEHOLDS

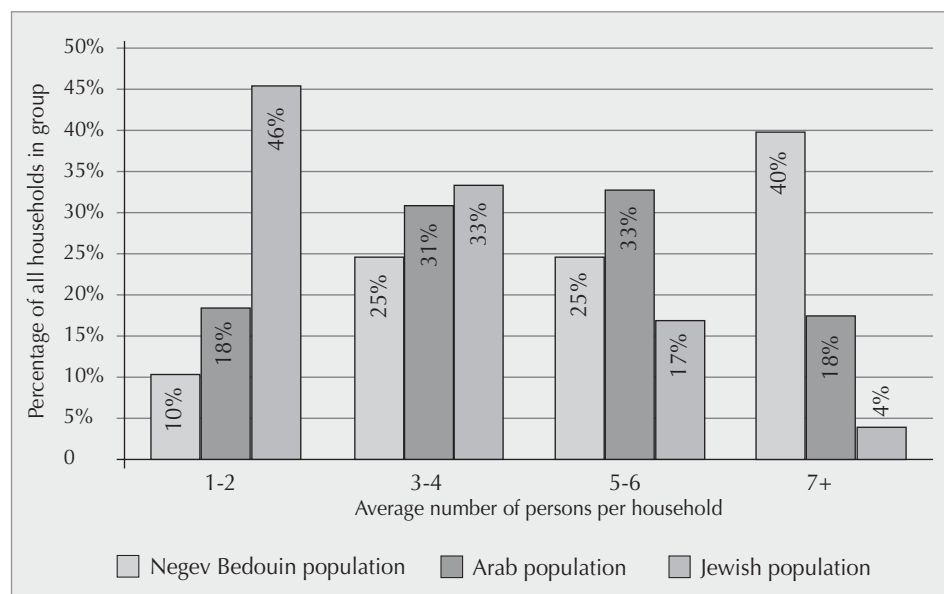
The Bedouin family is significantly larger than any other family in Israel either Arab or Jewish. According to figures for 2007, the average number of persons in a Bedouin household in the Negev was around 30% higher than the average among Arab households and twice as high as the average among Jewish households: 6.03, 4.64 and 3.09 persons respectively. When divided by household size, the largest group of Bedouin households in the Negev comprised those with nine or more persons: 20.3% of all households. In comparison, the largest group of households among the general Arab population comprised those with four or five persons: 18.2% and 18.9% of households respectively. Among the Jewish population, households with two persons comprised the largest group: 25.7% of households. The percentage of Bedouin households with seven or more persons (40.0%) was ten times higher than the comparable percentage among Jewish households (4.0%).

23 Ben David (2004), pp. 124-125.

Table 5: Distribution of households according to size and population group (2007)²⁴

Number of persons per household	Bedouins	Arabs	Jews
1	1.0%	4.2%	20.0%
2	9.4%	14.0%	25.7%
3	10.3%	13.0%	16.8%
4	14.6%	18.2%	16.5%
5	12.8%	18.9%	11.9%
6	11.8%	14.1%	5.0%
7	10.5%	8.8%	4.0%
8	9.2%	4.3%	
9+	20.3%	4.4%	
Average number of persons per household	6.03	4.64	3.09

Figure 4: Distribution of households by size and population group (2007)



²⁴ *The Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 92; Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010*, Table 5.1.

Housing in the Bedouin localities is significantly denser than in any other locality in Israel, whether Arab or Jewish. According to 2007 figures, the percentage of Bedouin households with two or more persons per room was twice as high as in households in the general Arab population and five times as high as in the Jewish populations: 18.4%, 9.5% and 3.7%, respectively.

Table 6: Housing density by population group (2007)²⁵

Number of persons per room	Negev Bedouins	Arab population	Jewish population
Less than 1	29.9%	35.3%	58.4%
1-2	51.6%	55.2%	37.9%
2-3	14.6%	8.5%	3.3%
3 or more	3.8%	1.0%	0.4%

²⁵ *The Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 111; Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2008* (No. 59), Table 5.24.

3. Standard of living in Bedouin localities

A. BEDOUIN LOCALITIES: AT THE BOTTOM OF ISRAEL'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCALE

According to figures from the 2006 Socio-Economic Scale (SES) Index of Israeli Localities (published by the Central Bureau of Statistics in November 2009),²⁶ all seven of the permanent Bedouin townships in the Negev as well as the localities in the Abu Basma Regional Council are ranked in the lowest cluster of ten. This cluster includes two Jewish localities with exclusively ultra-Orthodox populations: Betar Illit and Modi'in Illit. (For further information, see Section 5.A: Incidence of poverty among the Bedouin population of the Negev.)

B. MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURES

Abu-Bader and Gottlieb (2009) pointed out that the urbanization of the Bedouins in the Negev, as manifested in the establishment of the seven permanent townships, did lead to the provision of basic services, including roads, schools and water systems. Nonetheless, the level of these services remained inferior compared to the level of services provided in Jewish localities of a comparable size.²⁷ The following attributes reflect the inferior standard of living in the Bedouin townships compared to that of Arab localities in Israel, which in any case is inferior to the standard of living in Jewish localities in Israel.

26 The SES Index of Israeli Localities, published every few years by the Central Bureau of Statistics, offers a combination of a number of basic socio-economic attributes about the population of a particular locality, among them the residents' sources of income, housing statistics, municipal infrastructures, household ownership of durable goods, motorization level, educational level, employment and unemployment figures, various types of social distress and demographic attributes. The index is calculated according to the following 14 variables: 1) Average income per capita (including pensioners); 2) Motorization level (percentage with vehicles); 3) Percentage of new vehicles; 4) Percentage eligible for matriculation certificate; 5) Percentage of students; 6) Percentage of employment seekers; 7) Percentage earning up to the minimum wage; 8) Percentage earning more than twice the average wage; 9) Median age; 10) Dependency ratio; 11) Percentage of families with four or more children; 12) Percentage receiving unemployment benefits; 13) Percentage receiving guaranteed minimal income benefits; 14) Percentage receiving old age pension with supplemental guaranteed minimal income benefits.

27 Abu-Bader and Gottlieb (2009), p. 9.

I. Infrastructure in the permanent townships

The level of services supplied and the degree of connection to municipal infrastructures in the Bedouin townships is significantly lower than among the general Arab population. While a decided majority of Arab localities are connected to the national water and electricity grids and almost all are connected to sewage systems, a third of the Bedouin residents of the permanent townships are forced to connect to private networks for their water supply or to use private generators to produce electricity. An examination of the sewage infrastructure reveals a dismal picture: around two-thirds of the residents of the Bedouin localities are not connected to the national sewage system but rather to open sewage gutters (see Table 7 below). The Bedouins claim that the inferior quality of the infrastructures in their villages is a result of neglect on the part of government authorities. The government, in contrast, claims that the Bedouins themselves raise obstacles to improving the infrastructures, including, among other things, the illegal construction in these localities and the low level of municipal tax collection, thus hindering the expansion of existing infrastructures and the construction of new ones.²⁸

II. Infrastructure in the unrecognized villages

A Ministry of Health report dated December 2008 described the gravity of the situation in the unrecognized villages of the Negev:

"The residents of the unrecognized villages live in prefabricated structures, shacks and/or tents, without any regular supply of water or electricity. They get their drinking water from Mekorot (Israel National Water Company) distribution points, with drinking water reaching the homes by means of a plastic hose attached to a Mekorot water line and/or by water transported in tanks. Some households are not connected to electricity at all, while others use generators that often operate only a few hours per day. In the winter homes are usually heated by open fires. Food is cooked on gas stoves and/or open fires. Sanitation is poor, with no central sewage system, no cesspools and no regular garbage collection. There are no paved roads and no hookups to landline telephones."²⁹

According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, the homes of approximately one-fourth of the residents of the unrecognized villages *do not have* toilets, showers or kitchens at all.

28 See, for example, the review by The Israel Land Administration: http://www.mmi.gov.il/static/HanhalaPirsumim/Beduin_information%20hebrew.pdf.

29 Department of Health, Southern District and the Israel Center for Disease Control, 2008, p. 12 (Hereinafter: *Health Status of Bedouin Babies and Children up to age 6*). [Hebrew] See: <http://www.health.gov.il/download/pages/bedouinKids251208.pdf>.

Table 7: Infrastructure connections: Bedouin localities in the Negev vs. general Arab localities in Israel (2007)³⁰

Infrastructure type		All Bedouin localities (permanent townships and unrecognized villages)	Of these: Unrecognized Bedouin villages	All Arab localities in Israel
Water	National grid	65.4%	17.9%	95.1%
	Private grid	34.0%	81.2%	4.9%
	Water tanks	0.2%	0.4%	-
	Not connected	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%
Electricity	National grid	61.2%	9.2%	94.3%
	Private generator	38.5%	90.4%	5.6%
	Not connected	0.4%	0.4%	0.1%
Sewage	National grid	34.0%	0.4%	84.6%
	Open gutters	65.1%	97.9%	15.0%
	Other	0.9%	1.7%	0.4%
Kitchen	None	11.1%	25.4%	1.6%
	1 or more	88.9%	74.6%	98.4%
Showers	None	11.5%	25.0%	1.8%
	1 or more	88.5%	75.0%	98.2%
Toilets	None	14.2%	25.4%	2.2%
	1 or more	85.8%	74.6%	97.8%

C. LACK OF WELFARE INFRASTRUCTURES

The permanent Bedouin townships have a shortage of welfare infrastructure in general and of those for children and youth in particular. According to figures from the *Statistical Abstract of Bedouins in the Negev* for 2004, not one locality has a center for single-parent families, a marriage counseling center or a center for treating and preventing family violence. The residents of these localities are therefore forced to seek these services in neighboring Jewish localities.³¹ Some Bedouin localities do have afterschool facilities for children who need help with schoolwork and a place to be during afterschool hours. These facilities serve a small number of elementary-school-aged children.³²

30 Source: *The Galilee Society Survey 2007*, pp. 117-118.

31 Levinson & Yogev (2004), p. 112.

This situation is problematic in view of the fact that 52% of the residents of the Bedouin localities are children up to the age of 14 (see Table 1 above).

D. DISTANCE FROM EDUCATION, HEALTH, TRANSPORTATION AND CONSUMER SERVICES

The percentage of Bedouin families who live far from various public services is high compared to the average in the overall Arab population. For example, the percentage of Bedouin families who live five kilometers or more from an elementary school, a clinic or a shopping center is three times higher or even more than the equivalent percentage among all Arab families in Israel.³³

Table 8: Distance from public services by population group (2007)

Type of service	Closest service location			
	Up to 1 km. from locality		More than 5 km. from locality	
	Bedouin families	All Arab families	Bedouin families	All Arab families
Major transportation	37.3%	65.4%	12.1%	3.6%
Elementary school	50.5%	71.9%	13.1%	3.9%
Private doctor	39.4%	64.2%	18.0%	7.4%
Clinic	36.0%	61.5%	21.5%	7.0%
Hospital	0.9%	2.5%	83.4%	86.0%
Shopping center	32.3%	72.6%	28.3%	7.1%

According to figures from the *Statistical Abstract of Bedouins in the Negev* for 2004, many Bedouin pupils attend schools that are far away from their places of residence. At the elementary schools in Laqia and Segev-Shalom, over 20% of the pupils live outside the locality.³⁴ Children who go to school outside their place of residence must cover great distances on their way to school and back, usually over dirt roads and non-standard access roads. This situation leads to many problems, among them weather conditions that prevent access to schools and the risk of children getting injured on their way to school.³⁵

32 Weissblei (2006), p. 10. See: <http://www.knesset.gov.il/MMM/data/pdf/m01676.pdf>.

33 *The Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 128.

34 Levinson & Yogev (2004), p. 76.

35 Weissblei (2006), p. 7.

The availability of public services is particularly problematic in the unrecognized villages. According to figures from the Physicians for Human Rights organization and from the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev (two organizations that are demanding the government provide equal rights to the Bedouins), in 2004, 34 villages had no medical services, among them large villages such as El-Fur'a (pop. 3,885), Al-Za'rura (pop. 2,894) and Tel El-Malah (pop. 1,250). The village of Wadi El-Na'am (pop. 6,000) had only one clinic. There was not one pharmacy in all the unrecognized villages. Moreover, in the unrecognized villages there was on average one doctor for every 3,116 residents, while the usual ratio in Israel is one doctor for every 1,200 to 1,400 residents.³⁶

E. INFERIOR STANDARD OF LIVING: EXPOSURE TO ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

The standard of living in the Bedouin localities is inferior to the standard of living in the Arab localities in Israel in general. According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, a large proportion of the Bedouin population – several times greater than the average in the Arab population as a whole – declared they were frequently exposed to public health hazards, such as noise, odors, dust and smoke. For example, the percentage of Bedouin residents declaring they were "quite often" exposed to hazards such as dust and smoke is twice the average rate among the Arab population. This figure may explain the high rate of asthma in the Bedouin localities, and particularly in the unrecognized villages, a rate significantly higher than the average rate among the Arab population in general (see Section 7.D: Chronic illness morbidity).

Table 9: Level of exposure to public health hazards according to population group (2007)³⁷

Hazard frequency / Type of hazard	Occasionally / Often		Never / Rarely	
	Bedouins	Overall Arab population	Bedouins	Overall Arab population
Noise	40.4%	34.1%	59.6%	65.9%
Unpleasant odors/stench	42.9%	28.8%	57.1%	71.2%
Dust	52.0%	26.2%	48.0%	73.8%
Smoke	26.1%	12.3%	73.9%	87.7%

36 Wassim (2009), p. 8. See: http://d843006.bc470.best-cms.com/uploaded/articlefile_1247136142468HEB.pdf.

37 *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 305.

According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, the percentage of Bedouin residents who experience frequent water cutoffs in their localities or who live in close proximity to asbestos structures is higher than the percentage in the general Arab population. Of the Bedouins who answered the survey, 21.8% indicated they had experienced six or more water cutoffs in their localities during the previous six months, compared to 13.3% in the overall Arab population. Moreover, 20.2% of the Bedouin residents stated that they live in close proximity to asbestos facilities, compared to 14.3% in the general Arab population.³⁸

Of the Bedouins surveyed, 42.1% declared there was no regular garbage collection in their locality, a rate three times higher than those surveyed from the general Arab population (14.2%). Only 61.1% of the Bedouins indicated that they dispose of their garbage in closed disposal containers, compared to 92.3% of the general Arab population. Moreover, 4.1% of the Bedouin residents dispose of their garbage in open waste dumps, compared to only 1.1% of the general Arab population in Israel.³⁹

Another measure pointing to an inferior standard of living in the Bedouin localities is related to personal security. The rate of stolen property or stolen vehicle complaints among the Bedouin population is two to three times higher than the equivalent rate among the general Arab population. According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, 4.1% of the Bedouins in the Negev filed complaints of theft (excluding stolen vehicles), 3.5% filed complaints of stolen vehicles or vehicle parts, and 3.3% reported attempted robberies or theft in their place of residence. For comparison, the rates among the general Arab population were 2.7%, 1.6% and 0.8%, respectively.⁴⁰

F. OWNERSHIP OF DURABLE GOODS

In Bedouin households, the rate of ownership of durable goods (such as household electrical appliances) is relatively low. According to figures for 2007, the percentage of Arab households and of all households in Israel (Arabs and Jews) with an electric cooking stove, a refrigerator, a washing machine, a microwave oven, a television set, a telephone line and a computer was significantly higher than the equivalent percentage in Bedouin households in the Negev.

38 *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 308.

39 *Ibid*, p. 309.

40 *Ibid*, p. 332.

Table 10: Percentage of household ownership of durable goods by population group (2007)⁴¹

Item	Bedouin households	All Arab households	All households in Israel
Electric cooking stove	47.4%	89.1%	46.1%
Refrigerator	86.7%	97.4%	99.6%
Freezer	19.9%	38.4%	18.7%
Air conditioner	30.0%	41.0%	70.5%
Washing machine	71.9%	94.3%	94.6%
Vacuum cleaner	20.9%	59.5%	66.6%
Microwave oven	39.1%	63.2%	83.3%
Television set	87.8%	96.8%	90.5%
Telephone line	18.6%	62.7%	84.3%
Computer	30.0%	49.6%	68.9%

G. COMPUTER, INTERNET AND COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, the percentage of computer and Internet users among the Bedouin population is significantly lower than the comparable percentage in the Arab population as a whole. For example, the rate of Internet service usage in the Bedouin sector is almost half the usage rate among the Arab population as a whole: 18% vs. 32%, respectively. The percentage of those who have a mobile phone in the Bedouin population is also lower than in the Arab population as a whole: 43% vs. slightly less than 55%, respectively.

Table 11: Computer, Internet and mobile phone use by population group (2007)⁴²

Population group	Bedouin population			Arab population of Israel as a whole		
	General	Men	Women	General	Men	Women
Computer usage	32.2%	35.9%	28.4%	45.8%	48.9%	42.5%
Internet surfing	17.8%	20.4%	15.0%	32.2%	35.1%	29.2%
Mobile phone ownership	42.8%	50.5%	34.9%	54.6%	64.9%	43.9%

41 *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, pp. 121-122. The figures on Israeli households (Arabs and Jews) were taken from the Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2009*, Table 5.33.

42 *Ibid*, pp. 222-224.

4. Employment, salary and unemployment

A. CIVILIAN WORK FORCE

According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, only 37.4% of the Bedouin population (aged 15 and above) were part of the civilian work force, compared to 42.6% of the Arab population as a whole. In the civilian work force, the highest rate of unemployment was among Bedouin women: 23.1%, compared to 13.5% among all Arab women in Israel.⁴³ The rate of those among the Bedouins who have never worked is more than two times greater than the equivalent rate in the Arab population of Israel: 5.8% compared to 2.5%. This figure demonstrates the depth of unemployment in the Bedouin localities and the difficulty of escaping from it, compared to the situation in Arab localities in Israel.

Table 12: Rate of participation in the civilian work force and unemployment rates in the Bedouin population and in the Arab population as a whole (2007)⁴⁴

Category	Bedouin population			Total Arab population		
	General	Men	Women	General	Men	Women
Rate of participation in the civilian work force	37.4%	63.2%	11.4%	42.6%	65.6%	18.9%
Unemployment rate	16.7%	15.5%	23.1%	10.1%	9.1%	13.5%
Percentage who never worked	5.8%	4.1%	15.4%	2.5%	1.5%	5.9%

According to 2007 figures for the Negev, the average unemployment rate among the Bedouin population was more than twice as high as the equivalent rate among the Jewish population. The general rate of participation in the civilian work force in the Bedouin population was significantly lower than the rate in the Jewish population, due to the small percentage of Bedouin women (around 11%) who belong to the civilian work force.

43 The civilian work force includes those aged 15 and over who are employed and unemployed, with the exception of schoolchildren, people who work without pay (volunteers), housewives and those who are incapable of working (due to disability or loss of ability to work). See: Manna (2008), p. 71.

44 *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, pp. 146-147.

Table 13: Rates of participation in the civilian work force and unemployment rates in the Negev by population group (2007)⁴⁵

Category	Bedouin population			Jewish population		
	General	Men	Women	General	Men	Women
Rate of participation in the civilian work force	37.4%	63.2%	11.4%	55.8%	58.9%	52.9%
Unemployment rate	16.7%	15.5%	23.1%	7.3%	6.0%	8.7%

According to 2004 figures, not only was the average income for a Bedouin household in the Negev lower than the average income for the Arab population in general, the relative percentage of National Insurance Institute (NII) benefits in this income was significantly higher than in Arab households in general: 31.8% compared to 19.4%, due to the high percentage of those receiving child benefits as a result of high rates of fertility. This figure demonstrates how difficult it is to make a living in the Bedouin localities in the Negev, as reflected in a relatively low level of wages and the fact that, more than any other population segment in Israel, the Bedouins are forced to depend upon National Insurance Institute payments.

Table 14: Distribution of average gross household income in the Bedouin population and the overall Arab population (2005)⁴⁶

Population group		Bedouin households in the Negev		Households in the overall Arab population	
Distribution of average income		Amount (NIS)	Percentage of income	Amount (NIS)	Percentage of income
Source of income	Work	5,823	69.4%	5,624	75.2%
	NII benefit payments	2,526	30.1%	1,597	21.3%
	Other income	46	0.5%	262	3.5%
Total gross income (average)		8,395	100.00%	7,483	100.0%

45 Statistics on the Bedouin population taken from: *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 147. Statistics on the Jewish population were adapted from: *Manpower Survey for 2007*, Table 1.22.

46 Khamaisi (2009), pp. 97-98.

B. SALARY LEVELS AND INCOME GROUPS

According to National Insurance Institute figures for 2008, the majority of Bedouin wage earners fall into the lowest income brackets. In the vast majority of Bedouin localities, over half of wage earners do not earn more than one minimum wage. Furthermore, around 90% of the Bedouin wage earners in the permanent townships in the Negev earn less than the minimum wage. In comparison, three-fourths of wage earners in the Jewish localities in the Negev earn less than the minimum wage. In Jewish localities at the top of the SES, such as Lehavim, Omer and Meitar, more than half of wage earners earn salaries above the average salary and sometimes even four times as high.

Table 15: Distribution of wage earners in Bedouin and Jewish localities in the Negev, by salary group (2008)⁴⁷

Locality	Up to minimum wage	From minimum wage to average wage	From average wage to twice average wage	More than twice average wage
Bedouin localities				
Rahat	56.9%	34.6%	7.6%	0.9%
Tel Sheva	54.7%	35.8%	7.3%	2.2%
Ar'ara-B'Negev	49.4%	37.8%	11.3%	1.5%
Hura	46.7%	41.1%	10.5%	1.7%
Kseife	51.3%	38.8%	8.7%	1.2%
Laqia	54.4%	34.3%	9.9%	1.4%
Segev-Shalom	56.7%	36.8%	5.5%	10%
Total	54.2%	36.3%	8.3%	1.2%
Unrecognized villages				
Unrecognized villages	54.5%	38.2%	6.5%	0.8%
Jewish localities				
Be'er Sheva	44.1%	32.6%	15.6%	7.7%
Qiryat Gat	47.9%	36.5%	13.1%	2.5%
Eilat	40.8%	40.2%	14.3%	4.7%
Ofaqim	49.7%	35.5%	12.6%	2.2%

47 Figures adapted from: Bendelac (2009). This survey uses the term "Bedouin tribes and population outside the localities." See: http://www.btl.gov.il/Publications/survey/Documents/seker_228.pdf.

Locality	Up to minimum wage	From minimum wage to average wage	From average wage to twice average wage	More than twice average wage
Dimona	43.2%	31.4%	16.7%	8.7%
Yeruham	42.4%	35.1%	17.3%	5.2%
Netivot	52.2%	33.6%	12.5%	1.7%
Lehavim	27.3%	18.2%	22.9%	31.6%
Omer	27.2%	17.7%	21.7%	33.4%
Meitar	28.1%	21.6%	23.4%	26.9%
Mizpe Ramon	51.3%	30.3%	14.3%	4.1%
Sderot	43.8%	39%	14.7%	2.5%
Arad	42.5%	35.8%	14.7%	7%
Total	43.8%	33.9%	15.3%	7%

According to National Insurance Institute figures, in 2008 the average monthly salary for a salaried position in the Bedouin localities in the Negev was on average 34% lower than the monthly salary for a salaried position in the Jewish localities in the Negev: 4,138 NIS vs. 6,308 NIS, respectively. The average monthly salary for male Bedouin wage earners was on average 39% lower than the average salary received by male Jewish wage earners (4,793 NIS compared to 7,817 NIS), while female Bedouin wage earners earned on average 47% less than their Jewish female wage-earning counterparts (2,569 NIS compared to 4,852 NIS). Among the Bedouin localities, Rahat was found to have the lowest average monthly salary for a salaried position: 3,922 NIS per month.⁴⁸

Table 16: Average monthly salary for wage earners in Bedouin and Jewish localities in the Negev, by gender (2008)

Locality	Average monthly salary (over a year, in New Israeli Shekels)		
	General	Men	Women
Bedouin localities			
Rahat	3,922	4,640	2,401
Tel Sheva	4,157	4,796	2,423
Ar'ara-B'Negev	4,536	5,102	2,345

⁴⁸ Figures adapted from: Bendelac (2009).

Locality	Average monthly salary (over a year, in New Israeli Shekels)		
Gender	General	Men	Women
Hura	4,747	5,299	3,297
Kseife	4,276	5,001	2,539
Laqia	4,206	4,656	3,119
Segev-Shalom	3,859	4,481	2,570
Abu Basma Regional Council	4,037	4,592	2,502
Average for Bedouin localities	4,138	4,793	2,569
Jewish localities			
Be'er Sheva	6,444	7,962	5,028
Qiryat Gat	5,047	6,008	4,122
Eilat	5,843	6,713	4,929
Ofaqim	4,817	5,802	3,940
Dimona	6,731	8,981	4,331
Yeruham	6,085	7,712	4,359
Netivot	4,592	5,581	3,757
Lehavim	13,020	17,378	8,949
Omer	13,476	17,604	9,297
Meitar	11,813	15,532	8,162
Mizpe Ramon	5,146	6,557	3,918
Sderot	5,261	6,317	4,135
Arad	6,397	8,295	4,566
Average for Jewish localities	6,308	8,295	4,566
All Negev localities ⁴⁹	6,093	7,404	4,625

49 These figures refer to all the localities in the Be'er Sheva Sub-District and include the localities under the jurisdiction of the regional councils belonging to this sub-district, in addition to the permanent Bedouin townships and the Jewish localities noted in the table.

One of the reasons for the low wages in the Bedouin localities compared to the Jewish localities is that Bedouin wage earners work fewer consecutive months during a given year than do Jewish wage workers. The salary of those who work only a few months during the year naturally differs from that of those who work continuously throughout the year. Those who work on a regular basis enjoy the benefits of a more stable wage scale and a higher salary. According to National Insurance Institute figures, in 2008 only 46% of the Bedouin wage earners worked for 12 consecutive months, while for Jewish wage earners in the Negev this figure was 60%. Bedouin wage earners on average worked one less month per year than did Jewish wage earners (8.8 vs. 9.8, respectively).⁵⁰

The fact that the majority of wage earners in the Bedouin localities are not employed continuously throughout the year testifies to how difficult it is to make ends meet and to escape the cycle of unemployment in these localities.

C. EMPLOYMENT SOURCES

According to a 2008 survey of Negev industries,⁵¹ the percentage of Bedouins employed in industry in the Negev is significantly lower than their proportion in the region's population (25% of all residents). In 2008 Bedouins represented only 3.7% of all those employed in industry. This figure has not changed since 2001, when it was 4%.

Most Bedouins employed in industry work in traditional branches and hold the most menial jobs in the factory, primarily in service positions. The non-metallic mineral products industry is the main employer of Bedouins, who constitute 14% of all employees in this industry, particularly in factories manufacturing construction materials. The second largest employer of Bedouins is the food and beverages industry (12.9%). The lowest percentages of Bedouin employees are in the electronics industry (0.5%) and in the printing industry (1.2%).

The level of industrial development in the seven permanent Bedouin townships in the Negev is extremely low. The number of factories in these townships is miniscule, mainly in construction materials, metals and food industries. Rahat, the largest Bedouin city, has only 13 factories, the largest of which employs 21 people.

Industry is also quite limited in the other permanent Bedouin localities. The 2008 survey of Negev industries found a total of nine factories with 152 employees. The two primary industrial areas are textiles and apparel, employing 42.1% of all Bedouin employees, and non-metallic minerals, employing 39.5% of Bedouin workers. It should be noted that the most prominent textile factory

50 These figures refer to the seven permanent Bedouin townships in the Negev and the localities of tribes included in the jurisdiction area of the Abu Basma Regional Council. See Bendelac (2009).

51 Gradus and Nuriel (2008). See: <http://seker.ncrd.org.il/index.asp?item=56>.

is Laqia Negev Weaving, which employs 60 women and produces authentic carpets, clothing and woven fabrics. The factory is managed and operated by Bedouin women.⁵²

In July 2009 an agreement was signed between the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor and the JDC in Israel to establish eight employment centers for the Negev Bedouins at an investment of five and half million Shekels – one center in each of the seven permanent townships and an additional center in the area under the jurisdiction of the Abu Basma Regional Council. The purpose of these centers was to provide counseling and guidance to Bedouin employees and to help them cope with barriers preventing their integration into the job market.⁵³

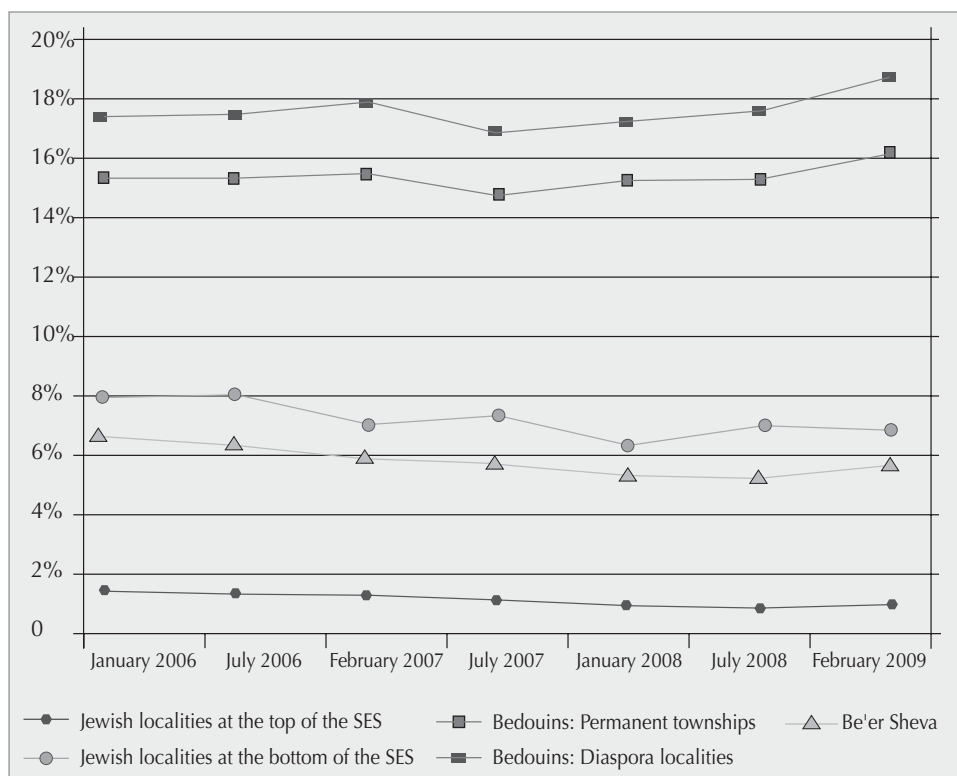
D. UNEMPLOYMENT

The gravity of the unemployment situation in the Bedouin localities is well known. According to Israeli Employment Service figures, particularly high rates of unemployment have been recorded in recent years (2006-2009), both in the permanent Bedouin townships and in the diaspora localities. Furthermore, the unemployment rates in these localities are constantly on the rise. In contrast, in the Jewish localities in the Negev at the bottom of the socio-economic scale as well as in those at the top, unemployment rates are dropping.

52 Gradus and Nuriel (2008). See: <http://seker.ncrd.org.il/index.asp?item=80>.

53 Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor (July 20, 2009): Press Release. See: <http://www.tamas.gov.il/NR/exeres/FE4E51D7-88B1-4DEB-B7A1-C0E89B06067D.htm>.

Figure 5: Unemployment rates in Bedouin and Jewish localities in the Negev (2006-2009)⁵⁴



One of the factors making it difficult for Bedouins to find suitable and stable employment is their low level of education. There is an inverse relationship between level of education and unemployment rate: as the level of education in a population decreases, the rate of unemployment increases. The level of education among the Bedouin population is low relative to the average educational level among the overall Arab population of the country and lower still when compared to the national average. (For more information, see Section 6.A: Level of education – General). A high level of unemployment deepens the incidence of poverty in a society.

54 Source: *Israeli Employment Service, Reports for 2006-2009*. See: <https://www.taasuka.gov.il/Taasuka>. The Bedouin localities are Hura, Ksife, Laqia, Ar'ara-B'Negev, Rahat, Segev-Shalom and Tel Sheva. The Bedouin tribal localities are Abu Krinat, Abu Rabia, Abu Reqaiq, Al-Asem, Masodin Al-Azaz. The Jewish localities in the Negev at the bottom of the SES are Ofaqim, Netivot, Yeruham and Dimona. The Jewish localities in the Negev at the top of the SES are Lehavim, Omer and Meitar.

5. Poverty

A. INCIDENCE OF POVERTY IN THE BEDOUIN POPULATION OF THE NEGEV

The incidence of poverty in the Bedouin population of the Negev is higher than in any other segment of the population. The poverty among the Bedouins is more profound than in Arab society in Israel as a whole and in Israel's ultra-Orthodox sector, which is the poorest segment of the Jewish population. According to the 2006 SES published by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2009, not only are all the Bedouin localities in the Negev ranked in the lowest SES cluster (see Section 3.A above - Bedouin localities: At the bottom of Israel's socio-economic scale), they also constitute the decided majority of this cluster – seven out of nine localities. The other two localities in this cluster are two cities with exclusively ultra-Orthodox populations: Betar Illit and Modi'in Illit.

Table 17: Localities in the bottom cluster of the socio-economic scale (2006)⁵⁵

Rank	Locality	Sector
1	Tel Sheva	Arab-Bedouin
2	Kseife	Arab-Bedouin
3	Ar'ara-B'Negev	Arab-Bedouin
4	Segev-Shalom	Arab-Bedouin
5	Betar Illit	Jewish-ultra-Orthodox
6	Rahat	Arab-Bedouin
7	Modi'in Illit	Jewish-ultra-Orthodox
8	Hura	Arab-Bedouin
9	Laqia	Arab-Bedouin

55 Zibel (2009).

Figures for 2004 and 2007 (the years for which focused information on the Bedouins in the Negev is available) show that the incidence of poverty among the Bedouin population of the Negev, and particularly in the unrecognized villages, is considerably higher than the incidence of poverty among the Arab population in general, which in itself is significantly higher than in the Jewish population.

Table 18: Incidence of poverty by population group (2004, 2007)⁵⁶

Year	Total Bedouin population in the Negev	Population of unrecognized villages	Total Arab population	Jewish population
2004	72.1%	79.1%	51.6%	17.1%
2007	71.5%	76.5%	54.5%	16.2%

A study by Bar-El, Malul and Rosenboim of Ben Gurion University (2009) demonstrates the distress and poverty of the Bedouins in the Negev. Not only must Bedouin wage earners bear the burden of supporting eight people (compared to 4.7 for Arab wage earners and 2.7 for Jewish wage earners), they must do so on a salary that is far below the national average.⁵⁷

Abu Bader and Gottlieb (2009) demonstrated that high incidence of poverty correlates positively with several socio-economic parameters, such as large numbers of people in the family (particularly children), high unemployment rates, low rates of participation in the civilian labor force, low educational rates, residence in outlying areas and others as well.⁵⁸ According to figures from the National Council for the Child, in 2009 59.9% of poor families in Israel had four or more children.⁵⁹ It should be noted that in the permanent Bedouin townships in the Negev in 2006, such families constituted on average around 58% of all families (see Table 1, Section 2.B above). It can be concluded that in 2009, more than half the Bedouin families would still be classified as poor.

56 Source for figures on incidence of poverty among the overall Bedouin population of the Negev and in the unrecognized villages in the Negev: Abu Bader & Gottlieb (2009). See: http://www.vanleer.org.il/econsoc/ppt/09beduin_abubadar_gottlieb.pdf. Source for figures on incidence of poverty among the overall Arab population and the Jewish population: National Insurance Institute, *Annual Survey 2008*, pp. 344, 346.

57 For an abstract of the study, see: http://www.bengis.org/image/users/86260/ftp/my_files.

58 Abu Bader & Gottlieb (2009), pp. 23-37.

59 National Council for the Child, *Annual Statistical Abstract, "The State of the Child in Israel 2010."* See: www.knesset.gov.il/committees/heb/material/data/avoda2011-01-04.doc.

Figures from the National Council for the Child also indicate that in 2009 the Bedouin localities in the Negev had the highest percentage of children in Israel living in families receiving guaranteed minimal income benefits, as follows: Laqia (46.9% of the children lived in families receiving guaranteed minimal income benefits); Kseife (42.2%), Segev-Shalom (40.5%), Tel Sheva (37.1%), Ar'ara-B'Negev (32.3%) and Hura (32.3%). These percentages were five to seven times higher than the 2009 national average of 4.9% and significantly higher than in Jewish localities with relatively high percentages of children living in families receiving guaranteed minimal income benefits that year: Akko (15.1%), Zefat (12.7%), Qiryat Mal'akhi (12.2%), Ofaqim (10.2%), Nazerat Illit (10.1%), Tiberias (10.1%).⁶⁰

B. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND INCIDENCE OF POVERTY

Research has revealed an inverse relationship between incidence of poverty and educational level: as educational level decreases, incidence of poverty increases. According to a study by Abu Bader and Gottlieb (2009), more than 80% of those with a basic educational level (uneducated or no more than eight years of schooling) among the Bedouin population of the Negev are below the poverty line, compared to around 70% in the general Arab population. More than half of the Bedouins with an academic education were defined as poor, compared to a third of those in the general Arab population.⁶¹

Table 19: Relationship between educational level and incidence of poverty in the Bedouin population and the general Arab population (2007)

Educational level (years)	Incidence of poverty by population group		
	Total Bedouin population in the Negev	Population of unrecognized villages	Total Arab population
0-8	82.1%	83.3%	69.4%
9-12	70.7%	76.7%	60.8%
13 and More	55.6%	56.6%	31.7%
Total	72.6%	76.5%	58.9%

60 Source of data: See Note 59 above.

61 Abu Bader & Gottlieb (2009).

6. Education

A. GENERAL LEVEL OF EDUCATION

According to figures for 2007, the percentage of those in Bedouin society with no education (9.7%) is almost two times higher than in the general Arab population (5.0%) and five times higher than in the Jewish population (1.9%). The percentage of those with only an elementary school or junior high school education among the Bedouin population is equal to that of the Arab population and twice as high as in the Jewish population. In contrast, the percentage of those with some form of higher education (academic and non-academic) in the Bedouin population (8.4%) is slightly lower than in the overall Arab population (13.8%) and significantly lower (less than a quarter) than in the Jewish population (36.5%).⁶²

Table 20: Level of education according to highest certificate earned, gender and population group (2007)

Level of education	Bedouin population			Overall Arab population			Jewish population		
	General	Men	Women	General	Men	Women	General	Men	Women
No education	9.7%	5.0%	14.5%	5.0%	2.5%	7.5%	1.9%	1.2%	2.5%
Some form of education	7.6%	4.9%	10.3%	5.3%	4.2%	6.3%			
Elementary school graduate	12.0%	12.9%	11.2%	12.7%	12.4%	13.1%	18.3%	20.2%	16.5%
Junior high school graduate	24.6%	26.4%	22.8%	24.8%	26.8%	22.8%			
High school graduate (without matriculation certificate)	15.8%	19.4%	12.1%	17.7%	18.9%	16.5%	17.5%	20.1%	15.1%

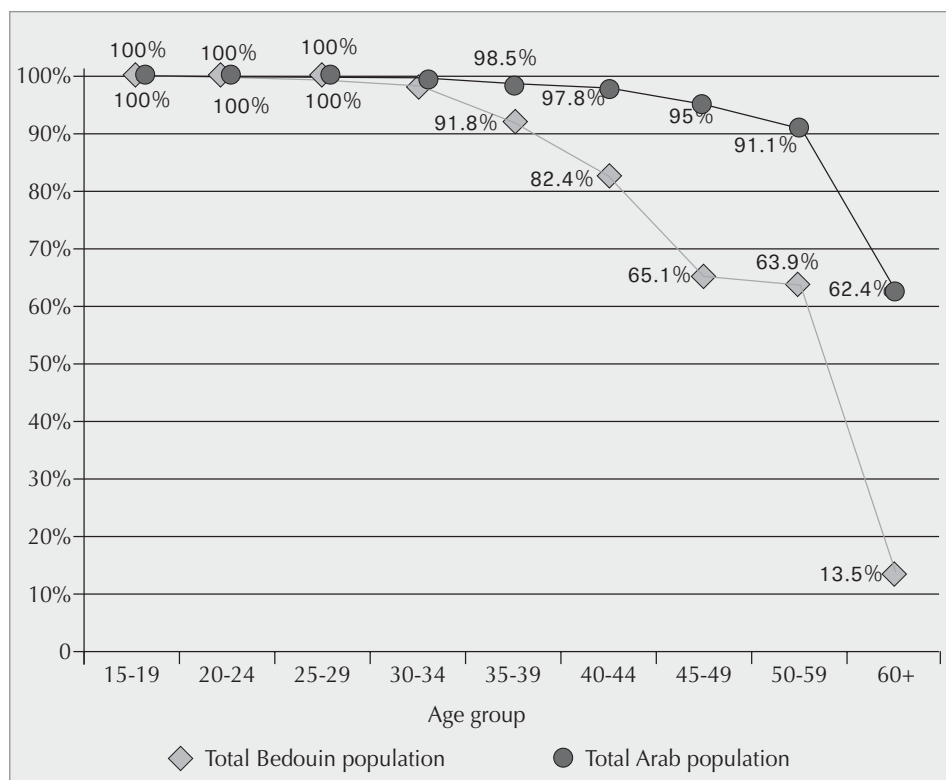
⁶² The figures refer to those aged 15 and over. The category "other form of education" refers to graduates of yeshivas and those who received some sort of education but did not receive a certificate. The source of the information for the Bedouins and the overall Arab population: *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, pp. 204-205. The figures for the Jewish population were taken from: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Manpower Survey for 2007*, Table 1.18.

Level of education	Bedouin population			Overall Arab population			Jewish population		
	General	Men	Women	General	Men	Women	General	Men	Women
Matriculation certificate	21.9%	21.2%	22.6%	20.8%	20.5%	21.1%	22.3%	21.4%	23.2%
College graduate or non-academic higher education	2.7%	2.5%	2.8%	6.3%	6.2%	6.4%	13.2%	11.8%	14.6%
B.A. or higher	5.7%	7.6%	3.8%	7.5%	8.6%	6.3%	23.3%	21.7%	24.8%
Other form of education	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.5%	3.6%	3.3%

B. LITERACY

According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, the difference between the number of people who can read and write among the Bedouins in the Negev and the comparable number in the overall Arab population becomes apparent in the 35-39 age group and widens in the older age groups. Around one-third of Bedouin citizens aged 45-59 are illiterate, while in the general Arab population the percentage of illiterate people ranges from 5% to 9%. These figures have a decisive impact on Bedouin employees' chances of finding employment at a decent wage and on the ability of unemployed Bedouins to extricate themselves from the cycle of unemployment. It should be remembered that those in these age groups are usually considered the ones who bear the main burden of supporting their families. The low chances of them finding sufficient means of making a living due to their low level of education are likely to sentence their families to a life below the poverty line. (For more on the inverse relationship between educational level and incidence of poverty, see Section 4.B above).

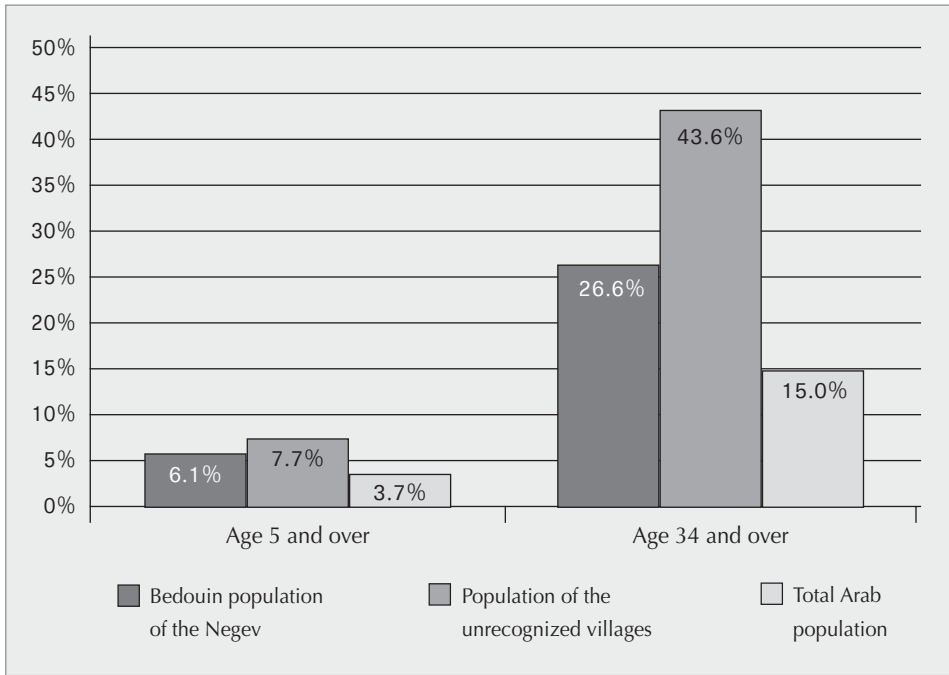
Figure 6: Percentage of those who can read and write by age and population group (2007)⁶³



According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, around one-fourth of those aged 34 and over in the Bedouin population never attended school, compared to 15% in the general Arab population. An even higher percentage was found in the unrecognized villages in the Negev: more than 43% of those aged 34 and over living in the villages never attended school.

63 *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 189.

Figure 7: Percentages of those without schooling according to population group (2007)⁶⁴



C. RESULTS OF "MEITZAV" NATIONAL STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS FOR FIFTH- AND EIGHTH-GRADERS

The discrepancy between the academic achievements of Bedouin pupils and those of all the pupils in Israel's educational system, Arab and Jewish, is evident already in elementary and junior high school. According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures for "Meitzav" tests (measuring school effectiveness and growth) for the 2005-06 school year, the achievements of fifth- and eighth-grade pupils in the Southern District in the Arab school system – most of whom are Bedouins – were significantly lower than those of pupils in the same grades in the Arab school system as a whole, which in turn were lower than the achievements of those in the same grades in the Jewish school system. Fifth graders in the Arab schools in the Southern District failed to achieve passing grades in math, Arabic, and science and technology, with average grades below 60 in these three subjects. More depressing is the picture among eighth graders in the Arab schools in the Southern District, who failed all the "Meitzav" tests, with their lowest scores in English and math.

⁶⁴ Galilee Society Survey 2007, pp. 195-196.

Table 21: Outcomes of fifth- and eighth-graders on "Meitzav" tests by type of educational system (2005-06)⁶⁵

	Fifth-grade pupils			Eighth-grade pupils		
	Arab education: Southern District	Arab education: Nationwide	Jewish education	Arab education: Southern District	Arab education: Nationwide	Jewish education
Arabic/Hebrew	56.5	69.3	74.3	54.2	64.6	74.5
English	62.0	71.3	76.3	38.4	51.8	58.5
Mathematics	41.0	53.0	71.3	33.5	45.6	53.0
Science & Technology	55.6	67.1	81.3	47.6	59.4	67.9

D. ELIGIBILITY FOR MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE

The percentage of Bedouin twelfth-graders eligible for matriculation certificates in the 2007-08 school year was lower than the national average, and in some Bedouin localities was even lower than the national average in the Arab school system. Only one-third to one-fifth of twelfth-graders in Bedouin localities met university entry requirements. This rate was significantly lower than the overall national average as well as the average in the Arab school system.

Table 22: Percentage of those eligible for matriculation certificates and those who met university entrance requirements in the Bedouin and Jewish localities in the Negev, by educational system (2007-08)⁶⁶

Locality	Percentage of all 12 th graders in the locality eligible for matriculation certificate	Percentage of all 12 th graders in the locality who met university entrance requirements
Rahat	35.7%	21.3%
Hura	42%	31.2%
Kseife	41.4%	29.5%
Laqia	46.7%	23%

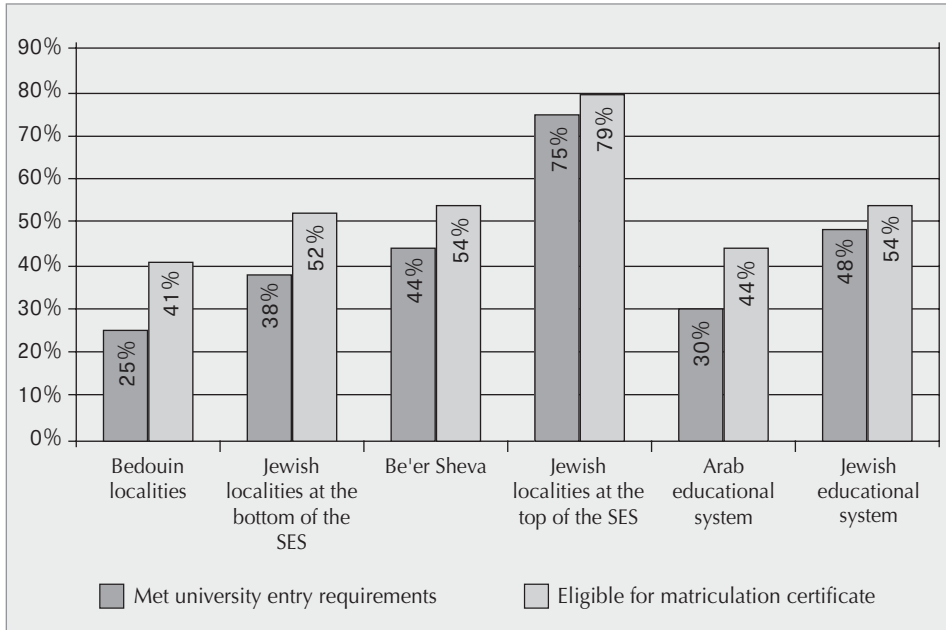
⁶⁵ Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010 (No. 61)*, Tables 8.12, 8.22.

⁶⁶ Figures for the Bedouin and the Jewish localities were taken from: Maximov (2010). Figures for the Jewish school system and the Arab school system were taken from: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010 (No. 61)*, Table 8.23.

Locality	Percentage of all 12 th graders in the locality eligible for matriculation certificate	Percentage of all 12 th graders in the locality who met university entrance requirements
Ar'ara-B'Negev	25.2%	19.8%
Segev-Shalom	38.3%	14.8%
Tel Sheva	43%	29.8%
Abu Basma Regional Council	36.4%	27.3%
Be'er Sheva	54.6%	44.3%
Qiryat Gat	56.3%	39.8%
Eilat	54.8%	45.2%
Dimona	60.6%	44.7%
Netivot	49.6%	32.4%
Ofaqim	36.7%	28.1%
Arad	44.2%	41.5%
Sderot	60.2%	36.2%
Yeruham	52.6%	38.4%
Mizpe Ramon	62.3%	46.8%
Meitar	65.6%	61.8%
Omer	76.0%	70.8%
Lehavim	70.9%	69.9%
Arab education	41.0%	30.2%
Jewish education	54.2%	47.3%
Nationwide	51.7%	44.0%

In the Jewish localities in the Negev at the top of the socio-economic scale (Meitar, Omer and Lehavim), the percentage of twelfth-grade pupils eligible for matriculation certificates in the 2007-08 school year was double than that of the Bedouin localities. The percentage of twelfth-grade pupils in these Jewish localities meeting university entry requirements was three times higher than among twelfth-grade pupils in the Bedouin localities.

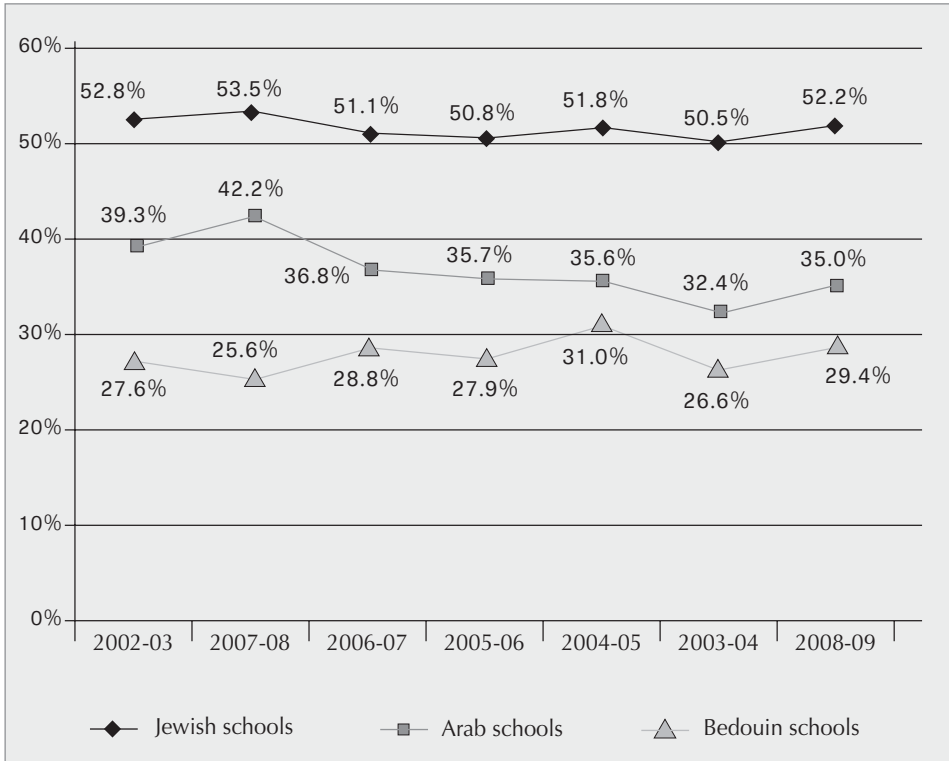
Figure 8: Distribution of matriculation certificate eligibility percentages and percentages of those meeting university entry requirements among twelfth-grade pupils in the Negev and nationwide, by socio-economic level and population group (2007-08)⁶⁷



In recent years, the discrepancy between matriculation certificate eligibility in the Bedouin school system in the Negev and in the Jewish and Arab school systems has remained stable. According to Ministry of Education figures for 2003-2009, the average annual rate of matriculation certificate eligibility among Bedouin twelfth-graders in the Negev (28%) was significantly lower than the comparable rates in the Arab (37%) and the Jewish (52%) school systems.

⁶⁷ Included in the category "Jewish localities at the bottom of the SES" were Dimona, Netivot, Arad, Sderot, Yeruham and Mizpe Ramon. Included in the category "Bedouin localities" were the seven permanent townships – Rahat, Tel Sheva, Hura, Laqia, Kseife, Ar'ara-B'Negev and Segev-Shalom – as well as the localities in the Abu Basma Regional Council. See Table 22 above.

Figure 9: Rate of matriculation certificate eligibility by school system (2003-2009)⁶⁸



⁶⁸ It should be noted that the Arab school system also includes the Bedouin pupils, and that figures for Bedouin pupils are presented separately solely to emphasize the discrepancy. Source: Levy (2008). See: <http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Exams/Netunim/Thashav/OpenStatistic2008.htm>. See also Ministry of Education presentation: *Matriculation Exam Figures 2009*, at the following link: <http://www.kav-lahinuch.co.il/CategoryID=711&ArticleID=8010>.

E. SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES

According to figures for the 2004-05 school year, the dropout rates among Bedouin pupils were extremely high compared to the average in Arab schools and in Jewish schools. In the ninth through eleventh grades, when dropouts are most common, the dropout rates among Bedouin pupils skyrocketed, reaching two to three times the average in Arab schools and three to four times the average in Jewish schools. Even in the twelfth grade, dropout rates are relatively high among Bedouin pupils, reaching up to four times the average in Arab and Jewish schools.

Table 23: Dropout rates for school students, grades eight to twelve⁶⁹

Grade	Negev Bedouins	Arab schools	Jewish schools
8th	5.0%	4.2%	3.3%
9th	16.2%	11.8%	4.3%
10th	7.6%	8.0%	4.7%
11th	10.7%	6.5%	5.2%
12th	7.0%	1.2%	1.7%
Total	9.5%	6.7%	3.9%

E. FACTORS IN TERMINATION OF STUDIES

The factors contributing to termination of studies can be classified as follows: internal factors derived from the personal circumstances of the individual, his or her immediate surroundings or the society in which he or she lives (for example, the desires, preferences and constraints of the individual or the family), and external factors resulting from circumstances that cannot necessarily be directly controlled or influenced by the individual. For example, a lack of desire to continue one's studies is an internal factor affecting the decision to stop attending school, while the lack of a school close to one's place of residence is an external factor that might cause an individual to make such a decision. According to figures for 2004, what stands out among the Bedouins in general, and among the residents of the unrecognized villages in particular, is that the major factor affecting the decision to leave school is external: economic distress or lack of a nearby school. In contrast, in the Arab population in general, the major factor influencing this decision is internal (lack of desire to continue studying or personal reasons).

69 Source for figures on Negev Bedouins: Khamaisi (2009), p. 139 (Table 8-D). Source for figures on Arab and Jewish schools: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2005 (No. 56)*, Table 8.19.

Table 24: Bedouins and Arabs who dropped out before finishing high school, by gender and reason for leaving school (2004)⁷⁰

Source of reason	Reason for dropping out	Overall Bedouin population of the Negev			Of that: Unrecognized villages in the Negev			Overall Arab population		
		Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Internal	Not interested in studying	29.3%	33.6%	25.0%	23.5%	26.7%	18.0%	36.5%	43.3%	29.5%
	Caring for family	5.6%	1.4%	9.9%	1.7%	0.5%	3.0%	9.0%	3.6%	14.6%
	Total	34.9%	35.0%	34.9%	25.2%	27.2%	21.0%	45.5%	46.9%	44.1%
External	Financial distress	31.8%	40.7%	22.7%	39.0%	48.9%	28.4%	31.1%	35.6%	26.5%
	Lack of school in the vicinity	16.4%	12.3%	20.6%	19.5%	10.4%	29.4%	6.6%	5.3%	8.0%
	Total	48.2%	53.0%	43.3%	58.5%	59.3%	57.8%	37.7%	40.9%	34.5%
Other		16.9%	12.0%	21.8%	16.2%	11.6%	21.4%	16.8%	12.3%	21.4%

The percentage of boys who left school due to financial distress is particularly apparent. In view of the difficult financial situation at home, these boys may have no choice but to leave school and go to work to help their families.

Among girls living in the unrecognized villages, many left school because there was no school nearby or for financial reasons. The families of girls living in these villages may avoid sending them to study far away from home. (For more on this topic, see Section 3.D above: Distance from education, health, transportation and consumer services.)

G. SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

According to surveys carried out by the Environmental Health Department in the Ministry of Health in 2005 and 2006 in Rahat and the unrecognized villages, most of the schools have very low levels of sanitation and cleanliness. Classes are held in temporary structures, most of which are outmoded and substandard, and the floors are covered with carpets that collect dirt and dust. The

⁷⁰ Data processed from Manna (2008), pp. 174-175 (Table 10-D).

lavatories in most of these schools are housed in a separate building in the schoolyard. In 80% of these schools, the cleanliness of the lavatories was found to be unsatisfactory. No personal hygiene products were available, and the structure housing the lavatories was substandard. The schools in the unrecognized villages need an additional 300 sinks and 260 toilets. The schoolyards do not have sufficient shaded areas. Some of the schools have a shortage of garbage cans, and garbage is scattered across the schoolyard.⁷¹

H. STUDENTS

According to figures for the 2005-06 academic year, Bedouin students constituted 4.6% of all Arab students studying at universities in Israel for all degrees. This percentage is significantly lower than the percentage of Bedouins in the overall Arab population aged 20-29 (major age group of those studying at universities), which was 10% in 2005.⁷²

Table 25: Bedouin and Arab students at universities in Israel (2005-06)⁷³

Degree	Bedouin students	All Arab students	Percentage of Bedouin students among all Arab students
Bachelor's degree	326	8,103	4%
Master's degree	88	1,994	4.4%
Doctoral degree	18	310	5.8%
Certificate studies	69	311	22.2%
Total	501	10,718	4.7%

71 Weissblei (2006), p. 6.

72 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2005* (No. 57), Table 2.10

73 Khamaisi (2009), p.158 (Table 18-D).

Table 26: Bedouins and Arabs holding degrees from Israeli universities (2004-05)⁷⁴

Degree	Bedouin students	All Arab students	Percentage of Bedouin students of all Arab students holding degrees
Bachelor's degree	78	1,383	5.6%
Master's degree	42	472	8.9%
Doctoral degree	0	29	0%
Certificate studies	23	226	10.2%
Total	143	2,110	6.7%

⁷⁴ Source: Khamaisi (2009), p. 161 (Table 20-D).

7. Health

A. LIFE EXPECTANCY

The life expectancy for Bedouins in the Negev is lower than for the Arab population as a whole and for the Jewish population in Israel. According to 2008 figures, Bedouin men live around three years less than men in the overall Arab population and around seven years less than Jewish men. Bedouin women live around four years less than women in the overall Arab population and around six years less than Jewish women.

Table 27: Average life expectancy (in years) by population group (2002-2006)⁷⁵

Gender	Bedouin population of the Negev	Overall Arab population	Jewish population
Men	72.1	75.1	79.5
Women	74.9	78.5	83.0

B. INFANT MORTALITY

Infant mortality rate is one of the most important measures in assessing the health status of a population group. This rate is calculated as the number of deaths among newborns and babies up to one year of age per 1,000 live births. While Ministry of Health figures show some decrease in the infant mortality rate in recent years among the Negev's Bedouin population (from 15.3 in 2001 to 11.5 in 2007),⁷⁶ this rate continues to be high (statistically significant) relative to every other population group in Israel. According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures, the average infant mortality rate for 2007-2009 among the Bedouins in the Negev was 1.5 times higher than among the overall Arab population and 3.75 higher than among the Jewish population.

75 Source of figures for Bedouins in the Negev: Khamaisi (2009), p. 30 (Summary Table 2). The figures for the Negev Bedouins refer both to those living in the permanent townships and those in the unrecognized villages. The source of figures for the overall Arab population and the Jewish population: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010* (No. 61), Table 3.24.

76 *Health Status of Bedouin Infants and Children up to Age 6*, p. 31.

Table 28: Infant mortality rates by geographic region and population group (annual average for 2007-2009)⁷⁷

Geographic region	Negev		Entire country	
Population group	Bedouins	Jews	Arabs	Jews
Infant mortality	10.5	3.8	6.8	2.8

Table 29: Infant mortality rates in the permanent Bedouin townships by locality (average for period 2004-2008)⁷⁸

Locality	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)
Segev-Shalom	14.3
Rahat	12.7
Ar'ara-B'Negev	13.5
Kseife	10.7
Tel Sheva	11.5
Laqia	13.5
Hura	10.3
Average	12.4

According to Ministry of Health figures for 2001-2005, the mortality rate for infants up to one year of age in the Bedouin sector was considerably higher than the infant mortality rate in the Jewish sector in the Negev. No significant difference in infant mortality rate was found between the permanent townships and the unrecognized villages. The discrepancy in infant mortality rate between the Jewish sector and the Bedouin sector stems in part from congenital defects that occur frequently in the Bedouin sector due to marriages between family members. Other factors contributing to the high infant mortality among the Bedouins compared to the Jews in the Negev are the socio-economic gap between these two population groups and the distance of the Bedouin localities from health services.

⁷⁷ Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010 (No. 61)*, Table 3.11. The infant mortality rates are per 1,000 live births and represent the average for the period 2007-2009. The term "infant mortality" refers to infants who had not yet reached the age of one year at the time of their death.

⁷⁸ Source: Maximov (2010).

Table 30: Infant mortality rates for Bedouins and Jews in the Negev (2001-2005)⁷⁹

Year	Permanent townships	Unrecognized villages	All Bedouins	Jews
2001	16.3	14.2	15.3	5.5
2002	17.7	16.5	17.5	5.3
2003	12.8	14.6	13.6	5.4
2004	16.4	16.0	16.9	4.2
2005	15.3	14.7	15.0	4.6
Annual average	15.7	15.2	15.7	5.0

C. MARRIAGES BETWEEN RELATIVES

Marriages between relatives are much more prevalent among the Bedouins in the Negev than in Arab society in Israel as a whole. According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, marriages within the *hamula* (clan) – first-degree relation or less – constituted 70.1% of all marriages in the Bedouin population, more than twice the comparable rate among the general Arab population in Israel (36.3%). The percentage of Muslim Bedouin women married to a first-degree relative is 1.75 times the percentage for all Muslim women in Israel: 32.3% vs. 18.5%.

Table 31: Distribution of marriages in Arab society according to degree of relation between groom and bride, religion and population group (2007)⁸⁰

Type of relationship	Bedouin population	Overall Arab population			
		Muslim	Christian	Druze	Total
First-degree relation	32.3%	18.5%	13.4%	20.4%	18.1%
Some relation (<i>hamula</i>)	37.8%	21.5%	5.7%	8.0%	18.2%
No family relation	29.9%	60.0%	80.9%	71.8%	63.7%

79 The segmented data on the permanent townships and the unrecognized villages were taken from: *Health Status of Bedouin Babies and Children up to Age 6*, p. 32. Data on the Bedouin population as a whole and the Jewish population of the Negev were taken from: Weissblei (2006), p. 12.

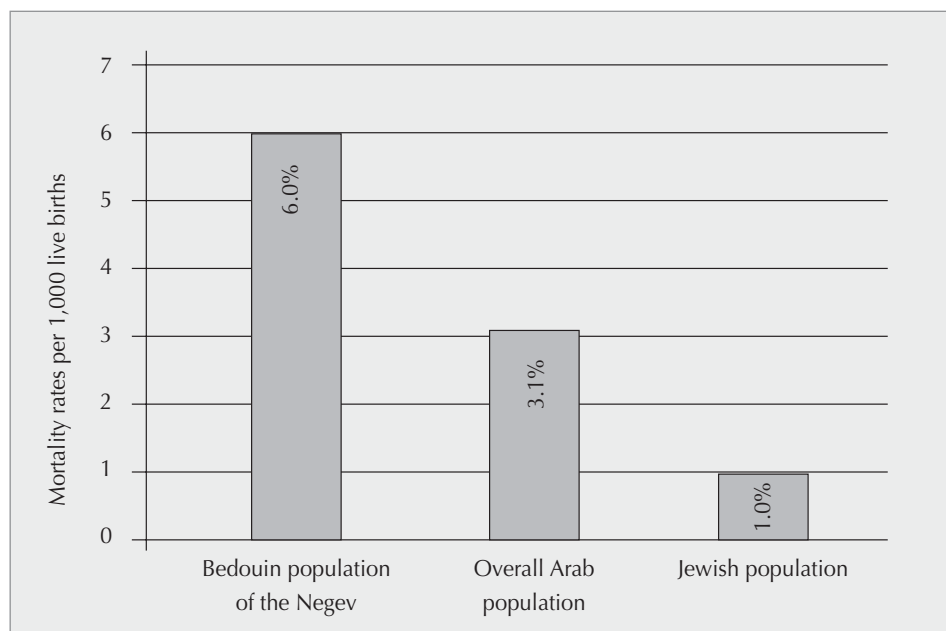
80 *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, pp. 285-286, Table 11.28.

In recent years, marriage within the family has been on the rise among the Bedouin population. According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, the rate of marriages within the Bedouin *hamula* in the Negev rose from 26.9% in 2003 to 27.8% in 2007.⁸¹

In general, due to the high rate of marriages within the family, the leading causes of death among Arab infants and babies (up to one year of age) are heredity illnesses and congenital deformities. Moreover, heredity or genetic illnesses are significantly more prevalent among the Arab population than among the overall population of Israel.

The prevalence of congenital deformities and the consequent infant mortality rates are significantly higher in the Bedouin population than in both the Arab and the Jewish populations. According to Ministry of Health figures, the 2005 infant mortality rate among the Bedouins as a result of congenital deformities was almost twice as high as among the overall Arab population and six times as high as in the Jewish population: 5.98 per 1,000 live births, compared to 3.07 and 1.01, respectively.⁸²

Figure 10: Rates of infant mortality caused by congenital defects, by population group (2005)

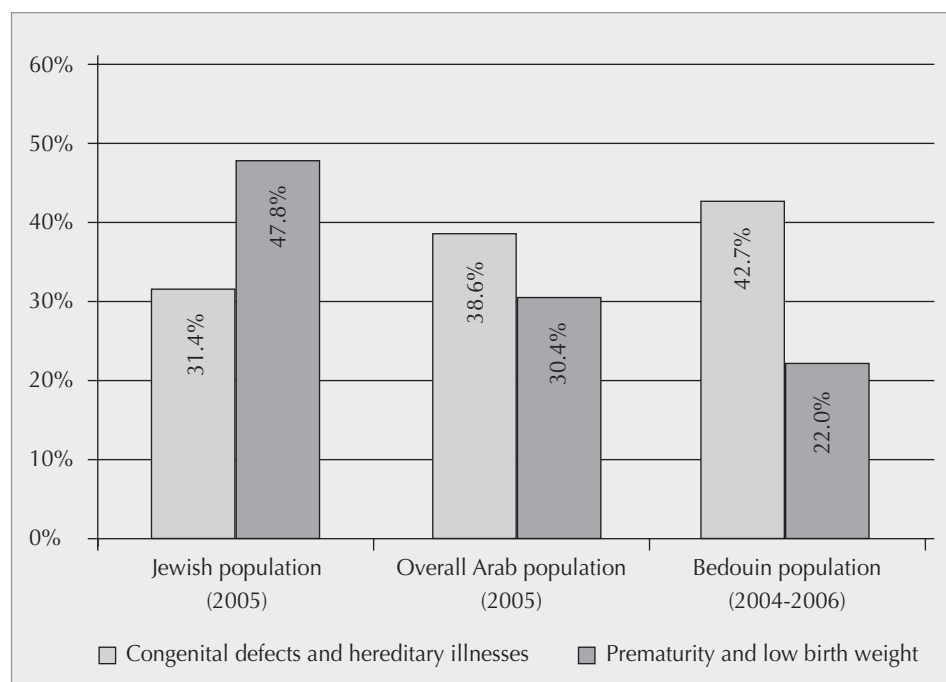


81 *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 75.

82 Amitai (2006). See: http://www.health.gov.il/download/forms/a2913_ch_d_2005.pdf.

According to Ministry of Health figures for 2004-2006, the primary cause of mortality among Bedouin infants is congenital defects and hereditary illnesses (42.7% of all infants who die). The secondary cause is prematurity and low birth weight (22.0%).⁸³ For comparison, Ministry of Health figures for 2005 show that prematurity is the main cause of infant mortality among the Jewish population (47.8%), while congenital deformity is the secondary cause (31.4%). In the overall Arab population, the primary cause of infant mortality is also congenital deformity (38.6%), but the rate is lower than in the Bedouin population. The secondary cause of mortality is prematurity (30.4%).⁸⁴

Figure 11: Main causes of infant mortality by population group (selected years)



83 *Health Status of Bedouin Babies and Children up to Age 6*, p. 32.

84 Amitai (2006).

The case of the Al-Sayyid Bedouin tribe

One of the most noteworthy examples of the genetic effects of marriage between family members is the case of the Al-Sayyid tribe. The village where the tribe lives was established around the year 1800 by a Bedouin who came from Egypt and married a local Bedouin woman. The village, adjacent to the Bedouin township of Hura, is today under the jurisdiction of the Abu Basma Regional Council. For years, other tribes in the region shunned marital relations with members of the Al-Sayyid tribe, whom they saw as foreigners. Consequently, marriages between members of the tribe increased, leading to the creation of an identical genetic load among members of the tribe and an increase in the prevalence of congenital genetic deformities. Around 5% of the members of this tribe (150 out of 3,500 residents) are deaf, a particularly high percentage compared to the rate of deafness in Israel as a whole (0.1%). This represents the combination of a genetic mutation causing deafness that is prevalent only among the members of the tribe and the high frequency of marriages between family members. A survey carried out in the tribe showed that 27% of the marriages were between cousins and that 65% of married couples were related to some degree. The assessment is that the genetic mutation that causes deafness is carried by around one quarter of the members of the tribe. For the past four generations, there have been no marriages between members of the tribe and other communities. Hence, the men and women of the tribe have very similar genetic loads. As a result of the high frequency of deafness in the village, over the years the members of the tribe have developed a unique sign language used by the entire community, deaf and hearing alike, which has become a second language.⁸⁵

D. CHRONIC ILLNESS MORBIDITY

According to the *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, 7.1% of the Bedouins in the Negev reported having some sort of chronic illness for which they were diagnosed (6.6% of men and 7.6% of women). The five most prevalent chronic illnesses among the Bedouin population are (in decreasing order): hypertension, diabetes, asthma, high cholesterol and arthritis. Among Bedouin men the major illnesses are diabetes (2.0%), hypertension (1.6%) and asthma (1.5%). Among Bedouin women the major illnesses are hypertension (2.8%), diabetes (1.9%) and arthritis (1.4%).

The percentage of asthma sufferers in the unrecognized villages of the Negev (2.3%) is 1.6% higher than in the overall Bedouin population (1.4%) and three times higher than in the total Arab population (0.8%). The proximity of the unrecognized Bedouin villages to the industrial plants at

85 For research studies examining the case of the Al-Sayyid tribe, see: Sandler, Meir, Padden & Aronoff (2005), pp. 2661-2665; Kisch, in: Van Cleve (2004), pp. 148-173; Ben Simhon (June 4, 2004), "One in Every Twenty," *Ha'aretz Weekly Supplement*; Sa'ar (February 22, 2005), "Born With A Sign," *Ha'aretz*.

Ramat Hovav in the Negev may be a factor contributing to the higher than average asthma morbidity rates in these localities. Other chronic illnesses prevalent among the residents of the unrecognized villages are hypertension (2.2%), arthritis (1.7%), diabetes (1.6%) and chronic headaches (1.1%).⁸⁶

Table 32: Prevalent chronic illnesses by population group (2007)⁸⁷

Total Bedouin population		Of that: Unrecognized villages		Total Arab population	
Illness type	% of sufferers	Illness type	% of sufferers	Illness type	% of sufferers
Hypertension	2.2%	Asthma	2.3%	Hypertension	3.8%
Diabetes	2.0%	Hypertension	2.2%	Diabetes	3.6%
Asthma	1.4%	Arthritis	1.7%	High Cholesterol	2.5%
High cholesterol	1.1%	Diabetes	1.6%	Discopathy	2.2%
Arthritis	1.0%	Headaches	1.1%	Cardiac problems	1.7%

E. PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS AND DISABILITIES

In general, the percentage of those with physical limitations and disabilities in the Arab population is higher than in the Jewish population. According to figures for 2007, 26% of the Arab population aged 20-64 had some form of physical limitation or disability, compared to 18% of the Jewish population in the same age group. The percentage of those with severe limitations in the Arab population was almost three times higher than in the Jewish population: 14.4% vs. 5.1%, respectively.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ While the findings of the survey show that the percentage of those with chronic illnesses among the Bedouins is lower than among the general Arab population (7.1% vs. 12.1%), it should be kept in mind that the survey relies on the answers of respondents who reported coming down with some illnesses and were actually diagnosed with the illnesses following their report. In view of the fact that the percentage of Bedouin families who live more than five kilometers from the closest clinic or private doctor is two to three times higher than the comparable percentage for families in the general Arab population (see Table 8 in Section 3.D above), it can be assumed that the picture of the situation with respect to chronic illnesses among the Bedouin population as reflected in the survey data does not necessarily reflect reality and that many in this population group have not been diagnosed by a doctor.

⁸⁷ *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, pp. 261-262, Tables 11.4, 11.5.

⁸⁸ Gaon (2009), p. 5.

The percentage of individuals with motor disabilities in the Bedouin population is somewhat lower than in the overall Arab population: 29.3% vs. 35.2%. In contrast, the percentage of individuals in the Bedouin population with speech and hearing disabilities (23.8%) and those with mental or a combination of mental and motor disabilities (20.0%) are significantly higher than in the overall Arab population (7.2% and 13.1% respectively). The percentage of those with visual disabilities in the Bedouin population (6.8%) is particularly low compared to the total Arab population (22.8%).

Table 33: Distribution of individuals with disabilities in the Bedouin population and the overall Arab population, according to disability type (2007)⁸⁹

Type of disability	Total Bedouin population	Total Arab population
Vision	6.7%	22.8%
Hearing	9.5%	10.8%
Speech or speech & hearing	23.8%	7.2%
Motoric	29.3%	35.2%
Mental or mental & motoric	20.0%	13.1%
Multiple disabilities	8.4%	6.8%
Other	2.2%	4.1%

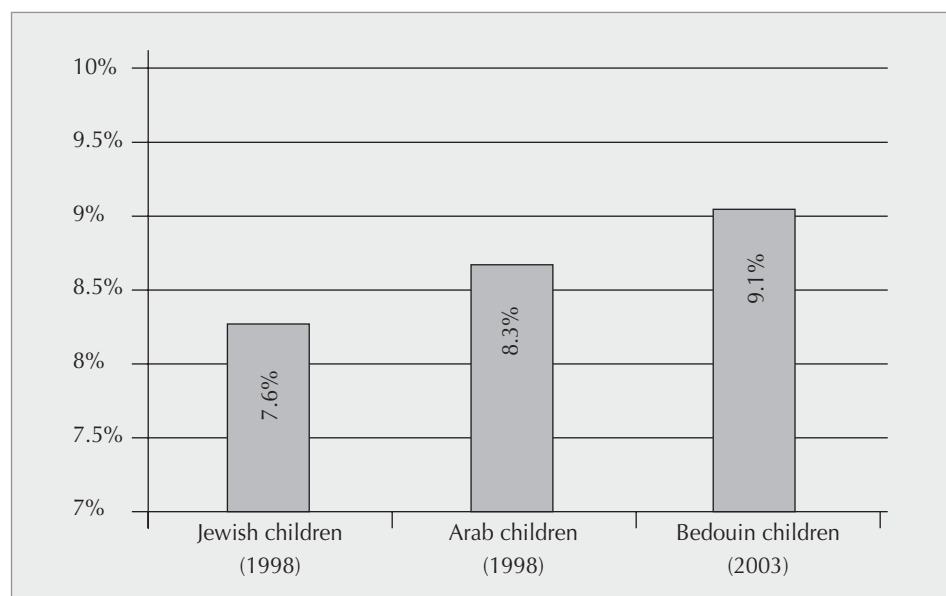
F. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Children with special needs are defined as those who have a chronic illness or some sort of disability that continues for a year or more and has an impact upon their everyday functioning. According to a Brookdale Institute research report, 9.1% of Bedouin children are special needs children, compared to 8.3% of all Arab children and 7.6% of Jewish children.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ *Galilee Society Survey 2007*, p. 266, Table 11.9.

⁹⁰ Figures for the Bedouins are accurate as of 2003 and for Arabs and Jews as of 1998. See: Strosberg, Naon, & Ziv (2008), p. 7. For the complete report, see: <http://brookdaleheb.jdc.org.il/files/PDF/503-08-RR-BedouinHEB.pdf>.

Figure 12: Children with special needs by population group



According to a report from the Ministry of Health Southern District Office, 9% of all Bedouin children in the Negev exhibit developmental delay. Some reports also specify a sub-diagnosis among the Arab and Bedouin children, indicating that the percentage of children with special needs in these population groups may be even higher. According to these reports, the percentage of Bedouin children with chronic illnesses is more than twice the percentage of Arab and Jewish children who have chronic illnesses.⁹¹

The lower the socio-economic level of a particular locality, the higher the percentage of special needs children in that locality. According to figures from the National Council for the Child for 2007, 50% of the heads of Bedouin households with a special needs child are not employed, and the family's financial situation is below par. The comparative figures for the Arab and Jewish populations are 43% and 30%, respectively. A Bedouin family with a special needs child has difficulty obtaining various services, mainly due to the high costs of these services (74% of families) or the distance between these services and the family home (72% of families).⁹²

91 Morad (July 2009), *Accessibility of Health Services to Children with Disabilities in the Bedouin Sector in the Negev, Inyan Shel Gisha (A Matter of Attitude)*. See: http://www.veredbitan.com/WD/shekel/shekel_mag9/Vol9_43.pdf.

92 National Council for the Child, *Special Needs Children in Israel 2007: Assorted Figures*. See: <http://children.org.il/Files/File/leket%20tzrachim.doc>.

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List of tables

- Table 1: Selected demographic figures on the population of the Bedouin and Jewish local authorities in the Negev
- Table 2: Five largest Arab cities in Israel
- Table 3: Age distribution according to geographic region and population group (average for 2007)
- Table 4: Overall fertility and rate of natural growth by geographic region and population group (2009)
- Table 5: Distribution of households according to size and population group (2007)
- Table 6: Housing density by population group (2007)
- Table 7: Infrastructure connections: Bedouin localities in the Negev vs. general Arab localities in Israel (2007)
- Table 8: Distance from public services by population group (2007)
- Table 9: Level of exposure to public health hazards according to population group (2007)
- Table 10: Percentage of household ownership of durable goods by population group (2007)
- Table 11: Computer, Internet and mobile phone use by population group (2007)
- Table 12: Rate of participation in the civilian work force and unemployment rates in the Bedouin population and in the Arab population as a whole (2007)
- Table 13: Rate of participation in the civilian work force and unemployment rates in the Negev by population group (2007)
- Table 14: Distribution of average gross household income in the Bedouin population and the overall Arab population (2005)
- Table 15: Distribution of wage earners in Bedouin and Jewish localities in the Negev, by salary group (2008)
- Table 16: Average monthly salary for wage earners in Bedouin and Jewish localities in the Negev, by gender (2008)
- Table 17: Localities in the bottom cluster of the socio-economic scale (2006)
- Table 18: Incidence of poverty by population group (2004, 2007)

- Table 19: Relationship between educational level and incidence of poverty in the Bedouin population and the overall Arab population (2007)
- Table 20: Level of education according to highest certificate earned, gender and population group (2007)
- Table 21: Achievements of fifth- and eighth-graders on "Meitzav" tests by type of educational system (2005-06)
- Table 22: Percentage of those eligible for matriculation certificates and those who met university entrance requirements in the Bedouin and Jewish localities in the Negev, by educational system (2007-08)
- Table 23: Dropout rates for school students, grades eight to twelve (2004-05)
- Table 24: Bedouins and Arabs who dropped out before finishing high school, by gender and reason for leaving school (2004)
- Table 25: Bedouin and Arab students at universities in Israel (2005-06)
- Table 26: Bedouins and Arabs holding degrees from Israeli universities (2004-05)
- Table 27: Average life expectancy (in years) by population group (2002-2006)
- Table 28: Infant mortality rates by geographic region and population group (annual average for 2007-2009)
- Table 29: Infant mortality rates in the permanent Bedouin townships by locality (average for period 2004-2008)
- Table 30: Infant mortality rates for Bedouins and Jews in the Negev (2001-2005)
- Table 31: Distribution of marriages in Arab society according to degree of relation between groom and bride, religion and population group (2007)
- Table 32: Prevalent chronic diseases by population group (2007)
- Table 33: Distribution of individuals with disabilities in the Bedouin population and the overall Arab population, according to disability type (2007)

List of figures

- Figure 1: Distribution of Bedouin population in Israel
- Figure 2: Distribution of Negev population by religion (1999-2006)
- Figure 3: Distribution of Negev's Bedouin population by type of locality (2009)
- Figure 4: Distribution of households by size and population group (2007)
- Figure 5: Unemployment rates in Bedouin and Jewish localities in the Negev (2006-2009)
- Figure 6: Percentage of those who can read and write by age and population group (2007)
- Figure 7: Percentages of those without schooling according to population group (2007)
- Figure 8: Distribution of matriculation certificate eligibility percentages and percentages of those meeting university entry requirements among twelfth-grade pupils in the Negev and nationwide by socio-economic level and population group (2007-08)
- Figure 9: Rate of matriculation certificate eligibility by school system (2003-2009)
- Figure 10: Rates of infant mortality caused by congenital defects, by population group (2005)
- Figure 11: Main causes of infant mortality by population group (selected years)
- Figure 12: Children with special needs by population group

List of maps

- Map 1: Negev geographical region according to municipal districts
- Map 2: Permanent townships and unrecognized village regions (by tribe), 2004
- Map 3: Localities in the Abu Basma Regional Council (2010)



יוזמות קרן אברהם (ע"ר)
مبادرات صندوق إبراهيم

The Abraham Fund Initiatives

The Arab-Bedouin Population in the Negev

TRANSFORMATIONS IN AN ERA OF URBANIZATION

Dr. Thabet Abu Ras

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Table of contents

1. Preface	71
A. Introduction	71
Negev boundaries and population.....	72
B. History of the Bedouins in the Negev.....	72
C. Government policy toward the Bedouins in the Negev: 1948-1980.....	73
D. Government decisions affecting Bedouin society.....	74
2. Society and economics.....	77
A. Demographics	77
B. Polygamy	79
C. Education.....	80
D. Enlistment of young people into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)	85
E. Health.....	87
F. Education and employment among women	88
G. Industry, commerce and employment	91
H. Civil society	94
3. Politics	97
A. Political life.....	97
B. Local government.....	99
I. Abu Basma Regional Council.....	103
II. Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev	105
4. Land and settlement.....	107
A. The Bedouin land issue	107
I. The problem	107
II. The history of the problem	108

III. Negev lands after the establishment of the State of Israel.....	109
IV. Negev lands today.....	111
V. The Goldberg Commission and its recommendations.....	113
B. The unrecognized villages in the Negev.....	115
C. Illegal construction and building demolition in the Negev's Bedouin localities.....	116
Conclusion.....	118
References.....	119
List of tables and charts.....	124
List of figures.....	124

"Special attention must be directed to the living conditions and hardships of the Bedouins. There is no longer room to disregard this subject or to push it aside. The state, by means of its most senior echelons, must act as soon and as decisively as possible to close the gaps by setting clear and tangible objectives and defined timetables."¹

1. Preface

A. INTRODUCTION

The physical and social living conditions of the Bedouin population are worse than of any other group in Israeli society. Recently, however, Israeli decision makers have begun to prioritize solving the problems of the Bedouins living in the Negev. In 2003 the government renewed its efforts to find a comprehensive solution for the problems of the Negev Bedouins, earmarking around 10 billion shekels to this end. A major portion of this sum has been allocated for the Negev Development Plan.²

In recent years, the issue of the Bedouins in Israel has gained momentum. The Bedouins themselves have begun organizing and have brought the matter up for public discussion, among other things by successfully petitioning the High Court of Justice. Moreover, after a standstill of several decades, the government has begun passing new resolutions, among them official recognition of unrecognized localities, the establishment of the Abu Basma Regional Council and a serious attempt to solve the issue of land claims. These achievements are lessened by the ongoing demolition of houses in the unrecognized villages and by government failure to devote serious efforts to solving this issue.

The political and security reality prevailing in Israel since the outbreak of the second Intifada in 2000 has had detrimental effects on the Bedouin population. The hermetic closure of the border with the Gaza Strip, the construction of the separation barrier and the partial closure of the Mount Hebron region have negatively affected the social and economic life of the Bedouins in the south. Until then, the Bedouins maintained close familial and economic ties with these regions. Moreover, the 2003 economic program of then Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which included cutbacks in child allowances, hit Bedouin society particularly hard. All this occurred in parallel to rapid urbanization and modernization forced upon the Arab population of the Negev without taking into consideration the repercussions on the social and economic structure of this traditional society.

1 *Or Commission Report* (2003), p. 767.

2 Praver and Sarfus (2006).

Negev boundaries and population

The Negev is a triangular-shaped desert area in the south of Israel, bound on the west and southwest by the border with Egypt and the Gaza Strip and on the east by the border with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Negev's northern geographical border is determined by the average annual rainfall, with the 200 mm isohyetal line separating the Negev from the rest of Israel. From an administrative perspective, the Negev is part of the southern district that includes two sub-districts: the Ashqelon Sub-District that covers an area of 285 sq. km, and the Be'er Sheva Sub-District with an area of 12,945 sq. km. This area constitutes more than 58% of Israel's total land mass.³

According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures, at the end of 2009 702,600 people lived in the Negev, among them 192,800 Bedouins representing 27.4% of the total population of the Negev.⁴ The Bedouin population is concentrated in seven towns established prior to 1990, nine villages recognized recently as part of the Abu Basma Regional Council and another 36 unrecognized villages that are awaiting recognition.

B. HISTORY OF THE BEDOUINS IN THE NEGEV

Researchers agree that practically all the Bedouins currently living in the Negev migrated to the area from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Syrian Desert. In their wanderings, they came to the Negev region and settled there. The time of this settlement is disputed. Some claim settlement took place in the 18th and 19th centuries, while others claim that the Bedouins began settling in the Negev even earlier.

Al-Araf (1937) and Ben David (2004) note the presence of Bedouins in the Negev from the time the armies of Islam arrived in the region. According to Sharon (1975), the Tyaha tribe, the largest Bedouin tribe in the Negev, came to the region in the 11th century, long before the beginning of Ottoman rule (1516).

Other researchers, among them Ashkenazi (2000), Grossman (1949) and Bailey (1980), who focused on Bedouin settlement patterns rather than on their wanderings, point to a process that

3 Negev Development Authority (2010).

4 The data on the Bedouin population and the general Arab population in Israel were taken from: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010 (No. 61)*, Table 2.1, Figure 2.6. The figures on the Arab population of East Jerusalem were calculated based on data from the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem 2007/2008*, Table 11/c. The Arab residents of East Jerusalem are classified as "permanent residents" and not as "citizens," and for this reason were not included in calculating the total number of Arab citizens in Israel.

began in the 19th century and continued into the 20th century with the rise of Bedouin agriculture and the establishment of the first Bedouin localities.

The first comprehensive survey of the Negev was carried out after the British conquest (in 1917). This survey identified a region settled by Bedouins who cultivated their lands and determined that the lands were traditionally owned by the Bedouin. According to the survey, 50% of the lands in the northern Negev were cultivated.⁵

The Bedouins were an influential presence in the Negev even before the establishment of the State of Israel. When the city of Be'er Sheva was founded by the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, Sheik Ali Al-Atawneh was appointed mayor.⁶ Later, during the British Mandate for Palestine, a Bedouin – Sheik Hassan Abu Kaf – was again appointed mayor of Be'er Sheva.

C. GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARD THE BEDOUINS IN THE NEGEV: 1948-1980

During the first three decades after the state was established, Israeli government policy toward the Bedouins in the Negev focused on three issues. The first was the decision to concentrate the Bedouins in the Negev in an area known as the *Sayig* (restricted) area. This area, predominantly south and east of Be'er Sheva, was limited to 1.5 million dunams (1000 sqm) of the total Negev area. Transfer of the Bedouins to this area was completed in 1954, and that same year the government granted Israeli citizenship to the Bedouins in the Negev. This complex operation was accomplished without any major difficulties because the Arabs in Israel were subject to strict military rule until 1966.

The second action undertaken by the government toward the Bedouins was the decision to urbanize the existing population. This 1962 decision stipulated that three Bedouin townships would be established in the Negev: Tel Sheva, Rahat and Kseife. Further decisions on this matter extended this urbanization to other areas. Today more than half of the Bedouins live in localities classified as urban. The objective of this urbanization was to give the government control over land areas held by the Bedouins, to supply them national and municipal infrastructure and services and to prevent them from spreading into wide areas of open land.

The third element in government policy toward the Bedouins was the attempt to resolve the issue of Bedouin ownership of land in the Negev. The first government compromise proposal on this issue was based on the recommendations of a commission chaired by Attorney Plia Albeck from the Ministry of Justice, which were published in 1976. The commission determined that while the

5 Israel Land Development Company, *The Negev – Report* (1920).

6 Nsasa (2009).

lands in the Negev are "dead lands" (*Mawat*) that are not suitable for cultivation, it approved partial compensation of 20% of the lands to anyone who claimed ownership of more than 400 dunams. In parallel to this proposed compromise, government policy toward the Bedouins began to worsen, as evidenced by the enforcement of construction and grazing laws and by the establishment of the Green Patrol (1977), charged with uncompromising enforcement of the law.

A major shift in government policy towards the Bedouin took place in 1998, with the establishment of the Ministerial Committee to Advance the Bedouin Population in the Negev and the Administration for Advancing the Bedouin in the Negev, which served as an instrument for implementing government policy. For the first time, the state recognized the need for systematic consideration of the status of the Bedouin population in the Negev and expressed a desire to grant recognition to more villages, in addition to the seven towns that had already been established.

D. GOVERNMENT DECISIONS AFFECTING BEDOUIN SOCIETY

For decades, consideration of the Bedouin issue focused primarily on the general issue of residence and occupation and less on their overall problems and distress. Over the years, Israeli governments related to the Bedouins in the unrecognized villages as if they were invisible and proposed minimal solutions for the seven established Bedouin towns. Even when the government did pass a resolution affecting the Bedouins, it was usually either partially or never enforced. Government performance on the local and regional level in the Negev was inadequate. Jewish functionaries, who had been given broad autonomy, handled the problems and difficulties of the Bedouins in an unprofessional manner, as evidenced by the large number of government and inter-ministerial committees whose decisions were not implemented.

Over the last decade, a number of major resolutions were passed affecting the Bedouins in the Negev. These resolutions form the basis for the changes taking place in Bedouin society today (see Table 1).

Table 1: Major government resolutions passed during the last decade regarding the Negev Bedouins⁷

Resolution number	Date	Topic
1028 (Arab/996)	April 5, 2003	Comprehensive plan for the Bedouin sector in the south
881 (Arab/15)	September 27, 2003	Plan for Handling the Bedouin Sector in the Negev
2886	December 12, 2004	Detailed steps for enforcement of Resolution 881 and establishment of an inter-ministerial administration to coordinate enforcement of land laws
3856	July 22, 2005	Plan for development of Abu Basma localities, budgeted at 400 million shekels
4415	November 20, 2005	National Strategic Plan for the Development of the Negev
1999	July 15, 2007	Establishment of an authority to regulate Bedouin settlement in the Negev
2491	October 28, 2007	Establishment of a public committee headed by Judge Goldberg, charged with making new policy recommendations to regulate Bedouin settlement in the Negev
4411	January 18, 2009	Appointment of a team to implement the conclusions of the Goldberg Commission

Government Resolution 881 passed on September 27, 2003,⁸ known as the Plan for Handling the Bedouin Sector in the Negev, allocated 1.1 billion shekels for six years. This sum was designated to the development of infrastructures in the localities recognized as part of the Abu Basma Regional Council as well as for the seven existing towns.

The trend toward government investment in the Abu Basma localities was also seen in another government resolution, number 3856 dated July 22, 2005. This resolution allocated 400 million shekels for developing these localities over four years. In many cases, this development encountered implementation problems on the ground due to the many organizations handling the Bedouin issue. The Administration for Advancing the Bedouin Population in the Negev, the organization

⁷ Source: Prime Minister office's website: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/pmo>.

⁸ Government Resolution No. 881 dated September 27, 2003 (Arab/15).

charged by the government to handle the issue of Bedouin land, and the Abu Basma Regional Council, representing the Bedouin residents, were not able to cooperate in many instances. On the other hand, many Bedouin residents objected to the implementation of projects on their lands before a final solution was reached regarding their land claims.

For these reasons, the funds allocated to the Bedouins according to Resolutions 881 and 3856 were not used in their entirety. On September 14, 2008 the government decided to extend the period of validity of these resolutions.

Another resolution affecting the Bedouin population is Government Resolution 4415, known as the National Strategic Plan for Negev Development. This plan was intended to develop the Negev as a whole over a period of ten years, and it allocated 6.3 billion shekels to the Bedouin population and the Bedouin localities.¹⁰ Furthermore, in several other resolutions the government allocated an additional two billion shekels for "broad initiatives". The total amount of money allocated to the Bedouins through government resolutions is around ten billion shekels.¹¹

These amounts are insufficient, were allocated much too late and some were designated to enforce the land laws. Nevertheless, they point to a new trend toward the development of existing Bedouin localities and the recognition of new villages for the Bedouin population of the Negev.

9 Government Resolution No. 3856 dated July 22, 2005.

10 National Strategic Plan for Negev Development (2005).

11 Goldberg Commission Report (2008), p. 25.

2. Society and economics

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

The Bedouins in the Negev are part of the Arab population of Israel, which totals around 1,400,000 people. As opposed to the Arab citizens living elsewhere in Israel, it is difficult to determine the exact number of Bedouins in the Negev. Among the reasons for this are official disregard, the existence of unrecognized villages, tribal registrations and the mobility of the Bedouins. According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures, at the end of 2009 around 192,800 Bedouins lived in the Negev, constituting 27.4% of all Negev residents.¹²

Based upon various estimates, between 65,000 and 90,000 Bedouins lived in the northern and northwestern Negev prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. According to the 1931 British Mandate census, 47,982 people lived in the Negev, in the following tribes:¹³ Al-Tarabin 16,330; Al-Tiaha 14,163; Al-Azazma 8,661; Al-Hajajra 3,757; Al-Jabarat 4,432; Al-Saidin 639. Shimoni (1947) estimated the number of Bedouins in 1947 at 65,000, and the government of Mandatory Palestine set the number at 90,000.¹⁴ In the wake of the Nakba in 1948, around 11,000 Bedouins remained in the Negev.¹⁵

After the establishment of the State of Israel and following the imposition of military rule over the Arab population in Israel, the Bedouins were concentrated in the *Sayig* (restricted) area southwest of Be'er Sheva, in the triangle formed by Be'er Sheva – Arad – Dimona (see Map 1). Before the establishment of the state, this area was inhabited by six tribes living on their lands. After 1948, an additional 11 tribes were added.¹⁶

At the end of the 1960s, the government decided to urbanize the Bedouins in the Negev and to establish seven towns for this purpose. The first town created was Tel Sheva, established in 1969. The process ended in 1990 when Laqia was established. Today most of the Bedouins in the Negev live in these seven towns, or at least are registered there as residents. Figures for 2008 indicate around 112,000 people registered as residents of these towns.¹⁷ Rahat, the only Bedouin city in the Negev and in all of Israel, has the largest concentration of Bedouins and is the second largest Arab city in Israel, after Nazareth. In 2008, the population of Rahat was 43,900.

12 See Footnote 4.

13 Al-Araf (1933).

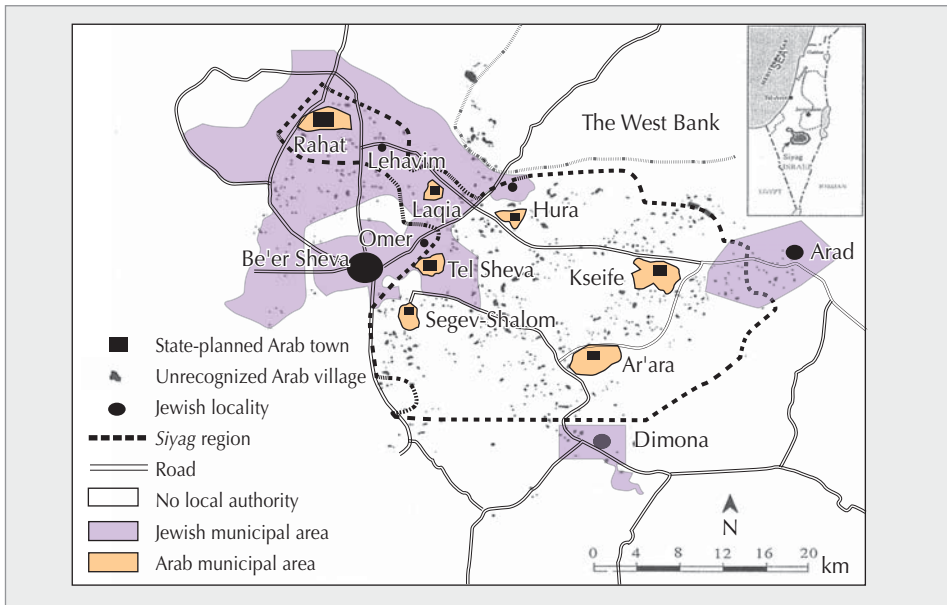
14 Falah (1989), p. 55.

15 Porat (1997), p. 400.

16 Falah (1989), p. 78; Porat (2000), p. 457.

17 Central Bureau of Statistics (2008).

Map 1: The Sayig area and the seven Bedouin towns in the Negev¹⁸



In 2005, the National Security Council estimated that the rate of natural growth among the Bedouins was 5.5%,¹⁹ while Lavie (2010) determined this rate to be 5.3%. This rate is the highest rate of natural growth in the world and is comparable to the rate in the Gaza Strip, also 5.3%.²⁰

This rate is decreasing due to the difficult socio-economic conditions among the Bedouins and the cuts in child allocations in Netanyahu's 2003 economic plan. Another factor in this drop in the rate of natural growth is the rising unemployment among the Bedouins and the closure of the borders with the territories, which has had a deleterious economic impact on the Bedouins. The Bedouin population is quite young. More than 63% of the Bedouins are under the age of 19, and almost 60% of Bedouin families have four or more children.²¹

In addition, marriages between members of Bedouin tribes lead to a particularly high percentage of children born with congenital deformities or special needs. This is evidenced by the fact that 80% of all children hospitalized in the children's ward at Soroka Hospital are Bedouins.²²

18 Source: Ministry of the Interior figures, area photograph analyses (1999).

19 Praver and Sarfus (2006).

20 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2009).

21 Lavie (2010).

22 Ibid.

Table 2: Selected demographic characteristics among the population of the Bedouin local authorities in the Negev²³

Locality	Residents (2008)	% Aged 0-14 (2008)	% Aged 0-19 (2008)	% 65 and older (2008)	Median age (2006)	Rate of natural growth 2007-08	Families with 4 or more children (2006)
Rahat	43,900	53.5%	64.4%	1.5%	13	3.78%	56%
Tel Sheva	14,600	53.8%	65.4%	1.5%	13	3.89%	57%
Ar'ara	13,500	50.1%	63.0%	1.3%	14	3.56%	59%
Hura	11,800	52.8%	63.7%	1.4%	13	3.85%	53%
Kseife	11,200	50.3%	61.0%	1.8%	14	4.18%	64%
Laqia	9,700	48.4%	58.0%	1.9%	15	3.54%	56%
Segev-Shalom	7,100	51.6%	62.8%	1.5%	14	3.86%	60%
Total	111,800	52.2%	63.3%	1.5%	13.7	3.80%	58%

B. POLYGAMY

The practice of polygamy – a man marrying a number of women – is associated with the social and patriarchal structure of traditional societies worldwide, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Such societies are characterized by homogeneous norms and values based upon a tribal social structure. Traditional societies tend to be more religious than modern societies and rely more upon agriculture and handicrafts.

Polygamy is common in traditional Muslim society in the Middle East, including in Bedouin Muslim society in the Negev. Because polygamy is considered a criminal offence in Israel, there are no accurate figures on the extent of polygamous marriages in Israel in general and among Bedouins in particular. According to various estimates, polygamous families constitute around 35% of all Bedouin families.²⁴ Polygamous wives have no civil status whatsoever, and most come from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The fact that the government withholds citizenship from these women only serves to increase their dependence upon their husbands. The law concerning polygamy is practically not enforced in Bedouin society, and indeed polygamy is often looked

23 Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2008).

24 Al-Krenawi and Slonim-Nevo (2005).

upon with understanding. Due to the closed nature of Bedouin society it is difficult to prove that this offence has been committed. In 2004-2005 only four cases of polygamous marriage among Bedouin society were brought to court.²⁵

The uncertain geopolitical situation and the nature of relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority facilitate polygamous marriages. Another source of such marriages is the Kingdom of Jordan, home to members of the same Bedouin tribes who moved to Jordan as a result of the 1948 war.

Despite growing urbanization and the rise in educational level among the Bedouins, the rate of polygamous marriages is not dropping. The custom is even found among young college graduates, including lawyers, educators and members of the academia. The practice has not lessened, apparently due to its widespread legitimacy in Bedouin society and to the religious endorsement it holds. Having more than one wife is seen among Bedouin society as a social status symbol. Furthermore, first marriages at a relatively young age also serve to encourage polygamy among the Bedouins.

C. EDUCATION

Before the establishment of the state, very few Bedouins in the Negev were educated. In the 1940s the sons of sheiks were sent to school in Be'er Sheva. The Bedouin lifestyle and their dispersion across the Negev made it difficult to establish a regular education system.

Despite the Compulsory Education Law passed in Israel in 1949, restrictions on Bedouins' movement during the first two decades of the state (as a result of military rule) prevented the establishment of a regular Bedouin education system. The Bedouin population was concentrated in the *Sayig* area and no schools were built to meet their needs, leaving most Bedouin children without any formal education.

Schools were built in the Bedouin sector in the south only after urbanization began and the first seven towns were founded. Tel Sheva, the first of these towns, was founded in 1969, and the first school in the town opened in 1979.²⁶ In the past several years the government has invested in building schools in villages recently recognized as part of the Abu Basma Regional Council. For the first time, high schools were built to serve the population of these villages and the unrecognized villages in the area.

25 Lotan (2006).

26 Abu Saad (2010).

Only in the 1970s the state began to fully implement the Compulsory Education Law among the Negev Bedouins. During that period as well, educational institutions were established in localities and unrecognized villages. Moreover, in 1981 the Authority for Bedouin Education was established and charged with the responsibility of building and operating schools. Until 2004, this authority was headed by a Jewish official. Petitions were frequently submitted to the Higher Supreme Court in the matter of building educational institutions and providing educational services to the residents of the unrecognized villages. The Supreme Court did not make the provision of educational services dependent on the recognition of the unrecognized villages or resolution of the land issue. Thus, for example, the High Court of Justice ruled in 2000 that a school should be established in the village of Abda near Mizpe Ramon, and in 2002 that a library should be built in the school of the Al-Azazma tribe.

Urbanization and the construction of schools in the Bedouin sector boosted the numbers of those attending school. Enforcement of the Compulsory Education Law granting free education increased the number of girls in school. Due to school dropouts, the number of girls in school has recently begun to surpass the number of boys, particularly in the upper grades.²⁷

In the 2006-07 school year, more than 75,000 students attended schools in the Bedouin education system at various levels. Due to the lack of kindergarten classrooms and other problems, this number does not reflect the overall potential of Bedouin pupils in the Negev (see Table 3).

27 Ben David (2004).

Table 3: Pupils in the Bedouin sector in the Negev according to educational level and local authority (2006-07)²⁸

Local authority	Kindergartens				Schools			Total
	Pre-kinder-garten	Kinder-garten	Special education	Associations	Elementary	Special education	High school	
Abu Basma Regional Council	1,671	1,536	6	0	13,651	0	258	17,122
Hura	510	669	5	1,297	2,358	82	1,465	6,386
Kseife	468	449	12	1,028	3,006	61	2,229	7,253
Laqia	422	444	8	1,050	2,187	0	1,541	5,652
Ar'ara	545	425	12	1,059	2,623	39	1,835	6,538
Rahat	1,571	1,471	23	4,505	7,589	139	4,103	19,401
Segev-Shalom	172	418	34	946	2,330	0	1,813	5,713
Tel Sheva	712	544	21	1,714	2,815	0	1,693	7,499
Total	6,071	5,956	121	11,599	36,698	182	14,937	75,564
	23,747				51,817			

28 Source: Amira Haim, Director of the Southern District, Ministry of Education. Cited in Vurgen and Lotan (2007).

Figure 1: Hussein Al-Hawashleh Elementary School, built in 2006 in the village of Qasr Al-Sir



Today there are 76 educational institutions for Bedouin students across the Negev. These institutions attempt to provide a solution for the serious shortage of classrooms and for the community's high rate of natural growth.

The Bedouin school system has numerous problems, among them meager and insufficient infrastructure, inadequate budgets, low educational achievements and high pupil dropout rates. The shortage of educational infrastructure remains serious. According to figures from the National Strategic Plan for the Development of the Negev approved by the government in November 2005, Bedouin schools lacked 1,250 classrooms. This shortage, which is particularly apparent in early childhood education,²⁹ leads to overcrowded classes and has a deleterious impact on educational quality. Portable classrooms are used in all the Bedouin localities in the Negev, and even within the Abu Basma Regional Council the majority of classrooms are portable structures. This situation causes difficulties in running an orderly school system, particularly in the winter and on hot summer days.

29 National Strategic Plan for the Development of the Negev (2005).

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, in the 2006-07 school year the dropout rate among Bedouin pupils from the 7th to the 12th grade ranged from 7.5% for boys to 5.9% for girls.³⁰

Matriculation exam scores are one of the indicators of educational achievement in Bedouin society. The results for 2009 point to some degree of improvement relative to previous years. According to Ministry of Education figures, the national average for 12th graders eligible to sit for the matriculation exams is 46.1%. Figures in most of the Bedouin localities approached the national average, despite budgetary shortfalls and inadequate infrastructure.

Table 4: Rates of eligibility for matriculation exams by year in the Bedouin localities (2007-2009)³¹

Locality	2007	2008	2009
Tel Sheva	35.5	42.8	35.9
Rahat	45.2	35.1	46.5
Kseife	42.0	40.8	44.0
Ar'ara	30.8	27.4	46.0
Segev-Shalom	39.8	49	58.2
Hura	54.5	50.5	62.3
Laqia	54.0	52.5	64.0
Abu Basma Regional Council	32.1	35.3	43.3

The improvement in matriculation exam eligibility rates is not indicative of marks on these exams. Figures on Bedouin graduates reveal low marks on average, which allow them to be accepted to colleges but not to universities.³² Since the Abu Basma Regional Council was established, preference has been given to constructing educational institutions in villages within the council (see Figure 2). In 2011, 27,000 pupils attended school in the Abu Basma Regional Council in 133 kindergartens, 28 elementary schools and four high schools. All the elementary schools in Abu Basma operate for an extended school day.³³

30 Central Bureau of Statistics. Cited by the Al-Nohod Association (2010).

31 Source: Matriculation Examination Information Center, Ministry of Education.

32 *Statistical Abstract of the Negev* (2004).

33 Internet site of the Abu Basma Regional Council: <http://abubasma.org.il>.

Figure 2: Construction of educational and public institutions in the village of Abu Krinat in the Abu Basma Regional Council



D. ENLISTMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES (IDF)

The Compulsory Military Service Law of 1951 does not apply to the Arab citizens in Israel, including the Bedouin citizens. Nevertheless, since the IDF was founded the state has sought to induct young Bedouin men, particularly as trackers. The state showed its appreciation of the cooperation of some Bedouin sheiks with respect to this issue even before the state was established. The capabilities of the Bedouin trackers and the fact that they lived along the borders encouraged their voluntary induction into the IDF. The IDF Southern Tracking Unit was established in 1970, and the IDF Desert Patrol Unit or Bedouin Desert Reconnaissance Battalion was set up in 1986.

Despite the above, there are no clear figures on the number of young Bedouins in the south who join the IDF. The IDF keeps these figures secret; figures that are provided are relative only and include Bedouins from the north.

Amos Harel, military correspondent for the Ha'aretz daily newspaper, estimated the number of young Bedouins from the south inducted into the IDF between 1995 and 2000, as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Number of Negev Bedouin inductees, 1995-2000³⁴

Year	Number of inductees
1995	208
1996	189
1997	251
1998	235
1999	315
2000	330

The number of Bedouin youth joining the IDF dropped drastically as a result of the events of October 2000. In 2001 only a few dozen volunteered out of Israel's total Bedouin population. Among the group inducted in November 2000, a month after the events of October 2000, only 22 Bedouin youth joined the IDF, and the number was similar in the March 2001 group.³⁵

The continuation of the Intifada and the ongoing conflict with the Palestinians, and particularly the war in Gaza, deterred many from volunteering. In 2007, 200 Bedouins enlisted in the IDF.³⁶

The number of those volunteering for the IDF is influenced by several factors, led by Bedouin citizens feelings of being discriminated against on the one hand and their desire to become integrated into the life of the nation on the other. Volunteering for the IDF is considered a catalyst for advancement and for opening the gates to Israeli society. Ben David sees the enlistment of young Bedouins as a sign of their identification with the state.³⁷ Others see military service as an opportunity for employment in view of the high unemployment rates in Bedouin society.³⁸

Enlistment in the IDF creates tensions within Bedouin society. Political and religious leaders object strongly. A considerable percentage of Bedouin citizens have family ties with Palestinians living in Gaza and the Mount Hebron area, making it difficult for young people to enlist. Moreover, continued discriminatory and exclusionary policies as well as the demolition of homes in the Negev by the authorities undermine motivation to join to the IDF.

34 Harel (June 14, 2001), "Number of Bedouins inducted into the IDF dropped by more than 50%", *Ha'aretz*.

35 Ibid.

36 Stern (2008).

37 Ben David (2004) A, p. 235.

38 Svirsky and Hasson (2005),

The IDF set up a special administration in charge of the recruitment of Bedouin youth. The purpose of this administration is to encourage enlistment, find candidates and run projects for young people to promote military activities in Bedouin society. One of these projects is the Reut High School, which operates in a military camp in the Negev and is designated for young Bedouins who have dropped out of school. In addition, together with the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, the IDF runs the Shahaf project, a pre-academic program for demobilized Bedouin soldiers. The IDF markets the advantages of the program as a chance to finish one's education and to be eligible for many employment opportunities after military service to promote enlistment into the IDF.³⁹

E. HEALTH

The health of the Bedouin population is directly connected to the environmental and living conditions in the Negev. Tens of thousands of Bedouin citizens live in unrecognized villages without basic services, such as running water, a sewage system and roads. This situation is a direct source of diseases and infections and is deleterious to children. Furthermore, tens of thousands live alongside polluted streams, such as the Hebron Stream and the Dimona Stream, or close to environmental hazards such as the Dragot quarry.

Water tanks in yards or water pipes exposed to heat and mildew can readily be tampered with, and algae can easily develop.⁴⁰ The lack of electricity in the unrecognized villages precludes the conditions necessary for heating and cooling and for keeping food fresh, leading to infection and disease. In the unrecognized villages, electricity is supplied for only a few hours in the evening by diesel-operated generators that pollute the air, are noisy and smell bad. In the schools in the unrecognized villages as well, electricity is supplied by generators. It goes without saying that there is no street lighting, thus limiting residents' movement in the dark. The exposed sewers are also a health hazard. Sewage discharged into the streams causes mosquitos to incubate there, and watering sheep and goats in these streams is dangerous to their health. The passage of humans and animals through the streams also leads to infection and disease.

The proximity of the Ramat Hovav Industrial Park to the Bedouin localities also endangers some of the residents. The park, situated 12 km south of Be'er Sheva, contains evaporation ponds that emit a foul odor. In addition, the park includes the only hazardous waste disposal facility in Israel. A number of factories in the park emit dangerous chemical substances.⁴¹

The unrecognized villages do not have a local government body to provide residents with health and environmental services. Therefore, there are no garbage removal services, and in most

39 Ofer (2003).

40 Almi (2003).

41 Ibid.

cases residents are forced to burn their waste themselves. Not every Bedouin citizen has access to primary health services. Where these services do exist, their availability is limited, and in the unrecognized villages the clinics operate only a few hours per week. The residents of these towns are also subject to untenable health conditions. The HMOs operate in all the towns, but provide only primary and limited services.

According to the Ministry of Health's report on the Health Status of Bedouin Infants and Children, these children suffer from inadequate physical development and are underweight. Fifty-six percent of all Bedouin children are anemic.⁴² Disease and natural failure to develop are among the causes of the high infant mortality among the Bedouin population. Despite the decrease in this figure from 16.9 per 1,000 births in 2004 to 11.5 in 2007 (a trend that continued in 2008, reaching 8.5), these numbers are still much higher than the infant mortality rate among the general population of Israel, which in 2007 was only 4.1 per 1,000 births.⁴³

Some improvement in the living and health conditions of the residents of the unrecognized villages was achieved due to the intervention of the High Court of Justice. In rulings on several petitions, among them family health centers (HCJ 7115/97), clinics (HCJ 4540/00), water (HCJ 3586/01) and Mount Hebron sewage (HCJ 3511/02), the justices expressed their understanding of Bedouin citizens' demands even if they did not always accept their claims. The judges established the principle that the provision of basic services to the Bedouin population is not related to the issue of lands in the Negev.

F. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN

Bedouin society is a traditional patriarchal society, and the status of women is influenced by the nature of this society. Modernization processes and Israeli civil law have benefitted Bedouin women, but their status is still far from that of Arab women in other parts of Israel. Some researchers claim that the urbanization of Bedouin society and its concomitant changes to Bedouin lifestyle has in fact damaged the status of women. Urbanization has transformed Bedouin women from producers to consumers, limited their mobility, abolished their traditional roles as shepherdesses and increased their dependence upon men.⁴⁴ Others argue that male hegemony has always dominated Bedouin society and though urbanization has limited the opportunities for Bedouin women, their situation is better today than it was in the past.⁴⁵

42 Bet Or (2009).

43 Harpaz (2009).

44 Fenster (1995); Kassem (2002).

45 Ben David (2004) A.

Before the establishment of the State of Israel, Bedouin girls and boys went to separate schools. In 1933 the first elementary school for girls was founded in the Negev, adjacent to the school for boys in Be'er Sheva.⁴⁶ Today all the Bedouin schools in the Negev are co-ed, with boys and girls studying together.

Official bodies and local civil society organizations have given high priority to the education of women. The relative improvement in education for women is noticeable. In 1995 there were only 12 female Bedouin graduates of institutions of higher education. By 2010 this figure reached 303 (see Table 6). According to figures from the Al-Nohod Association for the Promotion of Bedouin Women's Education in the Negev, in 2010 women constituted 65% of the 469 Bedouin graduates of academic institutions. The decisive majority of these women majored in education and teaching.⁴⁷ This is undoubtedly a revolution, influenced by a combination of modernization and rising social openness, encouragement from civil society organizations and monetary contributions from abroad.

Although official authorities in the Negev have prioritized the employment of women, many Bedouin women remain unemployed. According to figures from the southern district of the Israeli Employment Service, the unemployment rate in the south is 9%.⁴⁸ Knowledgeable sources in the Bedouin sector estimate the unofficial employment rate in Bedouin society as high as 30%. The female work force in the Bedouin society is far from realizing its full potential. Many tribes still do not agree to allow women to enter the work force or to work or study outside the locality or tribe. Then there is also the problem of the absence of day care centers or other child care facilities that would enable mothers of young children to work. Distance from the job market and the lack of public transportation, particularly to and from the unrecognized villages, as well as the lack of professional training and knowhow, all make it difficult for Bedouin women to join the workforce and share in supporting their families. Yet despite these limitations, more and more Bedouin women are joining the work force or seeking employment in the Negev.

46 Abu Rabia (2006).

47 Al-Nohod Association (2010).

48 Israeli Employment Service (2009).

Table 6: Bedouin graduates of institutions of higher education in the Negev, 1995-2010⁴⁹

Institution	Sami Shamoon College of Engineering		Be'er Sheva Technological College		Achvah College		Sapir College		Kaye Academic College of Education		Ben Gurion University		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
1995				2		1				8		1	12
1996				1						11		0	12
1997				2						21		2	25
1998				1						40		5	46
1999										38		5	43
2000				2	8	6	2	1		40		5	64
2001				2		43 ⁵⁰	2	1		53	39	17	157
2002				1		45 ⁵¹	4	0	70	62	30	14	226
2003				2		132 ⁵²	3	1	30	17	25	20	230
2004				1		82	7	0	44	31	59	37	261
2005					70	208	2	0	52	43	50	38	463
2006-07					24	80	7	0	254	483	52	26	926
2007-08		2	160	72	81	274	12	4	55	127	39	37	863
2008-09	60	2	12	7	74	209	5	7	58	103	40	44	621
2009-10					37	87	17	7	58	143	54	66	469
Total through 2009-10	60	4	172	93	1460		61	21	621	1220	286	337	4,335

49 Source: Al-Nohod Association (2010).

50 No separate figures for men and women.

51 As above.

52 As above.

G. INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND EMPLOYMENT

The Negev is filled with industrial factories. Although there are 474 factories situated between Qiryat Gat and Eilat, Bedouins are only a minor factor in them, and most work in small industries that employ very few workers. Despite the proximity (within a 25 km radius) of the Bedouin localities to Be'er Sheva, the metropolis of southern Israel, industry in these localities is still in its infancy. The fact that there are no approved industrial zones within the area of jurisdiction of most Bedouin localities has pushed Arab businesses to concentrate their economic and commercial operations in Jewish cities such as Be'er Sheva, Dimona and Arad. Dozens of Bedouin businesses operate in the Emek Sarah Industrial Zone and the Be'er Sheva market.⁵³

Three industrial zones exist near the Bedouin localities in the south. The largest industrial zone is situated in Rahat, covers 570 dunams and houses 13 factories. The largest factory employs 21 people. Most of the businesses in this zone are garages and light industrial plants with very few employees. The second industrial zone is in Segev-Shalom. This zone is developing rapidly and already covers 300 dunams. In July 2010 Minister Ben Eliezer launched the Tenne meat factory, which, according to Amar Abu Mamar, head of the Segev-Shalom Local Council, would employ 550 people upon reaching full capacity. In the meantime, however, a fire in the factory has shut it down. The third industrial zone, in Hura, is just starting out and has limited operations.

On the regional level, two industrial and employment zones are planned. Construction began in 2009 on a joint industrial park at the Lehavim junction, to be called Idan Hanegev, a cooperative venture of Rahat, the Bnei Shimon Regional Council and the Lehavim Local Council, with profits divided 44%, 37% and 19%, respectively. The second zone, still in the planning stage, is the Shoket Industrial Zone, which will belong to Hura, Laqia, Meitar and the Bnei Shimon Regional Council. According to Khaled Al-Sana, head of the Laqia Regional Council, each of the local authorities partner to this project will receive 23% of the profits, and the Bnei Shimon Regional Council will receive 31%.

53 Gradus and Nuriel (2008).

Figure 3: Sign declaring establishment of the Idan Hanegev Industrial Park at the Lehavim junction



According to the most recent statistical abstract of the Negev, published in 2008 by the Negev Center for Economic Development, there are only nine Bedouin-owned factories that employ more than ten workers each. These factories produce textiles, apparel, concrete and iron. The largest is Laqia Arigat HaNegev (Negev Weaving), which employs 60 Bedouin women and produces traditional carpets, clothing and woven fabrics. Other factories include R.A.D. Concrete located in Hura with 25 employees, Extra Concrete in Rahat with 21 employees, the iron factory in Ar'ara with 15 employees and the Elsheikh factory in Tel Sheva, with 13 employees.⁵⁴

It is important to note that there are three metal factories in the Be'er Sheva industrial zone owned by non-Bedouin Arabs (from the north). These factories, among the largest in this production area in the south, are Issa Khuri Metals and Azrik 2000 which employ each over 100 people of different nationalities and Nassir Iron Industries, with 61 employees.⁵⁵ The percentage of Negev Bedouins working in this industry is miniscule: approximately 3.7%, although they comprise 30% of the Negev population.

54 Gradus and Nuriel (2008).

55 Ibid.

A special report put out by the Negev Coexistence Forum (March 2010) found that only 1% of the Arab residents of the Negev work in the public service sector. The report notes that there are only 16 Bedouin employees working in government offices in the south (see Table 7).

Table 7: Bedouins employed in government offices in the Negev⁵⁶

Government office	Government office branches in the towns	Comments	Number of employees
Ministry of the Interior	Rahat	Reception clerk in the population administration	1
Ministry of Construction and Housing, Committee for the Regulation of the Bedouin Settlements in the Negev	Be'er Sheva	Clerk	1
Israel Land Administration	Be'er Sheva	Inspector and clerk in the department of agricultural transactions	2
Bedouin Administration	Be'er Sheva	Receptionist and clerk	2
Ministry of Transport	Be'er Sheva	Reception clerk	1
Ministry of Agriculture	Be'er Sheva	Clerk in charge of grazing land allocation, etc.	1
Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, Employment Department	Rahat	Receptionist and three researchers/inspectors	4
National Insurance Institute	Rahat	3 clerks and 1 department head	4
Total number of Bedouin employees in the southern district			16

⁵⁶ Source: Negev Coexistence Forum (2010).

H. CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society among the Negev Bedouins organized late compared to Arab organizations in other parts of Israel. Yet it should be mentioned that some of these organizations are stronger and more active than their counterparts among the Arab population in the north.

The lack of a local municipality body and representative institutions to provide services and protect the interests of the Bedouins served as the impetus for local organization. The first organizations emerged in Bedouin society at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s.⁵⁷

Bedouin civil society in the south was strengthened by the harsh reality prevailing in the unrecognized villages, the lack of local government in these villages, the weakness of the Bedouin local authorities and the limited involvement of Arab parties and political movements from the north (with the exception of the Islamic Movement).

Today more than 100 Bedouin Arab associations and NGOs are registered, though only around 30 are active, the majority of which are associations for social change. Almost no associations in Bedouin society provide services.

The organizations of Bedouin civil society can be classified according to their areas of activity. The land issue, recognition of the unrecognized villages and supply of services to the villages are the major topics of action for these organizations. The Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev and the umbrella organization of the local committees in the unrecognized villages are among the leaders in the land struggle.

Many organizations focus on issues related to the rights and empowerment of women. Among the more active women's organizations are the Al-Nohod Association for the Promotion of Bedouin Women Education in the Negev, Sidra, the Women of Laqia, the Women of Rahat and Ma'an - the umbrella organization for Arab Bedouin women's organizations in the Negev. Much attention is also focused on education in Bedouin society. Among the organizations active in this field is the Forum for Bedouin Education, which is sponsored by Shatil – The New Israel Fund's Initiative for Social Change.

57 The first to formulate this idea were Bedouin high school students who completed their studies at schools in the north. Bnei Laqia (Sons of Laqia), an organization founded following clashes and debates over the land issue, was one of the first organizations to emerge in the Negev. Still it must be noted that even in the 1950s and 1960s the kibbutzim and the left-wing parties (particularly Mapam) helped the Bedouin society organize itself and set up agricultural cooperatives (Porat, 2009, p. 155). The Association for the Support and Defense of Bedouin Rights in Israel, headed by Nori al Okabi, received assistance from the Israeli Left and was one of the first Bedouin associations in the Negev.

The tribal way of life is one of the primary features of Bedouin civil society. The administrations of many organizations operate in and are influenced by the tribal setting. Yet there are also organizations that are not local and that serve the entire Bedouin population. Some serve as the executive arms of national political movements operating in the Negev.

Though only a few Jewish-Arab organizations operate in the Negev, we can nevertheless point to Shatil – The New Israel Fund's Initiative for Social Change, AJEEC - the Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation, and the Negev Coexistence Forum. These are considered the strongest organizations in the Negev and provide assistance to many Negev Bedouins in the south. In the Negev there are only few cooperative endeavors between Jewish and Bedouin organizations. This is because the Jewish organizations focus primarily on providing services, while the Bedouin organizations strive toward social change.

A number of Arab and Arab-Jewish national organizations headquartered outside the Negev are also involved with Bedouin society in the south. Among these are Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, and Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights. Despite the tensions that occasionally arise when working together, there is no doubt that the experience of the northern and national associations makes a significant contribution to the organizations in the south.



3. Politics

A. POLITICAL LIFE

Over the years, the desert-dwelling Bedouins have preserved their inner tribal cohesion while maintaining very loose ties with the Israeli establishment and national politics. Such ties were maintained only through the sheikh or the tribal leader. Moreover, due to their isolation and geographic distance, the Bedouins were also cut off from the rest of the Arab population and its problems. Bedouin society began to become familiar with national politics in the mid-1970s. This development of political awareness among the Bedouin population was influenced by a number of factors:

1. The geographic proximity to the Gaza Strip and the Mount Hebron region and their daily contacts with the residents of the territories from 1967 exposed Negev's Bedouins to the problems of the Palestinians and reinforced their Arab-Palestinian identity.
2. Bedouin society became exposed to nationalist political ideas. Bedouin students who studied in the north became aware of political activism among the Arab citizens of the Galilee and the Triangle region and brought these nationalist political ideas back with them to the Negev. The younger generation was also influenced by Arab students studying at Ben Gurion University and by Arab teachers who came from the north to teach in schools in the Negev. Since Land Day 1976, the Arab Student Organization at Ben Gurion University, with the support of the Hadash movement, has made sure to hold rallies marking Land Day in the Bedouin villages.
3. The process of urbanization weakened the traditional leadership. The status of the individual became stronger at the expense of the power of the tribal collective. The process led to local elections and inter-tribal competition. Furthermore, political lists emerged and reinforced ties with national parties, particularly those in power.
4. The media widened its influence, reaching all across the country. Hence Bedouin society became exposed to the media's impact and its ability to assist them in promoting their interests.
5. The troubles of the Bedouin population and the lack of government solutions to their problems encouraged them to become involved in national politics. Young and educated Bedouin citizens sought out centers of influence where they could promote their personal status and find solutions to their troubles. This in turn was also affected by the crisis in leadership in Bedouin society. Members of the younger generation who had become integrated in Israeli society and were college educated, demanded total equality with Jewish society in Israel. Unlike the generation of the sheikhs, who were interested mainly in the survival of the Bedouin population, the young and educated generation was no longer satisfied with basic conditions and expected more from the government.

6. The religious awakening in the territories and in Israel did not pass by the Negev residents. The religious discourse of the 1980s and 1990s easily found its way into traditional Bedouin society.

Until 1977 the Bedouin vote in Knesset elections was apolitical. The Bedouin citizens gave their votes primarily to Mapai and Mapam, the two ruling parties. Bedouin society began to become politicized and partisan when an independent Bedouin list ran for the Knesset headed by Hamad Abu Rabia, who became the first Bedouin to serve in the Knesset.⁵⁸ The assassination of Abu Rabia underscored the need for a Bedouin representative in the Knesset. This tendency was given expression in the elections for the 12th Knesset held in 1988, in which most of the Bedouin voters gave their votes to the Arab Democratic Party (Mada). Thus, while in the elections for the 7th Knesset held in 1969, 76% of Bedouin voters in the south voted for Mapai, in 1988 the Ma'arach - Labor Alignment Party (the successor of Mapai) received only 17% of the Bedouin vote, while Mada, under the leadership of MK Darawshe, received 39% of their vote.⁵⁹

The inclusion of a Negev resident, Talab Al-Sana, as number two on the Mada list for the 13th Knesset in 1992 marked a revolution in the political options available to the Bedouin citizens. MK Al-Sana, a young educated Bedouin elected to the Knesset at age 32, still serves as an MK who attempts to represent the Bedouin population and express its needs and demands. The discourse of this young MK is primarily a patriotic Arab nationalistic discourse, which has increased the sense of a shared fate between the Bedouins in the south and the Arab population of the center and the north.

The entry of the Islamic Movement into politics, and particularly its southern wing, has also shuffled the political cards. The Islamic Movement is very well organized and active in all the Bedouin localities, particularly the towns. In the past decade, the movement has won the local council elections in all the Bedouin localities in the south, with the exception of Kseife. Today the Islamic Movement controls three local authorities – the city of Rahat and the towns of Hura and Laqia. In the past the movement also was in control in Tel Sheva, Ar'ara and Segev-Shalom.

Since the two Arab lists, Mada and the Islamic Movement, joined forces and Talab Al-Sana was elected to the Knesset, the Ra'am-Ta'al United Arab List continues to win most of the Bedouin vote in the south.

One of the characteristics of Bedouin politics in the Negev is that it tends to respond rather than to initiate. I believe this stems from the pace at which events occur in the Negev and from the depth of the troubles with which Bedouin society must cope. The result is a list of priorities led by concerns for immediate and family needs, leaving little room for initiated political actions. Another factor is the low voter turnout compared to other sectors in Israel society. Voter turnout

58 Ben David (1990).

59 Ibid.

in Bedouin society is constantly declining. In the elections for the 8th Knesset in 1973, 63% of eligible voters in the Bedouin localities cast their votes, while by the elections for the 10th Knesset 48% voted and in the most recent elections for the 18th Knesset only 45% of eligible Bedouin voters cast their votes.⁶⁰

B. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The idea of forcing urbanization upon Bedouin citizens initially came up during the first decade of the state. The common denominator among the various urbanization proposals was to limit the land area on which the Bedouins lived.⁶¹ The IDF was among the first to attempt to deal with this issue when it published a document about concentrating and urbanizing the Bedouin population. Moshe Dayan, Chief of General Staff during the Sinai Campaign (1956), was the one who led this effort. After his retirement from the military, Dayan was appointed Minister of Agriculture, and in this capacity as well he continued to encourage the urbanization of Bedouin society as follows:

"We should transform the Bedouins into an urban proletariat in industry, services, construction and agriculture. 88% of the residents of Israel are not agricultural workers. Let us give the Bedouin an opportunity to be like everyone else. This of course would be a radical step, the result of which would be 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 will become accustomed to a father who wears trousers and does not hold onto a "shabariya" (dagger). The children would go to school with their hair properly combed. This would be a revolution, but it will straighten itself out within two generations, without uniformity but with government guidance. This phenomenon of the Bedouin population will disappear."⁶²

As a first step in implementing this policy, the town of Tel Sheva was founded in 1969, east of Be'er Sheva. The state initiated the building of dozens of apartments for residents, but the project failed, due to the nature and size of the apartments and the fact that the special needs of Bedouin society were not taken into consideration. In 1974 the city of Rahat was established on the lands of the Al-Huzzail tribe south of Kibbutz Shuval. This time the government allocated an area for the Bedouins to build homes for themselves. The two towns of Ar'ara and Kseife were set up to house those who had been displaced by the Nevatim Airport, constructed as part of the peace treaty with Egypt. In 1985 the village of Segev-Shalom was founded for the Al-Azazma tribe, and in 1990

60 Ben David (1990).

61 Svirsky and Hasson (2005).

62 Ronen (July 31, 1963), interview with Moshe Dayan, *Ha'aretz*. Quoted in Mautner (2000).

Laqia and Hura were established. In 2003, after a long break of 13 years, the Abu Basma Regional Council was established.⁶³

After Tel Sheva was founded, the Ministry of the Interior decided to make the town part of the Bnei Shimon Regional Council, a status that continued until 1984. The council gained independence in 1984 and was run by Ministry of the Interior officials until 1993.⁶⁴ Rahat received partial services from the Bnei Shimon Regional Council until 1980. That year the Rahat Local Council was established and until 1989 it was run by three Ministry of the Interior officials. Rahat was declared a city in 1994.

After the five towns of Ar'ara, Kseife, Segev-Shalom, Laqia and Hura were established, they were divided into two independent regional councils. The first three were part of the Masos Regional Council, while Laqia and Hura constituted the Shoket Regional Council. These two regional councils were run by Jewish officials, and their areas of jurisdiction included only the built-up areas (blue line) of the localities. After Bedouin civil organizations petitioned the High Court of Justice, these two regional councils were dismantled and replaced by five independent local councils, which until 2000 were also run by Ministry of the Interior officials. That year elections for the local councils were held for the first time in the five towns. In the two older localities, Tel Sheva and Rahat, local elections were first held in 1993 and in 1989, respectively.⁶⁵

The concentration of the Bedouin population in these towns is the result of policies seeking to limit the geographic area available to Bedouin society and to reinforce control over them.⁶⁶ For this reason the Bedouin localities were established on grounds that are limited compared to other localities in the Negev (the area of jurisdiction of Rahat was extended only in 2008). Although the population of these seven towns constitutes more than 16% of the Be'er Sheva District, their area of jurisdiction is only 0.5% of the district, which extends over 12,945 sq. km.⁶⁷

63 See Table 8.

64 Svirsky and Hasson (2005).

65 Ibid.

66 Meir (1999), p. 20.

67 Adalah (2004), p. 7.

Table 8: Local government authorities of the Negev Bedouins: Date of establishment, type, jurisdiction area, and number of residents in 2007⁶⁸

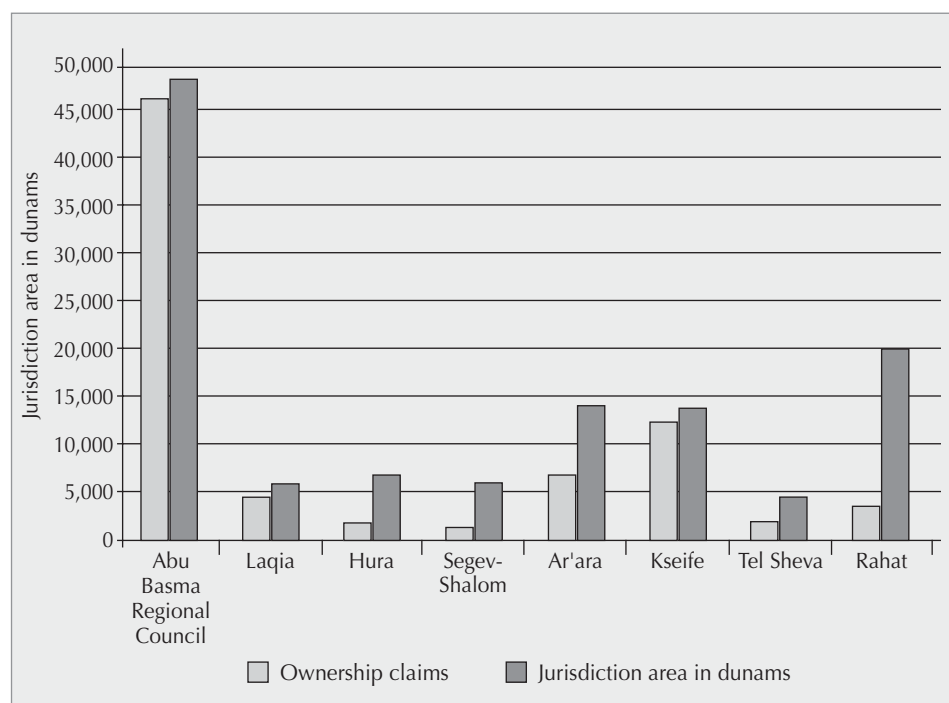
Authority	Year established	Type of local government	Jurisdiction area in 2006 (in dunams)	Land area under dispute (in dunams)	Residents in 2007	Socio-economic cluster
Tel Sheva	1969	Local council	4,604	1,900	13,655	1
Rahat	1974	City	19,586	3,500	43,225	1
Ar'ara	1982	Local council	14,052	6,800	11,123	1
Kseife	1982	Local council	13,692	13,000	11,188	1
Segev-Shalom	1984	Local council	5,981	1,500	6,363	1
Hura	1990	Local council	6,646		9,181	1
Laqia	1990	Local council	5,728	4,200	8,616	1
Abu Basma	2003	Regional council				1

The Bedouin localities were planned by the Israel Land Administration without consulting Bedouin residents. This planning did not take into consideration the land dispute or the residents' many land ownership claims within the jurisdiction area. Many Bedouin families refuse to live on lands claimed by other tribes or clans. The result is that a large portion of the area designated for construction in these towns has not been properly utilized and cannot be developed. Today more than half the Bedouins in the Negev live within these seven towns. A comprehensive study by Abu Saad and Lithwick (2000) pointed to the failure of these towns to provide infrastructures and services. Years after these towns were established, the local economy is still not flourishing, and it was only in May 2010 that any form of public transportation entered a Bedouin locality (Rahat).

68 Source: Ministry of the Interior, Southern District.

The difficult conditions in the seven towns in the Negev have motivated many discussions on the local and national level. In November 2000 the State of Israel was forced to do something on this matter, after Resolution 2561 determined that "the image of the existing seven permanent townships must be improved by upgrading of infrastructure, especially education and sewerage, and the construction of public buildings, beginning with the 2001 state budget."⁶⁹

Chart 1: Ownership claims within the jurisdiction area of the Bedouin localities⁷⁰



As can be seen in Table 8, all the Bedouin localities are ranked in the lowest socio-economic cluster of local authorities in Israel. The infrastructure in these localities is not developed, and many neighborhoods still do not have sewage systems. In localities that do have an industrial zone, this area is rather limited and employs very few people. Citizen services are also scarce (see Table 9).

⁶⁹ Government Resolution No. 2561 dated November 30, 2000, Arab/43.

⁷⁰ Data collected by the author from the relevant local authorities.

Table 9: Various services in Bedouin localities⁷¹

Locality	Industrial zone	Bank	Post office	Library	Senior citizens center	Community center	Sports team
Tel Sheva	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Rahat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3 teams
Ar'ara	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Kseife	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Segev-Shalom	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Football
Hura	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Laqia	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Abu Basma Regional Council	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	

I. Abu Basma Regional Council

In December 2003 the Ministry of the Interior announced the establishment of the Abu Basma Regional Council. The council was to include the six localities recognized by Government Resolution 2562 from 2000. At the time of its establishment, the council included the following localities: Abu Krinat, Bir Hadaj, Drijat, Makhul-Mar'it, Qasr Al-Sir - Al-Hawashleh and Tarabin Al-Sana. Other localities were added later: Um Batin, Al-Sayyid and Al-Atarash. The council's area of jurisdiction differed from the areas of jurisdiction of other regional councils in Israel in that it included only built-up areas and not agricultural lands or territorial continuity between the localities.

⁷¹ Data collected by the author from the relevant local authorities.

Table 10: Localities in the Abu Basma Regional Council (2009)⁷²

Locality	Area (in dunams)	Population	Master plan
Abu Krinat	7,300	3,600	Approved
Um Batin	6,800	2,900	Approved for validity
Al-Sayyid	3,100	3,000	Approved
Bir Hadaj	6,500	4,200	Approved
Drijat	628	850	Approved
Al-Atarash (Mulada)	11,000	3,500	Discussion of objections
Makhul-Mar'it	7,300	3,000	Approved
Qasr Al-Sir	4,800	3,000	Approved
Tarabin	1,100	250	Approved
Total	48,528	24,300	

Amram Kalaji, former head of the National Planning and Building Council, was appointed to chair the Abu Basma Regional Council, along with four representatives of the Interior, Housing, Education and Industry, Trade and Employment Ministries. A representative of the Bedouin Development Authority was also appointed to the council. In addition to these six Jewish representatives, the council included four Bedouin representatives from Qasr Al-Sir, Bir Hadaj, Tarabin and Drijat. The council began to operate and provide services to Bedouin residents from Be'er Sheva in addition to residents of the council's localities. Moreover, the council was made responsible for providing education, welfare and environmental protection services to all residents of the unrecognized villages.⁷³

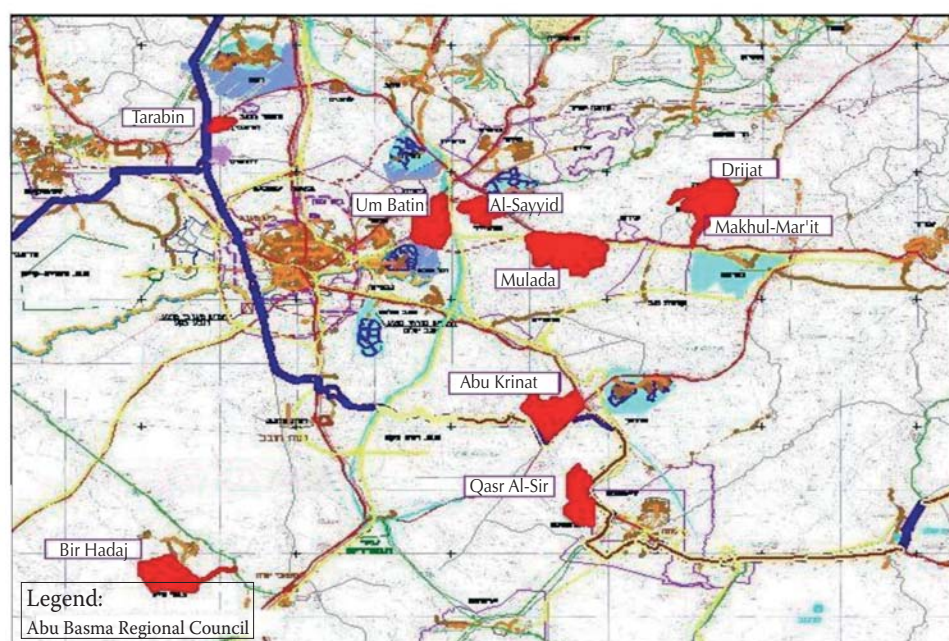
To date, the Abu Basma Regional Council has laid down infrastructure in some of the villages within its area of jurisdiction. This infrastructure includes four high schools that serve students living in the Abu Basma villages as well as in the unrecognized villages. The council has also paved access roads to the villages of Abu Krinat, Qasr Al-Sir, Bir Hadaj and Tarabin. The council has not yet managed to have the villages connected to the electricity grid.

72 Source: Abu Basma Regional Council, Profile (2010).

73 Abu Basma Regional Council Internet site: <http://abubasma.org.il>.

These achievements are overshadowed by the fact that the land issue has yet to be resolved. This issue is a stumbling block to the development of the villages. Residents of the Abu Basma villages who want to build new homes cannot do so because the land is officially owned by the Israel Land Administration. Thus the residents of the villages are caught between a rock and a hard place: the Abu Basma Local Building and Planning Commission on the one hand and the Israel Land Administration on the other. The Local Building Commission encourages residents to build only after attaining permits, but it does not have the authority to grant such permits because the Israel Land Administration is the official owner of the land, not the Bedouin residents.

Map 2: Localities in the Abu Basma Regional Council⁷⁴



II. Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev

The Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages is the leading organization safeguarding the rights of Bedouin citizens living in these villages. Before the council was established in May 1997, a number of organizations worked to promote this issue, but the founding of the regional council reinforced the villages residents in their efforts to achieve recognition for their villages and raised their struggle to a new level.

74 Source: Website of the Department of Geography and Environmental Development, Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

The unrecognized villages were not included in major government programs for the Negev region: the 1972 District Plan; the 1991 Negev Front (Kidmat Negev) Plan; the 1995 Be'er Sheva Metropolitan Development Plan; and the 1994 renewed District Plan.⁷⁵ Exclusion of the residents of the unrecognized villages from the master plans served to expedite establishment of the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages. Its establishment was initiated by major activists in the Negev, who founded local committees in the 45 unrecognized Bedouin villages with populations greater than 500. Those chosen to head these committees comprised the council's general assembly, which in turn elected a 15-member secretariat. The council leaders were chosen in democratic elections.⁷⁶

The main goal of establishing the council was to gain recognition for the 45 unrecognized villages. The council initiated alternative planning as an effective means of achieving this goal. One of its first projects was to prepare a master plan together with the Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development (CJAED). This plan was officially submitted to the planning authorities.⁷⁷

After recognition of the 11 localities that comprise the Abu Basma Regional Council, today there are 36 villages classified as unrecognized that are seeking recognition. According to council sources, around 50,000 people live in these villages.

75 Government Master Plan 14/4; Yiftachel & Khamaisi (2005).

76 Al-Khayal (2003).

77 Ibid.

4. Land and settlement

A. THE BEDOUIN LAND ISSUE

I. The problem

In December 2000 an article appeared in the *Karkah* (Land) journal titled: "Land as an economic tool for developing infrastructure and significantly reducing social gaps." The article was written by MK Ariel Sharon shortly before he was elected Prime Minister. In the article, Sharon described the problem of Bedouin land as follows:

"In the Negev we are facing an extremely difficult problem. Around 900,000 dunams of state land are not in our hands but rather in the hands of the Bedouin population. As a citizen of the Negev, I see this problem every day. In essence this is a demographic phenomenon... For reasons of weakness, perhaps also from lack of sufficient awareness regarding this matter, we as a country are not doing anything about this situation... The Bedouin are grabbing new territory. They are gnawing away at the country's land reserves and no one is doing anything of consequence about it."⁷⁸

Three years later, the same journal published an article by Prof. Ismael Abu-Saad, a Bedouin resident of the Negev, titled "The Bedouins' complaint: How can we be defined as intruders when we and our forefathers have lived in the Negev for thousands of years?" In his article, Prof. Abu-Saad wrote the following:

"Government authorities claim that the Bedouin do not have ownership rights to the land. But what can be done when from the perspective of historical customs, the Bedouin never registered their lands or holdings in the Land Registry Office. Can this fact preclude their ownership of the land? From the Bedouin point of view, there is a certain paradox involved in the question of land ownership. How can it be, the Bedouins ask, that in the 1920s and 1930s the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Agency purchased land in the Negev from its Bedouin owners, and today the Bedouin are not the owners? What has changed?... The Negev lands can supply all the present and future needs of the Israeli population. There is enough room to find a solution for the needs of the Bedouin population. The solution must be agreed upon by the Bedouins, not forced upon them."⁷⁹

78 Sharon (2000), "Land as an economic tool for developing infrastructure and significantly reducing social gaps" *Karkah*, Vol. 50, pp. 14-15.

79 Abu-Saad (2003), "The Bedouins' complaint: How can we be defined as intruders when we and our forefathers have lived in the Negev for thousands of years?" *Karkah*, Vol. 57, pp. 31-34.

These two articles express contradictory viewpoints on the same problem. According to the Zionist myth of redeeming the land, the desert is perceived as a barren space that needs to be filled with life and made to bloom. In this myth, the Bedouin population is seen as part of nature, as a group of nomads without any ties to the land. In contrast, the Bedouins see themselves as residents of the desert and as owners of the land. The fact that the government of Israel has never recognized Bedouin citizens' rights to their land has turned them into criminals or lawbreakers in the eyes of the Jewish population. In the absence of clear legal proof of their rights in the form of registry in the Land Registry Office, the Israeli courts have adopted the prevalent Israeli view, preferring to see the Bedouins as landless and rootless nomads.

II. The history of the problem

Until the State of Israel was established in 1948, the Bedouins were practically the only residents in the Negev. In 1947, between 70,000 and 90,000 Bedouins from 96 different tribes lived in the area south of Qiryat Gat and Ashdod. According to several researchers, among them Jewish researchers, Bedouin residents cultivated around two million dunams of land. The ownership rights to this land were arranged according to a clear and agreed-upon method.⁸⁰ Ruth Kark (2002) claims that the Bedouins cultivated 3.5 million dunams of land in the Negev and that the land was divided according to inter-tribal agreements.⁸¹

Land has always been Bedouin society's most important resource. Those who held large tracts of land enjoyed elevated social status. Those who had no land at all were at the bottom of the social scale. Most of the land in the Negev was held by Bedouins who inherited it from their forefathers without any written documentation whatsoever.

In 1858, the Turks passed a law determining that the names of landowners must be officially documented in order to officially resolve land rights in the Ottoman Empire. At the time there were five land categories (of the Ottoman Empire) privately held land (*Mulk*); state-owned land that could be cultivated in exchange for a one-time fee (*Miri*); land held in religious or Muslim trust (*Waqf*); land that is not cultivated (*Matruka*); and waste land that was declared unsuitable for any purpose (*Mawat*). Most of the land in the Negev was classified as *Mawat* land. The Bedouins objected to the registration of their land holdings because such registration would make them the subjects of a foreign power and would obligate them to pay taxes and serve in the Ottoman army.

In 1921 the British Mandate government issued a decree calling for the residents of the Negev to register their land. Bedouin residents were given a two-month extension to do so, but for

80 Porat (2000), p. 421.

81 Kark (2002), p. 57

various reasons they avoided doing so and their lands remained unregistered. According to the 1921 land decree, any Bedouin who cultivated, lived on or improved land classified as *Mawat* land was entitled to registration of his ownership of that land, which was reclassified as *Miri* land. When the State of Israel was established 27 years later, the Israeli courts ruled that any Bedouin resident who had turned down the opportunity to register *Mawat* land in his name in 1921 and did not receive government authorization of his ownership, lost his rights to the land.⁸²

III. Negev lands after the establishment of the State of Israel

Before the state was established, Jewish organizations managed to purchase 95,000 dunams of land in the Negev. Modern Jewish settlement of the Negev began only in 1942. When the state was established, an immediate need arose to set up Jewish localities in order to "conquer the wilderness". During the 1948 war, most of the Bedouin Arabs fled or were expelled to Jordan, the Gaza Strip and Egypt, and only 10,000 remained in the Negev.⁸³ Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, decided to relocate them to a restricted zone covering 1.5 million dunams in the northeast corner of the Negev, called the *Sayig* area (see Map 1).⁸⁴ Thousands of Bedouins were already living on this land. Those who were moved there were promised that their transfer from their lands to the *Sayig* area was temporary and that they would be able to return to their homes within two or three weeks.⁸⁵

In 1951 military rule was imposed upon the Arab population of Israel, including the Negev Bedouins. Most of the land held by Bedouin society was expropriated by the 1953 Land Acquisition (Validation of Acts and Compensation) Law. Land held by Bedouins was not expropriated according to the Absentees' Property Law. Rather, because the state claimed that the Negev lands were *Mawat* lands (dead lands), it registered these as state-owned lands.⁸⁶

By 1953 most of the Bedouin population had been moved from their lands in the fertile northwest Negev to the more arid area known as the *Sayig* area extending from the east and the southwest to Be'er Sheva. They were prevented from returning to their lands by restrictions placed by the military rule. Furthermore, two Israeli development-towns were later established on some of the lands in the *Sayig* area claimed by the Bedouins: Dimona in 1955 and Arad in 1962.

82 Ben David (1996).

83 Morris (1991).

84 Ben David (1996), p. 49.

85 Ben Porat (2009), p. 3.

86 Yiftachel (2000), p. 11.

After military rule was rescinded in 1966, the Israeli government decided to urbanize the Bedouins and relocate them to planned urban areas. The first city to be established for that purpose was Tel Sheva, in 1969. Many planning errors were made, the nature of which became clear when the second Bedouin urban center, Rahat, was founded in 1972. Kseife and Ar'ara were established in 1982 to settle Bedouin residents who had been evacuated from their land in Tel Malhata in the wake of the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai and the building of the Nevatim Air Base. Segev-Shalom was established in 1984, and the towns of Hura and Laqia were founded in 1990.

When military rule was lifted, the government of Israel attempted to register Negev land in its name by means of ownership claims. Bedouin residents also attempted to register the land in their names. In 1969 the state established a legal mechanism to regulate land ownership in the Negev. The claims and counterclaims came to an end in 1974, when the government adopted the recommendations of the head of the Civil Department of the State Attorney's Office, Attorney Plia Albeck, who ruled that all the lands in the Negev were to be classified as *Mawat* lands. Albeck recommended freezing all legal proceedings concerning ownership claims in an attempt to reach a compromise with the Bedouins. Her proposal included some degree of compensation. At the beginning of 1975, Albeck, in the name of the Israeli government, suggested that the Bedouins retain 20% of the land they held (provided it was more than 400 dunams) and would be given 2,000 shekels in compensation for the remaining 80%, representing around 30% of the value of the land to be determined by the government appraiser.⁸⁷ Bedouin society rejected these offers. They made dozens of unsuccessful attempts to legally register the land in their names. The breaking point was the precedent set by the 1984 ruling by Supreme Court Justice Avraham Halima, in which he determined that the Bedouins, by virtue of being Bedouins, have no ties to the land and cannot have such ties.⁸⁸ Until then, the government had managed to reach compromise agreements only on 115,000 dunams of land. Some of this land, around 60,000 dunams in the Tel Malhata region, was expropriated following the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai and the construction of the Nevatim Air Base. During the last 20 years, Bedouin citizens have stopped attempting to register the land in their names. Nevertheless, as time goes by they have strengthened their hold on the land. As a result, the Bedouin population is continuing to cultivate the land and to build light structures such as huts and open shelters.

In 2003, after a break of more than 30 years, the government decided to renew its claims against the Bedouins as a result of the lack of acceptance of Attorney Albeck's recommendations and the lack of progress in compromise arrangements with the Bedouins. By mid-2006, the government of Israel had submitted 170 counterclaims encompassing 110,000 dunams. Some

87 Swirski & Hasson (2005), p. 10.

88 Civil Appeal 218/74, Salim Al-Hawashleh v. State of Israel.

of these counterclaims were decided in the courts, which ruled that the lands should be registered as state lands.⁸⁹

Since its establishment, the State of Israel has not recognized that Bedouin citizens hold complete private ownership of the lands, but rather "rights of enjoyment" to some of the lands they are claiming. From the state's point of view, all the lands in the Negev are state-owned lands. The government's position relies upon Ottoman and British land policies prior to 1948, according to which the Negev lands are *Mawat*. Over the years, this position has gained legal authorization from the Supreme Court.⁹⁰ The state recognizes Bedouin ownership of lands in the Negev only when the Bedouins are willing to negotiate and to regulate the ownership of these lands.⁹¹

IV. Negev lands today

The essence of the Negev land issue is the need to regulate the lands in the northern Negev, a process that began in 1971. The state recognizes the existence of Bedouin claims. Yet according to government policy adopted by the courts, Bedouins are not the owners of the land and have at the most "guardianship" rights granted by the government as a good-will gesture. Across the Negev, Bedouins living in recognized localities, recognized towns and unrecognized villages populate around 260,000 dunams, representing around 2% of the total area. Of this area, the residents of the unrecognized villages live on 180,000 dunams, or around 1.4% of the total land area. The total land area claimed by the Bedouins is estimated at around 5.4% of the Negev.⁹² The Bedouins have submitted 3,220 claims to 775,863 dunams, divided as listed below (see Table 11).

89 Negev Coexistence Forum (2006), p. 8.

90 Meir (1999), p. 18; Ben David (1995), pp. 66-67.

91 Swirski & Hasson (2005), p. 11.

92 Al Khayal (2003).

Table 11: Negev land ownership claims by tribes⁹³

Federation	Tribe	Number of claims	Area claimed			Percentage of all claims
			Crop cultivation	Pasture	Total	
Al-Tiaha	Al-Huzzail	180	39,774	5,156	44,930	5.8
	Al-Asad	90	13,450	5,668	19,118	2.5
	Abu 'abdon	37	8,182	1,691	9,873	1.3
	Al-Qawa'in	12	2,789	21	2,810	0.4
	Al-A'sam	191	27,237	17,964	45,201	5.8
	Abu 'ammar	31	2,869	485	3,354	0.4
	Abu Rkeik	736	84,004	48,986	132,990	17.1
	Al-Sana'	200	33,015	6,163	39,178	5.0
	Abu Rabi'a	573	80,354	61,265	141,619	18.2
	Abu Krinat	205	33,129	47,341	80,470	10.4
	Abu Jwai'ed	287	34,233	44,886	79,119	10.2
	Al-Nasasra	52	4,904	1,657	6,561	0.8
	Al-Zbarqa	31	3,971	1,858	5,829	0.8
	Al-Afinish	76	11,845	1,198	13,043	1.7
	Al-Atawna	92	13,672	1,689	15,361	2.0
	Al 'Uqabi	118	13,634	1,764	15,398	2.0
Al-Azazma	Al-Azazma	144	37,525	49,625	87,150	11.2
Al-Tarabin	Abu Sirhan	47	9,305	720	10,025	1.3
	Abu Umra	48	4,727	43	4,770	0.6
	Abu Sahiban	40	7,297	253	7,550	1.0
	Abu Bilal	14	4,087	643	4,730	0.6
	Others	16	6,436	321	6,757	0.9
Total		3,220	476,439	299,397	775,836	100

93 Source: Report of the Public Committee for the Proposal of Bedouin Settlement Arrangement Policy for the Negev (2008).

According to the *Goldberg Commission Report*, from the beginning of the land arrangement process to the present, the government has managed to reach agreements with Bedouin residents for only 205,675 dunams, constituting around 18% of the disputed land, in 380 claims (around 12% of all claims). An additional 150,000 dunams were agreed upon as part of the compromise arrangements in the master plan for the Abu Basma villages. Another approximately 50,000 dunams were agreed upon through court rulings on counterclaims. As of July 2008, the ownership of 592,000 dunams in 2749 claims has yet to be agreed upon.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Bedouins had already submitted claims in the early years of the state. These claims were based on documents proving they had paid taxes on this land even before the state was established. The government refused to accept those documents based upon the argument that no land arrangements were made in the Negev and therefore the Bedouins cannot hold official ownership of the lands they are claiming.⁹⁵

V. The Goldberg Commission and its recommendations

On October 28, 2007, the government commissioned the Minister of Construction and Housing to appoint a committee to "recommend to the government a policy for regulating Bedouin settlement in the Negev, including legislative proposals and amendments." The committee was given a broad mandate and extensive authority. On December 23, 2007, the Minister of Construction and Housing appointed a committee of eight members, chaired by retired Supreme Court Justice Eliezer Goldberg. Two Bedouin representatives, representatives of the towns in the south, were also appointed to the committee. In January 2008, representatives of the public were summoned to appear before the committee. Over the course of five months, the committee convened over 25 sessions and heard more than 120 witnesses, among them public figures, representatives of organizations and of the government, researchers and people from the academia. On December 11, 2008, the committee submitted a report to the Minister of Construction and Housing.

As one of its major recommendations, the committee determined that **"there is no justification for the state to treat the Bedouin residents in these communities differently from the way it treats the rest of the citizens of the state."**⁹⁶ The committee recommended granting recognition to most of the unrecognized villages and determining that the illegal structures within the area of a current master plan, which do not hinder the implementation of the plan, should be recognized as "gray" structures – a definition that would pave the way for their being made legitimate. The report stipulates the level of compensation that would be

94 Goldberg Commission Report (2008), p. 14.

95 Porat (2000), p. 457.

96 Goldberg Commission Report (2008), p. 1 (author's emphasis).

required, including land compensation that, unlike the Albeck recommendations, would be calculated from the first dunam in the ownership claim. In addition, arrangements were made for allocating alternative lands and timetables were set out for implementing the committee's recommendations. The committee recommended establishing a new planning body attached to the Southern District Committee for Planning and Building, to be called the Committee for Regulating Bedouin Settlement in the Negev. The Goldberg Committee also recommended "not turning a blind eye to the enforcement of the law," and determined that its recommendations constitute a fair compromise between the state and the Bedouin population. The report was written in conciliatory and positive language and, unlike committees that addressed Bedouin affairs in the past, proposed granting Bedouin citizens "the right of ownership" to land, in consideration of their "historic connection" to it. Nevertheless, the many reservations expressed by members of the committee served to somewhat diminish the power and status of the report.

The Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev welcomed the new tone emerging from the report and announced that if the committee's recommendations were approved, particularly with regard to the issue of recognition for the unrecognized villages, they could form the basis for a shift in government policy. On the other hand, the council also indicated that the committee had failed to propose a just solution for the Bedouin population because it "did not meet even a small portion of the needs of the members of the community" or offer a solution to the immediate lack of services for residents, such as the provision of electricity and water infrastructure, garbage collection and medical services. The council argued that the committee had not provided a definite timetable for implementing the plan and had used mechanisms and methods that had failed in the past. It also stated that "the report was disappointing and did not offer a practical solution for resolving the conflict." While the Goldberg Committee adopted the principle of recognizing the villages as a means of resolving the conflict – a step of historic importance – it nonetheless "did not recognize the historic injustice done to the Bedouins."⁹⁷

The report's recommendations have yet to be implemented, a fact that Justice Goldberg has criticized. "A year and a half has passed since the publication of the Goldberg Committee's Report, and despite its official adoption by the Government of Israel, not a single step has been taken to implement its conclusions... the problems of the Bedouins require governance and a budget. Apparently, both of these components are still lacking."⁹⁸

Parallel to establishing the Goldberg Committee, the government decided to set up an executive authority to regulate Bedouin settlement in the Negev. The authority is meant to

97 Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev (2008).

98 Goldberg (July, 2010). Interview with retired Justice Eliezer Goldberg. *On Highway 40 (Mizpe Ramon local paper)*, Vol. 107. See: <http://www.kvish40.co.il/2010/07/658>.

operate as a public corporation and to regulate Bedouin settlement within five years based upon the Goldberg recommendations. Retired Police Brigadier General Yehuda Bachar was appointed head of the authority.

One of the results of the Goldberg Report was the acceptance of the investigator's recommendations regarding objections to District Master Plan 4/14/23 for the Be'er Sheva metropolitan area. These recommendations determined that the status of 16 localities should be recognized.⁹⁹

B. THE UNRECOGNIZED VILLAGES IN THE NEGEV

The state's unceasing disregard for the Bedouins and their problems has over time created a situation in which many groups of Bedouin families are left with no formal address and no local authority to represent them and provide them services. In the first two decades of the state, district plans for the southern district ignored the existence of tens of thousands of Bedouin citizens. Even after the seven towns were established, half of them were still left without land regulation.

Over the years the government has refused to connect the Bedouin villages to water and electricity infrastructures and to provide them with basic services, in order to force the residents to uproot themselves and move to the seven recognized localities (Tel Sheva, Rahat, Kseife, Ar'ara, Segev-Shalom, Laqia and Hura).

In 1999 the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev prepared an alternative master plan for recognizing 45 unrecognized villages (in the meantime, nine of these have been recognized.) This plan, which was submitted to the District Planning and Building Commission, proposes to develop one or two municipal authorities under the auspices of a regional council, to build infrastructures and to grant these authorities the right to represent the residents on the municipal level.

The residents of the unrecognized villages constitute the core of the land issue in the Negev. They are demanding recognition of their ownership of the lands on which they live, totaling around 180,000 dunams. The lack of local planning for this area has forced many young people each year to build their homes without building permits. This in turn has led to fines and demolition orders that are frequently enforced in these villages.

⁹⁹ The investigator of the objections to the District Master Plan recommended recognizing the following localities: Um Al-Hieran, Al-Gara, Hashm Zana, Dhayya, Um Al-Mila and others, to evacuate several villages such as Wadi Al-Na'am and Al-Sir that are south of Be'er Sheva and to allocate them alternative areas. Furthermore, the investigator recommended including villages such as Al-Grin and Tala' Rashid among the recognized villages, and not to recognize Al-Araqib, Tweil Abu Jarwal, 'Awejan and Al-Mkaminokaim. Duchin (2010).

One of the state's main claims against recognition of the unrecognized villages is their size. The state also claims that the Bedouin residents are dispersed over a geographic area that is too large relative to their numbers. Yet the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev, the (unofficially) elected body representing the residents, is demanding recognition only for villages with over 500 residents, in accordance with the dispersion radius prevalent in the Jewish localities in the Negev. With respect to population dispersion, the council claims that the kibbutzim and moshavim in the area were given a more extensive land area relative to their population. This is also true with respect to individual farms in the area that have recently gained state recognition.

Today, after a number of villages have been recognized within the jurisdiction of the Abu Basma Regional Council, around 36 villages are still unrecognized. Some of these were founded before the state was established, and others came into existence after 1950, when the Bedouins were displaced into the *Sayig* area. These villages were not marked on official state maps and for years were not provided with basic services. As of today they are still not connected to the electricity grid, the road system and other infrastructure. Water is only partially supplied to the residents. Most important, unlike the rest of Israel's citizens, they do not have any local representation.

C. ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING DEMOLITION IN THE NEGEV'S BEDOUIN LOCALITIES

The Goldberg Commission determined that there were 290 illegal structures in the Negev in 1945, of which 236 were tents. By 1956 the number of illegal structures in the Negev had reached 955.¹⁰⁰ Today there are around 50,000 illegal structures in the Negev, and another 2,000 such structures are added each year.¹⁰¹

Illegal construction in the Arab localities in Israel results from a genuine shortage of housing.¹⁰² This shortage is even worse among a population that approximately doubles itself every 15 years and lacks any ready planning solutions, particularly among the residents of the unrecognized villages.¹⁰³ The land dispute in the Negev and the fact that Bedouin citizens are not partner to planning in their communities undoubtedly add to this problem.

The housing demolition policy is one of the government's tools for coping with illegal construction in the Negev. This policy has never ceased, and in recent years there has even been a rise in the number of demolitions in the Negev. According to figures from the Regional Council of the

100 Goldberg Commission Report (2008), p. 27.

101 Ibid.

102 Inter-Ministerial Committee to Examine Illegal Construction in the State of Israel (2000).

103 Tabibian-Mizrahi (2004).

Unrecognized Villages in the Negev, during the last decade more than 800 homes have been demolished in the unrecognized villages (see Table 12).

Table 12: Home demolitions in the unrecognized villages, 2001-2010¹⁰⁴

Year	Number of demolitions		Year	Number of demolitions
2001	8		2006	96
2002	23		2007	232
2003	63		2008	139
2004	23		2009	99
2005	15		2010	132 (through end of August)

Table 12 does not include demolitions in recognized villages or demolitions carried out by the residents themselves as a result of legal proceedings. Following the Human Rights Watch organization's appeal to the Ministry of Justice, the ministry supplied different figures regarding the total number of demolitions in the Negev: 232, 103 and 200 homes demolished in the Negev in 2004, 2005 and 2006, respectively.¹⁰⁵

The state's legal explanation for the home demolitions is "to maintain public order." Nevertheless, the main reasons for these demolitions include construction in unplanned regions that are not covered by any master plan and construction on land not zoned for residential purposes.

Regavim – an NGO concerned with preserving national lands – is a new player in the arena of Bedouin illegal construction in the Negev. Regavim petitioned the Be'er Sheva District Court for Administrative Matters against Amram Kalaji, mayor of the Abu Basma Regional Council and chairperson of the Local Planning and Building Committee,¹⁰⁶ demanding demolition of houses constructed illegally in the council's area of jurisdiction. The judge did not accept the special conditions under which the council operates or the fact that they are "waiting for a holistic solution" following the recommendations of the Goldberg Commission. She accepted Regavim's petition and ordered the regional council and its mayor to obey the law and carry out the demolitions within a year.

104 Source: Data from the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev (2010).

105 Human Rights Watch (2008), p. 44.

106 Administrative Petition 253/09.

Conclusion

The Negev's Arab Bedouin population is currently undergoing dramatic and rapid changes and transformations. Urbanization and sedentarization were forced upon them. Moreover, modernization did not pass over Bedouin society. These factors have forced Bedouin society to change the style of life it was accustomed to for hundreds of years. Their camels were replaced by automobiles and their tents by houses.

The Negev, and in particular its Bedouin residents, have recently been the focus of local and global interest. The fact that this outlying region is adjacent to Israel's international borders and that the Negev constitutes the state's land reserves enhances the importance of this region. The government's current strategic plan for the development of the Negev is more important than all past plans and has the potential to strengthen and develop the region for the benefit of all its residents. Experts believe that this development will not succeed until the problems of Bedouin society have been solved and the Bedouins are included in all regional development plans.

For their part, the Bedouins see themselves as part of the Negev landscape. They ask to be included in the development of the region while taking their cultural distinctiveness into consideration. The fact that they are at the bottom of Israel's socio-economic scale is a stumbling block to their advancement and integration in the region. Improving the situation of Bedouin society is dependent upon government reforms that will offer affirmative action to citizens that have been discriminated against and excluded for decades. The leaders of Bedouin society must also act to eradicate negative social phenomena that have spread through Bedouin society, such as violence, lack of education and unemployment, and must take responsibility for leadership and development of this society, together with government authorities.

After years of calling for solutions to the problems of the Negev's Bedouins, today there seems to be a glimmer of hope for government response to this appeal. The Goldberg Commission's recommendations provide the government of Israel and the leaders of Bedouin society with a golden opportunity for a solution that is likely to put an end to the issue of land ownership and pave the way for recognizing additional unrecognized villages. This recognition will serve as a first step toward the development of Bedouin society and its integration into Israeli society. Solving the problems of Bedouin society, and first and foremost the land and planning issues, is a clear and present need. This solution depends upon building trust between the various branches of the government on the one hand and the Bedouin population on the other. Over the years, the Bedouins' experience with government promises has been extremely negative. The state now has an opportunity, perhaps the last, to integrate the Bedouin population into Israeli society as citizens with equal rights.

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List of tables and charts

- Table 1: Major government resolutions passed during the last decade regarding the Negev Bedouins
- Table 2: Selected demographic characteristics among the population of the Bedouin local authorities in the Negev
- Table 3: Pupils in the Bedouin sector in the Negev according to educational level and local authority (2006-07)
- Table 4: Rates of eligibility for matriculation exams by year in the Bedouin localities (2007-2009)
- Table 5: Number of Negev Bedouin inductees, 1995-2000
- Table 6: Bedouin graduates of institutions of higher education in the Negev, 1995-2010
- Table 7: Bedouins employed in government offices in the Negev
- Table 8: Local government authorities of the Negev Bedouins: Date of establishment, type, jurisdiction area, and number of residents in 2007
- Table 9: Various services in Bedouin localities
- Table 10: Localities in the Abu Basma Regional Council (2009)
- Table 11: Negev land ownership claims by tribes
- Table 12: Home demolitions in the unrecognized villages, 2001-2010
- Chart 1: Ownership claims within the jurisdiction area of the Bedouin localities

List of figures

- Figure 1: Hussein Al-Hawashleh Elementary School, built in 2006 in the village of Qasr Al-Sir
- Figure 2: Construction of educational and public institutions in the village of Abu Krinat in the Abu Basma Regional Council
- Figure 3: Sign declaring establishment of the Idan Hanegev Industrial Park at the Lehavim junction